

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

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## Chinnambavi Mandal's new SI Raman Goud honored The Sarpanch of the girl's village, Kavitha Prabhanjan Goud

“Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle” I would like to congratulate the newly appointed Sub-Inspector of Police P. Raman Gowda of Chinnambavi Mandal and wish him all the best for protecting every village in Chinnambavi Mandal and ensuring that no problem arises anywhere. I would like to express my heartfelt wishes to him for organizing awareness programs for the people of Chinnambavi Mandal and various villages in the Mandal, for shaping the people towards a better system, and for taking care of the people of various villages in the Mandal in a healthy manner. All girls are informed AmmaiPalli village sarpanch Kavitha Prabhanjan Goud Said. In this program, Ammayapalli Village Congress Party leaders, Prabhanjan Goud, Venkatesh Naidu, Village President Mohan Reddy, Satya Reddy, Raman Gowda, Parmeshwar Reddy, Kavinder Goud, Allenna Goud, Sukumar, Charakonda Babu, Telugu Rama, Govardhana Gaud, Bittu, Jahangir” People of Anji Ammayi Palli village participated.

## 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.

# Get serious before it's too late: Trump as Iran's naval commander killed

New Delhi, March 26

US President Donald Trump on Thursday issued a stark warning to Tehran, saying Iranian negotiators must “get serious soon before it is too late”, even as he lashed out at NATO allies for what he termed complete inaction in the ongoing conflict — a day marked by a major escalation with the reported killing of a top Iranian naval commander.

In sharp remarks on his Truth Social platform, Trump described the Iranian negotiators as “strange” and accused them of privately seeking a deal while publicly downplaying engagement with Washington. “They are begging us to make a deal... which they should be doing since they have been militarily obliterated,” he said.

“They better get serious soon, before it is too late... there is no turning back, and it won't be pretty,” he added, signalling a hardening US posture as hostilities approach the one-month mark.

Trump later told reporters that taking control of Iran's oil was an option, but said he would not talk about it.

He said Iran was allowing some oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz as a sign of good faith for talks.

He said Iran allowed 10 oil tankers to pass through the strategic strait as a “present” to show it was serious about negotiations to end the war.

The escalation in hostilities comes alongside reports that Alireza Tangsiri, chief of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy, was killed in an Israeli strike in Bandar Abbas — a move that could significantly alter the maritime dimension of the conflict centred around the Strait of Hormuz.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Tangsiri was among senior naval officials targeted, describing the operation as a direct blow to Iran's ability to control and potentially disrupt the critical energy corridor. Tangsiri,



who had led the IRGC Navy since 2018, was widely seen as the architect of Iran's asymmetric maritime strategy in the Persian Gulf.

While there has been no immediate confirmation from Tehran, the reported strike marks one of the most significant hits on Iran's military leadership since the conflict began and is expected to heighten risks of retaliation, particularly in the maritime domain.

Trump also turned his ire on NATO, accusing member nations of failing to support Washington during the crisis. “NATO nations have done absolutely nothing to help with the lunatic nation... of Iran,” he said, adding that the US “needs nothing” from the alliance.

At a Cabinet meeting later in the day, Trump cast doubt on the prospects of a peace deal, even as he maintained that Iran was keen to negotiate. “They are begging to work out a deal... I don't know if we're willing to do that,” he said.

He insisted the onus was on Tehran to step back and permanently abandon its nuclear ambitions. “They now have a chance... to chart a new path forward. If they don't, we're their worst nightmare,” he said, warning that US military operations would continue unabated.

Special envoy Steve Witkoff said earlier negotiations had faltered over Iran's insistence on its right to enrich uranium, citing concerns that Tehran retained sufficient enriched material to develop multiple nuclear weapons.

The convergence of sharpened rhetoric, uncertain diplomacy and targeted strikes on key military figures underscores the increasingly volatile trajectory of the conflict, with the Strait of Hormuz and broader regional stability hanging in the balance.

Meanwhile, Iran has conveyed its formal response to a 15-point US proposal through intermediary channels and is now awaiting Washington's reaction, the IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency reported on Thursday, citing an informed source.

According to the report, Tehran has stood firm on a set of core conditions, including an immediate cessation of attacks, binding guarantees against any future military escalation, compensation for war-related damages and a comprehensive halt to hostilities across all theatres involving its allied groups.

The response is also understood to underline Iran's insistence on recognition of its authority over the Strait of Hormuz, along with credible assurances that any agreement reached would be fully implemented and not subject to reversal.

Significantly, the source dismissed Washington's push for negotiations as a “deception”, alleging that the US was using the diplomatic track to buy time while attempting to manage international opinion in its favour.



## Modi to hold virtual meet with CMs, L-Gs today on W Asia crisis

New Delhi, March 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Friday hold a virtual meeting with Chief Ministers of states and Lieutenant Governors of UTs to discuss the lingering West Asia crisis and its immediate, medium and long-term impact on the domestic economy.

Top official sources said the meeting would be held with CMs of all states barring those where elections are to be held.

“The Cabinet Secretary will separately meet with the chief secretaries of the states that are going to elections,” a source said.

The PM's meeting will accordingly not involve the participation of CMs of Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Assam.

The meeting comes close on the heels of PM Modi informing Parliament of potential long-term impacts of the war and urging everyone to stay united and alert for a long haul.

The PM in his remarks in both Houses appealed to state governments to work in coordination with the Centre on ensuring adequate supplies of essential goods — crude oil, natural gas and fertilisers — and crack down on misinformation, hoarders and black marketers.

The PM has said nefarious elements were active and would try to take advantage of the situation.

Accordingly, all security establishments have been strengthened and all agencies related to law and order placed in a state of high alert.

At the meeting tomorrow, the PM will review availability of fuel, fertilisers and other commodities with the states and give a broad direction for the future.

The PM is also expected to urge the states to address panic buying and false information with respect to availability of crude oil and natural gas.

The meeting comes after some states and UTs like Gujarat, Rajasthan and J&K have reported long queues outside petrol stations.

The government earlier today said there was no shortage of crude oil or LPG and no dry out at any retail outlets of oil marketing companies.



## UK court rejects Nirav Modi's petition against extradition

Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi suffered a legal setback after the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division in London, rejected his petition seeking to reopen proceedings against his extradition order to India. The application to reopen the case was filed on the basis of a ruling delivered by a UK High Court in the case of defence middleman Sanjay Bhandari. In that matter, Bhandari had argued that he could face torture if extradited to India, and the court had declined his extradition on humanitarian grounds. Citing the same precedent, Nirav contended that he too would face a risk of torture if sent back to India. However, officials from the CBI presented arguments countering this claim during the proceedings. While delivering its decision, the UK High Court observed that the petition filed by Nirav did not meet the threshold of exceptional circumstances required to justify reopening the case. The court noted that the grounds presented were not sufficient and held that it would not be appropriate to revisit the earlier ruling. Nirav is wanted in India in connection with the Punjab National Bank fraud case. He fled the country in 2018 and was arrested in the UK in 2019, following which British courts approved his extradition, rejecting multiple appeals.

# Healthcare a Top Priority, Says CM Revanth Reddy in assembly

Hyderabad, March 26

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy told in the Telangana Assembly that his government remains firmly committed to strengthening the state's medical and health sector, despite inheriting significant financial liabilities from the previous administration.

Addressing the House, the Chief Minister emphasised that welfare of the poor is at the core of his government's agenda, with healthcare and education described as its “two eyes”. He categorically ruled out any possibility of budget cuts in these crucial sectors.

Referring to arrears under the Aarogyasri scheme, Mr Reddy dismissed what he termed as “false propaganda” regarding pending payments. He said that upon taking office, his government assumed outstanding dues of ₹627 crore as of December 2023 and has since released a total of ₹2,408 crore.

Of this amount, ₹927 crore has been allocated to government hospitals, while ₹1,480 crore has been paid to private hospitals. He added that the remaining dues now stand at ₹727 crore, with payments being processed continuously.



The Chief Minister also addressed concerns over transparency in the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF). He noted that the fund had previously been marred by irregularities in cheque distribution. However, after assuming office, his government introduced an online application system to curb malpractice.

Mr Reddy revealed that ₹2,046 crore has been disbursed through the CMRF so far. Combined with expenditure under the Aarogyasri scheme, the state has spent approximately ₹4,500 crore on providing medical care to the poor, he said.

## CM sanctioned funds for Bhadrachalam temple works: Thummala Nageshwar Rao

Hyderabad, March 26



State Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageshwar Rao has announced that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has sanctioned funds for the development of the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam, a sacred site associated with Lord Rama.

He stated that the Chief Minister would lay the foundation stone for the first phase of works, estimated at ₹351 crore. A comprehensive master plan has been prepared to develop both the temple and the town in three phases, with a total outlay of ₹586 crore.

On Friday, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami, the celestial wedding (Kalyanam) of the presiding deities will be held at the Mithila Kalyana Mandapam. The minister personally inspected arrangements for the event.

Speaking to the media, he said the Chief Minister would present Mutyala Talamburu and silk garments to the deities on behalf of the state government, and would visit Bhadrachalam for the ceremony, where a grand welcome is planned.

He added that efforts are under way to improve national highways, railway connectivity and establish an airport for devotees. He also expressed optimism about river navigation along the Godavari River after the Polavaram project, and said preparations have begun for next year's Godavari Pushkarams.

## Naka Bandi in Adilabad district to control crime

“S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad, March 26” Adilabad district police late on Wednesday night conducted Naka Bandi or blockade to control crime. The blockade was conducted under all 20 police station limits covering all the inter State borders with Maharashtra. “District Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan personally supervised the Naka Bandi which also included setting up of 28 check posts. The blockade was conducted between 9 pm and 12 am simultaneously across the district. “The operation saw registration of 41 drunken driving cases and seizure of 13 vehicles which were plying without number plate and those which were running without proper documentation. At the Pipparwada toll gate in Jainad mandal, the police seized two transport vehicles for illegally transporting cattle. Uttoor ASP Rutwik Sai Kotte, Adilabad DSP L. Jeevan Reddy, Mavala SHO Rahul Kant and all SIs and cIs from all police stations participated.



# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Step up ethanol blending to cut fuel imports

The ongoing war in West Asia has once again exposed India's vulnerability in the energy sector, as nearly 85% of the country's crude oil requirements are met through imports. Any disruptions in oil supplies due to global conflicts can trigger shocks at home, as the latest fiasco in the Strait of Hormuz has shown. Though Iran has permitted India-bound ships to pass through the key route for now, things can turn precarious at any moment amid an escalating conflict. It is time India explored alternative solutions to reduce its dependence on imports. One effective way to tackle this crisis is to significantly step up ethanol blending as part of a policy to diversify fuel sources. As a renewable alternative, ethanol can diversify India's fuel basket while helping reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector. Ethanol is produced domestically, burns cleaner than conventional petrol, and carries a naturally high-octane rating that improves fuel stability. Over the past decade, India's ethanol programme has reduced crude imports, saved more than Rs 1.40 lakh crore in foreign exchange, and created new demand for crops such as sugarcane and maize. It has also encouraged investments in rural bio-refining infrastructure and bolstered the link between the energy market and farm output. For an economy exposed to volatile global oil markets, exploring alternative fuel sources makes economic sense. Domestically produced biofuels can curb reliance on imported crude, provide a buffer against supply shocks, and create revenue streams for rural communities.

At present, India is implementing the E20 fuel policy — blending 20% ethanol with fuel. The government must work with the auto industry and oil marketing companies to gradually increase the ethanol blending mandate from 20% to 30% and incentivise the production of flex-fuel vehicles that can run on 100% hydrous ethanol. Fuel stations, too, should have separate dispensing units for E30 and E100 fuels, while the choice should be left to consumers. There is also a need to revisit taxation. Currently, ethanol is covered under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. Ethanol used for blending with petrol attracts 5% GST. But petrol remains outside GST, attracting both Central excise duty and State value-added tax. Both ethanol-blended petrol and pure petrol are treated identically for taxation purposes. All fuels blended with ethanol can be brought under GST. The latest oil shock presents an opportunity for India to revisit and review its existing ethanol blending programme. The government should also nudge companies to provide conversion kits to modify existing vehicles for flex-fuel compatibility and enable them to run on higher ethanol blends. However, India needs further upgrades to its infrastructure before it can accelerate its ethanol blending programme. Biofuel industry leaders are now pushing for measures such as tax reductions, flex-fuel vehicle incentives and carbon credits to stimulate demand and support further expansion of the sector.

### 13 years of Srujana Dental Hospital 2,000 free medical camps in villages

#### “Free distribution of dental kits worth Rs 50,000“Dr. Srujana , Dr. Vanitha's announcement

“Jagithyal Correspondent, March 26 (Indian Chronicle): “Srujana Dental Hospital in Jagityal, which provides free dental services to rural people every Thursday, has completed 13 years. Dr. Srujana has set up a hospital in Jagityal district center and has been providing free medical services to patients every Thursday, along with free medicines, earning her great recognition among the people.”“On the occasion of completing 13 years of the hospital from the 20th to 26th of this month, the hospital is conducting free dental check-ups for patients and distributing dental kits worth



of cost. Dr. Nakka Vanitha, along with her staff Pooja and Leena, distributed these kits to patients, earning praise.”“On this occasion,

Dr. Vanitha spoke to Telugu Prabha in Jagityal, saying that since the establishment of the hospital, they have conducted 2,000 free dental camps in rural areas across Jagityal district, provided free medicines, and created awareness about dental problems among the people.”“She added that they conducted free check-ups for patients who visited the hospital from the 20th to 26th of this month and organized a free dental camp at Mallannapeta. They also created awareness about dental problems and distributed dental kits worth ₹50,000 to the people.”“Dr. Vanitha advised people to take care of their oral health to stay away from diseases and assured that they will continue to provide services to the people.



## Chinnambavi Mandal's new SI Raman Goud honored

### The Sarpanch of the girl's village, Kavitha Prabhanjan Goud

“Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle”“I would like to congratulate the newly appointed Sub-Inspector of Police P. Raman Gowda of Chinnambavi Mandal and wish him all the best for protecting every village in Chinnambavi Mandal and ensuring that no problem arises anywhere. I would like to express my heartfelt wishes to him for organizing awareness programs for the people of Chinnambavi Mandal and various villages in the Mandal, for shaping the people towards a better system, and for taking care of the people of various villages in the Mandal in a healthy manner. All girls are informed AmmaiPalli village sarpanch Kavitha Prabhanjan Goud Said. In this program, Ammayapalli Village Congress Party leaders, Prabhanjan Goud, Venkatesh Naidu, Village President Mohan Reddy, Satya Reddy, Raman Gowda, Parmeshwar Reddy, Kavinder Goud, Allenna Goud, Sukumar, Charakonda Babu, Telugu Rama, Govardhana Gaud, Bittu, Jahangir”People of Anji Ammayi Palli village participated.



## Chinnambavi Mandal's new SI Raman Goud felicitated

### Senior leaders of the BRS party of Chinnambavi Mandal



““Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle”“Senior leaders of Chinnambavi Mandal TRS Party Kethapaga Sudhakar, Sankati Maddileti, Sampangi Maddileti, and MRPS Mandal President Devani Ramesh, Chinnamarur Village Sarpanch Madduri Shankar, who respectfully met SI Raman Goud, who took charge as the new SI of Chinnambavi Mandal, and felicitated him with

a shawl. Speaking on the occasion, senior leaders of Chinnambavi Mandal TRS Party said that peace has been maintained in various villages under Chinnambavi Mandal. To work for security, in villages Any untoward incidents Special surveillance in villages to prevent this from happening CCTV cameras special, existing CCTV cameras Village-wise monitoring in a functional manner To maintain peace and order SI Raman Goud on the occasion requested. On this occasion, SP Raman Goud Speaking, all the people in Chinnambavi Mandal In the villages, the people of all the villages and Various party leaders peace and security Everyone to the police for protection He said on this occasion to cooperate. Disturbance of peace and order in villages We will pay special attention to people who cause mentioned. Police system is public safety It works for the sake of it, that's why people Cooperate with the police and maintain peace and security He asked to be saved.

## Aksharabhyasam Program Conducted at Anganwadi Centre

““Indian Chronicle. (Jade Srinivas)“March,26.”“Sarpanch Ravinder and Vice Sarpanch Jagadeesh participated. Dr. Kamalakar attended as Chief Guest. “An Aksharabhyasam (initiation into education) program was conducted at the Anganwadi Centre (Narayanpur-2) located in the SC Colony of Narayanpur village, Rebbena Mandal, Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. On this occasion, school uniforms were also distributed to the Anganwadi children. “The program was attended by village Sarpanch Madasu Ravinder and Vice Sarpanch Nandi Jagadeesh as chief guests, who performed the Aksharabhyasam ceremony for the children. Speaking on the occasion, they emphasized that Anganwadi centres are the foundation for children's educational development. They stated that these centres play a crucial role in preparing children for formal schooling. They also advised that every child attending the Anganwadi centre should come regularly in uniform. They highlighted that Anganwadi centres are essential for ensuring children's health, nutrition, and basic education. “Dr. Kondagurla Kamalakar, ALMSC com-



mittee member and State Vice President (Telangana) of the Right to Information Protection Act, Ward Member Venkatesh, School Headmaster Subbarao, villagers Tulshakar, youth leader Sugunakhar, Anganwadi teacher Shobha Rani, helper Banakka, and mothers of the children Bharati, Ashwini, Rajeswari, Kamala, along with Anganwadi children, participated in the program helped create awareness about education and encouraged interest in learning among children.

## Come and see the wedding of Sri Sita Ramachandra

### Temples get ready for Sri Ram Navami



““Jagithyal Correspondent, March 26 (Indian Chronicle): Temples across Jagithyal district are being decorated in a grand manner on the occasion of Sri Ram Navami. Organizers have made all arrangements to conduct the wedding of Sita Ramachandra in a grand manner. On the day of Sri Ram Navami, devotees are flocking to temples to witness the wedding ceremony. “The utsava murthy of Sita Ramachandra is being decorated with beautiful attire and silk clothes. The wedding ceremony is being conducted with Vedic mantras and Mangala Vaadyam (traditional music). The priests are performing the wedding ceremony by exchanging jilakara (a traditional mixture) and bellam (jaggery) and throwing mutyala talambralu (a traditional wedding ritual). “The temples are decorated with mango leaves, flower garlands, and electric lights. Considering the summer season, arrangements have been made for drinking water and shade for devotees. “In Jagithyal town, the Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple, Dharaur Camp Ramalayam, Vidyanagar Sita Ramachandra Swamy temple, and Chinnagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple are among the temples where the wedding ceremony is being conducted in a grand manner. “The organizers are expecting a large turnout of devotees despite the hot weather. The wedding ceremony is being conducted with Vedic mantras, Mangala Vaadyam, and devotees chanting “Jai Sri Ram.” “The article reports on the preparations made for Sri Ram Navami celebrations in Jagithyal district, with devotees thronging temples to witness the wedding cer-



emony of Sita Ramachandra.

