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Speeding Car Kills Sheep, Injures Shepherd in Peddapalli

A serious road accident occurred on Saturday on the outskirts of Katnapalli, within Sultanabad Mandal of Peddapalli district, after a speeding car ploughed into a flock of sheep.

Ten sheep were killed instantly in the collision, while the shepherd, identified as Raju from Shastrinagar, sustained severe injuries. The vehicle, which was travelling from Peddapalli towards Karimnagar, reportedly lost control due to excessive speed upon reaching Katnapalli and veered into the flock, which was moving along the road in search of fodder. Following the impact, the car swerved off the road, crashed into adjoining agricultural fields and came to a halt. Six other sheep were reported to be in critical condition. Local residents rushed to the scene and immediately shifted the injured shepherd to a hospital in Karimnagar for treatment. His condition is said to be serious.

Liquor to be served till 1 am on New Year eve in bars

Hyderabad: In a good news for boozers in Telangana, the State government has decided to extend timings for bars, pubs and liquor shops on New Year's Eve.

Liquor stores and wine shops are allowed to stay open till midnight, according to a memo issued by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on December 20.

The Telangana government has granted permission to retail alcohol stores to remain open until midnight on December 31, 2022. Bars and other restaurants that serve liquor can remain open till 1 am, the State government further said.

Iran fires surprise 4,000-km missiles at US-UK joint base in Indian Ocean

New Delhi, March 21

Iran expanded the ambit of the West Asian conflict and launched an unsuccessful twin missile attack on Diego Garcia, the joint US-UK military base some 3,800 km away in the Indian Ocean, even as the UN nuclear watchdog confirmed that key Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz was targeted in a fresh strike on Saturday. Iran also claimed to have hit an Israeli F-16 fighter jet.

The Diego Garcia attack showed Tehran's hidden ability that it had missiles that could travel almost 4,000 km, a possibility flagged in January by 'Iran Watch', a think-tank operated by US-based Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control.

One missile reportedly failed in flight while the other was intercepted by a US warship mid-flight. The Diego Garcia base is on a small, remote atoll but is strategically located and capable of accom-

modating long-range bombers. It has been used as a launchpad for operations in West Asia for years.

Iran launching a 4,000-km-range missile has propelled it into a select league of nations, including the US, India, China, Russia, UK, France and North Korea. Tehran had earlier declared a missile range limit of 2,000 km.

Western analysts pointed out that Iran probably used Khorramshahr-IV to attack Diego Garcia. 'Iran Watch' had, in its January assessment, said the missile was "likely deployed", and that it "could almost certainly reach longer ranges (greater than the declared 2,000 km) if equipped with a lighter warhead".

For a missile to travel 4,000 km, it takes a parabolic arc, exiting the inner atmospheric core of the earth and then re-entering to hit the target. A missile of 3,000-km-plus

range is classified as intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM).

Since the 1980s, Iran has set up its missile project and slowly improved the manoeuvrability of its re-entry vehicles and warheads. The country has an active missile research and development programme based at Shahid Hemmat Missile Industries Complex in Tehran.

The US Congress in June last year made an assessment 'Iran's Ballistic Missile Programs', which said, "Iran continues to bolster the lethality and precision of its domestically produced missile and has the largest stockpiles of these systems in the region." The US National Air and Space Intelligence Center catalogues at least 14 Iranian ballistic missile variants.

The US Institute of Peace has expressed concern about the potential dual purpose of

Iran's space launch vehicle programme, noting that it could be used to develop ballistic missiles.

On the technology front, Iran has probably been inspired by the North Korean systems. The Khorramshahr appears to be based on North Korea's Hwasong-10 IRBM, which is referred to as 'Musudan' by the US intelligence. Its range is estimated to be between 2,500 and 4,000 km, which exceeds the 2,000-km range limit claimed by Iran for Khorramshahr. Meanwhile, UN nuclear watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that Iran's key nuclear facility at Natanz was targeted in a fresh attack on Saturday, even as it reported no increase in off-site radiation levels. In a brief statement on X, the IAEA said it had been informed by Iran that the Natanz enrichment site had been hit, and that it was closely assessing the situation.



Modi-Pezeshkian talks call for new West Asia framework, BRICS role

New Delhi, March 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, during which Tehran pitched the establishment of a "regional security framework" and urged a more assertive role for BRICS, even as New Delhi condemned attacks on critical infrastructure and flagged risks to global shipping lanes.

This conversation marked the second telephonic engagement between the two leaders in recent days, underlining India's calibrated but proactive diplomatic outreach. In an earlier discussion, Modi had stressed restraint, dialogue and the protection of civilians.

The Iranian side, in its official readout, foregrounded three key proposals: the creation of a regional security architecture led by West Asian nations without external interference; an immediate halt to ongoing military actions by the US and Israel along with guarantees against their recurrence; and a call for BRICS (under India's current rotating presidency) to play an independent role in stopping hostilities and ensuring regional and global stability.

Pezeshkian argued that a durable resolution to the conflict hinged on ending what he described as "unlawful aggres-



sions", asserting that Iran had not initiated the war. He also reiterated Tehran's willingness to engage in dialogue and verification mechanisms regarding its nuclear programme, while rejecting allegations that it sought to develop nuclear weapons.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday spoke to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi about West Asia conflict and its wider implications. He also conveyed greetings on the occasions of Nowruz and Eid. "Our conversation was on the latest developments regarding the conflict and its implications for the larger region," he posted on X.

The proposals come against the backdrop of sharply escalating tensions in West

Asia, with Iran accusing the US and Israel of targeting civilian population and critical infrastructure. The Iranian President cited strikes, including one on a school in Minab killed 168 children, describing the broader campaign as "inhumane and unethical".

During the call, Modi conveyed greetings on the occasions of Eid and Nowruz, expressing hope that the festive season would usher in peace, stability and prosperity across West Asia. He, however, struck a firm note on the security situation, condemning attacks on key infrastructure, particularly energy and logistics assets, which have emerged as flashpoints in the ongoing conflict.

The Prime Minister also underscored the importance of

safeguarding freedom of navigation, stressing that vital shipping lanes must remain open and secure, a reference to growing concerns over disruptions in strategic corridors such as the Strait of Hormuz.

India, one of the world's largest energy importers, has consistently flagged risks to global supply chains and energy security amid the intensifying conflict involving Iran and Israel.

Modi also appreciated Iran's continued support in ensuring the safety and security of Indian nationals in the country, a key concern for New Delhi as tensions persist.

India has been engaging multiple stakeholders across regions in a bid to de-escalate the crisis, maintaining contact with key global and regional leaders while reiterating that dialogue remains the only viable path forward.

Officials said New Delhi's outreach is guided by a combination of strategic interests—including the safety of the Indian diaspora, stability of energy supplies and security of critical sea lanes—as well as its longstanding position in favour of peaceful resolution of conflicts.

With attacks on infrastructure and maritime risks rising, India's message has sharpened in recent days, linking regional security directly with global economic stability.

Congress ministers meet senior leader Jeevan Reddy Amid Defection Speculation

Hyderabad, March 21

A meeting between senior Congress leader Jeevan Reddy and state ministers Sridhar Babu and Adhuri Laxman has concluded without a clear resolution, as speculation continues over Reddy's possible exit from the party.

Reddy, who has reportedly been dissatisfied with the attitude of the party's senior leadership for some time, is rumoured to be considering a switch to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). In an effort to dissuade him, the ministers held extensive discussions and assured him that the party high command would ensure he receives due prominence within the organisation. However, their efforts appear to have fallen short.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Sridhar Babu said they had urged Reddy not to take any hasty decision regarding a potential defection. He added that the party is actively exploring ways to support him and address his concerns,



and that the issues raised would be brought to the attention of the leadership and the Chief Minister.

The minister described Reddy as a pillar of strength in the Jagtial region, noting that his influence has been central to the party's development efforts there. He remarked that Reddy is widely recognised across Telangana and has consistently served as a strong voice for the people, even while in opposition.

Sridhar Babu further

stated that several senior Congress figures—including Meenakshi Natarajan, Mahesh Goud, and Uttam Kumar Reddy—had already held discussions with Reddy. According to him, Reddy highlighted a number of issues currently affecting party leaders and cadres, all of which would be conveyed to the high command.

Despite these outreach efforts, uncertainty remains over Reddy's next move, with no indication yet that he has been fully persuaded to remain within the Congress party.

Ramzan Celebrated with Across AP and Telangana

Hyderabad, March 21

Ramzan is being observed with great fervour across India, as Muslim communities gather for special prayers and celebrations. The festive spirit is particularly evident in the Telugu states, where mosques and Eidgahs in villages and major cities such as Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Warangal and Visakhapatnam have witnessed large congregations.

In Vijayawada, hundreds assembled at the Indira Gandhi Stadium to offer congregational prayers. Similar gatherings were held in the Old City and Yanamalakuduru areas, where worshippers exchanged greetings after prayers. Several local leaders, including representatives from major political parties, participated in the observances.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad is



fully prepared for the festivities, with large crowds expected at prominent prayer venues. Celebrations at the historic Mecca Masjid are scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM today, drawing a massive congregation for Eid-ul-Fitr prayers. Authorities have imposed traffic restrictions and heightened security in the Old City to manage the anticipated

turnout. At the Eidgah near Mir Alam Tank, large numbers of worshippers have already gathered, with prayers set to commence shortly. Police have deployed extensive security personnel, including Rapid Action Force units, and implemented traffic controls in surrounding areas.

'Bogus, Empty Budget': Harish Rao alleges govt ignored guarantees

Hyderabad, March 21 Stating that the 2026-27 Budget has deeply disappointed the people of Telangana, BRS Deputy Leader T. Harish Rao on Friday alleged that the government had completely ignored the six guarantees, with no clear mention or proper allocation of funds. Addressing a press conference at the Assembly premises, he said that merely increasing the size and pages of the Budget has no meaning without effective implementation, adding that the Budget is full of numbers on paper but lacks commitment to address people's problems.

He alleged that SC, ST, BC, and Minority declarations



were made only for votes and not for real development, as reflected in the Budget. Harish Rao pointed out that schemes announced in the previous Budget were not implemented but were repeated again this year. He claimed that no funds were actually spent on schemes like Rajiv Yuva Vikasam and Indiramma Atmiya Bharosa, terming the Budget as a "bogus, empty, and deceptive Budget"

with no sincerity in allocations or spending. He further alleged that there was no support for pensioners, retired employees, RTC workers, Singareni workers, BC communities, SCs, STs, minorities, women, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, stating that the Budget has effectively given "zero benefit" to all sections of society. Harish Rao also accused the government of pushing the State into massive debt nearing Rs 3.5 lakh crore, while failing to create assets. In contrast, he said the previous BRS government utilised borrowings for asset creation such as Kaleshwaram, Mission Bhagiratha, and medical colleges. Criticising the govern-

ment further, he said it was speaking about Dr B.R. Ambedkar while encouraging defections, calling it shameful. He remarked that BRS built Telangana like a "Phoenix rising from ashes," while the present government is weakening it. He questioned whether the government had any schemes or only scams, citing alleged irregularities in Medaram tenders and poor-quality works. He demanded a white paper on investments, questioning claims about industries and employment, and alleged that foreign tours were not aimed at attracting investments but served illegal financial interests.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

NavIC needs urgent reset to meet India's navigation goals

Billed as India's answer to the American GPS network, the indigenous satellite navigation system — Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) — is plagued by technical failures and ageing infrastructure. It needs an urgent reset if the ambitious goals set by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) are to be met. Experts have commented that NavIC represents a classic case of overpromising and underdelivering. It is ironic that just two years ago, the Ministry of Science and Technology had described it as "a magnificent gem in the crown of India's technological prowess" and "a beacon of self-reliance, shining brightly in the world of satellite navigation".

Despite ISRO's commendable technological achievements, persistent issues such as satellite failures, delays, and limited integration in consumer devices have restricted NavIC's effectiveness. The system's primary weakness has been the failure of onboard rubidium atomic clocks — many of which were imported. Without these precise clocks, satellites cannot provide accurate positioning data, leading to a cascade of service capability losses. The clocks have continued to malfunction, and as many as five satellites have been rendered unusable. A functional satellite navigation system requires at least four satellites to be visible simultaneously for reliable positioning. With reports indicating that the constellation has fallen below this threshold, the system's reliability for critical applications like defence, disaster management, and transportation is severely compromised. The navigation system was envisioned as a step towards self-reliance in satellite-based navigation, yet its relatively low usage in smartphones and commercial applications reflects gaps in policy execution and industry collaboration.

Immediate corrective steps can help NavIC realise its true potential. The idea of NavIC was born out of a strategic need for indigenous navigation and timing services, particularly after India was denied access to foreign GPS data during the Kargil War. The NavIC was designed to provide precise position, velocity, and timing information over India and surrounding areas. It was meant to be particularly useful in high-altitude areas where signals from global systems are sometimes unavailable.

"No one can change my decision,"

says stubborn Jeevan Reddy despite ministers' persuasion.

"Jeevan Reddy was firm, told PCC chief 'sasemira' (no way) on phone.

Furious Jeevan: "Should I just sit back if another party leader is brought in?"

"1.5-hour talks with ministers end in failure

"Jagtiyal Correspondent, March 21 (Indian Chronicle): "Senior Congress leader and former minister Tatiparthi Jeevan Reddy remains unmoved despite persuasion by party leaders, indicating his decision stands firm." Ministers Shridhar Babu, Adhuri Laxman Kumar, Choppadandi MLA Medipalli Satyam, and Karimnagar DCC president, along with SUDA chairman Komatireddy



Narender Reddy, held 1.5-hour talks with Jeevan Reddy, but they failed to change his mind. "Sources say Jeevan Reddy expressed anger, questioning the party's current state, saying it doesn't align with Rajiv Gandhi's ideals. When Shridhar Babu assured him that the party would stand by him and address his concerns, Jeevan Reddy reportedly questioned the relevance of staying in a party where he has no standing. "When PCC president Mahesh Kumar Gowd spoke to him on the phone, Jeevan Reddy reiterated his decision, saying his stance won't change regardless of who tries to persuade him. Sources indicate he might resign from Congress on March 25.

Beautiful Kawal beckons nature enthusiasts



"S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad, March 21**The greenery in Kawal Tiger Reserve has turned into a dull brown thanks to the autumn season. The trees will be green once again within a span of a month or so but do not wait for it or you will miss the beauty of the forest in summer months. "The dry vegetation in the thick Kawal forest is enchanting to say the least. If those of you who pass through the jungles are lucky enough you can spot wild animals like deer, the bison and a plethora of birds as there is hardly any cover for them in the dry season. "Kawal Tiger Reserve is spread over a core area of nearly 900 sq.km. and a buffer zone of about 1,200 sq.km across Mancherial, Kumram Bheem Asifabad, Adilabad and Nirmal districts. It is home to a wide range of wild animal



species though there is no presence of tigers at present. "The best way to enjoy the dried up forest is to take a two wheeler ride through the Tiger Reserve. It can be a ride from Kadem to Indhanpalli or the 30 km stretch between Kothapalli in Utnoor and Indhanpalli. "Branches of trees form a canopy over the road as if welcoming the passersby. You can find tribal and other women selling indigenous variety seasonal fruits or tasty roasted maize cobs all along the road. "Driving on the road is a thrilling experience because of ups and downs for the most part of the journey. The road is actually laid on a hill so drivers get to drive on the undulations. "The maximum speed limit of vehicles inside the Tiger Reserve cannot exceed 30 kmpl. It is to protect wild animals from getting killed in accidents by over speeding vehicles..

The youth of Wanaparthy district should take advantage of the Agniveer recruitments: Wanaparthy District Collector Adarsh

??Surabhi "Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle "Wanaparthy District Collector Adarsh ??Surabhi said in a statement today that online applications have started for the recruitment of 'Agniveer' posts in various categories in the Indian Army for the year 2027. He urged the eligible unmarried youth of Wanaparthy district to take advantage of this opportunity. Candidates are advised to apply online only on the website www.joinindianarmy.nic.in. He said that the deadline for online applications is till April 01, 2026. He said that the maximum age limit for all Agniveer categories has been increased from 21 years to 22 years. He said that recruitment will be made for Agniveer General Duty, Technical, Clerk/Storekeeper Technical, Tradesman (10th class & 8th class pass) categories. He said that the online Common Entrance Examination (CEE) admit cards can be downloaded from the designated website from June 01 to June 15, 2026. He said that this exam will be available in 13 languages, including Telugu. He said that bonus marks will be given to candidates with ITI, Diploma and NCC qualifications. The Collector said that this recruit-



ment process will be conducted in a completely transparent manner. He clarified that candidates should not be fooled by fraudsters and middlemen who promise to provide jobs, and that selection will be made only on the basis of merit. For any queries, you can contact the Secunderabad Army Recruiting Office on phone number 040-27740059.

Mandal-Level Sports School Selection Trials Commence in Manthani



"P. S. ASHOKAN "KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. "The Mandal-level Sports School Selection Trials were formally inaugurated at the Manthani Mandal headquarters. The event took place at the playground of the Government High School, where Municipal Chairperson Mr.

Vadnala Srinivas officially launched the proceedings. "Approximately 30 students, currently studying in Class III, actively participated in these selection trials, showcasing their athletic potential and enthusiasm. "According to Mandal Education Officer (MEO) Mrs. Dasari Lakshmi, the students selected from these trials will go on to represent the mandal at the District-Level Sports School Selection Trials, scheduled to commence on the 28th of this month in Peddapalli. "The event witnessed the presence of several distinguished dignitaries, including Municipal Vice Chairman Mr. Musukula Mahender Reddy, Councillor Mr. Machidi Raju Gowd, Complex Headmaster Mr. Suresh, Somanpalli Sarpanch Mr. Damodar, Physical Education Teachers Mr. Komroju Srinivas and Ms. Avadhanula Madhuri, along with CRP Mr. Mallayya.

Ramzan Greetings to Muslim Brothers and Sisters: TRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 21 (Indian Chronicle): "On the occasion of the holy festival of Ramzan, former corporator and TRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj extended his warm greetings to Muslim brothers and sisters in Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda divisions. Marking the festival, he visited the Chilkanagar Eidgah after special prayers and conveyed Ramzan wishes to the Muslim community. Later, along with party leaders and friends—Altaf, Mohammed, Sajid, Baba Bhai, Farooq, Akram, Obaid, Jahangir, Aslam, and Makhdum Sikandar—he visited their homes and shared in their festive celebrations. Speaking on the occasion, Praveen Mudiraj said that the holy month of Ramzan, observed with month-long fasting, spreads the values of peace, love, compassion, and brotherhood. He added that Ramzan symbolizes the spirit of "Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb" in Telangana. He further stated that various welfare and development schemes implemented

by the then Telangana State Government under KCR have significantly benefited minorities and brought positive changes in their lives. Praveen Mudiraj expressed his hope that people of Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda celebrate Ramzan with devotion, harmony, and joy in a peaceful atmosphere with their families. He also remarked that under the leadership of KCR, the BRS government worked tirelessly for the welfare of minorities, and the welfare schemes implemented during its tenure have become a model for the entire country. Senior BRS leaders Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Gowd, Mahmood, Shyam, Banti Gowd, Balu, and others participated in the program.

Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah Joins Ramadan Celebrations



"(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 21):- Beerla Ailaiah—Telangana State Government Whip and MLA for Alair—participated in the Ramadan festival celebrations held in the towns of Yadagirigutta and Alair within the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. On this occasion, he joined his Muslim brethren in offering prayers and extended his Ramadan greetings to them. Speaking at the event, Beerla Ailaiah expressed his hope that brotherhood and unity within society would be further strengthened, and he called upon people of all faiths to live together in peace and harmony. He further affirmed that the State Government remains committed to the development of all

sections of society. Local public representatives, religious elders, party leaders, activists, and a large number of Muslim brethren participated in this program.

Ugadi Celebrations Marked by Saree Distribution to Municipal Sanitation Workers by Ward Councillor Srilatha Kranti.

"P. S. ASHOKAN "KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. "On the auspicious occasion of Ugadi, the Telugu New Year, Mrs. Potharaveni Srilatha Kranti, Councillor of Boenpeta 6th Ward, organized a benevolent initiative by distributing sarees to the municipal sanitation workers of Manthani and their families. "Addressing the gathering, Councillor Srilatha Kranti stated that it has been her tradition to undertake a service-oriented activity every year during



Ugadi. As part of this year's initiative, she expressed her heartfelt gratitude towards the municipal sanitation workers who continuously contribute to the cleanliness and development of Boenpeta and the town at large. "She further remarked that honoring these dedicated workers through saree distribution brought her immense joy and satisfaction, acknowledging their invaluable service to society.

Ramzan Symbolizes Communal Harmony: Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 21 (Indian Chronicle): "On the occasion of the holy festival of Ramzan, Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy visited the homes of several Muslim families in areas including Uppal, Ramanthapur, and Mallapur. He interacted with local residents such as Jameela Begum Jani, senior Congress



leader Faseuddin, Charlapalli Congress leader Sarfaraz, and other Muslim friends, sharing in their joy. "Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy described Ramzan as a symbol of communal harmony and extended his heartfelt greetings to Muslim brothers and sisters. He stated that the holy month of Ramzan, which is highly sacred in Islam, offers an opportunity to purify the mind through fasting and prayers, to follow the path of righteousness, and to strengthen mutual love and affection. "He further added that helping the poor through charity during this period promotes equality in society.

Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Ramzan Celebrations with Muslim Community

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 21 (Indian Chronicle): "Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy participated in the Ramzan celebrations held at the Doodhekula Association Community Hall in Uppal, following an invitation from members of the Muslim minority community. On this occasion, she conveyed her heartfelt greetings to everyone celebrating the holy festival of Ramzan and Eid. She stated that Eid is a festival that brings people closer to society and reminds us of values such as compassion, generosity, and unity. She expressed her hope that this festival would bring peace, prosperity, happiness, and wealth to every household, and further strengthen the bond of brotherhood among all communities. She also wished that everyone be blessed with happiness, good health, and continuous progress. She extended her Ramzan greetings to all Muslim brothers and sisters. Several community members participated in the event, including Nagoor Basha, Alla Basha, Peerambi, Mallikarjun, Chinna Mastan, Nabi Saab, Rajamayi, V. Srinu, D. Hussain, N. Maulana, Anwar Basha, Afzal Pasha, Khader Pasha, Tummala Devi Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Benni Bhimsen, Mohan Nayak, Tummala Rajender Reddy, Gardas Venkatesh, Kemidi Srinivas, Badugula Upender Yadav, Janga Reddy, Ayodhya, Prashanth Reddy, Peerambi, Siddamma, Poolamma, Maulabi, Kasimbi, Rajyalakshmi, Parveen, Bibi, and many others from the Muslim minority community.



It is Joyful to See Muslim Brethren Celebrating the Festival of Ramadan with Grandeur

Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy & Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 21): Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy and Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar stated that it is a source of joy to witness Muslim brethren celebrating the festival of Ramadan with such grandeur. The Ramadan festive celebrations, held at the Eidgah in Bhuvanagiri town, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, were conducted on a grand scale. Attending the event as chief guests, MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy and Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar participated in the festivities and extended their Ramadan greetings to the Muslim brethren. The MLA remarked that, under the leadership of State Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government is providing various concessions to people of all faiths, enabling them to celebrate their festivals in a spirit of religious harmony. They further noted that in the state of Telangana, it has become a cherished tradition for people of all political parties and castes—transcending religious boundaries—to participate in every festival and exchange greetings with one another; they expressed their delight that everyone participates in every festival without any distinction between Hindu, Muslim, or Christian. On this occasion, the MLA personally met with the Muslim brethren and exchanged festive greetings. Speaking on this occasion, Bhongir Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar expressed her immense joy at witnessing Muslim brethren in Bhongir town celebrating the festival



of Ramadan on such a grand scale at the Eidgah, gathering to meet and exchange greetings with one another. She extended her special greetings to the Muslim brethren on this auspicious occasion. The event was attended by Municipal Vice-Chairperson Pothamsetti Manjula Venkateswarlu, Yadadri Bhongir District Library Chairman Avai Chishti, local RDO Krishna Reddy, Tahsildar Jaganmohan, Municipal Commissioner Ramalinga Reddy, local public representatives, religious elders, leaders and activists from various political parties, and a large number of Muslim brethren, among others.



Special Ramadan Prayers Held at Kapra Mosque; MLA Bandari Lakshmi Reddy Participates

“(NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 21, (Indian Chronicle):”KAPRA: To mark the auspicious occasion of Ramadan, special prayers were conducted at Kapra Mosque. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshmi Reddy participated in the event, joining Muslim brothers and sisters in offering prayers. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that Ramadan is a sacred time that fosters love, compassion, and mutual respect among people. He emphasized that the festival strengthens unity within the community and serves as an ideal example for all. The event was attended by a large number of dignitaries, including Division President Naveen Goud, minority leaders Badruddin, party leaders Mahesh and Shivakumar, senior Muslim community members, and other local leaders.

Central and State Governments Deceiving the Poor and Agricultural Laborers:

Kondamadugu Narsimha, State Secretary, Telangana Agricultural Workers Union

“(Mandava Srisailam | Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau | Indian Chronicle | March 21): Kondamadugu Narsimha, State Secretary of the Telangana Agricultural Workers Union, criticized both the BJP-led Central government and the Congress-led State government, accusing them of deceiving the poor and agricultural laborers by imposing various burdens upon them, failing to fulfill election promises, and neglecting to allocate adequate funds in their respective budgets. Speaking on Saturday at Sundarayya Bhavan in Bhuvanagiri during a meeting of the Telangana Agricultural Workers District Committee—presided over by District President Bollu Yadagiri—Narsimha lashed out at the BJP-led Central government. He alleged that the Centre has imposed severe burdens on the rural poor and agricultural laborers of the country by undermining the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)—a scheme of vital importance to these communities—by changing its name and drastically cutting its budgetary allocations. He further stated that the Telangana State government has followed a similar path, completely neglecting the poor and laborers in the budget it presented yesterday. He criticized the Finance Minister—who had introduced the budget by quoting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's maxim that the ultimate goal of governance is to ensure social, economic, and political justice for every citizen—for proposing a budget that stands in stark contradiction to that very principle. He pointed out that the budget contains no concrete proposals for the implementation of the "Six Guarantees" promised by the government. Furthermore, he noted that adequate funds were not allocated to critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and employment, and criticized the government for making massive cuts to welfare sectors. He stated that 40 percent of the funds in the State Budget were not allocated to the Employment Guarantee Scheme. He criticized the fact that not a single penny was earmarked in this budget for pending housing projects across the state or for new 'Indiramma' houses. Questioning the government—which had prom-



ised to support landless agricultural laborers—he asked how it could ever fulfill its pledge to provide Rs. 12,000 to each landless family when it has allocated a mere Rs. 6 crores for the purpose. He remarked that tenant farmers had been neglected, and that the budget failed to even mention support and rehabilitation for displaced persons, or a relief package for agricultural laborers who depend on land for their livelihood. He asserted that, in this manner, the Revanth Reddy-led state government has neglected all sections of society. Narsimha called upon agricultural laborers and the poor to mobilize in a united and organized manner to oppose the anti-people policies of both the Central and State governments. Furthermore, State Committee members Jellela Pentayya and Gangadevi Saidulu; District Vice President Pallerla Anjaya; District Assistant Secretaries Siripangi Swamy, Salluri Kumar, and Kookutla Chokkakuamri; and Committee members Andela Jyothi, Doddi Bhikshapathi, Kondapuram Yadagiri, Methuku Anjaya, Bollepalli Kishan, Kommu Anjaya, among others, participated in this meeting.

Eid-ul-Fitr Celebrated with Devotion Across Karimnagar

Special prayers held at major Eidgahs; religious leaders call for peace and unity.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, March 21: Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated with traditional fervour and gaiety in Karimnagar on Saturday, marking the culmination of the holy month of Ramzan. Thousands of faithful gathered at Eidgahs and mosques across the city to offer special prayers. The main congregations were held at Salehnagar Eidgah, Chintakunta Eidgah, Old Eidgah opposite the police station, and Eidgah near the Lower Manair Dam, besides several prominent mosques. At Salehnagar Eidgah, the Namaz was led by Sadar Qazi Mankhabat Shah Khan, where the Karimnagar Police Commissioner Gaush Alam also participated in the prayers along with a large number of devotees. The Chintakunta Eidgah witnessed prayers led by Mufti Mohammed Etamadul Haq. At the Old Eidgah opposite the police station, the Namaz was performed under the leadership of Hafiz-O-Qari Syed Shah Mohammad Quadri, while at the Eidgah near the dam, prayers were led by Mohammad Younus Madani. At Afzal Biyabani Masjid, the Eid Namaz was conducted by Maulana Mufti Khaja Aleemuddin Nizami Biyabani.



In their sermons, religious scholars highlighted the significance of compassion, charity, and communal harmony, urging people to uphold the values of unity and brotherhood. Special prayers were offered for peace, prosperity, and well-being of society. People exchanged Eid greetings and visited relatives and friends after the prayers. The police made elaborate security arrangements at all major prayer venues to ensure the peaceful conduct of the festival. The celebrations reflected the spirit of unity and cultural harmony in the city.

Here is your news report in clear English Bhakta Prahlada” Play Captivates Audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam

Kuchipudi Dance Performance by Bindu’s Disciples Enthralls Viewers

“(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 21 (Indian Chronicle):”As part of the Surabhi Drama Festival at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, the renowned troupe led by Sri Surabhi Jayanand presented the play “Bhakta Prahlada” on Saturday evening, captivating the audience from start to finish. The play beautifully depicted key episodes such as Hiranyakashipu’s penance, the birth of Prahlada, his upbringing in the ashram, his education alongside demon children, and his constant devotion to Lord Hari. It also portrayed the punishments inflicted by Hiranyakashipu, and how Lord Mahavishnu and Goddess Lakshmi appeared to protect Prahlada. The dramatic climax, featuring the emergence of Lord Narasimha from a pillar and the slaying of Hiranyakashipu, followed by the blessing of Prahlada, was presented with impressive stage techniques. The innovative effects and presentation by the Surabhi troupe drew great appreciation from the audience. Additionally, a Kuchipudi dance performance by Bindu’s disciples added charm to the event and entertained the audience throughout.



Petition Submitted to MLA Lakshma Reddy for Installation of High Mast LED Lights at Colony Bridge

“(KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 21 (Indian Chronicle):”Residents of Bagayath Venkata Sai Nagar Colony in Ramanthapur have submitted a petition to MLA Lakshma Reddy requesting the installation of high mast LED lights near the newly constructed bridge (box culvert) in the area. “Colony Welfare Association President A. Vijayender Reddy stated that the bridge area remains completely dark at night, causing serious safety concerns for women, children, and the elderly. Along with TRS senior leader MD Jangir, colony members met the MLA and explained the issue in detail. They pointed out that during nighttime, suspicious individuals gather in the area, consuming alcohol and engaging in illegal activities such as ganja use, which has increased fear among residents. Keeping women’s safety in mind, the colony representatives requested the immediate sanction of high mast LED lights and poles at the bridge. Vijayender Reddy emphasized that proper lighting would not only improve visibility at night but also help curb illegal activities and enhance public safety. Responding to the request, MLA Lakshma Reddy assured that the issue would be resolved soon and that IMAX light poles would be sanctioned at the earliest. The program was attended by TRS Venkata Reddy Nagar Division senior leader MD Jangir and colony members including R. Govind, CH Srinivas Goud, Ramakrishna, Shiva, Narasimha, Chalapathi Rao, Ashok, Vidyasagar, Ramesh Shetty, and other residents.



State Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla and Union Minister B.L. Verma Distribute Prizes to Winners of the Prime Minister's Sansad Khel



(Kabaddi, Volleyball, Cricket, and Kho-Kho) — Report by Padamati Jaganmohan Reddy, Joint Convener, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Sports Committee.“(Mandava Srisailam | Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau | Indian Chronicle | March 21): Padamati Jaganmohan Reddy, Joint Convener of the Bhuvanagiri Sports Festival, announced that a prize distribution ceremony will be held today—Sunday, March 22—at 4:00 PM at the Government Junior College in Bhuvanagiri. The event is organized to honor the athletes who secured first and second place in the Kabaddi, Volleyball, Cricket, and Kho-Kho competitions held at the Bhuvanagiri Parliamentary constituency level, under the aegis of Rajya Sabha Member and OBC Morcha National President, Dr. K. Laxman. The ceremony will be graced by the presence of Telangana State Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, Union Minister of State B.L. Verma, Rajya Sabha Member Dr. K. Laxman, and renowned singer Rahul Sipligunj. Mr. Jaganmohan Reddy further stated that certificates of participation will be presented to every athlete who took part in the sports events. Consequently, he urged every athlete who participated in the games—as well as the youth, students, intellectuals, representatives of voluntary organizations, public representatives, government officials, and private citizens—to attend the event without fail, transcending all political party lines.

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attends Sri Venkateswara Swamy Kalyana Mahotsavam Abhishekam as Chief Guest



Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, March 21: Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended as the chief guest at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Kalyana Mahotsavam Abhishekam held at the Tirumalanagar Pochamma Mutyalamma Temple, located in the Meerpet Housing Board Colony Division. Former corporators Jeripothula Prabhudas and Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy

also participated in the program. The temple committee members honored the chief guests with traditional shawls. Colony president Mallesham Goud, Sadanandam Gupta, C.H. Raju, and temple committee members Samudrala Krishnamurthy, Brahmachari, Thimmareddy, Raju, Suresh Goud, Shekhar Goud, and others were present at the event.

A family leaves a living person at the crematorium in Jagtial ?

“Jagtial Correspondent, March 21 (Indian Chronicle): “bizarre incident occurred in Jagtial where a family abandoned a living person at the crematorium, citing illness. The incident came to light late.” According to locals, Sridhar (49), a resident of Manchinilli Bavi area in Jagtial, had gone to Saudi Arabia five years ago for work, leaving behind his wife Sunitha and two daughters. He was working in a company there but didn't support his family, leading a lavish life instead. His wife was working as a laborer to support their children. “Recently, Sridhar was sent back to India due to severe illness. His family took him to local doctors, but his condition worsened due to kidney failure. Two days ago, his family abandoned him at Chintakunta crematorium, claiming he was ill. Locals noticed him and informed 108 services, who took him to the district hospital.” Sridhar alleges his family neglected him. Locals say his wife and children went to her parents' house in Gandhi Nagar, abandoning him. Sridhar is currently receiving treatment at the district hospital. “The incident has shocked Jagtial residents, who are questioning the family's actions.



Festive Spirit Marks Eid-ul-Fitr Celebrations in Kagaznagar



“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan) March 21, “Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion in Kagaznagar town on Saturday, as members of the Muslim community marked the occasion with traditional fervour. “Mosques and Eidgahs were filled with devotees from early morning. Thousands of worshippers participated in the special congregational prayers held at around 9:30 AM at the Eidgah. Following the prayers, people greeted each other warmly, exchanging wishes

of “Eid Mubarak.” The main streets and marketplaces in the town wore a festive look, reflecting the joyous spirit of the occasion. “On the occasion, Adilabad MLC Dande Vitthal and former MLA Koneru Konappa separately extended their Greetings, and the Dr. Ameer Khan, General Surgeon, also extended the Eid Greetings to the Muslim community at the Eidgah. “Meanwhile, the police made special security arrangements to ensure peaceful celebrations across the town.

Telangana Disability Rights Association Supports Wedding of Differently-Abled Couple

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 21, (Indian Chronicle): “Under the leadership of Merugu Shivakrishna, State General Secretary of the Telangana Disability Rights Association, and with the support of TPCC Chief Secretary, International Arya Vaishya Federation National Working President and State President, Uppal Srinivas Gupta, a special initiative was held today in Jawahar Nagar. A woman resident of the area, Premila, a differently-abled individual, along with her children Jyothi and Venkat, were presented with sarees and gifts for their wedding. The program also extended support to many underprivileged and differently-abled families by providing essential items, including clothing. Organizers expressed their heartfelt wishes for the couple's happiness, health, and prosperity on behalf of the entire Telangana differently-abled community. The event saw participation from Amma Foundation, Rupayi Foundation, Anil Sir, Maruguju Mahila President Bhagyakka, and several others who contributed to making the occasion memorable.



"I Will Strive Tirelessly for the Development of the Congress Party"

— Md. Mazahar, Newly Appointed General Secretary, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Congress Committee “(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 21): Md. Mazahar expressed his gratitude to Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District DCC President Beerla Ailayya for appointing him as the General Secretary of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Congress Committee. Md. Mazahar, the newly appointed General Secretary of the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Congress Committee, affirmed that in the days ahead, he would work diligently for the party and strive with all his might to strengthen the Congress presence within the district. He further pledged that, having been entrusted with this position based on the confidence placed in him, he would uphold that trust and work tirelessly for the Congress party at all times.



Paytm Introduces Built-in Calculator to Confirm Total Amount Before Payment

“Enable instant calculation of total bill amount directly within the Paytm payment screen before completing a transaction “Eliminate the need to switch between the Paytm app and a separate calculator while making everyday payments “Simplify on-the-spot bill calculations during purchases at grocery stores, vegetable markets, pharmacies and local shops “Paytm (One 97 Communications Limited), India's full stack merchant payments leader serving MSMEs and enterprises, and a leading financial services distribution company, and the pioneer of mobile payments, QR codes, and Soundbox, has introduced a built-in calculator within its payment screen that allows instant calculation of the total amount before making a payment. The calculator works directly within the Paytm payment flow, removing the need to switch to a separate calculator app or rely on mental calculations. “The total amount is displayed both in fig-

ures and in words, helping improve clarity and reduce the chances of payment errors. The addition is designed for everyday retail payments such as grocery purchases, vegetable markets, pharmacies, bill splits, and payments to local merchants where prices are often communicated verbally and totals need to be calculated on the spot. “Paytm Spokesperson said, “Our approach has always been to build practical solutions around everyday payment needs. We have introduced this built-in calculator within the payment screen to simplify the process of adding up amounts before paying while also displaying the total in figures and in words for improved accuracy. “By enabling quick calculations within the payment screen itself, Paytm aims to make mobile payments faster, simpler and more accurate during everyday transactions.



Birthday Greetings Extended to MP Etela Rajender



Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, March 21: Grand birthday celebrations were organized on the occasion of the birthday of Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Etela Rajender. The program was held under the leadership of BJP Medchal district executive member Sangishetty Ravindra Sagar at Shakti Sai Nagar Division in Mallapur. “Leaders and party workers gathered in large numbers to extend their heartfelt wishes to the MP. On this occasion, they presented a floral bouquet and honored him with a traditional shawl as a mark of respect. Speaking at the event, the leaders praised Etela Rajender for his dedication to public service and his con-

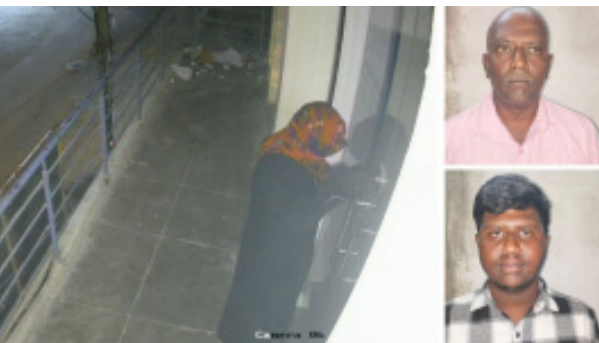
tinuous efforts towards the development of the constituency. They wished him good health, long life, and many more years of service to the people. “BJP leaders highlighted his commitment to addressing public issues and strengthening the party at the grassroots level. They expressed confidence that his leadership would continue to inspire party workers and contribute to further growth and development in the region. “The event was attended by Women's President Sabitha Yadav, Division Secretary Punyavathi, Booth President P. Lingam Goud, along with Anand, M. Naresh, Madhu, Anji, and several other leaders and party activists who actively participated and made the program a success.

Congress Leaders Distribute Ramzan Gifts to Muslim Families in 28th Division

“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Reporter March 21 Indian Chronicle: “On the occasion of the holy festival of Ramzan, celebrated by Muslims across the world, Congress leader Pattikonda Srinivasulu distributed Ramzan gifts to Muslim families in the 28th Division. Marking the sacred month of Ramzan, during which devotees observe strict fasting for nearly a month, the gifts were presented ahead of the festival celebrations. “District Congress Secretary Kalimela Bhadrappa, TDP Division President Pokala Uma Maheshwara Rao, Indiramma Committee member Kalimela Srinivasa Rao, Youth Congress leader Ande Saidana Rao, minority leaders Mohammed Zaheer, Mohammed Khadeer, SK Saleem, SK Madhar, and division leaders Sunkesula Venkateswarlu, Kasanaboyina Satish, Nimmala Paparao, Ankala Bhaskar, Hajjaruddin, Pothanaboyina Gopi, SK Naz, Katiboyina Guruteja, along with others, participated in the program.



Burqa-clad father, son rob Bengaluru computer store of former tenant, Rs 80 lakh haul recovered



GNS News Agency, March 21

(Left) CCTV grab of Manjunath M S, disguised as a woman in burqa, breaking into the computer store in HBR Layout. (Right bottom) Hemant, Manjunath's son. (Left bottom) Hemant, Manjunath's son. The Bengaluru police have arrested a father and son for allegedly stealing computer components and cash from a shop in HBR Layout, Nagawara, recovering stolen items worth Rs 80 lakh, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused Manjunath M S, 45, a water supplier, and his son Hemant, 21, a laptop service worker, were arrested on March 15 after CCTV footage showed the father, disguised in a burqa, breaking open the lock and entering the shop of a resident of T Channaiah Layout, Nagawara, to carry out the theft. The complainant stated that after closing his computer shop in the 4th block of HBR

Layout around midnight on March 13, he returned the next morning around 11 am to find the shop door open. The lock of the storage area was found broken, and laptop RAMs, SSD hard disks worth Rs 80 lakh, along with Rs 2.40 lakh in cash, were missing. The police said the accused were previously known to the complainant, as he had earlier lived in a rented house owned by them. "The accused's business was not doing well, while the complainant's business had recently improved. This appears to have motivated the theft," an officer said. He lodged a complaint with the Govindpura police station on March 14.

During the investigation, the Govindpura police gathered technical evidence and developed leads. On March 15, Hemant was arrested near a hotel on Chanakya Layout Main Road, Nagawara, along with the two-wheeler used in the crime. During questioning, he admitted to committing the theft with his father, leading to Manjunath's arrest near Nagawara Circle. On further interrogation, the accused revealed that the stolen computer components and cash had been stored at their shop in T Channaiah Layout. Acting on this information, police recovered 444 DDR4 RAM modules, 279 SSD hard disks, and Rs 2,29,900 in cash on March 17, recovering the entire stolen property. "The father-son duo planned and executed the theft together. Based on technical evidence and sustained investigation, we were able to recover all the stolen property intact. We are continuing the probe to check if others were involved", a police officer said. On March 16, the accused were produced before the court and remanded in police custody for three days. They were produced again on March 17 and remanded in judicial custody.

Clash over past FIR against Cong MLAs in HP Assembly



GNS News Agency, March 21

The Budget Session of the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha Thursday witnessed Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur clashing over a past incident involving an FIR registration against Congress MLAs. This further triggered a broader debate on legislative conduct and constitutional propriety. The deputy chief minister was participating in the discussion on the Governor's address. He referred to disruptions during such addresses and said it was not uncommon for Governors to skip parts of speeches, even during the previous BJP regimes.