## Free Tuition Success: 6 Out of 9 Students Secure Gurukul Seats

““Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. March, 26. “The free tuition program conducted at Jethwan Buddha Vihar in Wankidi Mandal headquarters under the guidance of Cluster Resource Person Durgam Sandeep has achieved notable success over the past five months. “Out of 9 students who appeared for the Gurukul 5th class entrance examinations after receiving training through this initiative, 6 students successfully secured seats in Gurukul schools. The tuition classes are held daily from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, where students are provided coaching for Gurukul and Navodaya entrance exams along with basic academic skills. Speaking on the occasion, Durgam Sandeep stated that the main objective of the program is to develop students' interest in education and help them reach higher levels in their academic journey. “He also expressed his gratitude to the Ambedkar Youth Association, Wankidi, for their support in successfully conducting the free tuition program.



## Prevention of road accidents with advance precautions : Inspector Mohan Babu

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY Three Town Police Station Khammam...“Inspector Mohan Babu said that one can get protection from road accidents only by following precautions.”“Farmers, truck drivers and auto drivers were educated at Mirchi market in the city on Thursday under the auspices of Khammam Three Town Police Station as part of the third phase of 'Arrive.. Alive' campaign program which was created by the police department to create public awareness about road safety with



the intention of reducing road accidents and loss of life in the state. On this occasion, the inspector said that their main aim is to reduce road accidents and deaths with the participation of people. He said that 'Arrive Alive' is being organized to inculcate the importance of road safety in the minds of every citizen. He explained that everyone should work hard to make this program a success. Through this campaign, the aim is to inculcate the culture of safe driving in the people and strengthen the road safety systems. They stated that their mission is to make Telangana a model state for the country in terms of road safety with the participation of students, celebrities, media, public representatives and all government departments. In this campaign, special attention has been given to the dangerous habits of two-wheeler riders like not wearing helmets, not wearing seat belts in cars, using cell phones while driving, driving under the influence of alcohol, jumping the signal, crossing the stop line, overloading autos on highways, and overtaking from the left.

## Poor Condition of Sarandi School

““Indian Chronicle. (Jade Srinivas) March,26.”“Wankidi Mandal, “The primary school in Sarandi village under Wankidi Mandal is currently facing severe difficulties due to a lack of basic facilities, according to parents and villagers. Children attending the school are struggling daily due to the absence of essential amenities like drinking water and toilets. Parents stated that due to the lack of proper drinking water facilities, students often suffer from thirst and are sometimes forced to fetch water from distant places. The absence of proper toilet facilities is causing serious inconvenience, especially for girl students, affecting their education and attendance. “A dangerous water pit present in the school premises for several months has become a major threat to the safety of children. Villagers expressed concern that children might accidentally fall into the pit while playing. Despite the risk, no steps have been taken so far to fill it, which has angered the locals. “Meanwhile, the behavior of the headmaster has also become controversial. Parents allege that he does not maintain punctuality, often arrives late, or remains absent. They also claim that when questioned, he responds irresponsibly and behaves rudely with some individuals. “Villagers are now demanding immediate action from the authorities. They urge officials to provide basic facilities like safe drinking water and toilets, fill the dangerous pit in the school premises, and ensure student safety. They also demand a thorough inquiry into the school's management and strict action against those responsible. “Government schools in rural areas serve as a backbone for children from poor and middle-class families. Such conditions in these schools can severely impact students' future. Villagers hope that authorities will respond promptly and improve the situation at Sarandi school.

## Huge additions to Telangana Rajyaadhikari Party from Wanaparthy district

““TRP Party President Teenmar Mallanna”“Wanaparthy District President Dande Vijay Yadav”“Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle”“The youth of various mandals in Wanaparthy district are of the Telangana Rajyadhikari Party, Teenmar Mallanna, and they believe that justice will be done for the BCs. The BCs will get their statehood under the leadership of Teenmar Mallanna. The youth are very enthusiastic about the services of Teenmar Mallanna and the struggle being waged by Teenmar Mallanna, and that is why the youth are very enthusiastic about working together in the Telangana Rajyadhikari Party, which is why the youth are very enthu-



siastic about working together in the Telangana Rajyadhikari Party, Hyderabad Uppal office, and the youth are very enthusiastic about the Wanaparthy district president. TRP under the leadership of Dande Vijay Yadav Party President Teenmar Mallanna in the party In the presence of Telangana Rajyadhikari Party Joined in. In this program District President D Vijay Yadav Constituency leaders Arun Kumar, Gopal Pet Mandal Chief Secretary Malik, President of the Edu Mandal, Satarla Bhanu Prakash, Mandal leaders Naresh, Tadipatri Village President G Devender Sagar, village leaders V. Sivakumar, Satyam, Sharan, Shiva, Venkatesh, and others”Participated.

## Sri Sai Model School Annual Day Celebrations Held with Grandeur Amid Festivities Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Attends as Chief Guest

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”The Annual Day celebrations of Sri Sai Model School in Shanti Nagar, Uppal were held in a grand and joyful manner. “Former Uppal Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest, upon the invitation of Correspondent Venkat Rao and Director Devi. Students made the event vibrant with their performances, including dances, songs, and drama presentations. “Speaking on the occasion, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy said, “Schools serve as a platform to encourage students’ creativity. Every activity helps in bringing out their talent and nurtures valuable human qualities. Such programs are essential for their overall development.”The event was attended by Academic Director John, Ganesh, Rajeshwari Devi, Rajini, Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Tummala Devi Reddy, Alugula Bhaskar, Mohan Naik, Ganesh, along with local residents, teachers, students, and school staff.



## BJP chief expresses shock over bus fire accident

“Hyderabad, Mar 26 :: BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao today expressed deep shock over the horrific bus accident in Andhra Pradesh in which 13 persons burnt alive and others sustained burn injuries.” Rao, in a statement, said he was “deeply shocked by the horrific road accident that occurred near Markapuram in Prakasam district.” It was extremely painful to learn that a private travels bus caught fire after colliding with a tipper near the slate quarries in

Rayavaram, resulting in passengers being burnt alive, he said. The women and childrens were among the deceased and the bus was left last evening from Nirmal in Telangana.” Rao extended his deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and wished speedy recovery of injured who were admitted in a government hospital at Markapuram.” He urged Andhra Pradesh government to ensure best possible medical care to injured.

## Essential Supplies Distributed to Disabled Person by Former Corporator Gandam Jyothsna Nageswara Rao

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”Former Ramanthapur Corporator, Gandam Jyothsna Nageswara Rao, extended timely support to a differently-abled person named Ravi, who approached her seeking help. Responding immediately, she provided essential daily-use commodities to him. Ravi expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the former corporator for her assistance. Speaking on the occasion, Jyothsna Nageswara Rao stated that she is always available to the people of Ramanthapur Division and has been actively carrying out several welfare and service programs through the Gantham Foundation. She further added that issues brought to her notice by the public are being taken to the attention of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, ensuring necessary funds are sanctioned and problems are resolved. “She also assured that more service-oriented initiatives will be undertaken through the Gandam Foundation in the future.



## Demand to Set Up Medchal-Malkajgiri Corporation (MMC) Headquarters in Uppal

Raised in the Assembly by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy  
Priority should be given to Uppal’s development



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy on Thursday brought to the notice of the State Assembly that the headquarters of the Medchal-Malkajgiri Municipal

Corporation (MMC) should be established in the Uppal area. He stated that the issue had already been brought to the attention of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy a week ago, and is now being raised again in the Assembly to urge the government to take action. “He also highlighted the tragic incident in Ramanthapur, where seven people died due to an electric shock. He mentioned that the government had announced ₹10 lakh compensation for each affected family and already distributed ₹5 lakh. He further requested that the government fulfill its promise of providing employment opportunities to the victims’ families.” He recalled that Minister Sridhara Babu had visited and consoled the affected families, and appealed to the government to extend full support and ensure that the announced compensation and assistance reach all the victims’ families.

## Senior Congress Leaders Meet CM Revanth Reddy’s Brother Kondal Reddy

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”Senior Congress leaders Janampalli Venkateswar Reddy and Tavidaboyina Giribabu met Enumul Kondal Reddy, the brother of Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, on Thursday. “The leaders, representing the Habsiguda division of Uppal constituency, met Kondal Reddy as a courtesy and felicitated him warmly. During the meeting, they discussed the current situation of the Congress party in the Uppal constituency. “On this occasion, Kondal Reddy stated that everyone should work collectively for the development of the party and that the party leadership would take care of assigning appropriate responsibilities. He assured that senior leaders who work for the party would be given due recognition and added that he would make efforts to ensure priority for seniors in the upcoming Greater elections.



## Prevention of road accidents with advance precautions : Inspector Mohan Babu

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY”Inspector Mohan Babu said that one can get protection from road accidents only by following precautions.”Farmers, truck drivers and auto drivers were educated at Mirchi market in the city on Thursday under the auspices of Khammam Three Town Police Station as part of the third phase of ‘Arrive.. Alive’ campaign program which was created by the police department to create public awareness about road safety with the intention of reducing road accidents and loss of life in the state. On this occasion, the inspector said that their main aim is to reduce road accidents and deaths with the participation of people. He said that ‘Arrive Alive’ is being organized to inculcate the importance of road safety in the minds of every citizen. He explained that everyone should work hard to make this program a success. Through this campaign, the aim is to inculcate the culture of safe driving in the people and strengthen the road safety systems. They stated that their mission is to make Telangana a model state for the country in terms of road safety with the participation of students, celebrities, media, public representatives and all government departments. In this campaign, special attention has been given to the dangerous habits of two-wheeler riders like not wearing helmets, not wearing seat belts in cars, using cell phones while driving, driving under the influence of alcohol, jumping the signal, crossing the stop line, overloading autos on highways, and overtaking from the left



## Culvert Works Worth ₹1 Crore Completed in Azmath Nagar, Chilkanagar Division: Former Corporator Bannala Geetha

To be opened for public use in 2–3 days: Bannala

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”The construction of a culvert over the irrigation nala in Azmath Nagar Colony of Chilkanagar Division, taken up at a cost of ₹1 crore, has been completed, said former corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj. She stated that the facility will be made available to the public within the next two to three days. “While inspecting the completed culvert works along with GHMC officials, she instructed the contractor to immediately complete the CC road leading down from the culvert. She also directed the GHMC authorities to expedite the remaining road works and ensure that the project is made accessible to the public without causing any inconvenience. “Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Geetha said that the culvert was constructed to ease travel for people commuting from Secunderabad towards Chilkanagar and Boduppal via Kalyanpuri, as well as for residents of the colony. “The inspection was attended by GHMC Work Inspector Kedar, BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna



Goud, Banti Goud, Shyam, Azad, Srinivas Reddy, Azmath Nagar Welfare Association President Atishesh Rathod, Vishatath Enclave President Amarendra Reddy, Gopal Rao, Hanumanthu Rao, Damodar, Srinivas Reddy, and others.

## Allegations of Irregularities in School Painting Works under “Mana Ooru – Mana Badi” Scheme

“Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. March, 26. “Serious allegations of irregularities have surfaced regarding the school painting works undertaken in 2025 under the “Mana Ooru – Mana Badi / Amma Adarsha Pathashala” scheme in Asifabad district. According to reports, painting works in 17 schools in Sirpur (T) mandal and 5 schools in Asifabad mandal have been marked as completed in the Measurement Book (MB) records uploaded online. However, concerns have been raised over the lack of transparency in this process. It is alleged that MB records were entered by a third party instead of authorized officials. In several instances, entries were reportedly made without proper physical verification, raising fears of possible misuse of government funds. “Meanwhile, workers have also leveled serious allegations against AVELI Group of Company, the firm that executed the works. They claim that salaries and TA (Travel Allowance) bills are

still pending. Workers stated that ₹18,000 salary for the month of September and ₹15,700 towards TA bills from June to September remain unpaid. Despite repeated attempts to contact the company’s head office, no response has been received. “Additionally, in some schools of Sirpur (T) mandal, it is alleged that local laborers were engaged for the work but were not paid, and the contractor has reportedly absconded. There are also accusations that payments were claimed by recording MB entries without conducting physical verification. Due to these issues, workers are facing severe financial difficulties. The victims have urged the District Collector to intervene immediately, conduct a thorough inquiry, take strict action against those responsible, and ensure that their pending dues are cleared. Victims: Goleti Nagesh (Aveli Company Representative) “Jadi Naresh (Local Labour Mster)

## Golden slippers for Lord Sriram... 40 mg gold slippers

“... Miniature artist Sri Ramoju Jayakumar’s amazing creation” “Srinivas Devulapally Warangal Bureau, March 26 (Indian Chronicle) : In Indian festivals, along with devotion, artistry also has its place. A miniature artist has created a miracle by adding his own creativity to devotion and artistry. A famous miniature artist from Narsampet, Warangal district, and a national award winner Sri



Ramoju Jayakumar has created a miracle. Expressing his devotion to Lord Rama, he made miniature shoes measuring 8 millimeters wide and 7 millimeters high, made of 40 milligrams of gold. A goldsmith by nature, miniature artist Jayakumar’s hobby is creating miniature works of art. Every time, he gives a beautiful message to the society according to the occasion. He has already created hundreds of miniature works of art and has also won awards and rewards. Recently, on the occasion of Sri Ram Navami, he made amazing miniature shoes made of 40 milligrams of gold and wrote the Hindi letters Jai Shri Ram on them, creating an aura. Speaking on the occasion, Jayakumar said that the spirit of Sri Ram’s rule should be a compass for the entire world. Expressing concern that the world would be thrown into turmoil due to the effects of the war in West Asia, he prayed to Lord Rama for peace and harmony in the countries of the world and said that he wished that people of all religions in India would live in happiness and joy.



## Initiated by S. B.I. T Arohan 2026 Celebrations



INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY “Local S. B.I. College Chairman Gundala Krishna said that the anniversary celebrations of T College started with the unveiling of Arohan 2026 wall magazine. He said that on Thursday, the students formally started the celebrations with the teachers’ games. Krishna said that project expo, technical events and cultural programs are going to be organized this year as a continuation of the annual event. “College Secretary and Correspondent Dr||G says that technical fests are a good platform to improve the knowledge, skills and future of students. Dhatri said that such programs will help in the physical and mental development of the students and in enhancing creativity. Vice Chairman of the college K.Sree Chaitanya said that

along with the students, the teachers of the college also enthusiastically participated in the game songs and added beauty to the program. “College Principal Dr|| G. Rajkumar announced that Arohan 2026 will be held on 3rd and 4th April. He said that technical events will be held along with project expo on the 3rd and the anniversary celebrations of the college will be organized on the 4th with cultural programs. On this occasion, various competitions will be organized from each section and prizes will be given to the winners, he said. “Academic Directors of the college Gundala Praveen Kumar, Gandham Srinivas Rao, Dr|| A. V. V. Shiva Prasad, heads of various departments, teachers, students and others participated.

## Prominent Leaders Attend Memorial Meeting of BC Leader Pandula Yadaiah

“Elders pay rich tributes to Yadaiah” “KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Hyderabad, March 26 (Indian Chronicle):”Prominent leaders participated in the memorial meeting of BC leader Pandula Yadaiah, who recently passed away due to illness in Brahmanapalli village. “Among those who attended the program were village Sarpanch Korukoru Tirupati, former Sarpanch Pulikanti Laxmaiah, elders Jella Kondal, Gorati Venkataiah, AMC Director Jella Ramesh Goud, Jangaiah Yadav, Jella Lalaiah, Anil Yadav, Mahesh Nagilla, Anand, Jerusalem Mattayya, and others. “They paid floral tributes to the late P. Yadaiah and expressed their condolences to his sons, P. Nagaraju and P. Rajashekar. “Speaking on the occasion, village elders said that Pandula Yadaiah had earned appreciation for his service to the community. Representing the Goud community in Brahmanapalli and Madgul mandal, he actively organized several welfare activities and provided valuable guidance and support to farmers, they added.



# Issue a Government Order for Half-Day Operations at Anganwadi Centers

Nalla Bharathi, State President, Telangana Anganwadi Teachers and Helpers Union (BRTU) Memorandum Submitted to Seethakka, Minister for Women Development and Child Welfare



“Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau, March 26 (Indian Chronicle): Nalla Bharathi, State President of the Telangana Anganwadi Teachers and Helpers Union (BRTU), has requested the issuance of a Government Order (GO) authorizing half-day operations at Anganwadi centers. In this regard, a delegation led by Nalla Bharathi met with Seethakka, the Minister for Women Development and Child Welfare, at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Thursday and submitted a memorandum. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Seethakka responded positively, assuring the delegation that a joint meeting would be convened to resolve their issues and encouraging them to bring any concerns they might have to her attention.”



“Subsequently, Union State President Nalla Bharathi addressed the gathering, noting that Anganwadi centers provide pre-primary education to children under the age of five. She requested that a GO be issued to allow Anganwadi centers to operate on a half-day schedule—similar to government schools—and further requested that permission be granted to distribute Take-Home Rations (THR) in May, followed by a full month of holidays for the entire month of May. She also demanded the immediate disbursement of retirement benefits and pensions to teachers and helpers who retired during the 2024–25 fiscal year, the immediate filling of vacant posts for Anganwadi teachers and Aayas (helpers), and the implementation of a monthly salary of ₹18,000 for Anganwadi teachers, in accordance with the promise made by the State Government. Subsequently, it was reported that they met with JD (Admin) Akeshwar Rao and JD Moti at the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare office to discuss various issues. Union State General Secretary V. Rama Tara, Treasurer M. Vedavati, and State leaders Yellamma, Rajitha, Sirisha, among others, participated in this event.

# BSP supports journalist Rambabu's struggle The government should immediately allocate houses for journalists

-- BSP Mandal General Secretary Boddu Baburao “ Journalist Unions should come in support of housing struggle All working journalists should fight with unity and get housing

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY “Khammam, March 26: Bahujan Samaj Party has declared its full support to senior journalist Korakopula Rambabu, who has been on a relay hunger strike for the past eleven days to provide housing to all deserving journalists, said Boddu Baburao, Chief Secretary of Nelakondapally Mandal, Khammam District. Boddu Baburao met journalist Rambabu who is on a relay hunger strike at Khammam Press Club on Thursday and announced his full support. On this occasion, Boddu Baburao reminded that the Congress government has mentioned in its manifesto that it will allot houses to journalists. Similarly, he also recalled the assurances given by Minister Pongileti Srinivasa Reddy and the other two Ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao and Bhatti Vikramarka that they would build houses and plots before the formation of the government in Khammam. But for the journalists, there is a lot of time consuming. Although the previous BRS government allotted 23.02 acres of land to journalists, this government has been criticized for delaying to give and keep the promise. He also expressed suspicion that the minister is encroaching on the land allotted to the journalists by placing a board in the name of government land. If they do not do that, they will assign it to journalists.” They demanded that justice be given to all the qualified journalists and that they should be given the allotted houses. The delay in the issuance of accreditation cards and health cards for the last four years is a proof of the government's incompetence. He said that if the promise is not kept, tomorrow's future will be questionable. He criticized that if the journalists are deceived by repeated assurances, it will suffer the same fate as the previous government. Keeping in view the future, he expressed his support for the hunger strike of journalist Rambabu and asked the ministers of Khammam district to give houses to the journalists and implement the given. Journalist unions have extended their support to Rambabu, a senior journalist who has been on a hunger strike for the past eleven days, and expressed his desire to participate in his struggle and get housing sites. On this occasion, Boddu Baburao wished Rambabu special wishes and success.