Drawing from his tenure as Leader of Opposition between 2017 and 2022, Agnihotri recalled an episode when Congress MLAs had protested inside the House against the Governor. "Then the BJP government, led by Jai Ram Thakur, had ordered the registration of an FIR against protesting Congress legislators." "This is perhaps the only Assembly in the country where police entered the House premises and lodged an FIR against elected representatives merely for staging a protest," he said, urging Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania to give a ruling on the issue. In February 2021, five Congress MLAs were suspended from the state Assembly for the entire budget session after allegedly manhandling the Governor. Agnihotri also blamed Jai Ram Thakur for setting "wrong precedents", including moving a privilege motion against a sitting Chief Minister. In response, Thakur defended the action taken during his tenure. He claimed the protest had escalated into a serious breach of decorum. He said, "Congress MLAs had virtually 'attacked' the Governor who was present along with his fam-

ily members. He was physically pushed. No law permits such behaviour." Agnihotri interjected and said certain legal provisions protect legislators from prosecution for actions within the House. A senior BJP MLA, Satpal Singh Satti, however, questioned whether such immunity would justify any conduct by legislators. "Does that mean MLAs can do anything inside the House?" he asked, also defending the validity of Rule 74 which allows members to move privilege motions. The situation was eventually defused after the Speaker intervened, urging members to maintain decorum and focus on the Governor's address. However, tensions resurfaced in the post-lunch session when BJP MLA Randhir Sharma raised concerns over governance issues, including the absence of regular appointments to key posts such as Chief Secretary and Director General of Police — both currently holding additional charges.

Randhir also questioned the reported friction between the ruling party leaders and the bureaucracy, and flagged concerns over the FIRs allegedly registered against media persons. He particularly raised the issue of the alleged manhandling with a media person who was covering the movement of the Haryana Congress MLAs, who were recently moved to Kufri from Chandigarh, ahead of the Rajya Sabha election in the state. He also cited remarks from the Governor's address, stating that certain portions were "not in line with constitutional values", and that he could not support it. He also referred to recent statements by ministers, alleging inconsistencies in the government's claims of "Vayastha Parivartan". Sharma also raised the issue of illegal felling of over 300 trees where the permission was given to cut only 25 trees at Shillai in Sirmour district. The developments underscore deepening political divisions in the Assembly, with both sides invoking past precedents and present governance challenges to press their case. In 2021, an FIR was also lodged after the MLAs were suspended. The incident, which occurred during the BJP government led by former chief minister Jai Ram Thakur, involved blocking the Governor's vehicle, which prompted a resolution for their suspension. The five MLAs included then LoP Mukesh Agnihotri, Satpal Raizada, Harshwardhan Chauhan, Vinay Kumar and Sundar Singh.

With jump of 29% over reserve price, Chandigarh's earns nearly Rs 500 cr in 1st round of liquor auction

GNS News Agency, March 21

To discourage cartelisation and monopolistic control, the policy caps the allocation at a maximum of 10 licensing units per individual or entity. To discourage cartelisation and monopolistic control, the policy caps the allocation at a maximum of 10 licensing units per individual or entity. For the second consecutive year, the liquor vend at Palsora village on the Mohali border has emerged as the highest-grossing unit in Chandigarh's excise auction, drawing a winning bid of Rs 16.71 crore against a reserve price of Rs 11.41 crore. In the previous excise cycle, the same vend had also led the chart with a bid of Rs 14 crore over a base price of Rs 10.22 crore. The first round of e-auction under the Excise Policy 2025-2026 saw participation from several, with 195 bids submitted online for 84 vends out of a total of 97. However, one bidder was disqualified during technical scrutiny, leaving 83 vends effectively in contention. The combined reserve price for these stood at Rs 385.24 crore. The Excise and Taxation Department reported a total collection of Rs 496.81 crore in licence fees from the first round, reflecting an increase of nearly 29 per cent over the reserve price. Additionally, Rs 3.90 crore was generated through participation fees. In comparison, last year's auction had yielded Rs 606.43 crore in licence fees and Rs 4.56 crore in participation charges for 96 vends. The second-highest bid of Rs 12.27 crore was recorded for a vend in Dhanas against a reserve price of Rs 9.62 crore. A Sector-61 vend secured the third spot, fetching Rs 11.52 crore compared to its base price of Rs 8.21 crore.

The department has initiated the tendering process for the remaining 14 vends. Officials expressed confidence that, given the strong response so far, the remaining units will also attract competitive bids, pushing overall revenues well beyond the baseline targets. UT authorities attributed the encouraging outcome to reforms introduced in the new ex-



cise policy, which emphasises transparency and technology-driven processes. The entire auction was conducted online, with bidders trained in the use of digital signatures and specialised software developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC). No offline submissions were entertained. To discourage cartelisation and monopolistic control, the policy caps the allocation at a maximum of 10 licensing units per individual or entity.

UT officials said this move is intended to ensure fair competition while boosting revenue. Other key provisions include the reintroduction of liquor sales through departmental stores, allowing bar licensees to procure stock from nearby vends, an increased security deposit for retail outlets, and mandatory GPS tracking for liquor transportation. Meanwhile, Darshan Singh Kler, president of the Wine Contractors Association, has raised objections regarding the bidding process. In a written complaint to the Excise and Taxation Commissioner, he alleged that certain bidders were allowed to submit documents after the stipulated deadline. He also claimed that some participants failed to disclose business associations with other bidders, as required under the policy guidelines.

Moga court denies bail to two in case linked to Amritpal speech



GNS News Agency, March 21

A court in Moga has denied bail to two men accused in a 2023-case linked to a speech by Amritpal Singh, citing the serious nature of the allegations and the possibility of the accused influencing witnesses. Additional Sessions Judge Ravi Inder Kaur Sandhu dismissed separate bail applications filed by Basant Singh, Daulatpura Ucha village, and Kulwant Singh, Rauke Kalan village. An FIR was registered at Baghapurana police station under multiple IPC provisions, including Sections 121-A, 153-A, 153-B and 120-B.

The prosecution said the case stems from an incident on February 19, 2023, at Budh Singh Wala village in Moga. Amritpal Singh, associated with Waris Punjab De, allegedly delivered a provocative speech during an event marking the death anniversary of Deep Sidhu. Police alleged that both the accused, along with others, were present armed with weapons, and that the speech incited sentiments against the government and promoted the idea of a separate state.

However, the counsel for the accused argued that they were falsely implicated on the basis of a video clip and no weapons were recovered from them. The counsel also contended that the challan was filed after a delay of over two years and that both accused had been in custody since June 23, 2025. Opposing this, the prosecution maintained that the allegations were grave and warranted denial of

bail. The court, in its orders dated March 17, held that the accusations were "clear and specific", and the matter was serious in nature. It observed that there was a likelihood of the accused fleeing justice and potentially influencing witnesses if released. It also noted that the trial was yet to commence and expressed concern that the accused could interfere with the judicial process.

Three from Maharashtra detained for selling two women from Bejjur

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: Three persons were detained for their alleged role in trafficking two women under the guise of marriage from Bejjur mandal on Thursday.

Police said three persons from Maharashtra's Sironcha were detained and were being interrogated for their role in selling two women from Bejjur mandal to buyers in Madhya Pradesh for Rs. 2.40 lakh each. The traffickers reportedly contacted the financially weak women from a tribal community after they migrated to Mancheril town in search of livelihood. It is learnt that the three managed to win the trust of the women by promising to marry them. The incident came to light when the parents of the women approached the police, who registered a case and launched an investigation. This is the second such instance reported in the district within a span of nine months.

"The three are being questioned as to how they contacted the women, to whom they had sold the victims and to which the buyers belong. Focus is also on since when the accused have been indulging in the offence," a police official said. On June 20 last year, eight persons, including a police constable and five women from several parts of this district and Madhya Pradesh, were arrested on charges of human trafficking.

Lawyers in Karkardooma Court go on a flash strike, resolve to not allow police to enter the complex: Why are they angry?

GNS News Agency, March 21

Lawyers in Karkardooma Court go on a flash strike, resolve to not allow police to enter the complex: Why are they angry? The circular mentioned instances of alleged failure by police to act on complaints by lawyers. Work has stopped in Northeast Delhi's Karkardooma Courts complex after lawyers went on a strike on Friday (March 20) to protest the alleged police inaction on a complaint of assault and robbery filed by one of their colleagues. The lawyers have also alleged that the Station House Officer (SHO) of Ghaziपुर police station, in whose jurisdiction the alleged crime took place, was trying to "shield the real culprits".

At a meeting on Thursday, the Shahdara Bar Association (SBA), which represents all lawyers in the Karkardooma Courts complex, called for a total suspension of work on Friday and to stop the entry of police to the complex. "All the members of Shahdara Bar Association are hereby informed that an emergent meeting... was called today to discuss a serious incident wherein a member of the Bar was brutally attacked and robbed within territorial jurisdiction of P.S. Ghaziपुर. Though an FIR... was registered... however, SHO Ghaziपुर failed to take any action against the accused person and to arrest them," the SBA said in a circular signed by its president V K Singh and honorary secretary Narveer Dabas. The circular alleged that the SHO had "intentionally failed to take any action against accused persons and has been taking time on one pretext or another just to shield the real culprits". The circular also mentioned earlier instances of alleged failure by police to act on complaints by lawyers. "In a previous incident, where an attempt was made to kill a lawyer and he received a gunshot injury during the incident, police officials of P.S. Mayur Vihar failed to arrest all accused persons till date. It has further been observed that various police officials have been misbehaving with lawyers in police stations and they intentionally don't take any action on the complaints filed by advocates," it said.

Therefore, the circular said, the meeting of the SBA's Executive Committee had "unanimously resolved to observe complete suspension of work on 20.03.2026, and to ban the entry of Police officials inside the court premises on 20.03.2026 as a mark of protest". There are 1.65 lakh registered lawyers in Delhi, a large and vocal community that has resorted to strikes to press their demands on several occasions earlier. In September 2023, lawyers in Delhi's district courts went on strike and abstained from work in protest against the murder of an advocate in Ghaziabad

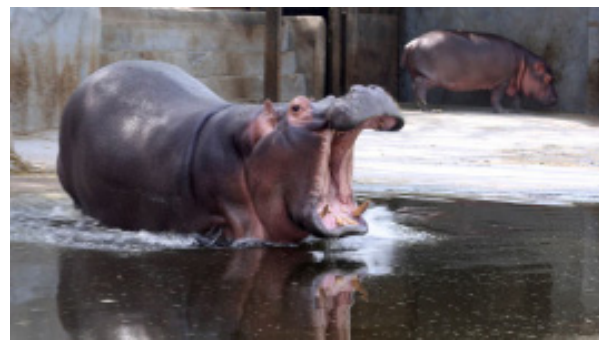


and the attack on advocates in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur. In December 2023, the Dwarka Court Bar Association (DCBA) passed a resolution to abstain from work alleging that a Delhi Police official had beaten up a member of the bar at Uttam Nagar East Metro station.

In August 2024, Dwarka Court lawyers gathered outside the court complexes to prevent the entry of police vehicles, because the lawyers alleged that their vehicles are barred from entering police station premises. In July 2024, Delhi's lawyers cited a "draconian" order passed by an administrative civil judge which allegedly restricted the entry and exit of any repair material in the lawyers' chambers without the prior approval of the caretaking branch, and the Delhi Bar Association (DBA) passed an order to abstain from work.

Also that month, lawyers across Delhi abstained from work as a sign of protest against the allegedly "draconian" provisions of the three new criminal laws, such as the extension of maximum police custody of an accused up to 90 days. In February 2025, lawyers across Delhi's courts stopped work stating that the decision to pass the Advocates Amendment Bill was taken unanimously. One of their main contentions was that the Bill allegedly contained clauses that would prohibit advocates from boycotting court work. In June 2025, lawyers across Delhi's lower courts decided to abstain from work following a decision to move judges of 34 digital Negotiable Instruments Act courtrooms, which hear cheque-bounce cases. In August 2025, lawyers abstained from work for six days and took to the streets against a notification issued on August 13 by then Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, allowing police personnel to record evidence from police stations via video conferencing.

Young veterinarian killed in hippopotamus attack at Karnataka's Tyavarekoppa Zoo, probe ordered



GNS News Agency, March 21

A young veterinarian, recently recruited on contract by the Karnataka Forest Department, died Friday morning after suffering injuries in a hippopotamus attack at Tyavarekoppa Zoo in Shivamogga Thursday night. Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said Friday morning that Dr Sameeksha Reddy sustained grievous injuries when she went to treat the animal at the zoo around 11.30 pm. Khandre said she was rushed to a hospital in Shivamogga but succumbed to her injuries around 6.30 am. "The government stands with the family of the deceased doctor in this hour of grief. Every life is precious. May God give the family the strength to bear the pain of separation," Khandre said.

The minister added that a team of senior veterinarians and forest officials has been appointed to investigate the accident. He also directed that veterinarians across the state's zoos strictly follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) when treating animals. Spread over 250 hectares,

Tyavarekoppa Zoo is located about 10 km from Shivamogga city in Karnataka's Malnad region. The zoo houses several species, including four lions and seven tigers, and features lion and tiger safaris. It is managed by the Zoo Authority of Karnataka, which oversees eight zoos in the state and functions under a governing council that includes the forest minister.

Rs 57 lakh to be spent on laying new drinking water pipeline: Mohali MLA

Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh on Thursday said that the Punjab government is resolving long-pending issues of the people of the city. He shared these remarks while speaking to reporters during the inauguration of a new drinking water pipeline project in Phase 10, Mohali. To improve the drinking water supply in the LIG and MIG areas of Phase 10, old and damaged pipelines — which were causing contamination of water — are being replaced. New 4-inch ductile iron pipes are being installed to address this issue. The project will cost approximately Rs 57 lakh and is expected to be completed within about two and a half months. While speaking to journalists, the MLA explained that due to the old pipelines, water used to get mixed and was not completely clean, posing a risk of diseases in the area. With the installation of the new pipelines, residents will be relieved from concerns about waterborne illnesses.

‘Had no haters’: Village grieves for property dealer killed in shoot-out



GNS News Agency, March 21

GNS News Agency, March 21 A few kilometres off the highway, nestled near the Shivalik foothills, lies the quiet village of Kubaheri in Mohali. On Thursday, the village stood still in grief as residents gathered outside the residence of Chamanpreet Singh alias Chini, awaiting the arrival of his body after postmortem. Chamanpreet was shot dead in broad daylight by two assailants in Sector 9, Chandigarh on Wednesday.

Outside his modest single-storey home, located a short distance from a gurdwara, villagers, many of whom had known him since childhood, stood in silence, mourning the loss of someone they described as the “pride of

Kubaheri.” “It’s not just Kubaheri village, it’s Chini’s village,” Saudagar Singh, a childhood friend and resident of the village in Majri tehsil, said. “He made the whole village proud.” Recalling his contributions, Saudagar said Chini had organised a major wrestling competition in the village around two years ago, even inviting noted Punjabi singer and actor Babbar Mann for a performance. “He arranged everything and spent money with the support of his associates and villagers. Everyone stood by him for such a big event,” he said. Describing his nature, Saudagar added, “I have seen him grow up. He was always supportive. Instead of rebuilding his own house first, he helped others construct rooms in their homes.” Another villager echoed similar sentiments. “He was always smiling, greeting everyone. He had no haters in the village,” he said.

Chini had been working as a property dealer for the past one and a half years. According to Saudagar, his routine was simple, he would travel daily to Sector 9, Chandigarh for gym, return home for meals, and then head to his office in Mohali. His family, too, is well-regarded in the village. His father, Sant Singh, is an Army veteran who continued working in Chandigarh after retirement, while his mother serves as a panch in the village. “We never heard of any threats to him. It is unfortunate that he was shot dead,” Saudagar added. Satvinder Singh, Chini’s nephew, said, “I play football, and Chini always supported sports activities in the village, including football.”

UT hosts International conference on yoga for children with intellectual disabilities

GNS News Agency, March 21

The Government Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities (GRIID), Chandigarh, in collaboration with the Haryana Yog Aayog, Government of Haryana, organised an international conference on the theme “Yoga for Empowerment: Enhancing the Lives of Children with Intellectual Disabilities” on March 19.

The conference was attended by several dignitaries, including Ravneet Kaur, Director (GMCH and GRIID), as chief guest; Jaideep Arya, Chairman of Haryana Yog Aayog; Ajeet Sidana, Joint Director of GRIID; M Karuppasamy, Course Coordinator of GRIID; Anil Kumar Principal of GRIID; Reena Jain, Clinic In-charge of GRIID; Raj Kumar, Registrar of Haryana Yog Aayog; C V Jayanthi, Associate Professor, Department of Yoga, Chennai; and Pawan Kumar Gupta, member of Haryana Yog Aayog. The programme began with a welcome address by Ajeet Sidana, who also provided an overview of GRIID and its contributions in the field of intellectual disabilities. This was followed by the felicitation of the chief guest, Ravneet Kaur. Jaideep also addressed the conference and talked about the importance of yoga in daily life, and in promoting physical, mental and emotional well-being, particularly for persons with disabilities.

He also appreciated the joint efforts of GRIID and the Haryana Yog Aayog in organising the event. He also said efforts would be made to formulate guidelines at the end of the conference to further strengthen initiatives for the empowerment of children with intellectual disabilities. Karuppasamy outlined the structure and objectives of the two-day conference, and provided details of the RCI Continuing Rehabilitation Education programme. Anil Kumar presented an overview of the scientific sessions, including scheduled paper presentations. Addressing the gathering, Ravneet shared her experience of working with



the founder of GRIID, B S Chavan, and acknowledged his role in establishing the institute. She said she felt privileged to carry forward his vision and highlighted the satisfaction derived from working with children with special needs. She also appreciated the efforts of special educators and professionals at GRIID.

The event also featured a yogasana demonstration and a cultural dance performance by students. Technical sessions included a presentation by Mukta Kumar, CMO, Panchkula, on “Stimulate Early, Shape the Brain”. Mukta emphasised the importance of early identification of developmental and intellectual disabilities, particularly within the first three years. She said timely intervention can significantly improve outcomes and integration into mainstream education and society. Other speakers included Ravinder Kaur, Professor, Dhanwantri Hospital (Chandigarh), who spoke on adaptive yoga practices for children with special needs; Jyoti Bholeshwar Mishra, Associate Professor, GMCH (Chandigarh), who discussed yoga for emotional and behavioural management; and C V Jayanthi, who presented on yogasana in Special Olympics.

Kisan Mela at PAU begins today, V-C urges farmers to attend amid inclement weather



GNS News Agency, March 21

The mela will also convene live demonstrations on nursery raising techniques, micro-irrigation park, nutrition garden model and drone spraying technology. The mela will also convene live demonstrations on nursery raising techniques, micro-irrigation park, nutrition garden model and drone spraying technology.

The two-day Kisan Mela at the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, will begin on Friday even as the weather continues to be inclement and Thursday witnessed continuous light showers, with the Vice-Chancellor urging the farmers to attend the event. The mela is based on the theme, “Adopt Crop Diversification for Environmental Protection.” The varsity will be selling high quality paddy seeds for the upcoming kharif season at the Mela. The Mela will reportedly be attended by thousands of farmers not just from Punjab but across the northern region.

The mela will showcase new crop varieties, including PR 133 (paddy), PBD 88 (cotton), NK 7328 (maize), MH 56 (muskmelon), PSGH 1 and 3 (sponge gourd), Matar Ageta 8 and Punjab 90 (pea) and Himgiri (ginger). New varieties of nectarine, peach, dragon fruit, apple, cape gooseberry, ber, bael, kinnow and citrus fruits will also be major attractions for the farmers. Satbir Singh Gosal, Vice-Chancellor (PAU) has called upon the farming community to participate in the mela with full vigour. “Farmers have always stood by PAU and PAU has always stood by farmers in difficult times. They have showered unwavering affection and support to each other, thus, marching on the path of glory and excellence. Come... visit 325 stalls and make mela successful,” the V-C said in a statement.

The mela will also convene live demonstrations on nursery raising techniques, micro-irrigation park, nutrition garden model and drone spraying technology. Besides there will be exhibitions on value-added products from millets, preparation of herbal gual from petals of different flowers, low tunnel and net house vegetable cultivation, irrigation and drip irrigation techniques in orchards. The crowd will also get to participate in field demonstrations on farm machinery such as PAU Super SMS, Smart Seeder, Super Seeder and Happy Seeder, multi crop planter, lucky seed drill, tractor

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After son, Arjun Singh gets BJP nod to contest: ‘Will win all 7 seats in Barrackpore’

Pawan Singh, Arjun Singh, Arjun Singh gets BJP nod to contest, Arjun Singh gets BJP nod to contest West Bengal Assembly elections, West Bengal Assembly polls, Indian express news, current affairs Arjun Singh, known for his aggressive campaigning style, was even more blunt about the party’s prospects. Despite losing the Barrackpore Lok Sabha seat to TMC’s Partha Bhowmick by roughly in 2024, Arjun remained undeterred.

As the BJP released its second list on Thursday, it became clear that the party is aiming to consolidate its influence in the industrial belt of Barrackpore by banking on former MP Arjun Singh’s clout in the area. After announcing the candidature of his son, Pawan Singh, for Bhatpara in the first list, the BJP on Thursday announced to field Arjun Singh from Noapara. Both the Assembly seats fall in the North 24 Parganas district. “It is a good opportunity. We are fourth-generation political families... My father has immense popularity in this belt. While his short-term return to the TMC slightly impacted his image, he still secured four lakh votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, losing by 70,000 amid rigging.” Pawan told Pawan expressed confidence that after the “weeding of dead voters” following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), both he and his father would emerge victorious. He had defeated veteran TMC leader Madan Mitra from Bhatpara five years ago. This time, TMC has



fielded Amit Gupta against Pawan Singh.

Arjun Singh, known for his aggressive campaigning style, was even more blunt about the party’s prospects. Despite losing the Barrackpore Lok Sabha seat to TMC’s Partha Bhowmick by roughly in 2024, Arjun remained undeterred. “My opponent in Noapara has already lost the fight.... I can proudly say that all seven Assembly segments in Barrackpore will go to the BJP this time,” Arjun Singh asserted, referring to his extensive personal influence across the region, including Bijpur, Jagaddal, and Naihati Assembly seats.

Left Front fields Srijib Biswas in Bhabanipur, JU scholar gets Ballygunj ticket



GNS News Agency, March 21

The Left Front has once again fielded youth leader Srijib Biswas against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the latter’s home turf in Bhabanipur in Kolkata. The young advocate had contested against the TMC supremo in 2021 Bhabanipur Assembly bypoll and lost. Biswas’s name featured in the Left Front’s second list, comprising 32 candidates, released on Thursday. Out of the 32 candidates, 29 are from the CPI(M), two from CPI, and one from the RSP. The Left had announced names of 192 candidates in the first list on Monday.