He also expressed suspicion that the minister is encroaching on the land allotted to the journalists by placing a board in the name of government land. If they do not do that, they will assign it to journalists.” They demanded that justice be given to all the qualified journalists and that they should be given the allotted houses. The delay in the issuance of accreditation cards and health cards for the last four years is a proof of the government's incompetence. He said that if the promise is not kept, tomorrow's future will be questionable. He criticized that if the journalists are deceived by repeated assurances, it will suffer the same fate as the previous government. Keeping in view the future, he expressed his support for the hunger strike of journalist Rambabu and asked the ministers of Khammam district to give houses to the journalists and implement the given. Journalist unions have extended their support to Rambabu, a senior journalist who has been on a hunger strike for the past eleven days, and expressed his desire to participate in his struggle and get housing sites. On this occasion, Boddu Baburao wished Rambabu special wishes and success.

# Robust Security Arrangements for Sri Rama Navami Celebrations in Bhadrachalam Bhadrachalam Town



Under Surveillance via Drone Cameras and CCTV Special Vigil by 2,000 Police Personnel to Ensure No Inconvenience to Devotees Robust Measures Implemented Under Police Department Leadership in Coordination with Other Departments: SP Rohit Raju. Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadrachalam

Kothagudem Staff Reporter, March 26, Indian Chronicle: District Superintendent of Police (SP) Rohit Raju, IPS, stated that robust security arrangements have been put in place for the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Kalyana Mahotsavam (Divine Wedding Ceremony) scheduled for Friday and the Pattabishekam (Coronation Ceremony) scheduled for Saturday in Bhadrachalam. As part of these arrangements, he noted that stringent surveillance measures—involving special teams—have been established in light of the visit by the Honorable Chief Minister of Telangana State, Mr. Revanth Reddy. He added that comprehensive measures have been undertaken—involving approximately 2,000 police personnel working in coordination with officials from other government departments—to ensure that devotees face absolutely no inconvenience. Furthermore, as a precautionary measure to prevent traffic congestion, the Police Department has specially designed a QR code and an online link for devotees. He stated that the entire town of Bhadrachalam will remain under continuous surveillance through the deployment of drone cameras and CCTV systems. He appealed to the residents of Bhadrachalam town and its surrounding areas to cooperate with the police over these two days by strictly adhering to the traffic restrictions imposed by the authorities. Finally, he urged devotees to immediately dial '100' to avail themselves of police assistance should they encounter any issues or difficulties.

# Pre-school mela held under Saksham Anganwadi initiative,

Focus on child development and parental awareness.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, March 26: A pre-school mela was organised at the Anganwadi centres in Malkapur of Kothapalli mandal on Thursday under the Saksham Anganwadi initiative of the Karimnagar Urban Project.

The programme was inaugurated by 16th Division Corporator Kanthala Jagan Reddy at Malkapur-1 and 2 centres. Officials said that 35 RO plants had been sanctioned as part of efforts to strengthen infrastructure in Anganwadi centres.

Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) Sabitha highlighted the importance of early childhood care and nutrition, and sensitised mothers on child development practices.

As part of the mela, children participated in structured activities including storytelling, songs, and games. P&G Pratham Master Trainer Rajender conducted sessions focusing on five domains of child development.

Report cards assessing the developmental progress of children were distributed by CDPO Sabitha, Corporator Jagan Reddy, and Supervisor Swapna.

Teachers Sushma, Hemalatha, and Lavanya, along with ANMs Saraswati and Aruna, were present.



A large number of parents and children attended the programme.

# District Administration Plans Special Drive to Address Child Welfare Issues in Jawahar Nagar

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 26, (Indian Chronicle): “Medchal-Malkajgiri district: Member of the Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Chandana, stated that the entire district administration must work in coordination to not only protect children in Jawahar Nagar but also ensure a better future for them. A review meeting was held on Thursday at the Collectorate VC Hall in Medchal-Malkajgiri district. Additional Collector Vijender Reddy, Commission members Saritha and Chandana, along with officials from various departments, attended the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Chandana said that during a recent visit to Jawahar Nagar, it was observed that the municipal area consists of nearly 100 colonies, most of which are slum areas. She pointed out that children in these areas are deprived of basic education and adequate healthcare facilities. She expressed concern that even minimum essential services are not reaching the children. She emphasized that these issues must be treated as a first priority and addressed in a phased and planned manner. She stated that coordinated efforts by all departments are essential to safeguard children's rights and ensure their well-being. She suggested launching a special drive with dedicated efforts from all departments, treating the children as their own, to effectively resolve these issues. Chandana instructed officials to collect detailed data on children in the area, including those who are out of school or have dropped out, and submit the reports. She also called for organizing health camps and creating awareness on health and hygiene. She highlighted that many children lack basic documents such as Aadhaar, birth certificates, and caste certificates, and directed the RDO to conduct a special drive to issue these documents. She further noted the prevalence of child labour, child marriages,



child sexual abuse, and school dropouts in the area, and urged concerned departments to address these issues with special focus. The Labour Department was directed to identify child labour cases and submit details. She suggested conducting a special drive similar to Operation Muskaan to identify and rescue child labourers. She added that, if necessary, the Commission would escalate the issues to higher authorities through its Chairman to seek further support. Chandana stressed that departments including GHMC, Revenue, Police, Education, Health, Labour, and Women & Child Welfare must work in coordination to ensure a better future for children in Jawahar Nagar. She assured full support from the Commission. Additional Collector Vijender Reddy stated that the issues in Jawahar Nagar would be addressed through a special drive with complete inter-departmental coordination and necessary support from all departments. DRO Chandravathi, Keesara RDO Rajesh, DEO Vijaya Kumari, DWO Sharada, and officials from Police, Labour, and Health departments, among others, participated in the meeting.

# Your safety is our goal: Vaira ACP Sarangpani

Your safety is our goal and road accidents can be avoided if safety standards are followed, said Vira ACP Sarangpani

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY “ As part of the public governance progress plan undertaken by the state government, with the aim of reaching the destination safely without any loss of life in road accidents, a road safety awareness program was conducted with the sarpanchs of Madhira Rural Police Station as part of the third phase of "Arrive Alive" road safety awareness programs organized by the state government and police department. Vaira ACP, who participated in the program held at the local police station, said that due to lack of awareness about road safety rules, a large number of road accidents are taking place. “He said that by obeying the fixed speed limit, we can save our lives as well as the lives of others. He said accidents are happening due to careless driving, over speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol, lack of use of helmet, seat belt and overtaking. He said that accidents can be reduced only if everyone strictly follows the traffic rules. Driving a vehicle while using a mobile phone is dangerous. On this occasion, everyone was called upon to work together towards the goal of “Safe Journey – Happy Destination”. Similarly, they appealed to spread widely in the villages. If we look at the statistics of road accidents, most of the accidents are due to human negligence, he said. As a part of 'Arrive Alive' programme “He said that villages, towns, mandal centers, national highways and areas where accidents are happening are being identified and special programs are being carried out there. He said that people are being directly met and made aware at



places like schools, colleges, bus stands, hospitals, industries, market areas, temples, prayer halls and function halls. He said that road safety is not the responsibility of the police alone, only the society as a whole can come forward and reduce the accidents. For 'Arrive Alive' to become a movement, He clarified that the goal of the police department is to make this program not just an awareness program but a public movement. He said that real change is possible only if every person obeys the traffic rules and encourages others to do the same. “Madhira Rural Inspector Madhu, Inspector Ramesh, SSI Lakshmi Bhargavi participated in the program.

# Sri Rama Navami Celebrations Held Enthusiastically with Students at Deccan Springs Global School

Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, March 26: The auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami was celebrated with grandeur and devotion at the Deccan Springs Global School campus in Nacharam. Students, teachers, and staff came together to mark the festival with a vibrant display of cultural programs, devotion, and learning. “The celebrations began with a traditional Vedic chanting session, invoking the blessings of Lord Sri Rama. This was followed by melodious devotional songs that resonated throughout the school, creating a serene and spiritual ambiance. Primary school students enthralled the audience with graceful dance performances set to songs praising Lord Sri Rama, showcasing their talent and disci-

pline. Meanwhile, pre-primary students enacted skits from the Ramayana, imparting moral lessons of courage, honesty, and compassion through engaging role-play. The Hanuman Chalisa was recited with heartfelt devotion, adding to the sanctity of the occasion. “The event was graced by Chairman K. Navaneetha Rao, Managing Director K. Naveen Kumar, and Director Dr. Kamala Mohan Rao as chief guests. Addressing the gathering, they highlighted the timeless virtues of Lord Sri Rama—discipline, truthfulness, patience in overcoming challenges, and compassion towards all. They emphasized that these values remain relevant in modern times and serve as

guiding principles for students in shaping their character and life choices. The guests also spoke about the importance of preserving traditional values, familial bonds, and cultural heritage even in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world. “The celebration concluded with the guests extending warm Sri Rama Navami greetings to the entire school community. The campus reverberated with joy, devotion, and the collective spirit of the festival, leaving a lasting impression on students and staff alike. “The event not only reinforced cultural learning but also encouraged students to imbibe the noble qualities exemplified by Lord Sri Rama in their everyday lives. The enthusiastic participation of students and the vibrant decor reflected the

school's commitment to nurturing both academic excellence and moral values.



## Gujarat local body polls in 15 civic bodies, 84 municipalities likely to be announced next month



GNS News Agency, March 26

Gujarat local body pollsThe announcement of the local body elections, which was to be done in March, was delayed due to certain issues raised in the delimitation process in a few districts, sources revealed. AS THE draft voter list by the State Election Commission (SEC) was published on Monday, the schedule for general elections in 15 of the total 17 municipal corporations, along with 84 municipalities, 34 zilla panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats in Gujarat, is likely to be announced in the first week of April. On the basis of the draft voter list, objections and claims will be accepted till March 27 and the final list will be announced. Normally, a period of ten days is required after the draft voter list and the declaration of elections. The announcement of the local body elections, which was to be done in March, was delayed due to certain issues raised in the delimitation process in a few districts, sources revealed. With preparations to declare the election schedule in April first week by the State Election Commission (SEC) nearly complete, the elections will wind up by the first half of May. The draft voter list published on Monday is based on the recent voters' data published after the completion of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) by the office of the Chief Electoral

Officer (CEO) on February 17. As per the data released by the SEC on Monday, the 'Voter Registration Officers' concerned have made the draft publication of the concerned electoral roll at the local level. The total number of voters included in it for the general elections of 15 municipal Corporations is 11039131, 84 Municipalities and by-elections of 13 Seats of 11 Municipalities is 3399330 and 34 district panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats is 27482357 voters.

On February 17, the final list of Gujarat's electoral roll was published with 4.40 crore registered voters. After the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) drive of the voter list which lasted for three and a half months, the final voter list increased from 4,34,70,109 in the draft list to 4,40,30,725 voters in Gujarat. As preparations for the local body elections intensify, sources revealed that the elections will be held in two phases where urban areas-municipal corporations and municipalities — will vote in the first phase and voting for zilla or district panchayats and taluka panchayats will be held in the second phase-all on EVMs. "The delimitation process for Mehsana and Kheda was completed on March 20. The process was revised after some representations were made from these districts in the allocation of seats in certain talukas. This led to verification of bifurcation of seats and re-checking by the respective district collectors. This was expected to be complete by March 11 but was delayed. Following completion of the delimitation process on March 20 night, the draft voter list could be announced today (Monday)," an official told this newspaper. The state government has ruled out the possibility of extending these elections till June. "We saw what happened in June 2025 when polls to 8,000 gram panchayats were held in the month of June amid rains. It was very difficult," a government official added.

## Three pillars, an incomplete Metro line: Why Chingrighata has stalled work

GNS News Agency, March 26

At the busy Chingrighata intersection, three pillars (317, 318, 319) stand prominently along one of Kolkata's most congested corridors. These concrete structures are meant to carry the metro viaduct that will connect the southern suburbs with the IT hub of Salt Lake Sector V. These pillars, spanning a 366m stretch, have effectively become the missing link of the 29.8km Orange Line (Line 6). While Metro services are currently operational from Kavi Subhash (New Garia) up to Belegghata (Hemanta Mukhopadhyay), which is short of 10km from the airport, the corridor cannot extend to Sector V because of the incomplete stretch at Chingrighata. "Every time I pass this junction, I just look at the pillars and wonder when they will finally be connected. The wait seems never-ending," said Shalini Chakraborty, who lives within one kilometre of the intersection.

For those working in the IT hub, the gap represents more than just unfinished construction. "These pillars have become more than just infrastructure for commuters like us who cross the busy signals of Chingrighata daily. It is frustrating that this gap is the only factor preventing a seamless journey from Kavi Subhash to Sector V," said Sector V employee Phalguni Chakladar, a resident of South Kolkata. According to traffic personnel, Chingrighata is one of the city's most high-activity zones, carrying heavy traffic from the IT hub towards south Kolkata as well as the airport. The jurisdictional split adds further to the complexity as one side falls under the Bihannagar Traffic Police while the other is under the Kolkata Police. "Managing fast-moving traffic from the flyover along with pedestrian movement at ground level makes it more difficult," said a traffic personnel on condition of anonymity. "The main diversion has to be implemented by Kolkata Police. Nothing is impossible, but the project has remained in limbo because of some conflict between the state and the Centre," he added. Another traffic official said some infrastructural adjustments could address the problem. "Even an underpass or a 100m diversion connecting to the main road could help resolve the issue," the official said.

The Orange Line, once fully operational, is expected to significantly cut down travel time between south Kolkata and the airport by about 50-60 minutes. The 29.8-km route, connecting Kavi Subhash to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport through New Town, is expected in 2026. "Initially we were aiming for completion by June 2026. But even December 2026 now looks difficult, even if we receive the NOC soon, because the monsoon season is approaching," said a metro official. The delay has also triggered a sparring between ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). While the BJP claims funds are available and accuse the state government of stalling progress, the government has cited safety concerns and demands a permanent pedestrian underpass before metro work.

The Calcutta High Court had earlier fixed February 15, 2026 as the deadline for completing the project. However, the order was challenged in the Supreme Court, with authorities saying that implementing night-time traffic blocks



during major events such as the Ganga Sagar Mela would not be feasible. "For metro construction, this time of the year is the most suitable. However, the entire season was wasted because the matter was in court. Once the monsoon begins, work cannot continue, so the next window to expedite things up will be winter," said a construction staff member. Earlier, the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) had built a 600m diversion road at its own cost to show that traffic could be managed during construction. However, the traffic department maintains that without a permanent pedestrian underpass, the area, already considered an accident-prone "black spot" could become a "death trap".

"We constructed a diversion road and it has been operational for several months," said a Kolkata Metro official. Kolkata Metro's Chief Public Relations Officer S S Kannan said the Chingrighata stretch remains the only bottleneck in completing the metro corridor. "Chingrighata is the only bottleneck in the completion of the Orange Line. We are still waiting for the NOC from Kolkata Traffic Police," he said. Another metro official said that connecting the stretch requires a complete traffic block at night. "For that, Kolkata Police has to give NOC. The state government will have to take a call. As far as the demand for a pedestrian underpass is concerned, that is a recent development and was not part of the original project plan," the official said. Some experts believe the delay might have been avoided with a different engineering approach. According to them, if steel girders had been used as a special span instead of segmental box girders at Chingrighata, metro operations could have started up to Salt Lake Sector V without waiting for this stretch. They also pointed out that cities such as Kanpur and Agra have adopted pre-cast construction techniques to minimise long traffic disruptions. Once these three pillars are finally connected, the 4.4km stretch between Belegghata and Sector V will open, bringing the 29.87km corridor closer to completion and linking it to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport. However, as of March 2026, the unfinished pillars remain a visible reminder of the last stumbling block to connecting south Kolkata with Sector V. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently highlighted a record railway allocation of Rs 2.78 lakh crore and noted that 45km of metro infrastructure has been built in Kolkata over the last 11 years. He also said that the pace of such projects often depends on land availability and cooperation from state authorities.

## Evening OPD at Chandigarh's GMSH-16 witnesses high footfall, service to be extended to Manimajra Civil Hospital

The evening Outpatient Department (OPD) facility at the Government Multi-Specialty Hospital (GMSH), Sector 16, began on February 24, with a positive response to the Health Department's new initiative. In the first week, more than 400 patients used the facility, which is available in the departments of Medicine, Surgery, Orthopaedics, Paediatrics and Gynaecology. The Medicine Department has the highest footfall, with working people using the facility more and gaining access to consultation by specialists, with a decrease of non-critical patients in the Emergency of the GMSH-16. The OPD is from 5 pm to 7 pm, and according to Dr Suman Singh, Director, Health Services, the feedback has been positive, encouraging the Health Department to plan and start the facility in the Manimajra Civil Hospital as well, beginning with the same five departments. With 500 beds, GMSH-16 caters not only to city residents but also receives referral cases from surrounding areas. Officials believe the evening OPD could play a crucial role in distributing patient load more evenly throughout the day and reducing pressure on tertiary care centres in the city. According to the department, the effort is to strengthen public healthcare services and improve accessibility for working individuals and others who find it difficult to seek treatment

during the day.

This year, speciality services were also introduced at the Manimajra Civil Hospital, with psychiatry, dermatology, and paediatrics consultations provided by specialists for two hours at the civil hospital. According to Dr Singh, patients from the area now don't have to be referred to GMSH-16 or GMCH-32 for treatment, saving time and money of patients. Manimajra Civil Hospital currently has a capacity of 100 beds and caters to patients from Manimajra, Panchkula, Kishangarh and several neighbouring areas. The hospital houses departments, including gynaecology, medicine and general wards, along with an emergency unit that has 13 reserved beds. The path has also been cleared for the construction of a 50-bed trauma centre in Manimajra. In February, the department received approval from the Ministry of Health to begin the process of a trauma centre, but the project was delayed due to land allocation issues. Now the Health Department has secured a three-acre vacant plot in front of Manimajra Civil Hospital, where the trauma centre will be built. With the establishment of the Manimajra Trauma Centre, emergency care will become more accessible, reducing travel time and ensuring timely medical intervention for trauma patients.

## 17 hospitalised in Tarapur chemical leak, second such incident this month

GNS News Agency, March 26

At least 17 people were hospitalised after a chemical leak at an industrial unit in the Tarapur Industrial Area on Sunday. This is the second such leak in the area this month highlighting persistent safety concerns in one of Maharashtra's largest chemical manufacturing hubs. The incident occurred between 1.30 pm and 1.45 pm at Aarti Pharma Lab, located at plot D-18. Officials said dimethyl sulphate was being loaded into a tanker when it began leaking through the vent line.

Workers immediately halted operations and initiated containment measures. Caustic soda and other neutralising agents were deployed on the premises under the supervision of senior management. Around 17 people were present at the site at the time. While the situation was brought under control by 2.30 pm, workers began to experience symptoms several hours later. Five to six hours after exposure, workers reported uneasiness, breathing difficulty, burning sensation in the eyes and vomiting," an official said. All affected individuals were admitted to a hospital in Betegaon

and are currently stable, according to Madhav Totewad, Joint Director of Industrial Safety and Health.