The key nominees in the second list included CPI’s Shanti Giri from Nandigram and former MP and CPI(M)

leader Dr Pulin Behari Baskey from Nayagram. Giri will fight against BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari and Pabitra Kar of TMC in Nandigram. The second list also included a few surprise entries, including Afrin Begum Shilpi and Partha Pratim Biswas. Afrin, the young research scholar from Jadavpur University has been fielded from Ballygunj constituency.

On the other hand, retired professor of Jadavpur University, Partha Pratim Biswas has been fielded in Tollygunj against heavyweight TMC candidate and cabinet minister Aroop Biswas. Reacting to her selection, 29-year-old Afrin said, “When I was in SFI, I was fighting for the rights of the research scholars in Jadavpur university. Now, my fight will change and it will be for the rights of the people.” Afrin was first seen with Md Salim and Samik Lahiri in the all party delegation of CPI(M). The other candidates whose names were announced in the second list include Meenakshi Mukherjee (Uttarpara), Diprita Dhar (Dum Dum North), Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya (Jadavpur), Sreejeev Biswas (Bhavanipur), Monirul Islam (Metiaburuj) and Apoorba Pramanik (Jayanagar (SC)). During the announcement of the candidate list, CPI(M) state secretary Md Salim described the current judicial review of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls as the “initial victory”, and asserted that the Left leaders will not rest till every genuine voter figures on the list before the two-phase polls. “We have an initial victory when CEO Manoj Kumar Agarwal and other senior administrative and police officials attended a SIR review meeting at Calcutta High Court, and the pace of disposal of pending voter-related claims and objections was discussed,” he said.

The 544 names in an envelope: A village in UP uncovers a massive bid to purge its voters

For 544 residents of village Louharipur in Shamli district, that means a month more of an anxious wait. On February 14, Form 7s with names of the 544 — all of them Muslims — were found stuffed in an envelope with the Booth Level Officer (BLO) at the village primary school. They made up nearly half the total number of existing voters in the village, which is around 1,100. In the SIR exercise, Form 7s are meant for deletion of an existing name in the electoral rolls. All the recovered 544 Form 7s in Louharipur had the same applicant: ‘Ved Pal’. A month later, residents of Muslim-dominated Louharipur say none of their questions regarding the forms have been answered. The claim by poll officials that the documents were “fake” has done little to assuage their apprehensions, with members from nearly every family in the village figuring in the list of 544. Villagers say that a local youth first spotted the BLO, Mukesh, with the forms, and confronted her about it. The forms were pre-printed with EPIC (electors’ photo identity card) numbers and other details of the 544 voters, with the reason cited for seeking their deletion from the electoral rolls being that they

had shifted out of Louharipur — a claim refuted by the locals. The school where the forms were discovered, and copies of the filled forms made by villagers. (Express Photo by Gajendra Yadav) The school where the forms were discovered, and copies of the filled forms made by villagers. (Express Photo by Gajendra Yadav) Not getting satisfactory answers from Mukesh, the villagers, who made a copy of the 544 forms, held a panchayat to discuss the issue the next day. “At the meeting, it was decided that we would lodge a complaint with the district administration,” says Mohammad Kamil (72), 10 of whose family members figured among the 544 in whose names the forms were found. Fakrudin (80), a retired primary government school teacher, says all the 544 in whose names the forms were submitted for deletion of names lived in the village. “In fact, some of them are government officials living here.” Also in the list of 544 were Nusrat (35), who was the village head of Louharipur between 2016 and 2021, and 12 other members of her family. She says that the youth who first noticed the forms is a graduate, and hence figured out what the forms were about. “

Judge rules U.S. government overreached with transgender health care declaration



GNS News Agency, March 21

A federal judge said the government overreached by issuing a declaration that called treatments like puberty blockers and surgeries unsafe and ineffective for young people experiencing gender dysphoria, according to a ruling on Thursday (March 19, 2026) in Oregon. Judge Mustafa Kasubhai's ruling was centered on Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. not going through the proper administrative procedures when issuing the declaration in December. The declaration also warned doctors that they could be excluded from federal health programs like Medicare and Medicaid if they provide these treatments. The judge also denied the defendants' motion to dismiss the case. The judge's ruling was at the end of a roughly 6-hour hearing and will be followed by a written decision.

"Today's win breaks through the noise and gives some needed clarity to patients, families, and providers," the Democratic New York Attorney General Letitia James, who led the lawsuit, said in a statement on Thursday (March 20, 2026). "Health care services for transgender young people remain legal, and the federal government cannot intimidate or punish the providers who offer them." A spokesperson for HHS did not immediately respond to an email request for comment.

The New York Times reported that the judge spoke about the broader implications associated with this case,

LPG crisis: In Kerala, war reaches the doorsteps

GNS News Agency, March 21

For 32 years, Divakaran (name changed) has been running a cooking gas distribution agency in Ernakulam district, Kerala, never once imagining that he might have to seek police protection for running his business establishment at any point. It was one of the toughest weeks in recent years for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) distributors like Divakaran across the country as the war that broke out in West Asia triggered speculations about an impending shortage of cooking gas. The panic-stricken domestic consumers made a beeline for his agency anticipating scarcity of LPG cylinders.

Not wanting to be at the receiving end of irate consumers, Divakaran even made a cautious recede of his office, circling the premises in his car and watching the restless crowd before finally summoning the nerve to step inside. "One woman grew so agitated at not being able to book a refill that she blamed it on the arrogance of my booking agent and demanded that I reprimand the woman at the booking desk. I realised it was impossible to convince her that it was a computer-generated Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) that responded to the booking. So, I promised to pull up my agent just to calm her down," says Divakaran. Predominantly from Qatar

When the West Asia conflict erupted on February 28, an imminent crisis was anticipated, though largely in the oil sector. But as it turned out, the initial pinch was felt in the LPG supply. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz choked vital shipping lanes, disrupting imports that account for nearly 80% of Kerala's LPG supply, sourced predominantly from Qatar. The domestic supply scene remained largely unaffected, though consumers reported difficulty in booking refills and a delay in delivery, which stretched to nearly a week. Yet, it was the shortfall in commercial cylinders and the consequent shuttering of hotels that triggered a ripple of foreboding among the households.

At an emergency meeting convened by the State government, it was decided that domestic consumers would be given priority in the distribution of LPG and the supply of commercial cylinders was to be restricted. Preference was given for essential institutions such as hospitals, old-age homes, schools, community kitchens, IT park and factory canteens, and crematoriums. 1,000-odd hotels shut down. Over 1,000 hotels across the State shut down, while many others pared down their menus and reduced the operational hours. For the industry, this was an unprecedented crisis," observes T.J. Manoharan, State secretary of the Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association. The Union government barred individuals with Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections from either obtaining a new LPG connection or retaining an additional one, besides imposing other restrictions.

The blow fell hardest on those who ran roadside kiosks for their livelihood. Mini Santhosh, who runs a modest tea shop along Press Club Road in Ernakulam, was forced to dust off her induction cooktop as an emergency backup after her pursuit of a commercial cylinder proved futile. With her regular customers to serve, she had little choice but to adapt, despite concerns over inflated electricity bills. Many eateries turned to firewood stoves in desperation. Samridhi@Kochi, a chain of budget outlets jointly run by the Kochi Corporation and the Kudumbashree Mission, was among the first to make the switch after exhausting its last stock of cylinders. But the shift created fresh challenges. Sawmills and plywood factories were inundated with inquiries, even as firewood prices surged to nearly ₹3,000 a tonne. "People kept arriving in small vehicles, demanding large quantities of firewood," says Hameed Shah, who runs sawmills in both Ernakulam and Thrissur. The missing workforce

Hotel operators were left staring at dwindling customers and revenue, apart from the prospect of losing their workforce as well. Migrant labourers, the backbone of the industry, began returning home especially to States like Assam, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, which are going to polls next month. The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and Ramzan added further momentum to the departures. The loss of employment opportunities, mostly in the hotel sector, following the LPG crisis, only seemed to hasten it. West Bengal accounts for nearly 40% of Kerala's migrant workforce, followed by Assam (20%). As the LPG crisis deepened, fears mounted that the labour crunch could spill into other sectors such as minor construction, plywood, and fishing. Oil companies maintained that the State's nearly 1.3 crore domestic consumers remained unaffected. Kerala

especially as it relates to democracy. "The notion that I will go forward and issue a declaration and see if we can get away with it is not a principle of governance that adheres to the overarching commitment to a democratic republic that requires the rule of law to be regarded and respected and honored as a sacred," the judge said. The decision is the second major legal setback for Mr. Kennedy and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services this week. Another federal judge in Boston on Monday (March 16, 2026) temporarily blocked several of Mr. Kennedy's vaccine policy changes. The judge ruled Mr. Kennedy likely violated federal procedures in revamping a key vaccine advisory committee and slimming down the childhood vaccine schedule without the committee's input. Federal officials have indicated they plan to appeal that ruling.

A coalition of 19 states and the District of Columbia in December sued HHS, Mr. Kennedy and its inspector general over the declaration, alleging that it is inaccurate and unlawful and asking the court to block its enforcement. The lawsuit says that HHS's declaration seeks to coerce providers to stop providing gender-affirming care and circumvent legal requirements for policy changes. It also says federal law requires the public to be given notice and an opportunity to comment before substantively changing health policy — neither of which, the suit says, was done before the declaration was issued. HHS's declaration based its conclusions on a peer-reviewed report that the department conducted earlier this year that urged greater reliance on behavioral therapy rather than broad gender-affirming care for youths with gender dysphoria. The report questioned standards for the treatment of transgender youth issued by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health and raised concerns that adolescents may be too young to give consent to life-changing treatments that could result in future infertility. Major medical groups and those who treat transgender young people have sharply criticized the report as inaccurate, and most major U.S. medical organizations, including the American Medical Association, continue to oppose restrictions on transgender care and services for young people.

has the advantage of an LPG import terminal in Kochi and seven bottling plants. "The movement of LPG from the terminal to bottling plants and onward to domestic customers was seamless all along. In fact, the panic booking took a toll on distributors, who often found no empty cylinders to exchange when refills were brought in," says a senior official of an oil company.

However, the story was different for commercial consumers. The oil companies catered to less than half the customer base, leaving the rest dependent on private players who lacked the infrastructure to meet an emergency and just vanished. Since then, the Union government has relaxed the supply of commercial cylinders by around 30%, which was to be distributed at the discretion of a State-level committee. The LPG shortage impacted unexpected corners, leaving its mark on more sectors. In Kozhikode, the Corporation was forced to temporarily divert bookings at its two gas-powered crematoriums to traditional wood-fired facilities until refilling could be arranged. "We were told that the Corporation's request for a refill has been prioritised by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited. But the time of delivery and the quantity sanctioned are yet to be intimated," says Corporation health inspector Sathesh Babu.

Hostels across the State were compelled to revise their menus, while some even explored the idea of running community kitchens to tide over the crisis. "Many hostels cut down the amount of rice cooked, since it requires a lot of gas. Normally, we need a refill every four to five days to prepare meals for nearly 200 residents," says Naseem Hamza, general secretary of the Hostel Owners Welfare Association. Nutrition departments in hospitals also faced operational challenges. "We have been able to serve patients a pre-fixed menu tailored to their dietary requirements, but have had to restrict the supplementary menu owing to the LPG shortage. However, we ensured that patients do not face any nutrient deficiency," says Teena John, senior clinical dietician with a major private hospital in Kochi. The Sabarimala Ayyappa temple opened for the five-day monthly puja on March 16, with authorities scrambling to ensure that the LPG shortage did not disrupt essential services for the thousands of pilgrims arriving each day. A consignment of cylinders was delivered at Pampa following the directive of the Pathanamthitta District Collector, points out a Travancore Devaswom Board official.

The crisis did not spare the rubber industry either. In Kottayam, nearly eight crumb rubber factories were forced to halt production as LPG supplies dried up. The war also hit the flow of essential chemicals, including ammonium, which is critical for processing natural rubber, points out Aby Ipe, secretary of the Karshaka Congress, Kottayam. "Almost 60% of crumb rubber factories run on LPG. We use gas cylinders weighing 300-400 kg. Our vehicle has been camping at Kochi for the last week for taking delivery," says M. Ansal, who runs multiple crumb rubber factories in Kottayam. The cancellation of flights following the attack on some aviation installations in Gulf countries has upset the travel plans of hundreds of Keralites. Missed jobs, skipped exams, extended leaves, and loss of wages left many expatriates in a lurch. Rakhi Mariam George, a staff nurse with the National Health Service in Sheffield, United Kingdom, had returned to her home in Chengannur for delivery and was originally scheduled to fly back on March 2. With her ticket cancelled, she is now searching for a bassinet seat, compelled to rely on premium airlines as she must travel with her newborn. "Besides, the direct debit from my U.K. salary (for rent and utility services) continues though I am back home, draining nearly half my earnings. A test for permanent residency in the country also had to be rescheduled twice because of flight disruptions," she says. Booking cancellations hit tourism. The disruption in the air transport also pushed Kerala's tourism and hospitality sector to the brink. A wave of booking cancellations and the closure of several restaurants marked the downturn. Nearly 85% of foreign tourists to the State transit through Doha or Dubai, in the absence of direct flights to Europe. That movement came to a near standstill following the outbreak of war, leading to widespread cancellations and postponements of trips. The economic impact of the cancelled bookings will be known shortly, according to industry experts. "There are growing fears of lay-offs and business closures once the current season winds down, as bookings for the next financial year have all but dried up since the war began," says James Kodianthara, former chairperson of the Kerala Chapter of the Indian Association of Tour Operators.

U.S. States challenge Trump decision to revoke basis of U.S. climate regulations



Twenty-three states, led by Democratic-governed New York and California, along with 14 cities and counties, sued President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday seeking to undo its decision to revoke the government's scientific finding that underpins U.S. climate regulations, the New York Attorney General's Office said. The legal challenge filed against the Environmental Protection Agency in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia takes aim at the agency's move last month to terminate the government's 2009 conclusion that climate change endangers human health and the environment. Mr. Trump has called climate change a hoax despite the scientific evidence.

The lawsuit also challenges the EPA's decision last month to repeal federal rules for all vehicles and engines from model years 2012 to 2027 that limit greenhouse gas

tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks. Some of the other states joining the lawsuit were Michigan, Connecticut and Virginia, alongside cities including New York, Boston, Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles. A coalition of environmental groups previously sued the administration to challenge the revocation of the endangerment finding. The EPA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The endangerment revocation — a major climate change policy rollback by Trump — followed a string of regulatory cuts and other moves intended to unfetter fossil fuel development and stymie the rollout of clean energy. In announcing the revocation last month, the Republican president called the endangerment finding "a disastrous Obama-era policy that severely damaged the American auto industry and drove up prices for American consumers." The endangerment finding was made during Democrat Barack Obama's presidency. The plaintiffs in the new lawsuit took issue with Mr. Trump's view. "Instead of helping Americans face our new reality, the Trump administration has chosen denial, instead repealing the critical protections that are foundational to the federal government's response to climate change," said New York State Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat. The EPA said the repeal and end of vehicle emission standards would save \$1.3 trillion over 30 years. Environmental groups said the move, along with the administration's legal challenge to California's zero-emission vehicle and tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions rules, will increase gasoline prices by as much as 9% over the next decade, adding over \$3 billion per year in fuel costs for U.S. drivers by 2035.

Fighting a looming threat of erasure: The outrage over amendments to trans rights law



Kabir, 34, is seated at the centre of the panel in Delhi's Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC), where he speaks about his journey. He wants to become a teacher to sensitise children to gender identities and give them the support he wishes he had. Kabir, a trans man, speaks about the multitude of obstacles he's faced on his way to accepting and expressing his gender, from adolescence through adulthood.

Now, there is another threat to his identity: On March 13, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was tabled in the Lok Sabha by India's Social Justice Minister. Almost immediately, the Bill drew shock and condemnation. Trans communities across India sensed the looming threat of an existential crisis. Tens of thousands spontaneously mobilised, both online and offline, in cities and towns across the country. Posters at protests read: "Trans lives are not for the state to redefine", "Identity is not a certificate", and "#RejectTransBill". The problem with the Bill, they reiterate, lies in the proposal to shift from self-identification to state identification of gender.

At the IWPC, the panel Kabir is speaking on comprises transmen, transwomen, and non-binary people across professions, who have come together to call for the withdrawal of the Bill. "The day after my name appeared on a list for a teaching position (in Uttarakhand), I learnt about this Bill and I thought, if they see it, they will strike my name off." Kabir, who is Dalit, says that gender and caste-identity-related harassment has set him back at least 10 years. He says, "Now, when I look back, I realise that if I had a teacher in school who was sensitive and could guide me, maybe I would not have lost all those years." At the teacher eligibility test in Delhi, he says he was singled out and questioned invasively. "I cited the Act and the Rules to explain that it was my right to be there," he says, softly but sternly. While he was taking his test, his friends were celebrating their identity at the Pride Parade, a kilometre away. Inside, there was gender antagonism; on the streets, there was celebration. "I realised the importance of that day," he says.

Juggling numbers In the 2011 Census, over 4.8 lakh people marked the "other" option in the gender column. Yet, so far in India, only 35,000 applications have been filed for transgender certificates. Of these, about 30,000 have received their certificates and about 5,000 applications have been rejected, as per government data until March 2026. People from trans communities say that applications are few because either government officials are unaware of the law or are insensitive to trans people. Rahul (name changed to protect privacy), a trans man from Uttar Pradesh, left his hometown after coming out to his family. He applied for his transgender card three years ago, but still hasn't got it. "I was told that I was the only person in the district applying for it. They had never heard of something like this."

However, on March 11, the government told the Lok Sabha that there had been issues with rejected applications that were limited to document mismatches, duplicate applications, or incorrect addresses. Yet, two days later, in the Bill the government argued that the existing definition was vague, alluding to self-identification making it "impossible" for the administration to identify transgender people in need of protection. The text of the Bill says, "The purpose was and is not to protect each and every class of persons with various gender identities, self-perceived sex/gender identities or gender fluidities." It goes on to say it "was and is" meant to protect "only those who face severe social exclusion due to biological reasons". Now, trans people are asking: What happens to the transgender certificates issued? Now and then twelve years ago, a month before the Bharatiya Janata Party's Narendra Modi was about to be sworn in as Prime Minister of India for the first time, Kabir, then a college student in Delhi, caught glimpses on TV of the transgender community celebrating on the streets, when the landmark NALSA judgment was delivered. Even as trans communities wore their identities without fear, holding up placards such as "acceptance saves lives", Kabir was at home, afraid of seeking out information about the judgment, feeling like he was under "constant surveillance". It took years for the vocabulary in the judgment to seep into his life as he acknowledged, accepted, and came out as a transman.

In the historic judgment, the Supreme Court had recognised a gender beyond the binary of male and female.

It laid down that the right to a self-perceived gender identity was an essential aspect of human dignity, protected under Article 21 of the Constitution, protecting personal liberty as a fundamental right. This judgment would lead to the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, codifying the right to self-determination of gender. Just as he was finishing his second term as PM, Modi told Parliament in February 2024, "We gave transgender people an identity," referring to the 2019 law. Almost two years later, his government's Cabinet approved amendments to the same law. This identity will be erased if the Bill becomes a law, say lawyers, human rights activists, and people from trans communities.

The Bill limits the definition of a "transgender person" to those with biological markers or people associated with "socio-cultural identities" like that of hijra, kinner, aravani, jogta, or enunch. This definition excludes people whose gender does not match the sex assigned to them at birth, and may want to undergo gender-affirming health care. This, lawyers say, means the exclusion of transmen and those transwomen who do not fit into traditional "socio-cultural identities" and genderqueer people, who may perceive their gender outside the binary of male-female.

The other problem with the Bill, say doctors, is the setting up of a medical board that is supposed to make a recommendation to the District Magistrate (DM) on whether a transgender certificate should be issued. This then gives DMs the discretion to decide if a transgender certificate is "necessary or desirable". In addition, medical institutes will be mandated to report details of gender-affirming care, potentially affecting doctor-patient confidentiality. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has not made any public statement about the reason for radically changing its stated position on gender identification. Currently, the procedure to get a transgender certificate leans on the principle of self-identification. The law allows for an applicant (i.e. anyone whose perception of their gender is different from the sex assigned to them at birth) to fill out a form, submit identification documents, and submit a self-attested affidavit declaring themselves transgender. The rules prescribe that the DM shall issue the transgender certificate based on the affidavit of self-declaration alone, without any physical or medical examination.

The only proof of medical certification is required when a person wishes to change genders within the binary of "male" and "female". For this certificate, the rules mandate that a person must have proof of ongoing or past medical intervention, not limited to sex-reassignment surgery. Dr. Aqsa Shaikh, a transwoman who teaches community medicine at the Hamdard Institute of Medical Science and Research in New Delhi, speaks about how the Bill is now a topic of conversation in medical circles. Besides reiterating that gender is not in the body, but is identity, she says the proposed amendment "conflates gender and sex". She adds, "How do you prove that you are part of a socio-cultural group? There is no official membership. Is a medical board equipped to make this decision?"

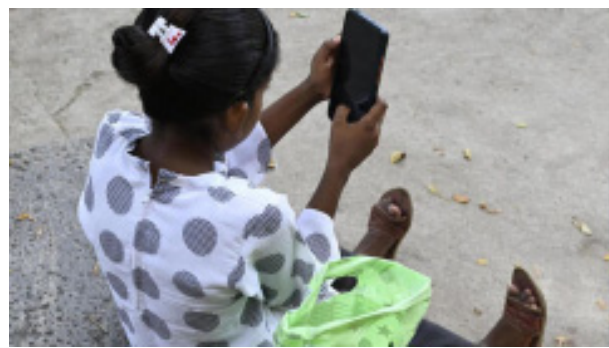
Members of Students' Federation of India and transgender communities stage protests against the Bill. At the IWPC press conference, transgender people draw attention to the language of the amendments, saying it criminalises anyone helping a trans person express their gender identity. It will impact doctors, as some may choose not to perform surgery. Rights organisations that may be helping trans people find safety from their natal families may also be affected. The power of a law

Around 550 kilometres away from Kabir, Sarvagya Soni, in Chhabra, Rajasthan, was starting to come to terms with his perception of his gender. By the time he was able to come out to his family, the government had enacted the 2019 law and notified rules under it a year later. His home had become a place of conflict because his family could not understand that while he was assigned female at birth, he identified as male. "I literally read from the Act to explain to them that even if they didn't recognise me, our government did," recalls Sarvagya, now 26, and working in the food-and-beverage sector in Delhi. "What happens now? If this Bill becomes law, what does that make me, if not a transgender person?" is a question that Sarvagya and others are asking. "How will you undo everything that I and people like me have gone through to assert our identity and have it recognised?"