The incident has been recorded at the Boisar Police Station, and the process of registering an FIR is underway. The latest incident is the second reported gas leak in the Tarapur-Boisar belt in the past month alone. A recent oleum gas leak on March 2 at Bhageria Industries in Boisar triggered a large-scale evacuation, with over 2,000 people including factory workers and students from nearby schools moved to safety after toxic fumes spread across the area. According to officials, the frequency of such incidents is linked to the high concentration of chemical industries in the Tarapur-Boisar industrial estate, where multiple hazardous units operate in close proximity. Factories in the region routinely handle highly reactive substances such as oleum, chlorine and nitrogen-based compounds, all of which require stringent safety systems and constant monitoring. Regulatory concerns have also been flagged in the past, including observations made before the Bombay High Court and the National Green Tribunal regarding inspection gaps and maintenance of safety systems.

## UK doctor booked over anti-BJP posts says lookout notice has put life in coma

GNS News Agency, March 26

Senior advocate Rajiv Shakhder, along with advocates Ujjwalkumar Chavhan argued that Patil is employed with the National Health Service (NHS) in UK and he has cooperated with the probe. Senior advocate Rajiv Shakhder, along with advocates Ujjwalkumar Chavhan argued that Patil is employed with the National Health Service (NHS) in UK and he has cooperated with the probe. UK-BASED DOCTOR and YouTuber Sangram Patil, booked over anti-BJP posts on Monday, sought to file an affidavit before the Bombay High Court stating his intention to cooperate with the probing agency even after he is permitted to travel back to the UK. Patil argued his "life cannot remain in coma" due to action taken against him.

Maharashtra government, represented by Advocate General Milind Sathe, stated that if an affidavit is filed, the state was "not averse" to considering the same within two weeks. The HC asked Patil to file an affidavit within three days, followed by the state's expeditious consideration within two weeks thereafter. A single-judge bench of Justice Ashwin D Bhohe was hearing a plea by Patil against the FIR and Look Out Circular (LOC) issued against him for allegedly posting objectionable content against BJP leaders. He has denied the allegations of making a post against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Senior advocate Rajiv

Shakhder, along with advocates Ujjwalkumar Chavhan argued that Patil is employed with the National Health Service (NHS) in UK and he has cooperated with the probe. "He has a family (wife and a child) in England and also has patients to look after. He is on a tourist visa and not getting any pay as he cannot work in the UK. The police have not sought custodial interrogation as they do not have material. He cannot live in India for long. As far as the LOC is concerned, my life cannot remain in coma," Shakhder argued. Opposing the plea, AG Sathe claimed the likelihood of spreading hatred between two groups (followers and non-followers) was established in the case and the LOC was also issued considering his non-cooperation. Advocate Aniket Nikam, representing complainant, also opposed the plea. After Shakhder argued that the police had not called Patil since January this year, the judge sought to know what happened in probe from January till date. When the judge sought to know how Patil would secure his presence if allowed to travel to the UK, Shakhder argued that he has a "family of origin," including his parents, and his native place at Jalgaon in Maharashtra. "It'll be a huge leap of faith to say spreading of hatred within groups involves political parties, and it will open pandora's box if the criminal provisions are interpreted in such a way. State cannot conduct fishing and roving inquiry," Shakhder argued.

## Get 'physically, technically and mentally' ready for IPL campaign opener: Ponting to Kings players



GNS News Agency, March 26

The 2025 IPL finalists Punjab Kings, who kicked off their pre-season preparations last week at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh PCA New International Stadium, were joined in by head coach Ricky Ponting for the training camp ahead of their opening match against Gujarat Titans at the Mullanpur Stadium on March 31. In his address to the team, Ponting delivered a clear and motivational message, emphasising process-driven preparation and resilience.

Ponting, who has been at the helm since the 2025

season, urged the group to focus on getting "physically, technically and mentally" ready for the campaign opener on March 31. "This is training, this is preparation. This is about getting ourselves physically, technically and mentally right for that first game on the 31st," Ponting said. "I want you to think back and think what you brought to this team last year and that made us a good team." He stressed that errors are part of the game and acceptable as long as players remain committed to their roles and plans.

"We all make mistakes. That's fine. I will make mistakes on the way through this. You will all make mistakes, you'll drop a catch, you'll play bad shots, you'll bowl a bad over. But as long as you are sticking to what you know and what your game plan is, if you make a mistake, doing that in my eyes is not a mistake. It's just what happens in the game, it's a part of the game," he added. Ponting expressed enthusiasm about reuniting the core group, describing the camp as "the band back together again" with many familiar faces, who were part of the team which lost against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the final by six runs. The team had topped the league stage before they lost against the Bengaluru side in the first play-off before they won against Mumbai Kings in the qualifier 2 to enter the final.

## Data cut after 7 pm, Digital Wellness committee at schools, Aadhaar-enabled login: Karnataka issues draft social media ban policy for children

GNS News Agency, March 26

The Karnataka Government Monday released a draft policy aimed at addressing the growing mental health impact of excessive screen use among school students, following Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's announcement proposing a ban on social media use for children under 16, making it the first state to move towards such a restriction.

The policy, developed jointly by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, the Karnataka State Mental Health Authority (KSMHA), the Department of Education, and NIMHANS, follows consultations with over 70 experts, including health professionals, educators, cybercrime officials, and NGO representatives, in October 2025. The draft policy cites Indian studies which show that nearly 25 per cent of adolescents exhibit signs of internet addiction, with many reporting anxiety, sleep disturbances, and declining academic performance. "There is now an urgent need for teacher and parent training programmes focused on the early identification of digital overuse and related mental health concerns, as well as the promotion of healthy, balanced technology habits in both children and adults," the draft policy reads.

The committee has recommended that the Karnataka Government issue guidelines to schools to constitute a Digital Safety and Wellness Committee, comprising the principal, a counsellor, teachers, a student representative, and a cybercrime police officer. Schools must cap recreational screen time at one hour per day, embed digital literacy into the curriculum, schedule regular tech-free periods, and maintain confidential logs of student referrals to counsellors. According to the draft policy, schools should guide parents on managing screen use at home. The draft



suggests creating tech-free zones, such as bedrooms, dining areas, and vehicles; introducing family "digital fasting" periods; and switching off all screens at least 1 hour before bedtime. Parents should also be encouraged to model responsible screen habits. The committee has further recommended Aadhaar-enabled sign-ups to verify age and authenticity, and to prevent the creation of fake or multiple accounts. It also proposes digital detox weeks or "offline Joy Days" at least once every term, with options such as observing a Digital Detox Day on December 10 or a "No Technology November."

The draft also suggests that schools move away from direct WhatsApp communication with students and instead use traditional diary-based systems. A one-day teacher training programme, organised by NIMHANS and the Health Department, will help educators identify warning signs such as social withdrawal, mood changes, and declining concentration. Teachers will also be introduced to the "5C framework" of technology addiction: Craving, Control, Compulsion, Coping, and Consequences.

## Rs 2 lakh reserved price for new coconut water locations in upcoming Mohali auction

higher reserve price of Rs 3.5 lakh. These include Kamal Mohali Chowk (Wave Estate, Sector 85), park and vegetable market in Sector 88 (near Hero Homes gate), outside the DC Office (Sector 89), near Ajit newspaper office (Sector 91), near Taj Plaza on Airport Road (Sector 118), near Cheema Boilers Limited (Sector 74 A), in front of BSF (Sector 90), near Ambika Flats (Sector 66 B) and Booth Market B Road (Sector 89). Earlier, the civic body had conducted a large-scale auction of vending sites, awarding multiple contracts. However, most contractors allegedly violated the norms by setting up large stalls in no-vending zones along main roads. In several instances, it was found that the vendors were tying stall ropes to the no-vending zone boards and poles. In December 2025, sites worth approximately Rs 1.5 crore were auctioned across 35 designated locations. Out of these, 24 sites were allotted, while the rest remained vacant. The corporation is now preparing to re-auction the remaining sites along with the newly added locations. Notably, no strict action was seen against vendors operating in no-vending zones despite continuous violations since December.

At the time, the Commissioner had categorically said no sites would be allotted on main roads or in no-vending zones. The Mohali MC has reiterated the same condition for the upcoming bidding process. The Assistant Commissioner, Manpreet Singh, said: "We had received complaints regarding stalls being set up in no-vending zones. Some have already been removed, and the rest will be cleared soon. Under no circumstances will new contracts be allotted in no-vending zones." After the recent expansion, the Tehbazari branch has prepared a proposal for new bidding, which will be presented for approval in the upcoming House meeting.

GNS News Agency, March 26

The Mohali Municipal Corporation has initiated preparations for fresh bidding of coconut water vending sites in the newly added areas, following the recent expansion of the civic body limit. The reserved price for new places was fixed at Rs 2 lakh, while the existing locations' reserved price was fixed at Rs 3.5 lakh. The civic body has also announced that all the existing stalls operating in no-vending zones along the major roads will be removed and it will allot no new sites in the restricted areas. The newly proposed sites with a reserve price of Rs 2 lakh include locations such as Aero City Airport Road (Slip Road) in Sector 82 (Block B), JLPL Market (Sector 82), near ISB on Airport Road (Sector 81), near Medison Flats (Sector 82 A), near Royal Towers at Kamal Mohali Chowk (Sector 86), near White City residential plots (Sector 92) and Fateh Burj Road, Ladran (Sector 93).

Meanwhile, existing prime locations were assigned a

## 'A strong swimmer, a powerhouse': SPS Garcha says drones deployed to search for missing rally ace Hari Singh in Maldives

GNS News Agency, March 26

SPS Garcha, president of the Chandigarh Motorsport Association, said Monday that drones are being used to search for veteran rally driver Hari Singh, who went missing after a speedboat accident in the Maldives. Search operations have now been extended for a few more days. The accident occurred last Thursday and there were seven people, including Raymond Group's Gautam Singhanian, Hari Singh and Arjuna awardee Commander Mahesh Ramchandran, onboard the vessel. Two women from the UK and Russia, and two other Indian men, were also on board.

The accident occurred approximately 2 nautical miles southwest of Keyodhoo or Felidhoo Island. While Singhanian and four others were rescued, Singh, 59, has been untraceable since the early hours of March 19, when the speedboat carrying him and others overturned near the area. According to Garcha, drones are being deployed daily until midnight over the next three days as part of intensified search efforts. "Earlier, the search was to be discontinued, but somehow four more days have been granted. Drones will scan the area, while the Maldives' coast guard is also looking for him. Search is also on along the shore in case he drifted," he said, adding that no concrete information has emerged so far.

On the ground, the search is being coordinated by Hari's close friend Jagwant Singh Gill, along with his son Mivaan Singh, who is in the Maldives. "The family is holding up bravely, but as hours pass, their hopes also take a hit. Still, they are hoping for a miracle," Garcha said. Recalling his long association with Hari, Garcha said he had known him for years and remained in touch over motorsport discussions. "He is extremely fit, a very strong swimmer, a powerhouse. Hari started his rally career with my team and went on to achieve so much. He is like a son to me," he said. However, he pointed out that the conditions in the waters where the accident occurred remain challenging. "There are strong undercurrents, coral formations, and large marine life, including sharks, in that area. These factors make the situation difficult despite his swimming ability," he said. Hari Singh, fondly known as the "Gypsy King", began his rallying career in 1990 with the Himalayan Car Rally and went on to become a five-time Indian National Rally Champion. Driving for the J K Tyre Rally Team, he also won the inaugural Asia Zone Rally Championship and represented India in international events, including the ASEAN and SAARC rallies. Later, he took on mentoring roles and remained closely associated with motorsport. Beyond his achievements, Garcha described him as a kind and helpful person. "If he saw someone stranded on the road, he would always stop to help. That was his nature," he said.

## Karnataka grants Rs 10 crore more for Wayanad landslide rehabilitation; BJP slams 'Keralam CM Shri Siddaramaiah'

habilitation of 100 families affected by landslide in Meppadi, Wayanad district". The latest grant was provisioned in the third and final instalment of the supplementary estimates—aggregated to Rs 14,767.89 crore—for the 2025-26 fiscal year, tabled in the Assembly on Monday.

In an X post on Tuesday, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka criticised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the allotment. Calling him the "Keralam chief minister", the BJP leader alleged that the grant allotted for rehabilitation work in Priyanka Gandhi's constituency was meant to "please high command leaders and save his chair". "If Karnataka had a chief minister as broad-hearted and sensitive as Keralam Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah, every constituency would have received ample grants. Unfortunately, Kannadigas are not as fortunate as the people of Keralam," Ashoka said. The Siddaramaiah Government has also drawn flak in the past for releasing compensation for an elephant attack victim from Wayanad in February 2024. The elephant captured and radio-collared by the forest department had trampled a person in Wayanad district, which shares its northern border with Karnataka. The Government had announced Rs 15 lakh in compensation for the victim, drawing flak from the BJP. Wayanad was then represented in Parliament by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

GNS News Agency, March 26

The Karnataka Government's decision to release an additional Rs 10-crore grant for the rehabilitation of families affected by the 2024 landslide at Meppadi in Kerala's Wayanad district, which falls under Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi's Lok Sabha constituency, has come under fire from the Opposition BJP. This is the second time this fiscal year that the Congress Government has provided rehabilitation funds for the neighbouring state. In the first instalment of the supplementary estimates for 2025-26, presented in August 2025, the Government allotted Rs 10 crore "for re-

## Four workers killed, 12 injured as cold storage unit collapses in Prayagraj; PM, Yogi announce ex gratia

At least four workers were killed and 12 others injured after a part of a cold storage facility collapsed in Phaphamau area in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj district on Monday, police said, adding the facility is owned by former Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Ansar Ahmad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the incident and have announced financial assistance to the injured and ex gratia for the kin of the deceased. According to police, initially a corner of the roof caved in, leading to the collapse of half of the structure, trapping the workers under the debris. Rescue teams, including personnel from the police, NDRF, SDRF and the fire brigade were rushed to the site, and an intensive rescue operation was launched. The exact cause of the collapse is yet to be determined and an inquiry is underway, police said. Prayagraj Police Commissioner Jogendra Kumar said that a total of 16 people were rushed to the hospital, of whom four succumbed to injuries. The remaining 12 are currently undergoing treatment. Those who sustained minor injuries were administered medical aid and later

discharged, police added. A preliminary probe has revealed that the cold storage facility was being operated by former Samajwadi Party MLA Ansar Ahmad after obtaining the requisite licence from the department concerned, police said, adding that the manner in which the licence was granted will also come under scrutiny in light of concerns that the building did not meet prescribed construction standards. District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma said that rescue operations were still underway and necessary arrangements were being made to facilitate operations at night. Expressing grief over the loss of lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the PM National Relief Fund to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured. In the post on X, he said, "Deeply saddened by the mishap due to the collapse of a building in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. My thoughts are with the affected people and their families in this difficult hour. May those injured recover at the earliest." Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each for the bereaved families.

## As Bengaluru hotels cut menus amid LPG crisis, how this restaurant is using 8 tonnes of city waste to take on more cooking



GNS News Agency, March 26

Even as many restaurants in Bengaluru cut their menus and scramble for alternative fuel amid a shortage of commercial LPG linked to the conflict in West Asia, one chain is expanding its cooking operations and supplying food to its 59 outlets across the city. At the iconic Empire Hotel's Koramangala branch, operations remain unaffected. In 2023, the restaurant switched to biomethane as its main cooking fuel through a tie-up with a civic waste management unit located next door.

A biomethane plant at the Kasa Rasa waste management unit, built to process eight tonnes of wet waste into biogas, supplies about 120 kg of biomethane daily to the Empire Hotel on one of South Bengaluru's busiest "eat streets." "We are facing an LPG problem across our outlets and only the Koramangala unit is self-sustained because of the biomethane supply contract with the BBMP waste disposal plant located next door. Our entire cooking is with biogas," said Abdul Gaffar, a cluster manager for the NKP Empire Hotel Group. "We are using the biogas to even cook our biryani for other outlets at present. We are using the Koramangala unit to cook food for the other outlets since there is a guaranteed supply of cooking fuel," Gaffar said. How the Koramangala biomethane plant works: The biomethane plant at the Koramangala waste disposal unit, set up by the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike in collaboration with bioenergy start-up Carbon Masters, the Koramangala Residents Association, and the NGO Sahaas, was funded through CSR support from tech firm CGI, which invested Rs 2.4 crore in the project.

The plant processes eight tonnes of segregated wet waste every day, producing about 120 kg of odourless biomethane. This gas is supplied to the Empire Hotel next door via a pipeline. An additional five-tonne-per-day waste-processing unit was inaugurated on March 21, as demand among Bengaluru restaurants for alternatives to LPG, including biomethane cylinders, grows. "For five tonnes of input processes, the capital will be about Rs 2.6 crore. This was the cost that was tendered (when the Koramangala plant was set up five years ago). As you scale, the cost will come down. If you set up a 100-tonne plant as per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs estimate, the cost is Rs 32 crore," said Som Narayan, the co-founder of Carbon Masters. Carbon Masters also operates a 50-tonne-per-day waste processing unit on the outskirts of Bengaluru. This facility is set to be scaled up to 200 tonnes and is expected to produce nearly 10,000 kg of biogas for supply. For the first time in South India, the gas will be distributed through a completed GAIL pipeline.

Carbon Masters is also setting up a 1,000-tonne-per-day waste-to-energy plant at one of Bengaluru's largest waste disposal units in Kasavanahalli, on the city's outskirts. The project is being developed in collaboration with civic authorities and Saataram Alternate Fuel Energy Pvt Ltd.

"If all stakeholders get together, then the problem India faces of disposing 62 million tonnes of waste that is being produced can be solved, where it can be processed into useful climate-friendly products showcasing a circular economy model," Narayan said. According to Narayan, biomethane can reduce costs by up to 15 per cent compared to LPG, especially when supplied through pipelines. It also offers environmental benefits by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and helping divert municipal waste. However, the fully operational biomethane plant at the Koramangala waste disposal unit, which supplies gas to the Empire Hotel, is relatively small compared to larger waste-to-energy projects yet to become operational across Bengaluru.

From pilot project to growing demand "At present, we generate 300 cubic metres of raw gas and after purification, around 170 to 180 cubic metres of pure methane

(around 120 kg) is obtained and supplied to the Empire Hotel," said Manjunath, the Carbon Masters plant manager at Koramangala.

"BBMP gives us eight tonnes of segregated wet waste. We shred the waste into small pieces and send it for anaerobic digestion. During anaerobic digestion, gas is produced. Methane is produced along with unwanted gases," he said. He said the gas is first sent to a storage balloon, where it is held before being purified to remove unwanted components such as hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide, leaving only methane. The methane is then stored, compressed, and supplied to the Empire Hotel under a commercial contract for cooking, he added. "We did the initial pilot where we were able to show them that organic waste, instead of being sent to landfills, can be converted into bio-CNG, which can be used for cooking by nearby restaurants," said Narayan about the early days of biomethane production.

"If the CSR funding takes care of the capital that is needed for starting the project, then the bio CNG production at the plant can take care of the operational costs and can be competitive versus LPG," he added. Amid the conflict in West Asia and the resulting shortage of commercial LPG, Carbon Masters, co-founded by Som Narayan and a US-based partner, has been flooded with requests from restaurants for biogas supply.