The recognition in the current law gave Sarvagya, a trans man, who leads his company's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative, the confidence to approach his employer with a policy proposition. This was to include gender-affirming care in the company's health insurance policy for staffers. It was a policy that Sarvagya became the first to avail himself of. If the new Bill is passed, his fear is that many such company policies will be pushed back.

Ritika, 25, a trans woman, wears a crisp blue shirt and formal pants, with metallic floral earrings. She has moved on from the gharana system that has been intrinsic to the functioning of several communities that identify with socio-cultural identities like hijra, kinner, or aravani.

Schools must teach digital discipline, not just literacy, to prepare students



The recent decisions by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to restrict social media access for children under 16 and 13 have triggered familiar reactions some calling it necessary, others calling it excessive. But beyond the debate, there is a more important signal we must pay attention to. We are not facing a technology problem. We are facing a behaviour problem. For years, education systems have been focused on building digital literacy. Schools have invested in devices, platforms, and connectivity, believing that access to technology is the foundation of future-readiness. But what we are now witnessing across classrooms suggests something deeper, literacy is no longer enough. The real challenge today is not whether children can use technology. It is whether they can manage it. Access without discipline is not empowerment, it is exposure. What classrooms are telling us

Across the schools we work with, ranging from government institutions to some of the largest international schools there is a visible shift in how children engage with learning. Teachers speak of students who struggle to stay focused beyond a few minutes. Tasks that require sustained thinking are often abandoned midway. Silence feels uncomfortable. There is a constant need for stimulation. This is not a failure of students. It is a reflection of the environments they are growing up in. We are operating in what is often described as the attention economy, where platforms are designed not just to engage, but to retain attention for as long as possible. For a developing mind, this creates an uneven playing field. Every notification, every scroll, every short burst of content trains the brain to expect instant reward.

The cost of fragmented attention Over time, this begins to reshape how children think, learn, and respond. What we see in classrooms is not just distraction it is fragmented attention. Students are physically present, but cognitively elsewhere. And when attention is compromised, everything else begins to weaken. The ability to think deeply. The ability to reflect. The ability to stay with a problem long enough to solve it. If we continue to ignore this shift, we risk preparing students who are digitally skilled, but cognitively

fragile. For decades, education has emphasised the "Four Cs", Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity. It is time we recognise a fifth: Consciousness in how we engage with technology. Because without it, the other four cannot sustain themselves.

Conscious use, not just constant use Consciousness is not about restriction. It is not about removing access or creating fear around technology. It is about awareness. It is about helping children recognise where their attention is going, why it is going there, and whether it deserves to stay there. At its core, it is about agency, the ability to pause, to choose, and to engage with technology intentionally, rather than being unconsciously driven by it.

We are now seeing the emergence of a new divide in education. Earlier, the digital divide was about access, who had technology and who did not. Today, the divide is about usage. There are students who use technology to create, learn, and explore. And there are those who consume, scroll, and seek validation. The difference is not access. The difference is discipline. And this is where schools are missing the point. Significant investments are being made in infrastructure - smart boards, tablets, digital platforms. But very little attention is being given to building digital behaviour. We are teaching children how to access information, but not how to handle it. The real meaning of future-readiness

Schools, therefore, need to move beyond integrating technology into classrooms and start integrating discipline into its usage. This means teaching children to become aware of their own digital habits. It means helping them distinguish between meaningful engagement and passive consumption. It means creating structured boundaries within the school environment where technology is used with intent, not by default. It also means bringing parents into the conversation, not as enforcers of rules, but as partners in shaping behaviour. The recent policy decisions in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh may offer a temporary pause. They may reduce exposure. But they are not long-term solutions. You cannot regulate your way into responsible behaviour. You have to educate for it. Because the moment restrictions are lifted, children will return to the same environments, unless they are equipped with the ability to navigate them differently. This is the shift education must make. Future-ready education is not about how early children start using technology. It is about how well they learn to live with it. The goal is not to raise children who can use technology. The goal is to raise children who are not used by it. Schools that understand this distinction will not just respond to the challenges of today, they will define the next era of education. (By Syed Sultan Ahmed, Chairperson, The Association of International Schools of India (TAISI), Festival Director, School Cinema International Film Festival (SCIFF) & Founder & Chief Learner, LXL Ideas)

Allied healthcare anchors budget 2026's plan to ease health workforce stress

Over the past decade, India has steadily expanded its healthcare footprint - adding and developing healthcare facilities, and strengthening diagnostics and specialty care across both public and private sectors. Yet, the performance of this infrastructure is ultimately determined by a workforce that has long remained under-recognised: allied and healthcare professionals (AHPs). The recent Union Budget 2026-27 signals a notable shift in this regard. With ₹1,000 crore earmarked to train one lakh AHPs over the next five years, it signals that allied and healthcare professionals are now firmly part of national policy priority.

Allied and healthcare represents one of the most scalable employment avenues for India's youth. With the right structures in place, the sector could potentially absorb nearly a million individuals each year. There are hardly any sectors that combine employability, aspiration, and contribute to national development at this scale. A 6 million AHP shortage is straining India's healthcare system. Estimates across industry and policy bodies suggest a shortage of over six million allied and healthcare professionals in India, across diagnostics, imaging, rehabilitation, and clinical support roles. These roles together form nearly 60% of the healthcare system, yet remain significantly understaffed. The consequences of this gap are visible across the healthcare ecosystem. In the absence of adequate allied support, clinical responsibilities increasingly shift onto doctors, stretching their capacity beyond sustainable limits. Extended working hours, limited rest, and rising emotional fatigue among doctors are becoming more common, contributing to burn-out. At the same time, system efficiency takes a hit - delayed patient appointments, diagnostic timelines lengthen, and delays in procedures become harder to avoid.

This gap is driven by both supply and perception. Awareness of allied and healthcare careers remains limited, and many young people do not yet view them as aspirational pathways. At the same time, the number of trained professionals is not keeping pace with demand - and even among those who enter the workforce, job readiness remains uneven. Addressing these challenges will require a dual focus: expanding the talent pool while ensuring that training translates into real-world capability from day one. For the first time, India has a structural roadmap for allied and healthcare workforce development

In recent years, the government has begun to address the gap in allied and healthcare professionals through more structured reforms. The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021 marked an important step in bringing order to what was earlier a fragmented space. Since then, the Commission has been working towards defining professional categories, training pathways, setting up state-level councils, standardising qualifications, program structures, and initiating the process of registering professionals across categories. These efforts are gradually bringing more consistency and accountability into allied and healthcare space. The latest budgetary push builds on this progress by placing the skilled-workforce expansion firmly on the national agenda. However, for translating this intent into meaningful outcomes, three things need to come together: Firstly, expansion must be matched with consistent standards, as the quality of training, clinical exposure, and infrastructure still varies widely across institutions today. Secondly, higher education institutions will need the structured support for curriculum alignment, faculty development, simulation infrastructure, and industry-aligned training.

Thirdly, ensuring that training reflects industry-needs. Healthcare is hands-on, and the transition from classroom to clinical settings must be seamless. This will require deeper collaboration between academia, skill training organisations



and healthcare providers, with clearer role definitions. With policy direction now in place, outcomes will depend on how effectively regulators, academia, training providers, and healthcare organisations work together to operationalise this at scale. India's healthcare system can double as its largest training ecosystem

If workforce development is to scale meaningfully, one of the key levers is ensuring that training does not remain confined to classrooms, but is embedded within the healthcare system itself. This calls for a more integrated approach, where public, private, and local healthcare service providers are leveraged as shared training environments. Such an approach can significantly expand capacity without proportionately increasing costs. Structured partnerships between institutions and healthcare providers can improve access to hands-on learning, while shared investments in high-cost infrastructure, such as simulation labs and advanced diagnostic equipment can be developed as shared regional facilities, improving utilisation while maintaining quality. India does not need to build everything anew. It needs to use what already exists, more effectively and more collaboratively. Unlocking national and global opportunities India's investment in healthcare education and practice also has implications beyond domestic needs. Many developed economies, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan, are facing acute shortages of healthcare professionals due to ageing populations. India, with its scale and demographic advantage, is well-positioned to contribute to this global demand. With one of the world's largest youth populations, a strong base of English-speaking talent, and a proven track record of supplying skilled professionals to global economies, the country has a clear opportunity to become a major talent hub for allied and healthcare professionals worldwide. However, realising this opportunity will depend on the standardisation, and global alignment of training systems. With the right focus on quality, practical exposure, and internationally recognised certifications, allied and healthcare professionals could emerge as a significant component of India's skilled workforce exports in the coming decades. From expanding seats to building skills The ₹1,000 crore allocation for training allied and healthcare professionals marks more than a budgetary commitment, it signals a shift in how healthcare education is being prioritised. The focus is beginning to move beyond simply increasing seats to building a workforce that is skilled, capable, and ready for real-world demands. The challenge now lies in execution. Delivering impact at scale will require raising awareness around allied & healthcare careers, expanding training capacity, and ensuring that education and training are closely aligned with industry needs. At the same time, greater emphasis must be placed on hands-on learning, with quality keeping pace as the system grows. If done right, this shift can not only improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes within India, but also position the country as a reliable source of skilled healthcare talent globally.

North Korea's Kim Jong Un takes his daughter on tank ride during army training



In their latest joint public appearance, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his teenage daughter rode a tank together, state media photos showed on Friday (March 20, 2026), days after they watched rocket launches and fired pistols. The official Korean Central News Agency reported that Mr. Kim oversaw firing and other drills involving tank units and infantry troops on Thursday and called for completing war preparations. KCNA images showed Mr. Kim and his daughter, both wearing black leather jackets, riding in an olive-green tank with other soldiers during Thursday's training. The images showed the girl sticking her head out

of the tank's hatch, while Kim sitting on the top of the tank and smiling.

The girl, reportedly named Kim Ju Ae and about 13, has accompanied her father to a number of high-profile military and other events since late 2022, sparking outside speculation that she is her father's likely heir. North Korean state media has called her Kim Jong Un's "most beloved" or "respected" child and published footage and photos indicating the two's closeness. Last week, they fired pistols during a visit to a light munitions factory and watched a live-fire test of multiple rocket launch systems. Last September, the girl went to Beijing with her father, and during New Year's Day celebrations she kissed her father on the cheek. South Korea's spy agency assessed last month Kim Jong Un was close to designating her as his heir. Some experts disagree with that assessment, citing Kim Jong Un's relatively young age and the extremely male-dominated nature of North Korea's power hierarchy. The North Korean training, meanwhile, came as the U.S. and South Korea were engaged in their annual military exercises that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal. The U.S. and South Korea wrapped up their 11-day computer-simulated command post exercise on Thursday, but they are still continuing field training.

U.S. military not preparing for Cuba invasion, senior U.S. General says

GNS News Agency, March 21

The U.S. military is not rehearsing for an invasion of Cuba or actively preparing to militarily take over the island, the top U.S. general overseeing American forces in Latin America told lawmakers on Thursday (March 19, 2026). But the U.S. stands ready to address any threats to the U.S. Embassy, defend its base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and aid U.S. government efforts to address any mass migration from the island, if needed, General Francis Donovan, head of U.S. Southern Command, said.



Mr. Donovan's remarks came during a Senate hearing focused on President Donald Trump's increasingly muscular use of the U.S. military in Latin America, where his administration has re-asserted the idea that the region falls into Washington's zone of influence. Mr. Trump has launched military strikes on suspected drug boats and is expanding counter-narcotics alliances with pro-Washington governments in Latin America, even carrying out joint operations with Ecuador on the ground there earlier this month. In January, U.S. special forces seized Venezuela's then-President Nicolas Maduro in a raid on his Caracas compound and whisked him to New York to face drug-trafficking charges. Trip to Venezuela

Mr. Donovan, who was the No. 2 at Special Operations Command at the time of the raid, made a surprise visit to Venezuela for security talks last month shortly after taking over the Latin America post. Mr. Trump said on Monday (March 16, 2026) that he expected to take Cuba "in some form" and that "I can do anything I want" with the neighboring country, which sits about 90 miles (180 km)

south of Florida's Key West. But so far, U.S. efforts appear aimed at creating economic leverage over the island. Mr. Trump has piled tremendous economic pressure on Cuba by halting all Venezuelan oil shipments to the island, which has been forced to carry out severe energy rationing. Much of its economy has ground to a halt. On Monday, Cuba's electric grid collapsed, leaving the country of 10 million people without power. Asked whether the U.S. was conducting any military rehearsals that involve seizing, occupying, or otherwise asserting control over Cuba, Donovan said: "U.S. Southern Command is not." He was then asked whether he knew of any U.S. military command doing so, and Mr. Donovan responded: "No." Questions about U.S. next steps come as Cuba and the United States have opened talks aimed at improving their largely adverse relations, which have reached one of the most contentious moments in the 67 years since Fidel Castro overthrew what had been a close U.S. ally. Under-investment in Latin America

In the hearing, Mr. Donovan noted that Guantanamo Bay had suffered storm damage and needed fresh investment, along with other Caribbean locations that U.S. officials have long said suffered from under-investment over the past two decades, when the U.S. military's focus was on combating militant groups like al Qaeda and Islamic State. "I won't pull any punches, it's in rough shape," Mr. Donovan said of Guantanamo Bay. "Because of the hurricane damage, we're down to one working pier and one refueling pier. I believe (the base) is a pivotal point for any operations in the Caribbean," he added. Mr. Donovan said the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the U.S. Coast Guard, would be in the lead in any mass migration event from Cuba, which experts have long warned could follow a collapse of the Communist government in Havana. But he left open the possibility of setting up a camp at Guantanamo Bay for any overflow of migrants. Asked about what U.S. forces were prepared to do if there were a security threat to Americans in Cuba, Mr. Donovan responded: "If it developed into a physical security threat to the U.S. embassy or the base at Gitmo, we would put U.S. troops to defend American lives."

China poses pressing threat, deterrence needed to avert invasion, Taiwan says



GNS News Agency, March 21

China poses a pressing threat given its military buildup that continues unabated, and effective deterrence is needed to make sure any attack would be very risky for Beijing, Taiwan's Defence Minister Wellington Koo said on Friday (March 20, 2026). China does not currently plan to invade Taiwan in 2027 and seeks to control the island without the use of force, the U.S. intelligence community said on Wednesday (March 18, 2026), striking a measured tone on one of the world's biggest potential flashpoints. Beijing has stepped up pressure on Taiwan, which it views as its own territory, with frequent military drills. Taiwan's democratically elected government rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims. Speaking about the U.S. report, Mr. Koo said China has neither given up the option of using force against Taiwan nor slowed military spending. "So its military expansion, and the threat it poses to us, remain very serious," he told reporters at Parliament. "We need to make it feel that any plan to attack Taiwan would carry a high degree of risk: in other words, to make its assessment of a successful invasion very low." If China continues expanding its military while Taiwan's defence capabilities do not improve, the likelihood of an attack would rise, Mr. Koo said.

"On the other hand, if our defence capabilities continue to improve and our deterrence grows stronger, then its calculation regarding an attack on Taiwan will decrease. That would have the effect of pushing back such a date again and again." China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday (March 19) said that Taiwan is an internal issue and that the U.S. needs to "stop hyping up the 'China threat' theory". Taiwan President Lai Ching-te has proposed \$40 billion in extra defence spending, but the plans have been slow to work their way through Parliament, where the opposition, which has the most seats, has complained they are too vague and that its lawmakers cannot be expected to sign "blank cheques". Mr. Lai on Thursday (March 19) visited Taiwan's new domestically developed submarine, which is still undergoing sea trials, as well as one of its

two existing combat-capable submarines, bought from the Netherlands in the 1980s. Mr. Koo said one of those two Dutch-built submarines had already completed an upgrade, with the upgrade for the other to be done by the end of the year. "These two submarines will significantly enhance our combat capabilities," he said.

Joint statement on Strait of Hormuz by European nations, Japan, Canada

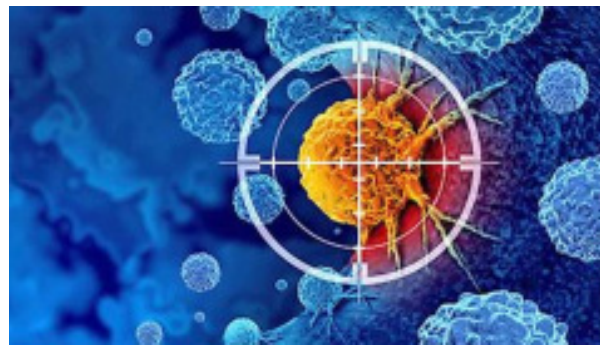


Leading European nations, Japan and Canada issued a joint statement on Thursday (March 19, 2026) saying they were ready to join appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz and would take steps to stabilise energy markets.

We condemn in the strongest terms recent attacks by Iran on unarmed commercial vessels in the Gulf, attacks on civilian infrastructure including oil and gas installations, and the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian forces. We express our deep concern about the escalating conflict. We call on Iran to cease immediately its threats, laying of mines, drone and missile attacks and other attempts to block the Strait to commercial shipping, and to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2817. Freedom of navigation is a fundamental principle of international law, including under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The effects of Iran's actions will be felt by people in all parts of the world, especially the most vulnerable. Consistent with UNSC Resolution 2817, we emphasise that such interference with international shipping and the disruption of global energy supply chains constitute a threat to international peace and security.

A panchayat dream and a daughter's murder

Review by Indian researchers notes that body's immune cells 'betray' it to help breast cancer spread



A growing body of research is reshaping how scientists understand breast cancer—not just as a disease of rogue tumour cells, but as one that cleverly recruits the body's own immune system to survive and spread.

A recent review by researchers from two Indian universities explains how macrophages, a type of white blood cell meant to protect the body at sites of infection, can be "reprogrammed" by breast tumours to aid cancer growth and metastasis. The authors of the review are Alisha Sinha of the Jaipur-based Banasthali University's Department of Biotechnology, and Pranay Punk Pankaj and Ranjit Kumar of Nagaland University's Department of Zoology. Their review was published in the *Breast Global Journal*.

Breast cancer, the most common cancer and the leading cause of death in women worldwide, accounts for almost 15% of cancer deaths in women, either due to metastasis or its drug-resistant nature. Many mechanisms involved in breast cancer metastasis focus on tumour cell activities. Macrophages normally act as the body's cleanup crew, destroying harmful cells through phagocytosis, a process in which unwanted cells are engulfed and digested. However, within breast tumours, these cells often change their behaviour and become tumour-associated macrophages (TAMs)—immune cells that now work in favour of the cancer rather than against it.

The review explains that macrophages can exist in different "moods" or states. One form, the M1 macroph-

ages, attacks tumours and triggers inflammation to destroy abnormal cells. Another form, the M2 macrophages, focuses on tissue repair and calming inflammation. Breast cancer cells push macrophages towards this M2 state, which unintentionally helps tumours grow, spread, and hide from the immune system. Once converted, these M2-type macrophages help tumours in several ways. They release chemical messengers called cytokines (small proteins that allow cells to communicate) that encourage the formation of new blood vessels—a process known as angiogenesis. These blood vessels supply tumours with oxygen and nutrients, allowing them to expand rapidly. The macrophages also weaken the body's defences. They suppress T cells, immune cells that would otherwise recognise and kill cancer cells. In addition, tumour cells display "don't eat me" signals on their surface, preventing macrophages from destroying them and allowing cancer cells to survive unchecked. Another critical role played by these altered immune cells is in reshaping the extracellular matrix—the supportive tissue surrounding cells. By breaking down this structure, macrophages make it easier for cancer cells to escape the breast and travel to distant organs such as the lungs or bones, a process known as metastasis. The authors highlighted that this 'dangerous partnership' between tumours and macrophages forms a self-reinforcing cycle: larger tumours attract more macrophages, which further accelerate tumour growth and spread.

Understanding this relationship could open new treatment options. Instead of targeting cancer cells alone, future therapies may aim to re-educate macrophages, switching them back into their tumour-fighting mode or blocking signals that turn them into cancer allies. Ms. Sinha said checking the "betrayal" of immune cells could be key to slowing breast cancer progression and improving long-term survival. "The downregulation or reprogramming of M2 macrophage differentiation could emerge as a viable strategy for reducing breast cancer progression and metastasis. Such approaches may support the development of targeted immunotherapies that complement existing treatment modalities, offering more precise and less toxic options for patients," Prof. Kumar said.

Tadoba tiger that swam two rivers and crossed three States tranquilised in East Godavari

A transient male tiger, believed to be a native of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra, was tranquilised in a cattle shed at Kurmapuram village in Rayavaram mandal of East Godavari district on Friday evening, 53 days after it reportedly left its native landscape in search of prey. A transient male tiger tranquilised in a cattle shed at Kurmapuram village of Rayavaram mandal in East Godavari district.

By Friday, the tiger is believed to have covered more than 650 km after setting out from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, traversing forest landscapes across Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, and swimming across two major rivers, including the Godavari, before entering Andhra Pradesh and moving into Papikonda National Park. The animal was tranquilised at around 6.50 p.m. while it was resting in a cattle shed after preying on a buffalo. Earlier in the afternoon, the tiger had escaped an initial attempt to tranquilise it when local residents raised alarm while it was resting near an abandoned house in Kurmapuram village.