"There are normal restaurants that you would never have imagined would use green energy that are moving from fossil fuel to carbon-lite fuels," Narayan said. "If you see some of our smaller restaurant customers, there are people using one cylinder or two cylinders per day, but there is so much demand right now." Compared to just three years ago, when Carbon Masters struggled to scale production, the current surge in demand is now driving the expansion of waste-to-energy enterprises, Narayan said. "It has been a challenge to scale in terms of making the gas available. Right now, restaurants are continuously calling. Back then, it was very hard. We got the initial buyers after a lot of effort. Now, India has passed a blending mandate. GAIL has become our customer, so we have a situation where the distributing company is itself buying gas from us," Narayan said. "The cost of setting up a plant depends on the scale. For a larger plant processing 150 to 200 tonnes of waste per day, if the municipal authority provides the land and ensures feedstock delivery with a processing fee of around Rs 1,000-1,500 per tonne, I think private investors will come in and the government will not have to pay even the capital," the Carbon Masters co-founder said. "If you do two small plants like five tonnes and 10 tonnes, it is not viable to recover the capital. In the case of small plants, the capital has to be paid through some kind of CSR or financing from the government," he said. Narayan said there are three key components involved. The first is pre-processing the feedstock, since cleaner input material reduces the cost of extracting biogas. The second major cost is the anaerobic digesters, which are essentially RCC reactors. The third is the refinery unit, which separates and purifies the gas. "Bio methane is on par with LPG prices, and in use, it can provide a lot of savings, like, for instance, if the customer is not using it on a cylinder basis, then the pricing is for the amount of gas that is used. There is no waste like in LPG cylinders. I would say there is about 15 per cent saving with bio methane when you compare it to LPG," Narayan indicated.

Around 12,000 kg of bio-CNG produced annually at the Koramangala plant for supply to Hotel Empire under a commercial contract in 2023 was estimated by some experts to be equivalent to about 600 LPG cylinders, or roughly 11,000 kg of commercial LPG. Government push and expansion vision Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, whose constituency includes the Koramangala waste disposal unit, inaugurated a five-tonne-per-day waste-to-energy processing unit at the plant on March 21. "Initially, the processing capacity was eight tonnes of garbage per day. Today, we have inaugurated an additional five tonnes, taking the total capacity to 13 tonnes of wet waste being processed daily to produce gas," Reddy said. "In Bengaluru, at least 2,500 to 3,000 tonnes of wet waste is generated every day. Most of it is dumped in yards along with dry waste, leading to problems such as foul smells, mosquito breeding, and contamination of water sources. If we properly utilise wet waste like this, about half of the city's waste can be managed efficiently," he said. "If we replicate this model in two or three locations in every Assembly constituency in Bengaluru, the city will not face a waste problem at all," Reddy said.

## A Tesla wrapped in art: Bengaluru exhibition reimagines future through renewables and AI



Photography also has a prominent place at the display this year. One exhibit, Bengaluru In Focus, has placed dozens of photographs of the city throughout the venue, ranging from the city's natural landscapes to cultural and architectural landmarks,

GNS News Agency, March 26

From terracotta sculptures and cinema-inspired installations to a decorated Tesla and the deep archives of old Bangalore, the eighth edition of the Whitefield Art Collective has transformed VR Bengaluru into a sprawling gallery. Backed by the Yuj Foundation, the festival features over 300 individual items under the timely theme "Tomorrow, Altered". Inaugurated on March 13 by Grammy-winning musician Ricky Kej, the collective highlights artists from local institutions like the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath and will remain open to visitors until April 12. The message:

sustainability and renewable energy Curator Sumi Gupta emphasises that the theme is a call to action. "Unless we make changes now, our future has already been altered," she says. "We want to drive the message of being sustainable and protecting the planet for the generations to come.

A standout centrepiece is Kala Car, a recurring festival favourite. This year, Gujarat-based artist Mittal Sojitra has decorated a Tesla with intricate art evoking various forms of renewable energy, blending cutting-edge technology with traditional aesthetic appeal. Cinema, AI, and photography The collective features works from artists of international renown. Gita Hudson returns with Cinema Reimagined, an installation that uses discarded DVD discs to explore the visual language of film. Nearby, German-born artist Nele Martens showcases her versatility through a series of works ranging from delicate ceramics to industrial metal. The intersection of technology and art is further explored in Echoes of the Original, a piece by Mansi Pipaliya of Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath that features several AI-generated interpretations of a single painting. Similarly, The Endless Merge by JD School of Design contrasts organic life with industrial waste, reassembling computer components around living plants.

Photography also has a prominent place at the display this year. One exhibit, Bengaluru In Focus, has placed dozens of photographs of the city throughout the venue, ranging from the city's natural landscapes to cultural and architectural landmarks, while a UNESCO-partnered exhibit focuses on nature from around the world, with an emphasis on marine life. A unique exhibit from the MOD Foundation will also be of interest to history enthusiasts – from memories such as a news article on the Vrishabhavathi Riverto the pre-independence Mysore Gazetteer, alongside posters tracing the growth of the city all the way from 1537. The Whitefield Literary Society will host literary panels and workshops from March 20 to 29. Various other events will also take place, including workshops on topics such as resin art and clay modelling.

## Trump announces 'very good' Iran talks denied by Tehran



GNS News Agency, March 26

The surprise disclosure — denied by Tehran, which accused Mr. Trump of manipulating energy markets — came ahead of a Monday (March 23, 2026) night deadline imposed by Mr. Trump for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz shipping lane or see the US "obliterate" its power plants. Oil prices fell and stock markets jumped as observers scrambled to interpret Mr. Trump's statements despite the Iranian denial. Axios, citing an unnamed Israeli official, identified Mr. Trump's interlocutor as Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's speaker of parliament and one of its most prominent non-clerical figures.

The outlet and newswire Reuters reported U.S. negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner may meet an Iranian delegation for talks in Pakistan as soon as this week, with Vice President J.D. Vance possibly joining. White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt did not deny the reports, saying "speculation about meetings should not be deemed as final until they are formally announced by the White House." Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday (March 23, 2026) said he spoke with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, promising Islamabad's help bringing peace to the region.

But Mr. Ghalibaf said on X that "no negotiations" were underway, insisting Mr. Trump was seeking "to manipulate the financial and oil markets." Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said messages were received from "some friendly countries indicating a U.S. request for negotiations aimed at ending the war", but denied any such talks had taken place. Iran's official IRNA agency reported. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had spoken to Mr. Trump and acknowledged the United States thought a deal was possible, but vowed to continue striking Iran and Lebanon to protect Israel. "Trump believes there is a chance to leverage the tremendous achievements of the IDF and the US military... in an agreement," he said. "At the same time, we continue to strike both in Iran and in Lebanon." "Trump blinked" On a day of whirlwind developments, Iran's neighbours breathed a sigh of relief after Mr. Trump stepped back from his threat to target Iranian power infrastructure. Tehran had vowed to deploy naval mines and

target power and water infrastructure across the region in retaliation, threatening to escalate an energy crisis of already historic proportions.

"Trump blinked first — out of a clear understanding that striking Iran's energy infrastructure would trigger a direct and significant retaliation," Danny Citrinowicz, a security analyst and former Israeli intelligence Iran expert, wrote on X. Mr. Trump said his administration was holding talks with an unidentified "top person," but not the country's supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, who is believed to be injured. He described the individual as "very reasonable," while warning if talks failed in the next five days, "we'll just keep bombing our little hearts out." Thousands of U.S. Marines are headed to the Middle East, reinforcing America's presence amid weekend speculation that Mr. Trump was mulling ground operations either to seize Iranian oil assets or to forcibly reopen the Strait of Hormuz. 'Major threat' to economy

Since the war erupted, Tehran has retaliated against U.S.-Israeli attacks by throttling traffic through the Strait, a conduit for one-fifth of global crude, and by hitting Gulf energy sites and U.S. embassies as well as targets in Israel. International Energy Agency chief Fatih Birol warned if the war is protracted, daily oil losses would pave the way for a crisis worse than the combined impact of both 1970s oil shocks and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Oil prices have been driven above \$100 a barrel by the conflict, but they tumbled sharply after Trump's announcements, while European stocks rebounded. Wall Street also closed up. International benchmark Brent crude plunged some 10% to around \$100 per barrel. Mr. Trump said there were already "major points of agreement" with the Iranian negotiators. U.S. conditions included Iran abandoning any nuclear ambitions and giving up its enriched uranium stockpiles, he said.

Lebanon ground campaign Mr. Trump has offered shifting timelines and objectives for the war, saying on Friday (March 20, 2026) he was considering "winding down" the operation — only to later threaten Iran's power plants, of which it has more than 90. Mr. Netanyahu has spoken of a long-term campaign against Iran's government, a sponsor of Hamas, which launched the October 7, 2023 attack that triggered the Gaza war.

In Lebanon, Israel has expanded its ground campaign against Iran-backed Hezbollah, warning of "weeks of fighting," striking southern Beirut again Monday and claiming to capture two Hezbollah fighters. Israel reported a new wave of missiles fired from Iran early Tuesday (March 24, 2026). Israel's attacks in Lebanon have killed more than 1,000 people and displaced more than a million, Lebanon's Health Ministry said. The war has killed at least 3,230 Iranians, including 1,406 civilians, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. AFP cannot access strike sites nor independently verify tolls in Iran.

## Centre to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act



The Union government is likely to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act in the ongoing session of Parliament session. One of the key changes proposed is the appointment of a "designated authority" to take over, manage or dispose of assets created out of foreign funds by an NGO or association, which has had its FCRA registration suspended, cancelled, or not renewed.

Another proposed amendment is expanding the definition of "key functionary" of an NGO beyond an "office bearer/director" to include directors; partners; trustees; the karta (head) of a Hindu Undivided Family; office-bearers or members of the governing body or managing committee of a society, trust, trade union or association; and any other person who has control over or responsibility for the management or affairs of such an organisation. The amendment also proposes to make key functionaries liable for offences under the FCRA, unless they can provide evidence of lack of knowledge, or due diligence. Registration under the FCRA is mandatory for a non-government organisation to receive foreign funds. Till now, the 2010 parent Act only had the provision to regulate the flow of foreign funds, and not the statutory framework to manage the assets created out of such funds.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 also proposes to amend Section 43 of the parent Act,

which will require any law enforcement agency or State government to seek prior approval of the Central government for initiation of investigation into FCRA-related complaints. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill circulated among members of Lok Sabha by Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that, at present, approximately 16,000 associations are registered under the FCRA and they receive around ₹22,000 crore annually.

It said that the FCRA, 2010 regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution and foreign hospitality to ensure that such inflows do not adversely affect national interest, public order, or national security. The Act came into force on May 1, 2011 and has been amended in the years 2016, 2018, and 2020. "Over the period, certain operational and legal gaps have been identified, particularly in relation to the management of foreign contribution and assets created therefrom in cases where registration is cancelled, surrendered or otherwise ceases," the statement said.

Section 15 of the Act provides for vesting of assets, but the absence of a comprehensive framework for supervision, management and disposal of such assets has led to administrative uncertainty and scope for misuse, it said. "Further, multiplicity of investigations, inconsistency in penalties, absence of timelines for utilisation, lack of express provision for cessation of registration, and ambiguity regarding treatment of assets during suspension have resulted in implementation challenges," the statement further said. The Bill also proposes timelines for the receipt and utilisation of foreign contributions under prior permission, automatic cessation of certificates upon expiry or non-renewal, clearer rules on asset handling during suspension, and rationalised penalties. The Bill proposes to reduce the maximum imprisonment for FCRA offences from five years to one year. It proposes fixed timelines for the utilisation of foreign funds received under the "prior permission" category (one-time receipt of funds), unlike the open-ended provision under the 2010 Act.

## Netanyahu says spoke with Trump, vows to protect Israel's interests

GNS News Agency, March 26

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday (March 23, 2026) that he spoke with Donald Trump, saying that the U.S. President believed U.S.-Israeli military gains in Iran could be converted into a negotiated agreement that protected Israel's interests. "President Trump believes there is a chance to leverage the tremendous achievements of the IDF and the U.S. military in order to realise the war's objectives in an agreement - an agreement that will safeguard our vital interests," Mr. Netanyahu said in a video statement. "We will protect our vital interests under any circumstances," he said, adding: "At the same time, we continue to strike both in Iran and in Lebanon." Mr. Netanyahu reiterated that the ongoing strikes were "crushing the missile programme and the nuclear programme" of Iran and also "inflicting heavy damage on Hezbollah".

"Just a few days ago we eliminated two more (Iranian) nuclear scientists, and this is not the end," he said. Mr. Netanyahu's comments came shortly after Trump announced "very good" talks with an unnamed Iranian official.

Mr. Trump's sudden turn to diplomacy came just hours ahead of his now-postponed Monday night ultimatum for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz shipping lane — or else see the U.S. military "obliterate" its power plants. The



"Just a few days ago we eliminated two more (Iranian) nuclear scientists, and this is not the end," he said. Mr. Netanyahu's comments came shortly after Trump announced "very good" talks with an unnamed Iranian official.

Axios news outlet, citing an unnamed Israeli official, named Mr. Trump's interlocutor as Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's Speaker of Parliament, who is one of the most prominent non-clerical figures in Tehran. But Mr. Ghalibaf said "no negotiations" were underway in a post on X.

## Siemens CEO says customers holding back on investments due to Iran war



German industrial giant Siemens said on Monday that the Iran war has led to customers holding back on new investments as prices increase for raw materials and energy. The war has nearly halted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, which handles about 20% of global oil and liquefied natural gas flows, as well as damaged major energy facilities in the Gulf. Brent crude futures have jumped 56% since the start of the conflict.

"Growth is throttled because of price increases. You see ... customers holding back their investments. For example, oil and gas customers or petroleum customers who were planning maybe a new plant... so it means investments are slowing down," CEO Roland Busch told reporters on Monday. Busch was speaking on the sidelines of the annual Siemens Tech Summit in Beijing, where the company announced it would expand its industrial artificial intelligence partnership with Chinese tech giant Alibaba.

## Trump sends mixed signals on Iran



When the U.S. and Israel launched their war on Iran on February 28, U.S. President Donald Trump said overthrowing the Iranian government was his objective, and told Iranians their freedom was in their hands. The Iranian government did not just survive the initial blow, but retaliated with missile and drone attacks at Israel and across the Persian Gulf, targeting American bases in the region. The U.S. and Israel continued their air strikes, and Iran kept retaliating. Three weeks later, neither side seems interested in taking an off ramp.

Mr. Trump has declared victory several times over the past week. He said the U.S. was very close to meeting its military objectives such as destroying Iran's navy, air force and missile capabilities. Both the Pentagon and the Israel Defence Forces had earlier claimed that they had targeted most of Iran's missile launchers. But despite such claims, Iran continued to launch missiles and drones. Last week, Israel attacked Iran's South Pars gas field, and Tehran retaliated by targeting energy facilities in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Israel. After the Iranian retaliation, Mr. Trump distanced himself from the South Pars attack, saying Israel would not target the Iranian oil field again, and warned Iran against attacking Qatar's gas facilities any more. Israel then struck Iran's Natanz nuclear plant. In response, Iranian missiles targeted Dimona, which hosts Israel's nuclear facilities.

Mr. Trump faces a dilemma here. Oil and gas prices are rising. A prolonged war, which is unpopular at home, could come with a political cost. He claimed victory several times, but Iran refused to budge and is still firing. So the claims of dismantling Iran's capabilities sound hollow. A bigger challenge is the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime chokepoint which the Iranians have effectively shut after the war broke out. Mr. Trump earlier sought help from his allies in Europe and Asia, as well as China to open the Strait. While no country was willing to join his war, he said the U.S. did not want anybody's help. And then, in another social media post, he called America's NATO allies "cowards" for not sending help. It now increasingly looks like reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which was open before the war broke out, has become the main objective of the ongoing war effort. The U.S. media reported that the Trump administration is sending additional marines to West Asia in pos-

Siemens will provide 26 new services spanning industrial infrastructure, automation and AI-powered applications to Alibaba Cloud customers. But Busch noted that some Chinese partners have been reluctant to share real-world data crucial for training and fine-tuning its models due to concerns about IP issues. "Most of our foundational models, they are so far trained on publicly available data, they haven't seen industrial data yet. This is a big step up to tune models," he said. "We want data to travel across borders and the Chinese government, at least for industrial and machine data, has allowed the possibility (for data) to travel across borders."

China has imposed strict cross-border data transfer laws for national security purposes, but some European firms have been granted exemptions on a limited case-by-case basis. Busch said Siemens developers prefer to use Chinese open-source AI models over their closed-source U.S. rivals for certain tasks related to training industrial AI models because of their cheaper token cost and customisable parameters. A token is the smallest unit of data processed by AI models. Six out of the top ten most widely used large language models worldwide are Chinese, according to the token usage ranking scoreboard of OpenRouter, a unified public interface for AI models. Some Western think tanks have warned about the security risks of reliance on Chinese open-source models, as well as their political bias towards Chinese government positions. Chinese open-source AI models, led by Qwen and DeepSeek, have gained significant traction in the U.S., with some estimates suggesting that around 80% of U.S. AI startups now use them.

sible preparation for a ground offensive. On March 23, Mr. Trump threatened to bomb Iran's power plants unless the Strait is opened in 48 hours. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has responded saying any attack on Iran's power facilities would trigger immediate retaliation against power plants across the Persian Gulf. In the face of Iran's threats, Mr. Trump said on Monday that he would halt attacks on Iran's power facilities for five days. India's response This is worrying for the global economy, particularly for India which is dependent on imports to meet most of its energy requirements. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 21 spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and urged for "freedom of navigation", indicating India's growing concern over disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. Mr. Pezeshkian, on his part, referred to the current presidency of India in the BRICS and said it should play an "independent role" in bringing the attacks by the U.S. and Israel to a "halt". India's position since the war broke out has triggered intense debates in the country. New Delhi condemned Iran's attacks on Gulf states, but not the strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran, including the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, on February 28. India also co-sponsored a UN Security Council resolution that only condemned strikes by Iran on its neighbours. But the government is now emphasising the need to avoid attacking civilian infrastructure "across the region". Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, a former ambassador and expert on West Asia, writes in The Hindu that New Delhi's Iran policy may be influenced by U.S.-Israel dynamics in the war. The American conservative commentator, who says his worldview is shaped by his Christian faith, has emerged as one of the most influential critics of U.S. interventionist foreign policy, Washington's support for Tel Aviv, and, more specifically, Israel's war in Palestine and the ongoing U.S.-Israel attack on Iran, writes Varghese K. George.

2. Iran and the politics of martyrdom

By assassinating Khamenei, Larijani and others, the U.S. and Israel have elevated them, in the eyes of their supporters, to a higher realm of martyrdom, writes Stanly Johny

3. Sri Lanka looks to India-backed Trincomalee project amid energy crisis

Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath terms redevelopment of storage wells the 'permanent solution' to managing energy crisis, reports Meera Srinivasan.

4. South Pars | Same field, two fates

An Israeli attack on a gas field straddling the Persian Gulf and Iran's counterstrikes have laid bare how fragile the world's energy security really is, writes V. Nivedita.

5. Blockade on Cuba: Asphyxiating an island nation Cuba's dependence on oil is structural: it accounts for 83% of total power generation, while oil products make up 56% of total energy consumption by industry, transport, agriculture, and households, writes Srinivasan Ramani.

## OpenAI warns Microsoft ties pose risk ahead of potential IPO: Report



OpenAI said its close ties with Microsoft could be a potential risk to its business, telling investors that "the software company is responsible for a substantial portion of our financing and compute," CNBC reported on Monday.

OpenAI included sections titled "Risks Related to the Transaction" and "Risks Related to our Business", the report said, citing a financial document that resembles an IPO prospectus, which OpenAI shared with prospective investors tied to its recent record financing round. The company is working with banking partners to secure an additional \$10 billion in commitments from a broader pool of investors, the report said, adding that the round is on track to close by the end of March. If Microsoft modifies or terminates its commercial partnership with us, or if we are unable to successfully diversify our business partners, our business, prospects, operating results, and financial condition could be adversely affected," OpenAI said in the document viewed by CNBC. Microsoft is and will remain a

critical long-term partner", an OpenAI spokesperson said in an emailed statement to Reuters, adding that the disclosure was a standard legal risk factor and not related to any potential IPO prospectus. OpenAI is laying the groundwork for an initial public offering that could value the company at up to \$1 trillion with an expected listing as soon as the second half of 2026, Reuters reported last year, citing three people familiar with the matter. Microsoft was one of OpenAI's earliest investors, injecting \$1 billion in 2019 and \$10 billion at the beginning of 2023. In September, the two signed a non-binding deal under new relationship terms, paving the way for OpenAI to sign deals with SoftBank, Nvidia, and Amazon.

## Cold storage at Madhira in Khammam collapses after on fire for two days

Khammam: A five-storeyed cold storage that caught fire on Saturday evening at Athkur near Madhira town in the district collapsed on Monday. The fire was said to have been caused due to an electric short-circuit; firefighters tried to control the fire for the past couple of days but in vain. As there were no means to bring the fire under control or to salvage the farm produce in the cold storage, firefighters stopped their operations on Sunday evening. It was said that around 12,500 quintals of chilli belonging to over 300 farmers from Bonakal and Madhira mandals in Telangana and Gampalagudem in Andhra Pradesh were stored in the facility.

# Heart disease kills 28.6 lakh Indians every year and yet, treatment is uneven and erratic

On a cold February morning, Jassuram Khanna, a farmer from Sujau village in Chakrata in Uttarakhand, felt a tightness in his chest on his way to the market. After waiting a few minutes, he called his son Suresh to come and take him to the doctor. They hired a private car and went to the local Primary Health Centre (PHC), where the health worker checked his blood pressure and sent him to Vikasnagar, a nearby Tehsil town.

On reaching Vikasnagar's Community Health Centre (CHC), 55 km away, they found no doctor there. Finally, at around 3 pm, they found help at the Swami Vivekanand Charitable Hospital in Dharamwala, about 70 km from their hometown. This is where Jassuram finally got an electrocardiogram (ECG) done, which indicated he had suffered a heart attack. The doctors rushed him for an angiography, where they found he had a 100% blockage in one of his heart vessels. They performed an angioplasty where a balloon was sent to the blocked heart blood vessel to widen it, and a mesh tube called a stent was placed there. The time taken from his first symptoms at 10:30 am to his first ECG was 4.5 hours, and it would be another 40 minutes before he the angioplasty procedure was done. The ideal time that guidelines recommend for a patient with a heart attack to get an ECG and have it interpreted is 10 minutes of contact with a medical team.

While poor access to healthcare in rural India is a well-known fact, does living in a city guarantee timely care? In December 2025, Usha Amin, a retired teacher, felt breathless for two consecutive days on her morning walk; she found her pulse to be 33 on her electronic BP machine (normal pulse being 60-80beats/min). Alarmed, she called her son and rushed to the nearest multispecialty hospital in Thane, which falls in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. An ECG showed Usha had developed a third degree heart block, a serious condition where the electrical signals from the upper chambers of the heart are completely blocked from reaching the lower chambers of the heart that can lead to cardiac arrest. However the doctor on duty informed them that the cardiologist was unavailable at the moment. Since Amin looked stable, the family was told that there was no need to worry, and she was advised to schedule an appointment with the cardiologist and return the next day. Amin's daughter, an occupational therapist, realised the possible gravity of the extremely low pulse rate and asked them to go to another hospital's emergency department, which correctly diagnosed her. They immediately admitted her and fitted her with a temporary pacemaker and scheduled her for surgery to fit a permanent pacemaker the next day. "I feel extremely lucky that my mother did not face complications due to the delay, and we could refer her to another hospital," her daughter Kritika Amin said.

?Heart disease is the most common cause of death

in India, accounting for 28.6 lakh deaths according to the Global Burden of Disease, 2021. It is estimated that nearly 27% of all deaths in India are due to heart disease, while 62% of all deaths due to cardiovascular disease (CVD) in the country are premature between the ages of 40 and 69 years. In 2014, the World Economic Forum and Harvard School of Public Health estimated India's economic loss due to CVD between 2012 and 2030 to be approximately \$2.17 trillion—about half of India's 2025 GDP of \$4.5 trillion. Yet, despite the rapid development of medical facilities in the country, there remains a lacuna when it comes to an appropriate and timely response to emergency heart conditions. Here, we look at the various gaps in the healthcare system that delay treatment for heart disease and the cost that we pay for it.

?Most PHCs not equipped?The first step in diagnosing a heart attack is undergoing an ECG test, which records the heart's electrical activity using sticky patches called electrodes, and gives out a report as a wave graph. This test can help diagnose heart attacks, irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias) and problems with blood flow. An ECG can detect a heart attack as ST-segment elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) cases -- or non-STEMI within minutes, and help doctors plan further treatment. However, even access to this ECG is not common in India.?ECGs are currently available in district hospitals and community health centres in India, which are tertiary healthcare centres. Most primary health centres (PHCs), which are the first point of contact for patients in rural areas and are equipped with medical officers, do not have ECG machines. While the 2025 National Essential Diagnostic List recommends that ECG be available at the PHC level, its implementation is expected to take time, time which millions in India do not have.

Meanwhile the availability in higher centres is also not guaranteed. "ECGs are not available in many of the CHCs here and patients have to travel all the way to the district hospital (2-3 hours away) to get an ECG done," said a doctor who works at a non-profit in the tribal district of Surguja in north Chhattisgarh. ?

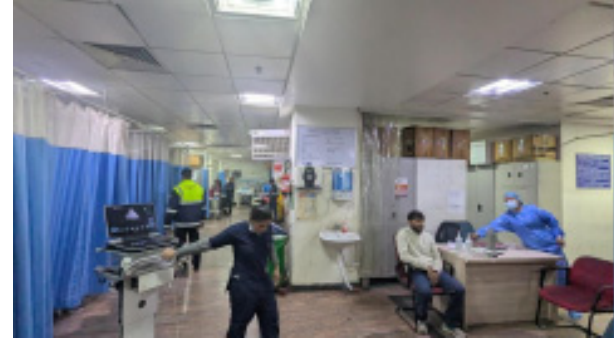
Despite being comparatively inexpensive and easy to conduct, the availability of ECGs is restricted to big metros and hospitals in India, and there is a shortage of trained personnel to interpret the results, says Yogendra Singh, director-interventional cardiology at Max Healthcare, Dehradun. "If a patient gets chest pain in Uttarakshi [in Uttarakhand], he has to travel at least 40-50 km to get an ECG done without which he cannot even be given an Ecospirin [a blood thinner]", he says, emphasising the need to make ECGs available and accessible to people to detect heart attacks early. Doctors are not necessary to be present

to read the ECGs, several studies (here and here) have shown how tele-ECGs, conducted by frontline health workers, can be electronically sent to doctors and nurses for further interpretation and advice, saving crucial time and money, in reaching higher centres.Heart attack mortality

Indians suffer from heart disease about 10 years before the Western population, while our deaths due to heart attacks is twice that of Sweden, even as their patients are 15 years older, said S. Ramakrishnan, senior cardiologist at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. While the average age at first heart attack in Western Europe, China, and Hong Kong is 63 years, it is 53 years in South Asia, and about 10% of our patients are below the age of 40 years. A number of factors, like high blood pressure, poor cholesterol control, diabetes, sedentary lifestyles, high abdominal fat, poor diet, as well as genetic factors, play a role, along with lifestyle factors such as smoking and prolonged stress. Poverty also plays a role -- poor people are more likely to consume tobacco and alcohol and not consume fruits, vegetables, fish and fibre -- and this increases risk for heart disease.

?What's worse is that most people do not know that they are at risk for heart disease due to inadequate screening and poor awareness. "In India, major heart attacks and death are often the first symptoms of heart disease," said Dr. Ramakrishnan. Despite having 315 million with high blood pressure and 101 million with diabetes according to the Indian Council of Medical Research's INDIAB study, there is low awareness of blood pressure and blood glucose, even among those with the disease, and 57% of the population does not meet the WHO guidelines for physical activity.

?Further, various studies have shown that patients with heart disease in India have a higher proportion of STEMI cases. STEMI is a more severe type of heart attack caused by the complete blockage of a coronary artery, restricting blood to the major part of the heart and requiring urgent emergency care. The studies also show that STEMI patients in India are likely to be poorer, show symptoms late, get inappropriate treatment and have a higher likelihood of dying within a month of the first month. ?While timely treatment of STEMI cases in India will improve the quality of life and also save lives, "the most common treatment an average Indian gets for a heart attack is no treatment," says Dr. Ramakrishnan. Either patients do not reach the hospital in time, or the hospitals they reach do not have the infrastructure or expertise to treat heart attacks, he added. Late treatment increases the risk of death and complications, increases chances of muscle damage and even if the patient survives, he or she ends up having heart failure, adds. ?When it comes to the heart, cardiologists often like to use the phrase "time is muscle." Every minute of delay in getting treatment causes irreversible death of the heart



muscle. Restoring blood supply to the heart can reduce damage to the heart, improve survival rates and prevent deaths.

?In STEMI cases, for example, the key treatment is reperfusion, which involves opening the blocked blood vessel. This can be done either by giving thrombolytic therapy, which is drugs that bust the clots in the artery or through primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) or an angioplasty. While PCI is the gold standard of treatment, a very small percentage of Indian patients get PCI as treatment, and even getting thrombolytic therapy in the treatment window is not widespread. Various registry databases show that only 5 to 10 in 100 patients undergo timely PCI while 36-60 out of 100 undergo thrombolysis. Another approach of combining the two, is called pharmacoinvasive therapy, where thrombolytic drugs are given to the patient till the patient can be transferred to a hospital with a cath lab. This has been successfully implemented as a hub-and-spoke model in many parts of the country. In other cases such as in conduction defects, cardiac muscle dies because of the irregular pumping of the heart. Immediately addressing this via drugs or a temporary pacemaker ensures that the damage to the heart muscle is kept to a minimum. In case of any emergency heart condition, detecting and treating immediately is of paramount importance to ensure that as much of the heart muscle as possible can be saved. Treatment windowsThe most critical time for intervention is between 1-3 hours of the heart attack. The ideal time to conduct an angioplasty is within 120 minutes or two hours of the first medical contact. Treatment most beneficial within three hours of a heart attack. Jassuram and his son had to waste four and half precious hours travelling from one centre to another before getting the treatment that could save his life. Most Indian patients reach the hospital between 6 hours on average, and up to 12 hours in the hilly States of India, according to various heart registries, after suffering significant damage to their heart muscles. A study in Denmark has shown that a one hour delay in starting treatment after the first contact in the health system leads to a 15% increase in deaths within three-and-a-half years, while it is doubled if the delay is within three hours.

## EWS patients getting deprived of free treatment at private hospitals in Delhi, flags CAG report

Utilisation of only 28.7% available facilities at private hospitals, serious lapses in grievance redressal and reimbursement process, and low referral rate by government hospitals — these are among the deficiencies flagged in the implementation of the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) healthcare scheme in Delhi in the latest audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). The report has raised concerns that beneficiaries were deprived of free treatment between 2016-17 and 2021-22 despite clear court mandates. "The underutilisation of free OPD and IPD services at IPH (identified private hospitals) needs to be viewed seriously..." read the report, highlighting that a total 13.89 crore EWS patients have taken treatment in the Delhi government hospitals between 2016-17 and 2021-22 while only 43,951 patients were referred to private hospitals by 28 government facilities, indicating limited outreach and access.

Even if it is presumed that all the patients referred to IPHs were for IPD and each patient was admitted for an average seven days, the bed-days utilisation would be 6.565 lakh indicating that only about 28.77% of the facilities available were utilised, as per the findings.

The report recalled a March 2007 Delhi High Court judgment that required private hospitals allotted land at concessional rates to provide 25% of their OPD services and reserve 10% of IPD beds for EWS patients. The court also mandated that all government hospitals set up referral centres within two weeks to channel such patients to identified private hospitals. However, as per the audit findings, 19 out of 47 government hospitals had failed to establish referral centres even after more than 15 years, as of June 2022.

On grievance redressal, the audit revealed that no separate complaint registers were maintained for EWS patients, and there was no system to ensure timely disposal of complaints. Additionally, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) was found to have no effective monitoring mechanism to ensure that private hospitals complied with free treatment obligations, with instances of denial of care reported. The CAG also examined the functioning of the Delhi Arogya Kosh (DAK), which was set up in 2011 to provide financial assistance to poor patients with life-threatening diseases. It noted that DAK had not maintained scheme-wise beneficiary data and failed to track utilisation certificates or unspent funds with hospitals. No Aadhaar-based or biometric tracking system had been implemented to monitor patients and prevent malpractices despite directions from the Lieutenant Governor, the audit flagged, adding that the scheme's objectives were not widely publicised, resulting in low awareness and uptake.

Under DAK's free surgery and high-end diagnostic schemes, the audit found that no assessment had been conducted to evaluate whether referrals to private hospitals helped reduce waiting periods. In some cases, patients reportedly waited between three to eight months for procedures, even when private options were available. The audit also highlighted procedural lapses in reimbursements, noting that no mechanism existed to verify whether medico-legal patients were already covered under insurance schemes before payments were made. In its recommendations, the CAG called for strengthening of the referral system, stricter monitoring of private hospitals, creation of an oversight mechanism for complaints, wider publicity of schemes, and mandatory verification of patients' insurance status. It also emphasised the need for biometric tracking to ensure transparency and follow-up. Responding to the findings, the Delhi government said corrective measures had been initiated. These include setting up EWS/DAK helpdesks, appointing nodal and liaison officers, establishing referral centres, and improving monitoring of private hospitals. The government also said grievance redressal systems had been strengthened and awareness campaigns



intensified.

On DAK, the government stated that patient-wise records are now being maintained, a biometric monitoring system is being procured, and insurance checks have been made mandatory before payments. It also cited the rollout of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in Delhi from April 2025 and onboarding of hospitals onto a next-generation e-hospital platform. Despite these assurances, a legislative committee reviewing the audit noted that while the measures "appear good on paper", there remains scope for improvement in actual implementation, particularly in ensuring that EWS patients receive benefits in private hospitals. The committee recommended strict enforcement of stated measures, wider adoption of digital platforms to improve transparency, and early launch of a proposed health helpline to improve access and awareness.

## Coal gasification key to India's energy security, says Kishan Reddy

New Delhi: Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday highlighted that coal gasification will be pivotal in strengthening India's energy security, reducing import dependence, and supporting industrial growth.

Addressing the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026, the minister, describing coal gasification as a key transformative technology, said that it converts coal into syngas, which can be further used to produce cleaner fuels, chemicals, fertilisers, and hydrogen. This approach enables more efficient and sustainable use of domestic resources while enhancing economic resilience.

The minister said to promote adoption, the government has launched the National Coal Gasification Mission with a target of 100 million tonnes of gasification by 2030. An incentive framework of Rs 8,500 crore has been introduced to support public and private sector projects, with several large-scale initiatives already underway and investments exceeding Rs 64,000 crore in the pipeline. Advanced technologies such as Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) were also highlighted for their potential to tap previously inaccessible reserves while reducing environmental impact.

He said that India's rapidly expanding economy requires a balanced energy approach that aligns development with sustainability. The minister underlined India's robust coal reserves, estimated at nearly 400 billion tonnes — among the largest globally — where coal accounts for about 55 per cent of the energy mix and nearly 74 per cent of electricity generation. With annual coal demand currently around one billion tonnes and expected to rise significantly by 2047, he emphasised the continued importance of coal even as India remains committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070.

## IPL too good an opportunity to pass up

Last year, it was Corbin Bosch, the South African all-rounder. This year, the list has grown longer by one, for now — Blessing Muzarabani, the towering Zimbabwean paceman who had a wonderful T20 World Cup, and Dasun Shanaka, the all-rounder who led Sri Lanka in the same tournament which concluded earlier this month. We are talking about the late shift of players from the Pakistan Super League to the Indian Premier League. It isn't just a late shift, it's about severing one contract at the last minute to sign a more lucrative deal to be a part of arguably the most visible franchise-driven T20 competition in the world. From 2025 onwards, there has been an overlap in dates between the PSL and the IPL. Last year, that was necessitated by Pakistan hosting the Champions Trophy in February-March, though the tournament was also played in Dubai. This year, the PSL had to be postponed from its pre-2025 window owing to the T20 World Cup, which ran in India and Sri Lanka between February 7 and March 8. The only window available for the Pakistan Cricket Board to conduct the PSL coincided with the IPL; the PSL is due to start this Thursday, two days before the IPL kicks off at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru locking horns with 2016 winners Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Bosch, part of the Diamond category, had been picked up by Peshawar Zalmi for PSL 2025 before he moved to Mumbai Indians as an injury replacement for fellow South African Lizaad Williams. Understandably miffed at this late "desertion", the PCB slapped a one-year ban on the now 31-year-old, making him ineligible to play in PSL 2026. Not that it has made any real difference to the right-arm pacer and hard-hitting batter, considering he is part of the MI roster this year too. Bosch did it first

Following in Bosch's footsteps are Muzarabani and Shanaka. Muzarabani was one of the standout players for Zimbabwe, who advanced to the Super Eight from a tricky Group B with an unbeaten record. Zimbabwe hadn't even qualified for the previous T20 World Cup, in the Americas in June 2024, but heralded their return to the competition with a stunning victory over Australia in their second group tie. As if to show that the performance was no flash in the pan, they then subdued the home crowd and Sri Lanka's superstars in their final league clash to top their group and earn a shot at the West Indies, India and South Africa in the next stage. Muzarabani took four for 17 against Australia, backed it up with two for 38 against the hosts and finished the competition with 13 wickets from just six outings. He was in the running to top the chart, and it needed the genius of Jasprit Bumrah and a solitary wicket for Varun Chakaravathy in the final for the two Indians to get past him with 14 scalps apiece. Long before the World Cup, Muzarabani had made a pitch for an IPL berth but went unsold at the auction. He had been a part of the RCB set-up during their title-winning campaign in 2025, signed up as a mid-tournament replacement for the WTC final-bound Lungi Ngidi, but did not play a game. Just as he was readying to extend his relationship with the PSL came a call from the Kolkata Knight Riders management, which sought his services instead of Mustafizur Rahman, the Bangladesh left-arm quick whom they let go in controversial circumstances earlier this year. There was no way Muzarabani was turning that offer down.