Rajahmundry Chief Conservator of Forests B.N.N. Murthy told The Hindu that the tranquilisation brought an end to the tiger's six-day movement in East Godavari district. He said the animal's health condition was stable and that it had not attacked any human being during its entire journey, surviving mainly by preying on cattle. Mr. Murthy led the monitoring and tranquilisation operation from the time the tiger entered Andhra Pradesh. According to East Godavari District Forest Officer B. Prabhakara Rao, two male tigers are believed to have dispersed from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in early December 2025. One of them was first sighted in Khammam district after crossing the Pranahitha river in Telangana, before moving into Eluru



district of Andhra Pradesh. On January 29, the tiger entered Papikonda National Park from the Eluru side. Two days later, it swam across the Godavari river near the Polavaram irrigation project to enter East Godavari district. On February 1, it reportedly killed three cattle at Torredu village before moving closer to an urban landscape.

Experts from the Pune-based RESQ Trust played a key role in the monitoring operation by deploying advanced tracking technology, assisting the expert team constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. Mr. Murthy said the tiger would need veterinary care for a few days as it had travelled extensively over the past weeks. A decision would be taken on whether to shift it to the Animal Rescue Centre in Visakhapatnam or to the Tirupati Zoo. He added that the operation succeeded due to round-the-clock monitoring by Forest Department personnel, with police officials managing crowds and ensuring smooth movement for the tracking teams.

Bangladesh elections: BNP promises to end 'border killings' by BSF, seeks fair share of cross border rivers



A week before the election and referendum in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) launched its manifesto announcing that its foreign policy will be based on 'Bangladesh Before All' and said, that the party will establish friendly relation with all but will not accept any country as its "master". The manifesto declared that if elected to power, BNP will prioritise to end "border killings" by the Border Security Force (BSF) of India and take steps to claim a "fair share" of common rivers with India like Teesta and Padma. The manifesto also called for building "strategic partnership" between Bangladesh and the Gulf countries and announced that the BNP "will not tolerate" any terrorist activity on Bangladesh's soil. "We are committed to building relations of equality, cooperation and friendship with our neighbours. The foundation of that relationship will be mutual respect and understanding which will ensure our collective progress. Our initiatives and efforts in this regard will always continue," said the manifesto highlighting that BNP will ensure "fair share" of water from the Padma, Teesta and "all transboundary rivers of Bangladesh". Reflecting a long-standing issue in Bangladesh's relation with India, the manifesto said "strong measures" will be taken to deal with "border killings and push-in". "Smuggling, trafficking and drug trafficking at the border will be strictly suppressed," the BNP's manifesto said. The BNP, whose founder Ziaur Rahman was the first regional leader to talk about South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), has been talking about reviving the SAARC and reiterated that if elected to power, the BNP will make SAARC effective. "BNP historically had deep relations with Middle Eastern (West Asian) countries and

the Muslim World. Sincere efforts will continue to deepen and strengthen relations with the Middle East (West Asia) in international politics," the manifesto said. "Bangladesh wants to build a strategic partnership with member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the goal of which will be to achieve economic integration by combining the surplus capital of Gulf countries with Bangladesh's productivity and human resources," the manifesto pledged. The document also sought a "rapid resolution" of the Rohingya crisis. The BNP said that the Rohingya crisis was not resolved because of the "failure of the foreign policy of a government without people's mandate for eight long years," and added that their party dealt with the issue on two occasions in 1978 and in 1992. The manifesto announced that the party will have "zero tolerance" for terrorist activities and "will not provide shelter or support to any terrorist." "A national consensus will be built against militancy and extremism and terrorism," the manifesto stated. It further stated that Bangladesh will constitute a National Security Council that will work on protection of sovereignty and credible deterrence capability. It also promised to enhance capacity of the diplomatic service with additional recruitments and activities of its missions located in different parts of the world.

People oppose move to build shelter for stray dogs at Uppoor

Many residents of Uppoor, Havanje and Aroor in Udupi district staged a protest in front of Udupi Deputy Commissioner's office on Friday, opposing Udupi City Municipality's proposal to construct a dog shelter at Uppoor. They said that the municipality did not hold any public consultation before taking a decision to build the shelter on 9.90 acres of government land. As the land in question is close to residential areas, it can be used for any other development projects and not for sheltering stray dogs. The proposed dog shelter project should be relocated, they demanded.

while a few have tiled pathways. The villagers claim that their sarpanch, 36-year-old Ganesh Ramachandra Shinde, was doing his bit to develop the village. Panchayat elections are scheduled to be held in the village in the next 6 months. While, according to a lottery system, Kerur was under the 'open category' 5 years ago, which means that the seat for the sarpanch is not reserved for any specific social category, this time it is reserved for persons from Other Backward Classes (women). Kondamangale, who runs the hair salon in a rented commercial complex on the main road, lives in a rented house in Baralinaka of Mukhed. Since his family belongs to the OBC category, his wife was eligible to contest for the sarpanch post. The police are not sure how the salon owner suddenly decided to enter politics. "At some point, Kondamangale began aspiring for either himself or his wife to become the sarpanch. He confessed that the sitting sarpanch, Shinde, was ready to support him if he chose to contest," Vijay Babu says. As per Kondamangale's admission before the police, Shinde used to keep dropping by his salon and sometimes his house. He encouraged Kondamangale to field his wife as a candidate. "The second accused, Shinde, said he would spend ₹15 lakh for this and would take care of any problems and asked the first accused, Kondamangale, not to reveal his name to anyone," states the remand report submitted to the local court.

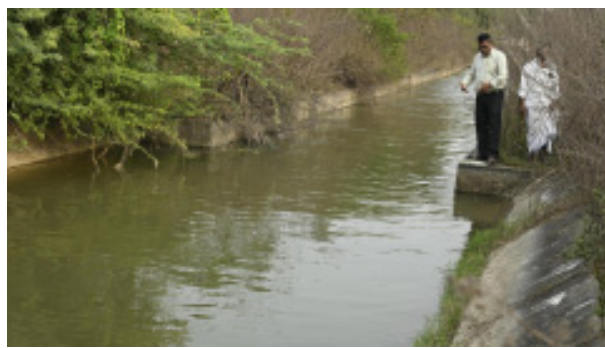
Bolstered by Shinde's support, Kondamangale felt he was inching closer to the seat of sarpanch. The only roadblock was the 2-child rule. Vijay Babu says that initially, Kondamangale confessed he had considered giving up his 3-year-old son for adoption to one of his uncles. Since he had not obtained a birth certificate for the child, he thought this would allow him to bypass the two-child norm. But he dropped the idea, as hospital records listed his wife as the child's mother, which, he believed, could cause problems for their political ambitions.

"He admitted during the interrogation that he and his relative went to the Mukhed municipal office to verify if he could give his son up for adoption. They even went to Pune to seek clarifications on the matter. We are verifying his statements," says Vijay Babu. "Realising that the adoption plan was not the solution, he began exploring what other act could make him or his wife sarpanch and finally decided to kill one of his children." The police say that inquiries with Ankita and other family members suggested that Kondamangale was particularly fond of Prachi, and she of him, which makes the case all the more perplexing for them. Prachi's twin sister, younger by just a few minutes, reportedly did not like sitting pillion on the bike. On January 29, the police say, Prachi did not go to school. When she arrived at the salon a little before noon, her father told her he would take her on a long ride and made her sit pillion on the bike. "He masked his face with a towel and left his mobile phone at the salon. This indicates that the murder was premeditated," Vijay Babu says. Kondamangale started from Mukhed towards Bodhan. Entering the Yedapally area, he followed the Nizam Sagar distributary canal, stopped at an isolated point, and dropped her into the water. "While she was screaming 'Papa, Papa,' he did not look back. He returned to the main road and then proceeded towards Maharashtra," reads a sentence in the remand report. When Ankita asked about the whereabouts of her child, Kondamangale apparently led her to believe that he had gone out on work and was not sure where she was. The couple approached the local police, requesting them to trace her. The investigators believe that the accused deliberately did not lodge a formal complaint with the local police. "Had he done that, a case would have been registered and they would have immediately found out about his ghastly act," says an investigator.

On February 2, the police revised the charges to Sections 140(1) (kidnapping), 103(1) (murder), and 238 (destruction of evidence, providing false information) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. They arrested the two accused and remanded them to judicial custody. Ankita, her daughter, and son have shifted to their relative's house. Support for the sarpanch in Kerur village, Shinde enjoys a lot of support. Several villagers describe him as "innocent" and demand that he be set free immediately. When Yedapally sub-inspector, M. Rama, went to the village, the villagers gheraoed her, raising slogans that their sarpanch had been falsely implicated in the case. "In the few years, our village, under the leadership of Shinde, has seen some progress. New drainage lines were laid. We are getting tiled internal roads," says Venkat Shinde, a resident. Another villager, Balaji, says, "We are not sure why Kondamangale killed his child. But we know that our sarpanch is not the type to abet a crime." Rajesh of Kerur, who runs a bookstore at Mukhed, feels, "Our villagers were already teasing Pandurag by referring to him as sarpanch saab whenever they met him. May be that went to his head and he resorted to this extreme step of killing Prachi." Some residents are upset that the case has tarnished the name of the village. Hanmant Baliram Shinde says, "This case is showing our entire village in poor light even though we did not do anything wrong." For the ARP camp sarpanch, P. Vinod Kumar, the complainant in the case, Prachi's death is the most disturbing incident of his life. "Every time I pass by this canal, the horrible image flashes in my mind. For me and others of the village who saw it, we just can't shake it off," he says.

Timely police action could've saved his life, say Kamal's kin

The family, based in Palam Colony, said delayed police response cost Kamal Dhyani his life. "The Internet was full of videos of how people were disappearing in Delhi, so when I could not reach my brother, I had all sorts of wrong thoughts," said Karan, the deceased's brother. As repeated calls went unanswered, the family first went to the call centre in Rohini, where he was employed. "We connected with his manager, who told us that he had left long ago. We kept calling, but nobody picked up the phone," Mr. Karan Dhyani said. They rushed to several police stations, six in all, starting from a little past midnight, and their search ended around 8 a.m., after the police confirmed that the body found in a pit near a school matched the description of Kamal. "We last spoke to Kamal on Thursday night at 11.53 p.m. He informed us that he would be home in another 10-15 minutes. When he did not return by that time, we got worried and started looking for him," said Mr. Karan Dhyani, the deceased's brother. The family started by visiting the call centre in Rohini, where he was employed, followed by rounds to all the police stations in the district — Rohini, Vikaspuri, Janakpuri, Mangolpuri, Sagarpur and Palam. Mr. Karan Dhyani alleged that officers at Vikaspuri and Sagarpur refused to file a missing person complaint. "At Vikaspuri, we were asked to return to the police station the next day to register the complaint. At Sagarpur, an officer told my father that he was not the only man looking for his missing son," said his brother



On the afternoon of January 29, Mustaq Ahmed, head constable of the Yedapally police station in Telangana's Nizamabad, and Mohan, a constable, were questioning residents about a land dispute, when they received a call informing them that a girl had been washed away in the Nizam Sagar distributary canal. The waterway ran just a stone's throw from the ARP camp in Yedapally mandal, off the Nizamabad-Bodhan National Highway 63. Ahmed says they immediately kick-started their bike and set off. "When we reached the spot, we saw rescuers laying the body of the girl on the bund side," he recalls. The girl, sporting a glittery bindi on her forehead, seemed to be about 5-6 years old. Barring a contusion on her forehead, she did not seem to have any other injuries. The policemen observed that unlike in most drowning incidents they had probed, the body showed no signs of bloating. "She had died just a few minutes earlier. We felt guilty that we could not save her," Ahmed says.

The duo made some quick inquiries. They found that an 18-year-old man, P. Pawan Kalyan, was standing near the small bridge over the canal and speaking to a friend on the phone when he noticed the girl being swept away in the canal. "Kalyan said he shouted for help," Ahmed says. "Venkatesh, an auto driver who was nearby, rushed to the spot on hearing him yell. By then, the girl had apparently been swept further away." Venkatesh did not give up. He rode his bike along the bund's mud road and, after nearly 300 metres, jumped into the canal's 3-foot-deep stream near a small gate. He caught the girl and pulled her out with the help of others. She was unresponsive and had no pulse. The girl with the bindi The police began to make inquiries to identify the girl. They sent notices to all the police stations under the Nizamabad Police Commissionerate to see if any complaints had been filed about missing girls, but none came up. They took the body to the Nizamabad Government Hospital. Then, they registered a case under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, which mandates the police to inquire and report on cases of suicide, homicide, or suspicious, unnatural deaths. While checking with nearby police stations, the investigators also shared the girl's pictures and an audio message on WhatsApp groups, seeking help to establish her identity. Three days passed with no leads. The investigation seemed to have hit a dead end — until constable Sudheer received a call that provided crucial details.

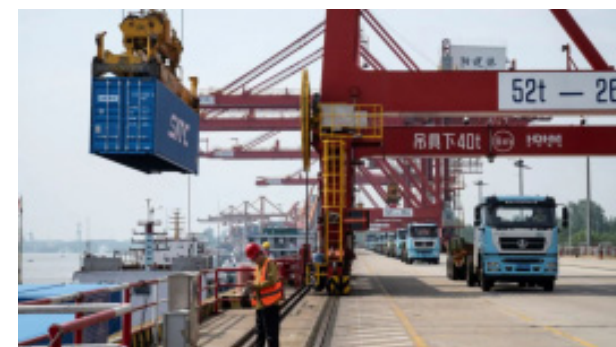
Sudheer was the driver for the circle inspector, D. Vijay Babu, who was investigating the case. The caller, a close relative from Mukhed, a taluq headquarters in Nanded district, Maharashtra, contacted Sudheer claiming he knew the girl. He sent a photo, which showed a child who looked exactly like the one found in the canal, wearing the same clothes. The relative said the girl was from Mukhed, nearly 50 kilometres from Bodhan, and had been reported missing. He added that villagers were worried and had been discussing her disappearance. The Bodhan police contacted the girl's family. A few village elders and members of the family, including the girl's mother Ankita, arrived in Bodhan and identified the body. The girl was Prachi, the older of the twin daughters of a hair salon owner, Pandurang Baburao Kondamangale. After forensic doctors performed an autopsy, which confirmed that she had died due to drowning, the police handed the body over to the family. As they prepared to return to Maharashtra, the Yedapally police began their work. Alone at a canal Although the autopsy confirmed drowning as the cause of death, the police remained puzzled as to how the girl had ended up at the canal alone. The ARP camp, often mistaken by many for a defence or research facility, is a cluster of three villages. These grew around the Nizam Sugar Factory, established decades ago to process locally grown sugarcane. With irrigation from the factory's canals, even remote areas are covered with lush green fields of paddy and other crops. The canal's side bunds — overgrown with bushes and flanked by sprawling paddy fields — conceal the water distributary that runs just a few feet away, parallel to the road. It was strange for a girl of her age to have just wandered off there.

"We believed that someone had taken her up to the canal. Whether she slipped into the water or was pushed was the question," says Bodhan Assistant Commissioner of Police, P. Srinivas. The investigators began probing the case. When they found a lead, they brought Kondamangale to Bodhan. He said that his daughter had gone missing from January 29 and that he had approached the local police to trace her. Circle inspector Vijay quotes him saying, "We were hoping she would come home sooner or later."

Despite the incessant probing, Kondamangale stuck to his story. That is when, the inspector says, the police finally presented the lead they had — CCTV footage. The video showed Kondamangale riding his bike in Bodhan with his daughter Prachi sitting pillion. Realising that his cover was blown, Kondamangale allegedly began to confess to his crime. According to the investigators, Kondamangale left his salon with his daughter seated on the two-wheeler. Hours later, they reached the ARP camp. "He stopped at a secluded place. He carried the girl in his arms and walked towards the canal. He stood on the canal's edge and dropped her into the water," Vijay Babu says. The police say they were horrified that Kondamangale had taken his own daughter's life. The motive, however, was so shocking that they could hardly believe it. "He said he or his wife wanted to contest the panchayat (local body) elections. But the two-child rule of the Maharashtra government was a stumbling block for them because they had three children: twin daughters and a 3-year-old son," says Nizamabad Police Commissioner, Sai Chaitanya. The 2-child rule for panchayat elections was imposed by various State governments in the early 1990s, primarily as a population control measure. It was put in place to ensure accountability among local representatives. To reach his political ambition, Kondamangale decided to kill one of his children and chose Prachi, the Commissioner says. Although Kondamangale had allegedly admitted to the crime, investigators still had several loose ends to tie up. They began probing his background, starting from his village of Kerur, 8 km from Mukhed.

Hungry for the post-Kerur's nearly 3,000 residents are solely dependent on agriculture. The village has narrow streets, lined mostly with thatched-roof houses and a few concrete ones, and is surrounded by vast tracts of dry land. Some streets are dirty with overflowing drainage water,

West Asia crisis: Govt launches Rs 497-cr scheme to give relief to affected exporters



were stuck at various stages due to the crisis, and exporters were concerned about higher port and demurrage charges.

According to a statement released by the Ministry, the scheme has three parts: "First, exporters who have already obtained Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) credit insurance cover for eligible consignments will benefit from up to 100% risk coverage, over and above the existing ECGC cover, during the eligible period – February 14, 2026 till March 15, 2026 – thereby ensuring enhanced protection without additional financial burden." "Second, exporters planning upcoming consignments, during the next three months (March 16, 2026 till June 15, 2026), will be encouraged to obtain ECGC cover with Government support for up to 95% risk coverage, over and above the existing ECGC cover, which will help sustain exporter confidence and facilitate continued shipment flows despite logistics uncertainties," it said.

"Third, recognising that some MSME exporters may not have availed credit insurance – February 14, 2026, till March 15, 2026 – but are facing extraordinary freight and insurance surcharge burdens, RELIEF includes a partial reimbursement (up to 50%) mechanism for eligible non-ECGC-insured MSME exporters. This support will be extended subject to prescribed conditions, documentary verification and notified ceilings (up to Rs 50 lakh per exporter), and is intended to provide timely relief against conflict-related logistics cost escalation," the Ministry said. An official said the EPM Steering Committee will periodically review the operation of the intervention in light of evolving geopolitical conditions and may recommend calibrated modification, continuation or withdrawal as necessary. The Ministry said, "Through 'RELIEF', the government aims to mitigate the immediate impact of logistics disruptions, protect exporter confidence, prevent order cancellations and safeguard employment in export-linked sectors. The intervention also reinforces India's commitment to maintaining resilience and competitiveness in global trade during periods of uncertainty."

The Commerce and Industry Ministry Thursday announced a Rs 497-crore scheme to ease pressure on exporters facing trade disruption due to widespread logistical challenges, including near doubling of freight and fuel costs owing to the ongoing war in West Asia. The Ministry said that the 'RELIEF' scheme would include automatic extension of export obligations, logistical support, and potential financial measures to manage shipping delays and would mainly include consignments destined for delivery or transshipment to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Israel and Yemen.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal, addressing the press, said, "We are announcing a new scheme under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM), especially focused upon exporters exposed to these 17-18 geographies which have been impacted by the conflict to assuage some of the challenges that our exporters are facing." He said the crisis has had some impact on the overall trade environment and exporters are facing challenges as there have been instances where exports meant for West Asia have not reached their destination, and "there is a sense of worry". He said an inter-ministerial group is trying to respond to challenges, particularly addressing challenges related to warehousing and logistics. This comes at a time when exporters are facing a number of hurdles amid the widening war in West Asia. The Indian Express had reported that over 300 rice containers

No power struggle or governance issue: HDFC Bank's Mistry after Chairman quits

A day after HDFC Bank part-time chairman Atanu Chakraborty quit, the bank's interim chairman Keki Mistry Thursday said there had been no power struggle within the bank, and no discussion regarding governance within the board of directors. Stating that the board was united, Mistry said it had not witnessed "any kind of complete difference in opinion" in its meetings. "I think, to my mind, there could be a relationship issue between him and management. That may have been manifested over a period of time," Mistry said in a conference call with analysts. "The board will meet soon and take a call on what to do next," he said.

The bank's shares fell 5.13% to Rs 799.70 on the BSE Thursday, helping drag down the benchmark Sensex by 3.3%. Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju said HDFC Bank is a "strong institution with strong fundamentals" and that the Reserve Bank of India had already issued a statement on the developments.

In its statement, the RBI said the HDFC Bank has sound financials, a professionally-run board, a competent management team, and that the central bank's regular assessment had not shown any "material concerns" regarding conduct or governance. Mistry told analysts: "Differences on minor issues do come up from time to time but there was nothing material whatsoever. In no board meeting has there been any kind of complete differences of opinion or anything of that sort. And the board minutes will reflect that." "Relationships, I mean human beings are human beings. There will always be some relationship issue between individuals. Those kinds of things happen. There was no power struggle in the bank. The bank works, the entire bank, the management team in the bank works as a cohesive unit and, to my mind, will continue to work as a cohesive unit," he said. In his resignation letter, Chakraborty said "certain happenings and practices within the bank are not in congruence with my personal values and ethics". Mistry said, "None of us as board members are aware of what are the specific issues which Chakraborty wrote in his letter. The board members asked him yesterday and he did not give any specific explanation."

"There were no specific happenings and practices that were brought to our attention. There were no specific operational or other issues that have been highlighted. The board's oversight mechanism remains fully operational and our collective commitment to protecting the interests of the institution, depositors, shareholders and all stakeholders is completely and totally unwavering," he said. He said Chakraborty's resignation has nothing to do with the operational profitability of the bank. Mistry was appointed as interim part-time chairman for three months following Chakraborty's resignation from the board Tuesday.

"The management team does and will continue to work in a cohesive manner," Mistry said, adding that regulators



RBI and SEBI were fully informed. "The RBI is fully in the loop and they are comfortable (with) what is going on in the bank," he said. "I would never remain on the board if there were any issues with governance," he said. "The bank is very strong on ethics." "Reassuring investors and stakeholders, he said there were "no material matters at this point of time" and that the board remained committed to "safeguarding investor confidence". Sashidhar Jagdishan, the bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, said, "The board would re-examine the organisation structure as we move forward."