Shanaka has moved to Rajasthan Royals as a replacement for Sam Curran, the England all-rounder. In the closed season, Curran was one of two players — Ravindra Jadeja being the other — that five-time champions Chennai Super Kings traded out to Royals to acquire Sanju Samson, who would later go on to become the Player of the Tournament at the T20 World Cup. Curran played a big part in England's march to the semifinals, but during the course of that campaign, he is learnt to have picked up a groin injury that ended his chances of representing a new IPL franchise.

Shanaka, 34, has limited IPL experience; he played three games for Gujarat Titans in 2023 and was a mid-season substitute for the injured Glenn Phillips last year with-



out getting a match. Like Muzarabani, he too was ignored at the mini-auction ahead of IPL 2026 but a backdoor has opened up through Curran's injury and Shanaka has gratefully grabbed his chance. Classed as an all-rounder, Shanaka is more of a hard-hitting batter who has been a reluctant bowler; he has a strike-rate of 143.13 in 283 20-over representative games (average 25.83) against 111 wickets, mainly because he averages only 1.2 overs per match. Strong response expected

Like last year, the PCB hasn't taken kindly to these developments. Its chairman, the irascible Mohsin Naqvi, has again threatened legal action against the "players who have left". That the players left at very short notice itself would have been galling; their decision to dump the PSL for the IPL must be particularly infuriating, given the geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan and the fact that Suryakumar Yadav refused to receive the T20 Asia Cup trophy from Naqvi, who is also the boss of the Asian Cricket Council. As is often the case in such instances, opinion has been divided on whether Muzarabani and Shanaka this year, and Bosch before him, did the right thing. Their morals have been questioned when what is undeniable is that everyone's morals are their own outlook and no one else has the right to impose them on someone else.

From the players' perspective, and one is only guessing here, to pass up the chance of being a part of the IPL landscape would have been unthinkable. Without a shadow of doubt, the reach and clout of the IPL are beyond parallel in the cricketing universe. It has opened hitherto invisible doors; its profile is immense, and while the money isn't shabby, it also provides a great opportunity to learn and grow as an individual and a cricketer. More than just money. The tendency to view the IPL through the prism of financial gains alone is both myopic and convenient. Where else do you have the chance to pick the brains of the best in the business, either occupying the same dressing room or sitting in the opposition dugout? Where else can you savour the experience of playing in front of at least 35,000 spectators? Of learning to cope with noise, pressure and expectations? Of furthering one's education as a cricketer? It was once said that the English County firmament was the ideal finishing school but that has long passed into history. Admittedly, even till the start of the millennium, a tryst in England at the highest first-class level was an immense learning experience but that is no longer the case. The IPL has become a finishing school of sorts, and while it is easy to dismiss that remark as facile because it is 'only' a 20-over tournament, let's not forget which format has come to be the flavour of the sport globally. While we can continue to romanticise Test cricket and hope that it survives the very genuine threat of T20 cricket, it is the latter which has caught the imagination of a larger audience. It's a truism that can't be wished away; gradually, international careers are becoming shorter as more and more professionals are plunging into franchise leagues. Who's to blame them because while we might attach patriotic and nationalist mores, these are players trying their best to eke out a livelihood within the contours of their limited shelf lives. Muzarabani and Shanaka, and perhaps a couple more who are still expected to make the cross-border move,

# How are dating apps turning on AI for their users?



ChatGPT to help initiate conversations between contacts on the 'Bumble for Friends' offering, were breaking EU laws. "In order to do this, your personal profile information is fed into the AI system without Bumble ever obtaining your consent. Although the company repeatedly shows you a banner designed to nudge you into clicking "Okay", which suggests that it relies on user consent, it actually claims to have a so-called "legitimate interest" to use data," stated the organisation. "Chatfishing" and chafed feelings

Dating platforms aren't the only ones experimenting with Gen AI. Users are also bringing their Gen AI prowess to the platforms with fake profiles built using image generators that fool both the site and other users. If that wasn't complex enough to handle, more users on dating apps are stealthily using AI chatbots such as ChatGPT to flirt with potential matches, keep conversations running, sound fluent in a non-native language, and get feedback on the best ways to respond to texts. This has led to a trend known as "Chatfishing," or a form of catfishing where daters use AI to create an enticing but false persona online. Meanwhile, those receiving visibly AI-generated messages on dating apps feel disrespected, frustrated, or deceived. The Google Play Store even lists third-party apps designed to provide AI assistance to those wanting to secure dates. One such app, called "WingAI: Your AI Wingman," declared itself a "secret weapon to get Same Day Dates." It invited users to upload other people's dating app bios and chats in order to generate AI responses to send back to them. Tenable's Narang stressed the dangers of potential romance-baiting scams, known as pig butchering scams, where users looking for love end up getting defrauded. "We've seen fake profiles on dating apps using AI-generated images in the early part of 2024. Since the generative AI models have been improving exponentially, the fake profiles on these dating apps are only getting harder to spot," he said. "For dating app users, the red flag warnings they should watch out for is a rush to move off platform (to SMS, WhatsApp and other messaging apps) to continue the conversation and telling the user about their significant gains in financial or cryptocurrency complete with faked screenshots of dashboards," Narang explained.

While swiping through a dating app is often touted as a safe alternative that allows matches to privately vet each other before a first meeting, digital daters now need to be on the lookout for far more red flags than ever before. With AI tools in play—both behind the scenes and on stage—users looking for a Zohran Mamdani-style match must, perhaps, think of a new way to build trust through these connections. Meet the Match Family

The Match group owns a number of dating apps, targeting various demographic groups across the world. Over time and with increased adoption, however, the apps have developed certain reputations and labels of their own. Match appears to cater to older and more mature users who want to date in a systematic way or meet potential partners in group settings. Tinder: Seen as a Gen Z or Millennial dating app, it is aimed at users looking for short-term relationships and less formal dating experiences. Hinge: Known for its 'Designed to be Deleted' approach that is meant to encourage slower and more thoughtful romantic connections. It allows user filtration by ethnicity. Azar: A video-chatting platform that matches people for instant conversations, as well as offers more traditional matching options via an app. Salams: This is a dating/matchmaking app catering to Muslim users. Its quiet acquisition by Match was criticised. Customers claimed they were not clearly notified about the change in ownership, raising fears about the data privacy of Muslim users. The League: A dating and networking platform for professionals, with users getting a small number of curated profiles to choose from. The platform says it uses LinkedIn to help verify accounts and screen fakes

Another factor to consider is that Tinder will have to collect users' valid consent. This supposes that users are informed and [in agreement] to the processing. Specific and accessible information is therefore crucial, especially since people's camera rolls can include sensitive photos which could for example reveal sex life, sexual orientation, political or philosophical beliefs," said Steinfeld. Risks include AI hallucinations, inaccuracy, lack of a legal basis, unfairness, and the impossibility of exercising one's rights, she added.

Last year, noyb filed a complaint against Bumble, alleging that the app's "AI Icebreakers" feature, powered by

# US, China opt out of joint declaration on AI use in military



and not wanting to limit themselves in comparison with adversaries, said Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans. "Russia and China are moving very fast. That creates urgency to make progress in developing AI. But seeing it going fast also increases the urgency to keep working on its responsible use. The two go hand-in-hand," he said in comments to Reuters. Only 35 countries out of 85 attending the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (REAIM) summit in A Coruna, Spain, signed a commitment to 20 principles on AI on Thursday.

These included affirming human responsibility over AI-powered weapons, encouraging clear chains of command and control, and sharing information on national oversight arrangements "where consistent with national security." The document also outlined the importance of risk assessments, robust testing and training and education for personnel operating military AI capabilities. At two prior military AI summits in The Hague and Seoul in 2023 and 2024 respectively, around 60 nations, excluding China but including the United States, endorsed a modest "blueprint for action" without legal commitment. While this year's document was also non-binding, some were still uncomfortable with the idea of endorsing more concrete policies, said Yasmin Afina, a researcher at the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research, an adviser on the process. Major signatories on Thursday included Canada, Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, South Korea and Ukraine.

# Spain's Prime Minister says he won't be swayed by "tech oligarchs" on social media ban

Tech companies will not sway the will of the Spanish government as it intends to ban young people from social media platforms, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Thursday, accusing "tech oligarchs" of spreading lies about Spain. Telegram founder Pavel Durov on Wednesday joined Elon Musk in criticising plans by Sanchez to ban social media access for under-16s and to prosecute executives for hate speech on their platforms.

Spain joins countries such as Britain, Greece and France in considering tougher stances on social media, after Australia in December became the first nation to prohibit access to such platforms for children younger than 16. "Democracy will obviously not be swayed by the tech oligarchs of the algorithm," Sanchez told an event in Madrid. "Just yesterday they addressed millions of people via their platforms to spread lies." Durov said in a Tele-



gram message that Spain's proposed legislation would force social media platforms to gather data on all users and allow governments to control what linking users' data to a common EU identity would walt.

# EU accuses TikTok of 'addictive design,' seeks changes to protect users



up to 6% of the company's total annual revenue. "Social media addiction can have detrimental effects on the developing minds of children and teens," Henna Virkkunen, the commission's executive vice-president for tech sovereignty, security and democracy, said in a press statement. "The Digital Services Act makes platforms responsible for the effects they can have on their users. In Europe, we enforce our legislation to protect our children and our citizens online." The preliminary findings from Brussels are the latest example of pressure that TikTok and other social media platforms are facing over youth addiction.

Australia has banned social media for under-16s while governments in Spain, France, and Denmark want to introduce similar measures. In the US, TikTok last month settled a landmark social media addiction lawsuit while two other companies named in the suit — Meta's Instagram and Google's YouTube — still face claims that their platforms deliberately addict and harm children. The commission said that TikTok fuels the urge to keep scrolling because it constantly rewards users with new content, leading to reduced self control. It said TikTok ignores signs that someone is compulsively using the app, such as the amount of time that minors spend on it at night, and how often the app is opened. The company has failed to put in place "reasonable, proportionate and effective" measures to offset the risks, it said. The commission said TikTok's existing time management controls are easy to dismiss and "introduce limited friction," while parental tools need "additional time and skills" from parents. Changes that the commission wants TikTok to make include disabling features like infinite scroll; putting in more effective breaks for screen time, including at night; and changing its "highly personalised" recommender system, which feeds users an endless stream of video shorts based on their preferences. TikTok says it has numerous tools, such as custom screen time limits and sleep reminders, that let users make "intentional decisions" about how they spend their time on the app.

The European Union accused TikTok on Friday (February 6, 2026) of breaching the bloc's digital rules with "addictive design" features, including autoplay and infinite scroll, in preliminary charges that strike at the heart of the popular video-sharing app's operating model. EU regulators said their investigation found that TikTok hasn't done enough to assess how its features could harm the physical and mental health of users, including children and "vulnerable adults."

The European Commission said it believes TikTok should change the "basic design" of its service. The commission is the EU's executive arm and enforcer of the 27-nation bloc's Digital Services Act, a sweeping rulebook that requires social media companies to clean up their platforms and protect users, under threat of hefty fines. "The Commission's preliminary findings present a categorically false and entirely meritless depiction of our platform, and we will take whatever steps are necessary to challenge these findings through every means available to us," the company said in a statement. TikTok now has a chance to reply to the commission's findings, which could lead to a so-called non-compliance decision and possible fine worth

# Starlink fuels SpaceX growth with potential phone, more internet services



With a SpaceX IPO expected this year, the company has plans for its revenue-generating Starlink business that could expand its reach into new markets, including a Starlink phone, direct-to-device internet and a space-tracking service, sources familiar with the matter said. The star of Elon Musk's empire, SpaceX is quickly expanding on the momentum with its speedy satellite production line with Starlink and its reusable rockets. Those two forces would help realise Musk's plans to build data centers that orbit Earth, a costly bet underpinning SpaceX's recently announced merger with xAI.

The plans include making a mobile device connected to its Starlink satellite internet constellation that could rival smartphones, according to three people familiar with the plans. Specifics on the device's design or when Musk plans to develop the product are unclear. Starlink in recent years has worked with T-Mobile to bring Starlink internet directly into mobile phones on that network, a different effort than SpaceX producing a phone itself. SpaceX did not respond to a request for comment. Musk's satellite and rocket company has had the mobile phone plans for years, the people said. Responding last week to an X user musing over a hypothetical Starlink phone, the SpaceX CEO said, "Not out of the question at some point." "It would be a very different device than current phones," Musk said. "Optimized purely for running max performance/watt neural nets," referring to the brain-like computing hardware behind artificial intelligence. Replying to a user on X who shared the Reuters report, Musk said: "we are not developing a phone."

Starlink is a vital profit generator for SpaceX. Last year, the company generated about \$8 billion in profit on \$15 billion to \$16 billion of revenue, two people familiar with the company's results said, with Starlink as the main revenue driver, accounting for about 50% to 80% of the total. SpaceX's biggest investment yet into the cellular communications arena came last year with its \$19.6 billion purchase of satellite spectrum from EchoStar. While some view that as a threat to Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) like Verizon and AT&T, SpaceX has so far positioned itself as complementary to those networks. "It will likely be hard for Starlink to make a phone and compete with the MNOs - the other MNOs would avoid using it," said Armand Musey, president of Summit Ridge Group. "It would be like GM making car tires and trying to sell them to the other auto manufacturers." SpaceX is the world's largest satellite operator with over 9 million users of the broadband internet service, which also has government contracts associated with Starlink and military-grade satellite network Starshield. SpaceX producing a mobile device would be a significant expansion of its lineup of products tied to Starlink, which has grown into a 9,500-satellite internet network in six

years, opening doors to new markets. Roughly 650 of the Starlink satellites in space were built for SpaceX's fledgling direct-to-device business. The goal, Musk wrote in a SpaceX blog post on Monday, is to eventually "deliver full cellular coverage everywhere on Earth." Like the AI data centre idea, the expansion of Starlink as a cellular-like system depends heavily on its Starship rocket, which will launch bigger batches of upgraded Starlink satellites powerful enough to beam greater internet services into mobile phones. Musk says each future Starship launch carrying Starlink satellites will expand the constellation's capacity by "more than 20 times." While the market remains young, analysts estimate the direct-to-device market could be worth billions of dollars in the next several years. SpaceX in October filed to trademark "Starlink Mobile." And this year it filed patents for technologies that seek to improve Starlink's ability to connect with small and moving devices on land that are not just Starlink user terminals. Further building on its Starlink network, last week SpaceX announced a new product called StarGaze, which will use the tiny maneuvering cameras already installed on Starlink satellites to monitor the increasing traffic in Earth's lower orbits, where no international standards exist for satellite traffic management. While SpaceX said it will provide some of the data for free to satellite operators, the business could be attractive to the U.S. government, where the Pentagon and the civil Office of Space Commerce are improving their space-tracking abilities with a handful of U.S. space-tracking startups using ground-based radar, as well as SpaceX. The prospect of SpaceX leveraging Starlink for tracking in low-Earth orbit has prompted concern from some in the space-tracking industry that a key U.S. government system could rely too heavily on the company. Richard DalBello, former head of the Office of Space Commerce, said StarGaze could provide speedy space-tracking services for low-Earth orbit systems, but suggested the government should not solely rely on it.

# Amazon shares plunge as AI costs climb

Amazon shares dove more than 11 percent on Thursday as the computing and retail titan reported strong sales but significantly boosted spending estimates. Amazon reported a profit of \$21.2 billion on net sales of \$213.4 billion in the recently ended quarter as its AWS cloud computing, retail, advertising, and chips businesses thrived. "With such strong demand for our existing offerings and seminal opportunities like AI, chips, robotics, and low-earth orbit satellites, we expect to invest about \$200 billion in capital expenditures across Amazon in 2026," said Amazon chief executive Andy Jassy. Market analysts had forecast that Amazon's capital expenditures would reach about \$147 billion this year, mostly due to AI spending initiatives.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) unit sales in the quarter tallied \$35.6 billion, a 24-percent jump from the same period a year earlier, according to earnings figures. Like other tech giants, Amazon is making massive investments to grab a slice of the AI revolution pie. It is particularly banking on the performance of AWS, the world's leading cloud computing provider, which is engaged in a race against its fast-growing rivals, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud. "We have very high demand; customers really want AWS for core and AI workloads," Jassy said on an earnings call. "We're monetizing capacity as fast as we can install it." Cloud computing giants have spoken of demand for AI-infused services outpacing supply as they spend fiercely to expand infrastructure and access to energy needed to power the technology. "Amazon delivered a slightly mixed picture with strong overall revenue growth and a standout boost from the cloud unit's much anticipated reacceleration picking up greater speed," eMarketer principal analyst Sky Canaves said of the earnings figures. "Amazon has once again indi-

cated it is willing to outspend its rivals with an eye-watering \$200 billion in planned capex spending for 2026, far exceeding expectations." Amazon's core e-commerce business maintained solid growth in the important year-end holiday quarter with the help of efficient operations despite ever-faster deliveries, according to Canaves. An AI shopping assistant called "Rufus" at Amazon was gaining traction and helping drive online sales, the analyst noted. Jassy assured financial analysts that Amazon is keenly tracking demand in the AWS business with a focus on getting strong returns there. The earnings release comes on the heels of Alphabet and Microsoft reporting that they are seeing cloud computing demand surge and are continuing to invest heavily in infrastructure supporting the technology.

Both Alphabet and Microsoft shares have suffered despite robust quarterly earnings as investors focused on billions of dollars they are pumping into cloud computing and artificial intelligence. The tech giants are all making huge investments to build up their AI computing capabilities, money that the companies insist will be justified by increasing adoption of AI tools and applications by customers across the globe. Amazon announced last week that it would be cutting 16,000 jobs worldwide as part of a restructuring, as it focuses spending on artificial intelligence. The job cuts, which follow already-flagged plans to cut its workforce by 14,000 posts, are aimed at "reducing layers, increasing ownership, and removing bureaucracy," senior vice president Beth Galetti said in a statement. An overall elimination of 30,000 jobs would amount to nearly 10 percent of the 350,000 office jobs at Amazon, where distribution and warehouse workers make up the bulk of its 1.5 million employees.

## Will India buy Iranian oil after US sanctions waiver? Depends on refiners' techno-commercial feasibility, says Govt



2.7 million bpd of India's crude imports — around half of the overall oil imports — have transited the Strait in recent months, while the longer-term average is around 40%. India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its requirement of crude oil.

It is not clear how new potential buyers of Iranian crude, including India, will make payments for their purchase. Iran and its banks remain out of SWIFT — the main messaging network through which international payments are initiated. Earlier, a mechanism for payments in Euros existed, but that channel also shut down following sanctions on Tehran by the first Donald Trump administration. The Strait's effective closure by Iran, along with attacks on energy infrastructure in the region, have led to a surge in global oil prices. While some oil volumes are being evacuated from West Asia through a couple of other alternative routes that bypass the Strait, a bulk of the supply through the narrow waterway has effectively gone offline. According to industry watchers and experts, the US-sanctioned Iranian oil, however, continues to flow through the Strait. "India could emerge as a key demand centre to watch, alongside Chinese buyers and other Asian countries. Historically, India was a major buyer of Iranian crude, importing significant volumes of Iranian light and heavy (crude) grades due to strong refinery compatibility and favourable commercial terms. Following sanctions tightening in 2018, imports ceased from May 2019, with volumes replaced by Middle Eastern, US and other grades," said Sumit Ritolia, lead research analyst, refining & modeling, at Kpler, a commodity market analytics firm.