Mistry said, "When this thing happened yesterday evening, the first thing the board members did – the people who were in Mumbai – (was that) they met the RBI. The RBI gave their approval for making me interim chairman for a period of three months to get (things) stabilised, and then that's about it. And differences of opinion, differences of views may always be there between individuals but there was nothing. I received nothing substantive, nothing whatsoever." "And as far as our seeking some explanation from Chakraborty, the board will of course meet very, very soon and take a call on how to deal with the problem," he said. Meanwhile, sources said neither the RBI nor the bank initiated or directed Chakraborty's exit, describing it instead as a personal decision. The underlying friction arose from Chakraborty's style of functioning despite his non-executive role, with his exit ultimately tied to personal differences with the senior management. Although tensions between Chakraborty and the board had been building over time, his resignation came as a surprise. A board meeting was convened at short notice, during which Mistry was asked to step in temporarily to ensure stability until a new chairman is appointed. The board, Mistry said, will follow the due procedure to select the chairman. Chakraborty did not provide specific reasons beyond those mentioned in his resignation letter. However, sources indicated he may have had concerns about the conduct of certain individuals, who are in the middle level, linked to past lapses at the bank. However, it remains unclear whether these concerns were formally raised or documented internally.

Panic bookings of LPG cylinders ebb to nearly pre-West Asia conflict levels; import situation continues to be concerning

Even as India's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports remain highly constrained due to the West Asia conflict, there has been a notable decline in panic booking among household consumers of LPG, with latest-available daily cylinder bookings now close to the pre-war levels, the government said on Thursday. According to Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma, bookings fell to around 57 lakh on Wednesday; the pre-conflict daily average was 55.7 lakh cylinders. Due to panic booking, the number of cylinder bookings had touched almost 88 lakh on Friday (March 13). Sharma said that while the supply situation remains concerning, oil marketing companies are maintaining LPG supplies at pre-conflict levels of around 50 lakh cylinders a day. On Wednesday, they delivered close to 55 lakh LPG cylinders to households, and no dry-outs had been reported at any of the 25,000-off LPG dealerships across the country, she said. During the peak panic booking phase, OMCs were delivering over 60 lakh cylinders a day. While supplies to household consumers are being maintained, supplies to commercial and industrial consumers are heavily impacted, with just 20% of their requirement being allocated by the Centre and distributed through state governments.

With the effective halt in maritime traffic through the

critical chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz, India's LPG supplies have been majorly hit. The country depends on imports to meet 60% of its LPG needs, and 90% of those flow through the Strait of Hormuz—the narrow maritime passage between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. This effectively means that roughly 55% of India's LPG consumption volumes are currently unavailable. While the government has prioritised LPG supplies to households, commercial and industrial users like restaurants are facing severe shortages of the fuel. Apart from prioritising LPG supplies to households over commercial and industrial consumers, the government ordered refiners to maximise LPG production, and directed them to divert propane, butane, and other streams from petrochemical manufacturing to LPG production. On Wednesday, Sharma has said that these measures have led to an increase of 40% in domestic LPG production vis-à-vis pre-West Asia conflict levels, and a further increase is likely over the next few days. The government has also increased waiting times between cylinder bookings by households from 21 days to 25 days in urban areas and 45 days in rural areas to check hoarding behaviour and manage demand and supply.

Suniel Shetty's simple salt habit may help cut sodium intake: 'No pink one for me'



Suniel Shetty, known for his fitness, once admitted that he is extremely particular about his salt consumption. "Quantity of salt. It is never in the food. I'd rather have it sprinkled on top. No pink one for me. Regular salt for me," he told podcaster Nikhil Kamath in 2023. Does sprinkling salt on food instead of using it during cooking actually help control salt intake?

Dr Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, affirmed that the practice of adding salt at the end of the cooking process helps in the controlled intake of salt. "Usually, when salt is added during the cooking process, the food is flavoured by the salt. However, when food is not

flavoured with salt, the salt on its surface helps the taste buds detect it. It helps develop the same salt flavour with a lower salt content. This practice helps the individual to control the intake of salt and reduce the consumption of salt on a day-to-day basis without the feeling of food being bland," said Sheikh. Is there really a big difference between the regular salt and the pink salt from a health point of view?

From a health point of view, regular salt and pink salt contain the same amount of sodium chloride. "Though the pink salt contains trace minerals, the amount of trace minerals is extremely small. Hence, it does not really make a big difference from a health point of view. From a nutritional point of view, the body will still be consuming sodium from salt. Hence, it is more important to control the amount of salt being consumed rather than the type of salt being consumed," said Sheikh. For an average adult, it would be reasonable to limit the amount of salt consumed from all sources to a maximum of 1 teaspoon per day. "It should be noted that a person suffering from high blood pressure, heart problems, or kidney problems should be even more careful about the amount of salt in their diet. "Simple techniques of sprinkling a pinch of salt over the food after cooking, choosing fresh food over packaged food items, and tasting the food before adding salt can help an individual maintain a healthy amount of sodium in their diet," said Sheikh.

'She's the plane, I'm the tailwind': Gaurav Kapur reflects on how his 'reactive' nature complements wife Kritika Kamra's calmness; expert weighs in

Relationships often thrive not just on shared interests, but on how two people balance each other's personalities, communication styles, and emotional responses. Sports presenter Gaurav Kapur recently reflected on this idea while speaking about his relationship with actor Kritika Kamra. The couple tied the knot on March 11, 2026, in an intimate rooftop sundowner ceremony at their Bandra home.

In a conversation with Manifest, Gaurav described their bond in evocative terms, calling it "a bonfire in a cosy cabin on a cold night, something you want to sit with every day." He also recalled their very first conversation, highlighting how natural and effortless it felt. "I remember the first time we spoke very clearly. We talked for an hour, and it was just easy. What surprised me was her calmness. I'm very reactive, very instant, and she has a long view on life. We complement each other that way." Reflecting on what commitment means to him now, he added, "Commitment now means having her back always, making sure she can be the best version of herself. She's the plane, I just try to be the tailwind pushing her forward."

So, how do differences in emotional responses and temperament influence relationship compatibility?

Psychologist Rasshi Gurnani tells indianexpress.com, "Differences in emotional reactivity and temperament often enhance compatibility when they create balance rather than conflict. A more reactive partner tends to process experiences quickly and intensely, while a calmer partner regulates and contextualises emotions over time. This dynamic can support co-regulation, where one partner helps stabilise the other during stress." However, she notes that it works best when both individuals show emotional awareness and respect each other's style. Without this, differences can lead to misinterpretation, such as perceiving calmness as detachment or reactivity as volatility. "In psychologically healthy relationships, complementary temperaments increase resilience, improve problem-solving, and create a wider emotional range within the partnership."

How can couples create a sense of mutual support without losing their own individuality?

Gurnani states, "Mutual support without loss of individuality is built through secure attachment and clear per-

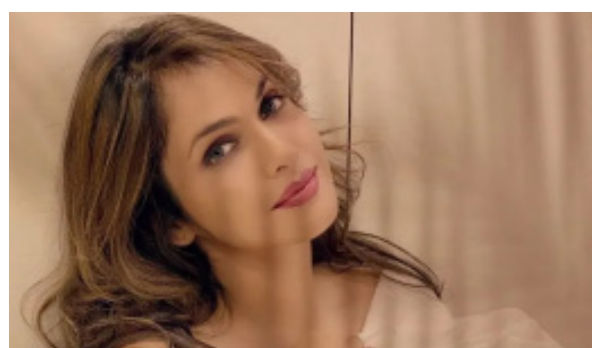


sonal boundaries. Partners who 'have each other's back' provide emotional validation, encouragement, and psychological safety, while still maintaining autonomy in thoughts, goals, and identity. This involves interdependence rather than dependence, where both individuals are connected but not fused. "Encouraging each other's growth, respecting differences, and avoiding over-reliance on self-worth are key, states the expert. She continues, "When each person retains a strong sense of self, support becomes empowering rather than restrictive. Healthy relationships allow space for individuality while fostering a shared sense of purpose and emotional security."

What role does early comfort play in long-term relationship success?

Early ease and comfort often reflect emotional attunement and perceived psychological safety, which are important foundations for connection. This sense of 'effortlessness' can indicate aligned communication styles, mutual openness, and reduced social defensiveness. However, it can sometimes be misleading if it is driven by projection, novelty, or idealisation rather than genuine compatibility. "Early comfort does not always account for deeper factors such as values, conflict styles, and long-term goals. While it can initiate bonding and trust, sustained relationship success depends more on how partners navigate challenges, repair conflicts, and maintain emotional responsiveness over time," concludes Gurnani.

Isha Koppikar discusses her morning routine, says swears by cinnamon: 'Sometimes, I put...'



Isha Koppikar, 49, recently described her morning routine and shared that she swears by cinnamon powder. "When I wake up in the morning, I have a warm glass of water. I add turmeric and pepper powder. You can add cinnamon too. It helps blood sugar, too. I add cinnamon to my coffee too. Sometimes, I put ghee also in my coffee," the Shabri actor told Pinkvilla Lifestyle Plus. So, we asked experts to verify how these practices affect one's health.

Consultant dietitian Garima Goyal said that starting the day with a warm herbal or spice-based drink can gently stimulate digestion after the overnight fast. "Ingredients commonly used in such traditional preparations often contain antioxidants and digestive compounds that may help reduce bloating, support metabolism, and improve gut function. Since gut health plays an important role in nutrient absorption, it can indirectly influence skin health and energy levels," said Goyal. Morning rituals that prioritise hydration and gentle digestive activation are widely recommended in many traditional health systems. "Drinking warm herbal infusions can help wake up the digestive system, support bowel regularity and reduce the feeling of heaviness that some people experience in the morning," shared Goyal. Cinnamon has been studied for its role in supporting blood sugar regulation. "Some compounds in cinnamon may help improve insulin sensitivity. This means the body can use glucose more efficiently. Because of this, people often talk about cinnamon as a useful addition to the diet for managing blood sugar levels," said Dr Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane. It is important to see cinnamon as a helpful ingredient, not a treatment for diabetes or high blood sugar. "Adding a small amount to foods or drinks might support dietary balance, but it cannot replace medical treatment, medication, or a structured diet plan advised by a healthcare professional," said Sheikh.

Three from Maharashtra detained for selling two women from Bejjur

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: Three persons were detained for their alleged role in trafficking two women under the guise of marriage from Bejjur mandal on Thursday. Police said three persons from Maharashtra's Sironcha were detained and were being interrogated for their role in selling two women from Bejjur mandal to buyers in Madhya Pradesh for Rs.2.40 lakh each. The traffickers reportedly contacted the financially weak women from a tribal community after they migrated to Mancherla town in search of livelihood.

It is learnt that the three managed to win the trust of the women by promising to marry them. The incident came to light when the parents of the women approached the police, who registered a case and launched an investigation. This is the second such instance reported in the district within a span of nine months.

"The three are being questioned as to how they contacted the women, to whom they had sold the victims and to which the buyers belong. Focus is also on since when the accused have been indulging in the offence," a police official said. On June 20 last year, eight persons, including a police constable and five women from several parts of this district and Madhya Pradesh, were arrested on charges of human trafficking. Six mobile phones, cash of Rs. 50,000 and a motorbike were seized from their possession. Two more accused from Madhya Pradesh, who were absconding, were later nabbed.

Navy officer takes a jab at selection of Army boxers for Asian Championships



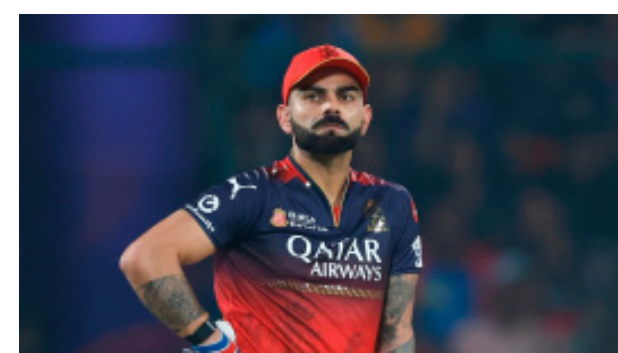
the allegations, BFI Executive Director Colonel Arun Malik has claimed that apart from the men's head coach, CA Kuttappa, nobody from the Army was part of the selection committee. "There is no one in the selection committee from the Army. Even Kuttappa retired many years ago," Malik told He said the men's head coach, who is in his third stint, had also worked with Beijing Olympics bronze medallist Vijender Singh. "You can't say that if the coach is from the Army, we can't put him in the selection committee," Malik said. Kuttappa did not respond to questions on the issue.

Malik said there wasn't much of a difference between Gulia and Deepak, and it's in the Federation's interest to pick the best boxer available. "I and my team would be stupid to pick sub-standard people just because we want to pick somebody specific," said Malik. "Deepak, in this weight category, during the assessment, outperformed everybody in all sparring sessions." In his letter, the Vice Admiral has requested the Sports Secretary to intervene and consider a review of the selection process where "... performance in national and international competitions as well as head-to-head results received appropriate weightage". He has pointed out that a similar assessment of players before the 2024 Paris Olympics resulted in "Indian boxing returning without a medal". Meanwhile, the BFI, in a statement, defended its selection process. Denying the charge about lack of video recordings, it said all matches were "duly recorded and recordings were shared with the Sports Authority of India". It added that it was not standard practice to share bout recordings with the boxers or their camps. It also said that sparring bouts held during assessment were not considered competitive and the purpose was to evaluate, rather than pick a winner or a loser. "These are not competitive bouts but structured sparring sessions conducted as part of an evaluation framework. The purpose of these sparring rounds is not to declare winners or losers, but to assess athletes across multiple performance parameters," it said.

A senior Navy officer has questioned the selection of an Army boxer over the Navy's pugilist in the Indian squad for the upcoming Asian Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The 10-member squad for the March 28-April 11 Asian meet includes nine Army boxers — the tenth is a boxer from Rajasthan, not from the defence services. The Navy's Hitesh Gulia lost out to the Army's Deepak in the 70-kg category.

In a letter to Secretary (Sports) Hari Ranjan Rao, a Vice Admiral in charge of personnel-related matters has alleged that the selection committee appointed by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) had two members from the "same organisation whose athletes were competing for selection", thus raising concerns about "conflict of interest" and "perceived lack of neutrality". The letter states that Gulia had got the better of Deepak at last year's Inter-Services Championship as well as the 2026 Nationals. "Despite this demonstrated superiority and international medal record, Gulia has been placed below Deepak," writes the Vice Admiral. Expressing concern about the BFI's selection process, he alleges that it "lacks open selection trials" and also raises "non-availability of video recording of bouts". Denying

Mohammad Kaif says Virat Kohli will play with 'fresh mind' in IPL as he is retired in Test matches: 'He will make it known to his critics that he is Virat Kohli'



GNS News Agency, March 21

Since retiring from the red-ball format, Virat Kohli's approach to ODIs has changed. The batter who got into his innings through the rotation of the strike and then accelerated started to play his shots from early on. But can the same be seen for Royal Challengers Bengaluru? Where his strike rate been under question at times. Former RCB player Mohammad Kaif feels that the lack of Test cricket will keep his mind fresh, and the veteran batter will answer his critics now. "It will not make a difference. In fact, it will

benefit him as he is coming from a break with a fresh mind. Making that switch is normal for him as he has been doing it for years even for India. I would say it would be difficult if it was some other batter. Look at the IPL before he took T20I retirement, he scored there. He won the MOM in the final then. There are very few players who can adjust that switch.

"This period, specially Test retirement, has not been easy for him. He is even playing aggressively in white-ball now, the strike-rate is there. He has improved his game and now he has fixed his mind that till he plays, he will make it known to his critics that he is Virat Kohli," he said on his YouTube channel. Kaif also said Kohli will not tolerate any complacency from his team members. "Virat Kohli will not accept any complacency. They will not take it lightly, having won the title. Kohli always starts from zero. I am not talking about Patidar here. If Kohli sees that someone is not putting that effort or that energy is not there, he will be the first one to call people and tell them we are here to win. Till you have a player like him, no one can take the nets or matches lightly. He will take nothing less than a trophy now. In terms of commitment, he is going to keep everyone on their toes. He will come in with a lot of hunger and the will to make winning a habit now," he expressed.

Candidates challenger Andrey Esipenko and his love for Russian Premiership football team FC



GNS News Agency, March 21 He might've snuck into the chess Candidates at the last moment finishing third at the World Cup. But Andrey Esipenko ensured that at least one Russian represented the plateauing powerhouse of chess, after Ian Nepomniatchi couldn't make the grade. At Elo 2698, he's dropped from his peak with 2723 in March 2022, but he is ranked World No 33 (again down from 22 in March 2022).

Esipenko nevertheless lines up at Cyprus, alongside seven others, with Americans Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura as favourites, and Indian R Praggnanandhaa and Chinese Wei Yi as dark horses. Recently married at 23, and a lover of travel, Esipenko has found the going not-so-easy in chess, after he became GM at age 16. There's no dearth of competitive spirit in him, as he rejoices in wins over arch-rivals that he dubs "eliminating." In true Russian Lev Yashin tradition, he also takes immense pride in his goalkeeping abilities on a football patch of a field. In December of 2021 in fact, he attended training with FC Rostov, and declared he was ready to don the big GigiBuff-like gloves.

"Attended the FC Rostov training! It was a pleasure to meet and talk to the head coach of the team Vitaly Vitalievich Kafanov and the players of the team! I also tested my strength as a goalkeeper," he wrote on Insta. "...it turned out I am ready to fight for a place at the base of almost any club. Good luck in the season!" The comments section was filled with fans telling "Sanya" (his nick) to be careful about not hurting his hands. "Chess players need beautiful hands," fans wrote, about the aesthetic value of carpels that move chess pieces. Others quizzed him about what he thought of the fate of Arsenal — and if they would win Champions League, a question that remains relevant in 2026. It was also an opportunity to take barbs at the national goalkeeper, and hype up club player Gamula. In the video, Esipenko is seen diving left and right like a pro, blocking gently hit shots, but with good technique in recovery, and getting back on feet for the follow-up rebound. His under-gloves also have foam-blocker guards on the knuckles to not break his hand when punching out the ball. Esipenko started following FC Rostov since the time Kurban Berdyev dragged the team out of relegation zone in the Russian Premier League in

2014 and catapulted them into Champions League with a top defensive tactical style eventually. The chess challenger would strike the symbolic kick for a Rostov vs Spartak match, joking, "The main thing is that I hit the ball after all," after his technique was called sloppy for getting his feet tangled.

Israel football association penalised by FIFA for multiple breaches of anti-discrimination rules, ordered to roll out prevention plan

GNS News Agency, March 21

FIFA, the world's football governing body, imposed sanctions on the Israel Football Association (IFA) on Thursday for breaches of its anti-discrimination and fair-play rules following an alleged discrimination complaint from the Palestinian Football Association (PFA). FIFA said IFA has committed multiple breaches of its obligations as a FIFA Member Association. The world body said, "Following the proposal made by the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) at the 74th FIFA Congress and the subsequent decision of the FIFA Council to mandate the FIFA Disciplinary Committee to investigate the alleged offence of discrimination raised by the PFA, the FIFA Disciplinary Committee has decided that the Israel Football Association (IFA) has committed multiple breaches of its obligations as a FIFA Member Association." FIFA's Disciplinary Committee said the IFA had failed to take adequate action against persistent racist behaviour by supporters of certain clubs, notably Beitar Jerusalem, and had not responded sufficiently to inflammatory and politicised public statements by football officials and clubs under its jurisdiction. Read the full statement from FIFA on IFA over breaches of its anti-discrimination and fair-play rules: Following the proposal made by the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) at the 74th FIFA Congress and the subsequent decision of the FIFA Council to mandate the FIFA Disciplinary Committee to investigate the alleged offence of discrimination raised by the PFA, the FIFA Disciplinary Committee has decided that the Israel Football Association (IFA) has committed multiple breaches of its obligations as a FIFA Member Association. As a consequence, the FIFA Disciplinary Committee has imposed the following sanctions on the IFA for breaches of articles 13

From Josh Hazlewood to Sam Curran, here is an injury list of overseas players



GNS News Agency, March 21

Several overseas players are set to miss the start or been entirely ruled out of the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League that starts on March 30. While the availability of Australia's pace trio is the biggest question, the likes of Sam Curran and Nathan Ellis are set to miss the entire season. The late withdrawal means teams are widening their nets for replacements. Here is a look at those who are injured ahead of the IPL. Pat Cummins: The Australian Test team captain who will lead Sunrisers Hyderabad won't be available for the initial phase with the franchise naming Ishan Kishan as stand-in skipper. Having missed a huge chunk of the last six months due to a back injury, which saw him play only one Ashes Test, Cummins has been on the road to recovery. The fast bowler is likely to join the SRH camp next week once he gets the clearance from Cricket Australia. Once he joins the team, he is expected to ease into the game.

Mitchell Starc: The left-arm pacer isn't nursing any injury, but given the workload he has had in the recent months with the Test team due to the unavailability of Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, Starc has been given a rest period. Though he didn't feature in the T20 World Cup, as he has announced international retirement from the format, Cricket Australia isn't taking any chances with his fitness. The left-arm pacer is expected to join Delhi Capitals only after he clears the fitness protocols. Josh Hazlewood: Having played

a crucial role in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's title winning campaign last season, Hazlewood is expected to miss the early round of fixtures. The pacer, who missed the entire Australian summer and the T20 World Cup because of hamstring and Achilles, is still continuing his rehab process back home. Having not played any competitive cricket, only if he clears the fitness test of CA will he be given the go-ahead to fly to the IPL. Nathan Ellis: Not part of the Test team, the Australian is an integral member of the white-ball set-up. A death-over specialist, he was expected to lead Chennai Super Kings' pace pack this season. However, a hamstring injury he sustained while playing a club fixture last week has ruled Ellis out of the entire IPL season. In his absence, CSK are looking for replacements. Sam Curran: The England all-rounder, who was traded from Chennai Super Kings to Rajasthan Royals, is likely to miss the entire season with a groin injury. Part of the deal that sent Sanju Samson the other way, Curran was expected to provide the much-needed balance to Rajasthan Royals. His injury means RR would be looking for replacements.

Jack Edwards: Another Australian pacer who is injured, but has been ruled out of the entire duration of the IPL. Signed up by Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 3 crore, Edwards was supposed to feature in his maiden season. Having picked up 13 wickets in the Big Bash, he was the lone uncapped overseas player at the auction before making his international debut. However, a foot injury he sustained has ended his hopes of featuring in the IPL. With Cummins also not available for initial rounds, Edwards injury means SRH are looking for other options. Lockie Ferguson: The Kiwi pacer, who recently became a father during the T20 World Cup, has decided to give the initial phase of the IPL a miss to spend time with his family. Signed up by Punjab Kings, Ferguson has been featuring in the home T20I series against South Africa, but confirmed his unavailability on Friday. "Just had a wee son, trying to spend as much time as I can at home and help the wife out. I'll have a few weeks off after this, before sort of heading to the later stages of the IPL and away for the winter," Ferguson said.

Delhi Capitals suffer blow as Mitchell Starc ruled out of IPL 2026 start due to workload management



GNS News Agency, March 21

Star Australian pacer Mitchell Starc will miss the start of the Indian Premier League 2026, becoming the latest in a long line of Aussie players set to sit out the opening half of the tournament. With Cricket Australia taking a cautious approach to managing its pacers ahead of a gruelling international schedule, Delhi Capitals will be without their ace speedster for the first few games, according to a report by cricket.com.au.

Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood will also miss the IPL's opening phase under the same workload management plan. The trio's availability will depend on their progress through return-to-play protocols over the next few

weeks. Starc, picked up by Delhi Capitals for INR 11.75 crore, was a vital cog in their pace attack.

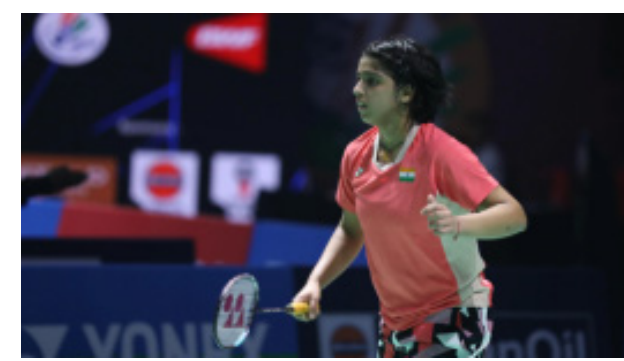
Fellow Australian quicks Nathan Ellis and Jack Edwards have also been ruled out due to injuries. Ellis, who was slated to lead the pace attack for Chennai Super Kings, suffered a hamstring injury and won't recover in time, forcing the franchise to explore alternatives. Edwards, a seam-bowling all-rounder bought for INR 3 crore by Sunrisers Hyderabad, will miss the IPL with a foot injury. Having featured in all five Ashes Tests before turning out in the latter stages of the Big Bash League, Starc's workload has been a key factor for Cricket Australia. While the 36-year-old stepped away from T20Is last year, he remains central to Australia's plans in the longer formats. With a packed stretch that could see Australia play up to 21 Tests in a 12-month window from August, including tours of South Africa, India and England, followed by the 2027 ODI World Cup, the board has opted for a conservative approach for their quicks. Australia selector Tony Dodemaide said last month that Cummins and Hazlewood's availability for the IPL but not the World Cup was purely a "timing issue." "If it was in reverse, the IPL was first and the World Cup was second, then they'd be missing the IPL to play in the World Cup. It's not going to be frustrating for us at all. We know their commitment to want to play and succeed for Australia," Dodemaide was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

Tanvi Sharma's shotmaking helps her beat misfiring Anmol Kharb in battle of Indian teens at Orleans Masters

It wasn't all plain sailing for Tanvi Sharma against Anmol Kharb in a round-of-16 battle of Indian teenagers at the Orleans Masters Super 300 on Thursday. Early in the second game, Anmol hit the best winner she managed all match — a crisp forehand crosscourt with a late flick of her wrists and a strong whipping motion. Tanvi was floored, lunging to her forehand flank but unable to get to the shuttle. But she got up, dusted herself off, and responded with a superb 1-2 punch next rally, hitting a strong forehand return smash from the backcourt and then playing the most delicate of drop shots to the frontcourt, to leave Anmol stranded.

It was this quality of shotmaking that saw Tanvi, 16, overcome her 18-year-old compatriot 21-14, 21-17 in just 35 minutes. It marked a good day for Indian badminton in women's singles as three shuttlers made it to the last eight, with Malvika Bansod and Isharani Baruah winning their matches, too. Malvika, on a comeback trail after a long injury break last year, beat Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching, currently ranked 19 places above the Indian lefty, 24-22, 21-13. And Isharani overcame Canada's Wen Yu Zhang 21-13, 21-12 in 29 minutes. Isharani and Malvika will face off in another all-India clash on Friday, while Tanvi faces a higher-ranked opponent in Japan's Natsuki Nidaira.

The most intriguing contest of the day pitted two young shuttlers seen as future hopes in a discipline where India has had their two biggest superstars, Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu, for nearly two decades. Tanvi was off to a strong start, moving her slightly senior opponent around to all four corners of the court in the early exchanges, employing a good mix of tosses to the backcourt and slices to the front for a 6-1 lead. The points Anmol was earning came through Tanvi's mistakes, until the 19-year-old nailed an inside-out cross smash to make it 6-9. That would only be a flash in the pan as Tanvi took an 11-6 lead into the mid-game interval. The contest was a bit more even after the break — interestingly, with coaches in their corners in a sight not usually seen in all-India matches — Tanvi continued to be a step ahead of Anmol, reading the attacks well and getting into position early to defend every time the Haryana youngster tried to increase the pace with her power, with her Punjab counterpart opening up a 17-11 lead. Another lovely illustration of Tanvi's shot-making skills came at the end of Game 1. She hit two round-the-head smashes from the exact same position midcourt, and for the first winner, she went down the line and changed it in the next point by going cross to pocket the lead.



Tanvi was once again off to a strong start in Game 2 with an 11-7 lead at the interval, and had the finish line in sight. But the next phase of play showed that it is the in-match temperament that Tanvi needs to work on. When she missed a crosscourt drop by quite some margin, she went down on her knees and buried her face in her hands, then was warned a few times by the chair umpire not to delay proceedings between rallies. While most rallies were short and sharp, at 17-14 in the second game, the teenagers produced their best collective exchange, moving to either flank at pace and hitting the shuttle crisply before Anmol won the point. She made it 17-17 on the back of two errors at the net from her opponent, showing the grit that has come to personify her rise. But Tanvi steadied her nerves and hit a clean round-the-head crosscourt winner at a critical juncture, and wrapped up the match on a run of four straight points. In the bigger picture, Tanvi enhanced her burgeoning reputation as the Indian teen with the greatest ceiling among a promising women's singles bunch. Earlier in the day, the men's doubles duo of Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun overcame Scotland's Alexander Dunn and Adam Pringle, winning 26-24 and 21-14. In men's singles, it continues to be an underwhelming start to the season for Ayush Shetty as the world No 25 went down against Yudai Okimoto, ranked 14 places below the Indian, in three games. Despite winning the opener comfortably, Ayush went down against a player from his junior days, 21-9, 18-21, 9-21. In mixed doubles, Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde took a shock lead in the opening game against world No 5 Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue in their French backyard. But the All England finalists fought back to win 19-21, 21-9, 21-14 in 54 minutes.

‘Ek star hai, usko bhi side karega’: Aamir Khan reveals why he feared for his career during the first week of Lagaan shoot



to be the center or something. That's not what I was thinking. I was thinking, 'Kuch gadbad toh nahi kar rahe hum log? (Are we making a mistake?)' What Aamir hinted at was whether they were completely pivoting from a mainstream film and entering into what is largely considered avant garde, art cinema category. Aamir, until this point, had largely worked only in mainstream formulaic films and was a well established movie star in Hindi films. He recalled that they rehearsed as per Ashutosh's instructions but he couldn't help and raise his concerns. "I took him aside and I told him that we are taking a big risk as it is. You have one star and that is me," he said and laughed while he added, "Usko bhi tu side kar lega toh hum log ki watt lagne vali hai (If you push the star to the side, then we will be in trouble)."

Ashutosh heard Aamir's concerns and told him that until this point in the story, the only one character who is above the rest is the village chief, played by Rajendra Gupta, and if anyone should be in the center, then that is him. He told Aamir that Bhuvan is not special until this point and will only become special when he assumes leadership, after accepting Captain Russell's challenge. "Ashutosh said, 'Your character is not special at this point in the film. Your character is going to become special. I don't want to put you in the centre because you are Aamir Khan. You will take the central position when Bhuvan takes leadership after he says 'sarat manzoor hai (I accept your challenge)'. You will become the centre of the frame when the story requires you to do so. Not because of the casting," he shared.

Aamir Khan, who not only played the lead role but also bankrolled Lagaan, spoke about how the film's budget shot up to twice the original estimate. Actor-producer Aamir Khan with fellow cast members of Lagaan. Aamir said that this happened early on in the shoot and listening to Ashutosh's thoughts, he was "blown away." "I had not even thought of that. And because this happened so early in the shoot, it gave me so much confidence in Ashutosh. I felt this guy really knows this film inside out. He is not doing anything without thought. He has a strong reason behind every decision," he said. Aamir said that after this point, he was completely relaxed and said, "I was certain he is completely in command of the material. Then, I was totally relaxed. I was like 'Bana bhaiya, abhi main aankh band kar raha hu (You make it, I won't interfere)'. "In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Aamir had said that making Lagaan was a onerous responsibility, "When I decided to make Lagaan, I knew I had taken up a huge challenge. It's an unusual film and just a few weeks before I left for shooting. I met with Adi Chopra and Karan Johar. Karan and Adi are very good friends of mine and they were genuinely concerned. They were saying 'Aamir tu itni badi film bana raha hai as your first production and we have heard that it's a single schedule, sync sound.'

Aamir Khan-starrer Lagaan, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, released 25 years ago and to date, it remains one of the most loved films ever made in India. At the recent Red Lorry Festival, Aamir and Ashutosh shared some anecdotes about the making of the film and Aamir shared that when they had just started shooting in Gujarat, he was a bit concerned as to how Ashutosh was placing characters in a frame as he decided not to put Aamir's Bhuvan in the centre. While the film had a huge ensemble cast, Aamir, without a doubt, was the biggest, or rather the only star in the film. He had also launched his production company with this film. Aamir recalled raising this concerns with Ashutosh in the first week of the shoot, but the director's answer put his mind at ease.

Aamir recalled that one of the first things they shot was the song "Ghanan Ghanan" which appears early on in the film. The song had the villagers spotting dark clouds in the sky as they start celebrating in the hopes of rain. The shot required all the characters to congregate in the center and as they rehearsed without any instructions at first, Aamir naturally took the central spot in the frame.

"Quite naturally, I would stand in the center and everyone else would gather around me," he said and added that when Ashutosh saw it, he said, "Bhuvan yahan se hat' toh main hat gaya. (Bhuvan, move from here so I moved)." When Aamir moved to the side, Ashutosh asked him to go and stand at the back and the superstar wondered if this was the right decision for the film.

"I thought, firstly we are making an experimental film and on top of that, while we have other good actors, but none of them are stars. I wondered if Ashutosh was making a 'mind blowing hatke (different)' film. Toh mera dil baith gaya (So I got scared)," he said. Aamir wondered, "Yeh toh gadbad ho rahi hai yaar. (This is a mistake). Not that I want

Dhurandhar 2: Ram Gopal Varma declares Aditya Dhar has ended the era of 'godly heroes', says other directors will 'wake up shivering in cold sweat'



Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has been heaping praise on Aditya Dhar and Dhurandhar ever since the first film of the franchise released in December. After watching the sequel, RGV called Dhurandhar The Revenge 'SholayX100' and now, when it appears that the audience has given its thumbs up to the film with the first day box office collection at Rs 102 crore, RGV has declared that Dhurandhar 2 will make directors "tremble" in their chairs, and make the stars re-examine heroism on screen. 'Godly heroes look ridiculous, like clowns in a circus'

In a long note shared on X, RGV started by declaring that Dhurandhar 2 is a "horror." He then explained that the film is a "horror" for those filmmakers who have built their careers on "over the top cinema" that expects that the audience leaves their brains at home. "The cinema that was rammed down our throats full of LOUDNESS and MASALA which will be now soon on a ventilator struggling for breath," he said and added that it will scare those directors who continue to "worship the godly hero." It is well known that most film industries in India are dependent on the male stars that often play the traditional hero.

RGV said that Ranveer, with his performance in Dhurandhar films, has "killed all those heroes who never bleed and never feel pain and then over the dead bodies of

those kind of outdated heroes, he gave birth to a true real hero, flawed, yet dangerous and unpredictable and also his heroism comes from his actions instead of being thrust upon the heads with ear drum shattering music." The Satya director said that compared to the hero that Ranveer played on screen here, the "godly heroes" will "suddenly look ridiculous, almost like clowns in a circus." RGV then mocked the action-set pieces that have become a mainstay in Indian films, that often defy gravity and said that Dhurandhar 2 will "terrify" those who presented physics as a joke and shows gravity as non-existent. "After the audience saw the action that actually hurts, that actually bleeds, the flying goon brigade will suddenly feel cheap, fake, and embarrassingly ridiculous. The filmmakers who still swear by wires and cranes to fake uplift the heroes will now wake up shivering in cold sweat. It will make the pan-India directors tremble in their chairs, the ones who still believe characters are created by hairdos, costumes, photoshopped six packs, and designer clothes instead of intrinsic psychological depth," he added. He said that after watching Ranveer in Dhurandhar 2, "the hair and costume school of cinema will look like kindergarten dress up."

RGV declared that Dhurandhar 2 "is not just a film" but "a verdict" and said that Aditya Dhar has "cut off the head" of the kind of films that "insulted the intelligence of the audience" and "turned heroes into gods and audiences into sheep." RGV then said that if makers of such kinds of films "don't go back to their drawing boards and exorcise themselves by watching Dhurandhar 2 multiple times, even god can't save their spirits." On Wednesday, March 18, RGV was the first to share his review of Dhurandhar The Revenge on X. He said that the film will have an impact that is 100 times more than Sholay, one of the best known Hindi films of all time and said that the film's "magnificence is bound to make all the greatest films made so far starting from Mughal E Azam onwards look like TV serials." Dhurandhar The Revenge had its wide release on Thursday, March 19 and on its first day, the film earned Rs 236 crore worldwide, which is unprecedented for any other Hindi film. Alongside Ranveer Singh, the film also stars Sara Arjun, Rakesh Bedi, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt and R Madhavan.

BTS' RM injured, hospitalised hours before comeback concert, will have limited role at Gwanghwamun event

GNS News Agency, March 21

RM of BTS suffered an ankle injury RM of BTS, who suffered an ankle injury during a performance rehearsal a day before the group's highly anticipated comeback concert at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul. BTS's biggest night in years just got a little more complicated. A day before their highly anticipated comeback concert at Gwanghwamun Square, Big Hit Music confirmed that RM suffered an ankle injury during rehearsals and will take the stage tomorrow with a limited role. The company explained that the diagnosis of RM revealed a sprain of the accessory navicular, a partial ligament tear, and a talus contusion involving ligament damage and inflammation. Doctors have advised him to wear a cast and limit movement for a minimum of two weeks.

In a statement, the label said RM had expressed a strong desire to perform at what is one of the most significant stages of BTS's journey. However, after consulting closely with the artist, Big Hit Music made the decision to follow medical advice and protect him from further injury. As a result, his on-stage performance, including choreography, will be partially limited. Despite the injury, RM will still be present on stage and will do what he can to engage with fans in attendance and those watching the live stream on

Netflix. The Gwanghwamun concert marks BTS's first full group performance since 2022, coming a day after the release of ARIRANG, the group's first studio album in three years and nine months. Anticipation for the show has been high, with the Netflix livestream expected to draw millions of viewers globally. Big Hit Music apologised to fans for any disappointment and asked for continued support, adding that the group's health and safety remain their top priority. The remaining six members are continuing rehearsals ahead of tomorrow's performance. BTS announced their comeback on January 4, 2026, after all seven members completed their mandatory military service, the last of them discharged in mid-2025. The group had been on an effective hiatus since their anthology album Proof in June 2022, making ARIRANG their first studio album in three years and nine months. Named after a traditional Korean folk song associated with identity, longing, and reunion, the 14-track album was produced under HYBE chairman Bang Si-hyuk and features songwriting and production contributions from Diplo, Ryan Tedder, Flume, Kevin Parker of Tame Impala, Mike Will Made-It, and JPEGMafia, among others. RM led the lyrics on nearly every track. The title track "Swim," directed by Tanu Muino featured American actor Lili Reinhart along with BTS.

BTS Comeback ARIRANG Album OUT: K-Pop idols make splash with Swim, read all details here



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For the millions of ARMY members who have been counting down since the last member completed his service, the wait is finally over. ARIRANG is BTS at their most honest. The album is rooted in who they are, seven members who have spent years turning their personal stories into music that people across the world have found themselves in. The lead single, "SWIM," centers on the resolve to keep swimming onward through life's many tides, RM is credited on every track excluding the interlude, while SUGA and j-hope contributed to multiple tracks, including "Body to Body," "Merry Go Round," and "NORMAL." Jimin participated in "they don't know 'bout us" and "Into the Sun," while V contributed to "2.0" and "Into the Sun." Jung Kook also played a key role in the creation of four tracks, including "Hooligan."

Why is BTS album called Arirang?

The album takes its name from Arirang, a traditional Korean folk song associated with themes of identity, longing, separation, and reunion. Big Hit Music stated the album captures BTS's identity as a group that began in Korea. The timing feels deliberate. All seven members spent the last few years apart, fulfilling their mandatory military obligations. Coming back with an album named after a song about separation and return is not a coincidence.

Babil Khan misses late father Irrfan Khan, shares unseen childhood pictures

Mumbai: Actor Babil Khan, on Thursday, remembered his late father Irrfan Khan as he shared a series of unseen childhood pictures, reflecting on their beautiful bond. The post struck an emotional chord with fans who took to their comments section of the post, as Babil reflected on memories while revisiting moments from his early years with his father. Sharing the pictures, Babil wrote in the caption, "To begin again, remembering you. With my feet planted firm in my roots."

Reacting to the post, Babil's mother Sutapa Sikdar commented, "What beautiful pictures both with same expression. Mashaallah." The pictures shared by Babil, capture intimate and candid moments between Irrfan and a young Babil. In one picture, Irrfan is seen holding baby Babil in his arms, both looking upward. In another picture, the late actor is seen sitting closely with his son, gently holding him while engaging with him. In a third picture, Irrfan is seen carrying Babil on his shoulders, with the little one holding on playfully as they share a lighthearted moment at home.

For the uninitiated, Irrfan Khan passed away on April



29, 2020, at the age of 53, reportedly after battling a neuroendocrine tumour, a rare form of cancer. His demise had sent shockwaves across the country and the global film fraternity. Talking about Sutapa Sikdar, a writer and producer by profession, had been Irrfan's wife for decades. The two met during their time at the National School of Drama and tied the knot in 1995.

‘Watching Dhurandhar 2 in Lahore’: Pirated cuts of Ranveer Singh’s ‘banned film’ swarm Pakistan, video goes viral

Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge hit theatres on March 19 and, as expected the film is doing wonders at the box office. The film has emerged as the biggest Hindi opener of all time with Rs 102.5 crore earning in India, and the second biggest Indian opener after Allu Arjun's Pushpa The Rule. Like its prequel, the film remains banned in Pakistan, but that has not stopped audiences there from watching it, thanks to pirated versions. Pakistani journalist Khalid Mehmood Khalid shared a video of watching the film on X. In the post, he wrote: "Watching Dhurandhar 2 in Lahore."

Ban didn't stop Pakistan from watching Dhurandhar. Dhurandhar, released in December last year, was banned in Pakistan but the film reportedly saw 2 million illegal downloads in two weeks, after the film's release. It became the most pirated movie, surpassing Raees. Viewers in Pakistan accessed the film through Telegram channels, underground streaming platforms, and VPN services. Pirated Dhurandhar DVD were sold at Rs 300

New Zealand-based YouTuber Karl Rock, in his vlog, found pirated version of Dhurandhar being sold at extremely low prices in Pakistan. In a vlog shot at Karachi's Rainbow Centre in Saddar Bazaar, known for its black-market entertainment trade, Karl spotted the film at a shop. When he asked about it, the shopkeeper confirmed it was Dhurandhar. The film was priced at just Rs 50 on a USB, or around Rs 300 for a DVD. After its release on Netflix on January 30, Dhurandhar climbed to the No. 1 position in Pakistan. Dhurandhar 2 box office report After its first day in theatres, Dhurandhar 2 has collected Rs 145.55 crore net in India, including Rs 43 crore from paid previews, according to trade tracker Sacnilk. The film's worldwide total stands at an estimated Rs 236.63 crore.

The Ranveer Singh starrer opened strong with Rs 43 crore from preview shows on March 18 across more than 12,700 screens, making it the highest preview-day grosser and surpassing They Call Him OG (Rs 25 crore). With Rs



99.10 crore from its Hindi version, the film earned Rs 102.55 crore across India, becoming the biggest opener in Hindi language beating the previous record held by Pushpa 2 (Rs 70.30 crore in Hindi). Dhurandhar 2 has earned Rs 236.63 crore worldwide becoming the second-highest India opener, after Pushpa 2 (Rs 275.2 crore). It also marks the biggest opening for both Ranveer Singh and director Aditya Dhar, significantly outperforming the first Dhurandhar, which had opened at Rs 28 crore. Dhurandhar 2 arrives in cinemas just three months after its first part, which created history by becoming the highest-grossing Indian film at the domestic box office with over Rs 890 crore, and the fourth highest-grossing Indian film worldwide with earnings exceeding Rs 1300 crore. The sequel brings back Ranveer Singh, Arjun Rampal, R. Madhavan, Sara Arjun, Sanjay Dutt, and Rakesh Bedi. The Aditya Dhar Directorial has received largely positive reviews from the audience but many also feel that it doesn't match up to Dhurandhar.