Currently, Iranian crude availability is high, with an estimated 170 million barrels on the water, including floating storage and cargoes in transit, as per Kpler data. While part of these volumes is committed, a portion remains unsold, representing potential incremental supply. India had been a regular buyer of Iranian oil, even during previous sanctions periods of the pre-Trump era, when import volumes of Iranian crude declined, but were still not insignificant. Back in 2009-10, India imported 22.1 million tonnes of Iranian crude and it accounted for 14.4% of India's overall oil imports, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. But as international sanctions on Iran intensified, hitting payment channels and creating other logistical hurdles, the volumes declined gradually to 11.2 million tonnes in 2014-15. The sanctions were formally lifted in early 2016 as part of the Iran nuclear deal. Thereafter, Indian refiners started ramping up oil imports from Iran. India imported 13.6 million tonnes of Iranian oil in 2015-16, and the volumes shot up to 27.1 million tonnes in 2016-17, making Tehran the third-largest source of India's oil imports behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Iran also did its bit to boost India's purchases of its oil by offering discounted shipping and extended credit periods to Indian refiners. In 2016-17, Iranian oil made up 12.6% of India's total crude oil imports of almost 215 million tonnes. In 2017-18, the Iranian oil volumes declined to 22.6 million tonnes due to a few reasons — tensions between New Delhi and Tehran over the development rights of a gas field in Iran, India's diversification of its supply and the first Donald Trump presidency. The last factor was the defining one over the next two years as Trump walked away from the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions. A waiver was given by the US to major buyers of Iranian oil, which expired in 2019. In 2017-18, India's Iranian oil imports were at 23.9 million tonnes, and crashed to just 2 million tonnes in 2019-20. No Iranian oil came to India after May 2019.

Indian refiners will decide on buying Iranian crude oil based on techno-commercial feasibility, a senior Petroleum Ministry official said Monday. Amid the raging West Asia war, the US on Saturday suspended for a month the sanctions on Iranian crude already loaded on tankers in a bid to allow as many barrels of oil as possible to flow into the international market to improve the global oil supply situation and curb spiralling crude oil prices.

"Regarding purchasing crude from some particular country, I will like to say that these are all techno-commercial decisions taken by the oil marketing companies," said Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma in response to a question on whether Indian refiners will resume buying Iranian oil, which was last imported into India back in 2019. Prior to that, Iran used to be one of the major sources of crude oil for India. According to the general license issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury on Saturday, transactions related to the sale, delivery, or offloading of crude oil and petroleum products of Iranian origin — loaded on any vessel, including tankers sanctioned by the US, as of 12:01 eastern daylight time (9:31 am India time) on March 20 — are authorised till April 19.

It is, however, not clear how new potential buyers of Iranian crude—including India—will make payments for any Iranian crude they might buy. This is because Iran and its banks remain out of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)—the main messaging network through which international payments are initiated. Earlier, a mechanism for payments in Euros existed, but that channel also effectively shut down after most major buyers of Iranian crude stopped imports following the reimposition of sanctions on Tehran by the first Donald Trump administration. For years now, over 90% of Iranian oil exports have been going to one country—China. Technically, this move will not really increase the global oil supply — Iranian oil was already part of it with China's purchases — but will enable other countries also to buy Tehran's oil. On its part, Iran has claimed that it currently has no floating crude or surplus available for international buyers. Industry experts said that shipping data shows that around 140-170 million barrels of Iranian oil is on water, including volumes that are already sold and those that are yet to be sold.

Nonetheless, industry analysts say that the US move could see Indian refiners capitalise on the opportunity, just like they did by ramping up imports of Russian crude in recent weeks. Amid the tight global supply situation, every barrel counts. Vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz have effectively been halted due to the conflict that began on February 28. The Strait accounted for one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows. Around 2.5-

## Sixth month in a row: India saw net FDI outflow again in January



electricity and other energy, and financial services. These sectors put together accounted for more than 60% of total inflows, the central bank said. While gross FDI inflows are greater than last year in April 2025–January 2026, net FDI is down 24% at \$1.66 billion on the back of a 37% rise in outward FDI to \$28.14 billion and 6% increase in repatriations to \$49.52 billion.

## Vedanta challenges NCLT nod to Adani's bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates

Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Group Ltd has approached the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), challenging the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) approval to Adani Enterprises Ltd's (AEL) resolution plan for acquiring debt-laden Jaiprakash Associates Ltd under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

The Allahabad branch of NCLT orally pronounced an order on March 17, approving the resolution plan dated October 14, 2025 submitted by Adani Enterprises, the successful resolution applicant, AEL said in an exchange filing last week.

Adani Enterprises, the flagship firm of Adani Group, had earlier secured the committee of creditors (CoC) approval — dominated by National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) — for its Rs 14,535 crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates in November 2025. The group emerged as the winning bidder for Jaiprakash Associates despite being outbid by Vedanta by nearly Rs 2,000 crore. The auction gained interest from five major players — Adani, Vedanta, Dalmia Cement, Jindal Power and PNC Infratech.

While the floor price was Rs 12,000 crore, only Adani and Vedanta remained in the final round. Vedanta submitted the higher overall bid of around Rs 16,000 crore, which included Rs 3,800 crore as an upfront payment and the balance to be paid over five years. In contrast, Adani's bid totalled Rs 14,535 crore, featuring a higher upfront component of over Rs 6,000 crore, with the rest scheduled for payment within two years.

Vedanta's bid was estimated at around Rs 12,500 crore, slightly higher than Adani's Rs 12,000 crore when adjusted for net present value. Bankers said Adani's bid was likely preferred as it offered a higher upfront payment and a shorter payout timeline, lowering risk while enabling faster cash recovery. Vedanta challenged the decision before the NCLT, but the tribunal dismissed the plea last week.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) saw an outflow from India on a net basis for the sixth month in a row in January, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday, nearly tripling from their December 2025 levels as gross FDI fell by a third. In January, gross FDI into India declined to an 11-month low of \$5.67 billion — down 33% from December and 7% from January 2025. As a result, net FDI — which is calculated after adjusting for investments that are repatriated by foreign companies and overseas investments made by Indian companies — saw an outflow of \$1.39 billion in the first month of 2026.

Repatriation of FDI refers to foreign investors taking back money they had previously invested in India. This repatriation can be in the form of profits, dividend, or sale of assets. Weakness in FDI flows — seen as a more stable form of foreign investment — has contributed to the sharp depreciation in the Indian rupee over the last year or so. After falling past the 90- and 91-per-dollar levels in December amid a delay in the finalisation of a trade agreement with the US, the war in West Asia has led to a global aversion to risky assets such as those of emerging markets like India. As a result, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have pulled out funds to the tune of billions of dollars from financial markets, leading to the rupee dropping past 92-, 93-, and 94-per-dollar levels in quick succession.

According to latest data from the National Securities Depository Ltd, FPIs have pulled out a net \$11.82 billion from Indian financial markets so far in March. In January, they had pulled out \$3.24 billion. Apart from lower gross FDI, India saw net FDI outflows again in January because of elevated repatriation of foreign money and foreign direct investments by Indian companies themselves. In January, repatriations stood at \$4.92 billion — down 18% from December 2025 but nearly double the January 2025 figure of \$2.49 billion. Meanwhile, FDI by Indian companies was down 30% from December 2025, but up 5% from a year ago. The RBI noted in its monthly State of the Economy article that around 75% of outward FDI flows were directed to the US, Singapore, the UK, and the UAE. For the first 10 months of 2025-26 as a whole, India has seen gross FDI inflow of \$79.32 billion, up 15% from the same period of 2024-25, with the RBI saying that manufacturing received the highest share of equity inflows, followed by computer services.

## 'Those who sleep, their fate...': Aparshakti Khurana on the 'low-pressure' upbringing that shaped him and brother Ayushmann; expert on parenting strategies



Conversations around parenting often swing between two extremes, strict discipline and complete freedom. But many also grow up in environments that were structured without being overly pressuring. Opening up about his childhood, actor Aparshakti Khurana highlighted how a lack of pressure, combined with consistent routines, influenced both him and his brother Ayushmann. "The only reason my brother and I have been able to achieve anything in life is that there was no pressure attached to anything. There were some valid restrictions, like sleeping at a certain time and waking up at a certain time, and my father was very, very particular about it. I used to ask my mother why Papa scolds so much, what's the big deal if I don't wake up early, it's Sunday after all. She had a very simple, sweet explanation: 'Those who sleep, their fate also keeps sleeping.' She told me this when I was in Class 3, and it has stayed with me ever since (sic)."

He also spoke about how certain boundaries were framed not as control, but as reasonable guidelines. "There was never any pressure regarding career choices or what time we were coming and going. To date, we don't drink alcohol; we have never even tried. That was a restriction, but again, a valid one. There was never any pressure to perform (sic)," he said. At the same time, his recollections of school discipline reflect a very different era of upbringing. "I was a naughty boy, but not misbehaved. There is a difference between the two. I can guarantee my teachers will have good things to say about me—not because I am an actor today, but even back then. I was never complained about or scolded in parent-teacher meetings. Nowadays, when I hear or read news that a teacher was removed because they scolded a child, I feel sad. If you tell your child to complete their homework and behave in class, the teacher will never say anything to you or raise her voice."

Recalling stricter forms of discipline, he added, "Whenever this topic comes up, I remember my knuckles. I have

## Gastroenterologist lists 5 steps to turn eggs into a 'gut friendly' powerhouse: 'That combo is my secret...'



You may be consuming eggs to meet your protein needs, but are you really achieving that goal? If gastroenterologist Dr Saurabh Sethi is to go by, there are five steps to turn regular eggs into a "gut-friendly, anti-inflammatory powerhouse". "Most people think eggs are just protein. But as a gastroenterologist, here's how I turn them into a gut-friendly, anti-inflammatory powerhouse in 5 steps," he said on YouTube shorts.

"Crack two whole eggs. For most people, up to two yolks a day is perfectly fine. The cholesterol scare around eggs is outdated science. Add a pinch of turmeric for anti-inflammatory benefits, and add black pepper to activate it. That combo is my secret, gut-friendly hack. Don't forget salt, but keep it light. Load your eggs with vegetables like tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, and even olives. This adds fibre, antioxidants, and healthy fats that your gut microbes love. Cook them gently — scrambled, omelette... however you like. Avoid browning in oil. Let the ingredients shine.

Eggs are one of the most versatile and nutrient-rich foods, but how you prepare them can significantly change

## 'What are the noticeable physical signs that your insulin resistance is improving, such as changes in skin or weight?'

Noticing subtle changes in your body can sometimes be the first clue that your insulin resistance is improving, even before lab results show a difference. A person recently asked on Quora: "What are some noticeable signs in your body that suggest your insulin resistance is improving, like changes in skin or weight?" To understand, we reached out to Dr (Col) Vijay Dutta, Director, Internal Medicine & Respiratory Services, ISIC Multispecialty Hospital, Delhi, who said, "In addition to laboratory reports, the body usually provides early indications that the insulin resistance is better. Among the initial transformations that people can feel is an increase in energy levels—people are no longer as notorious for feeling tired during the day and also encounter fewer energy crashes following a meal."

Other early signs include "a decrease in cravings, in particular, to sugary and high-carb foods. The quality of sleep can also be enhanced, and mood swings can be reduced. Others report a decrease in bloating and improved digestion. Even more, the waist circumference can begin to decline even preceding the change in weight." For women, more regular menstrual cycles also signal improved insulin sensitivity. "These minor yet significant changes indicate that the body is becoming more receptive to insulin and able to deal with blood sugar with much more success," he adds. Insulin sensitivity can often be seen in skin and weight changes. "Diseases such as dark, velvety spots on the neck or underarms (acanthosis nigricans) can improve over time as insulin concentration returns to normal. Skin might also

been beaten a lot—with dusters, rulers would break. On days I didn't do my homework, I was hit on the knuckles with a scale or a duster. Thank God that happened, because I still do my homework even today," he said. While such experiences may have shaped habits for some, current child development guidelines strongly discourage physical punishment, especially since corporal punishment is legally prohibited under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which recognises its potential harm.

How growing up in a low-pressure environment influences a child's motivation, confidence, and long-term success Sonal Khangarot, licensed rehabilitation counsellor and psychotherapist, The Answer Room, tells indianexpress.com, "Parenting in many Indian households often blends structure with implicit expectations. There is usually respect for authority, emphasis on discipline, academic achievement, and family values, sometimes leaning toward high-pressure environments where success is closely tied to identity. Psychologically, this can foster achievement but may also create fear of failure or conditional self-worth." In contrast, she adds that a low-pressure yet structured environment — where routines, boundaries, and guidance exist without excessive expectations — supports intrinsic motivation. "Children feel safe to explore, make mistakes, and develop autonomy, which strengthens long-term self-driven success. Confidence grows from competence and emotional security rather than external validation." "Where should parents draw the line between 'valid restrictions' and allowing children autonomy?"

In Indian households, boundaries often come from a place of protection, family reputation, and interdependence, but psychologically, the key is how these boundaries evolve with the child's age. Khangarot mentions that "valid restrictions" are those that protect a child's safety, health, and basic functioning—like sleep routines, screen limits, or age-appropriate social boundaries. "These are grounded in a parent's responsibility to provide stability and co-regulation. However, autonomy should gradually increase as the child's cognitive and emotional capacity develops." The line is best drawn using the principle of guided independence. According to Khangarot, younger children need more structure; adolescents need negotiation. Instead of control, parents can shift toward collaboration, allowing choices within limits, and respecting individuality. "Over-restriction can lead to rebellion, secrecy, or low self-efficacy, while excessive freedom without guidance can feel unsafe. A good marker: if a rule is about the parent's fear rather than the child's well-being, it may need reconsideration," concludes Khangarot.

their health impact, shared consultant dietitian Garima Goyal. "By pairing eggs with certain spices, herbs, and nutrient-dense ingredients, they can be transformed from a simple protein source into an anti-inflammatory, gut-friendly powerhouse," said Goyal. The key lies in combining eggs with anti-inflammatory compounds and fibre-rich ingredients. "Adding turmeric is a classic example; its active compound, curcumin, helps lower inflammatory markers and supports liver detoxification. However, turmeric alone isn't well absorbed, which is why a pinch of black pepper becomes essential. Piperine in black pepper increases curcumin absorption severalfold, amplifying its health benefits," shared Goyal.

Including colourful vegetables like spinach, bell peppers, tomatoes, or zucchini brings antioxidants, vitamins and phytonutrients that nourish the gut and help reduce oxidative stress. "These also add fibre, which supports digestion and stabilises blood sugar after meals. Cooking the eggs gently, scrambled, boiled, or soft-poached ensures proteins stay bioavailable and healthy fats remain intact without oxidising," said Goyal. To further elevate the nutritional profile, a small amount of healthy fats such as olive oil, ghee, or avocado can be added, advised Goyal. "This helps in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E and K present in the eggs. Sprinkling herbs such as parsley, oregano or thyme further boosts antioxidant potential and adds natural flavour without excess salt," said Goyal. So, it's not just about eating eggs, but about how you combine them. "Thoughtful pairings turn them into more than a breakfast staple; they become a targeted, healing meal for better energy, digestion and long-term metabolic health," said Goyal.

become clearer with fewer breakouts of acne since hormonal balance is enhanced. "Weight-wise, "Any slight decrease in the waist size is indicative of improved metabolic wellbeing. The increased insulin sensitivity will assist the body in utilising glucose more efficiently, which will decrease fat accumulation and lead to a healthier distribution of weight." Observing these changes can motivate continued lifestyle efforts. The timeline for visible improvements varies, stresses Dr Dutta, explaining, "The positive results in terms of the improvement of energy and decreased cravings may be observed in several weeks after the regular changes in lifestyle. But it could take up to 6 to 12 weeks to notice changes in the skin and weight. Skin disorders such as dark spots can eventually be eliminated in a few months with the help of insulin. The changes caused by weight, and in particular by belly fat, are not quick and require consistency. Even minor changes are signs that the organism is moving in the right way." Importantly, "weight loss may be beneficial to enhance insulin resistance, although it may not necessarily have an effect on enhancing metabolic health. Exercise can increase insulin sensitivity despite the same body weight. Likewise, healthier food would be better for the body's sugar processing. Thus, the sole scale is not as crucial to pay attention to—lifestyle changes in general are more valuable to being healthy in the long term." Even subtle shifts—more energy, fewer cravings, clearer skin, or a slightly smaller waist—can all signal that insulin resistance is improving and your body is responding positively.

## Inside the IPL's culture shock: The bathtub, the glamour, and the boy from Rewa – The Ishwar Pandey story



GNS News Agency, March 26

Every April, young cricketers from small towns across India enter the world of IPL — five-star hotels, foreign coaches, franchise millions, parties they would have never imagined. This series tells their stories, in their words, of what that crossing feels like. When Ishwar Pandey checked into his hotel room for Pune Warriors in 2013, the first thing he saw was the bathtub. "Pehle jankari yeh le gayi, ke hai kya yeh cheez? I just didn't know what it was. Do I have to bathe in it or sit in it? TV pe dekha toh tha but how do I store water in it?" He asked someone. Then came the air-conditioning. He didn't know how to work the buttons. He had to call again. "Coming from Rewa, I had never stayed in such rooms in my life. It feels like we are in heaven. Ghanti bajao and sab hazir."

Pandey, a lanky fast bowler from a lower-middle-class family in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, had played domestic cricket and stayed in three-star hotels. He had travelled with the state team, shared rooms, managed without much. "In domestic cricket, there are no security guards, no AC bus sometimes. No one is watching. Even if you are going out, nobody cares." The bathtub in the five-star team hotel puzzled Ishwar. "I just didn't know what it was. Do I have to bathe in it or sit in it?" The bathtub in the five-star team hotel puzzled Ishwar. "I just didn't know what it was. Do I have to bathe in it or sit in it?" (Illustration: Suvajit Dey) The IPL was a different country. His own room. A bathtub. A lobby he couldn't navigate. Lifts that went to floors he didn't recognise. "You don't understand how the hotel functions. It takes some time. It is difficult for a new player who comes from a small village."

The beds were different. The food was different. The parties after matches were different. "It's like a fairy tale. Sab apsarain-apsarain dekh rahi hai. It's a big distraction. A lot of people get distracted. Those who haven't seen it, think this is life. They don't know where their career is going and where they're going." Loud music in a dark hotel room, the glamour everywhere, the money visible in everything. "Whenever any senior player used to warn, sabko lagta hai, yeh khud toh party kar raha hai aur mujhe mana kar raha hai." Now, looking back, he admits it was exactly the distraction the seniors said it was. The dressing room was its own puzzle. "Kahan-kahan dekhe," he says. Players who had watched their heroes on television were now sitting next to them. The awe took time to fade. Players from villages took longer than players from cities. Nobody talked about this. "The chaka-chaund hits you. The boys get nervous because they have never seen anything like this. But your big players, your teammates, they have seen it all. They try to help."

"There comes a phase where you get scared.

Whether I am saying the right thing or wrong. Language is a problem. Whenever you go with a foreigner, you are speaking from your side. But you can't explain whether he is understanding or not." Pandey pauses. "For example, when Alan Donald was in Pune, I couldn't speak to him freely. I tried to explain it to him, but the sentence was not clear. He used to feel that I couldn't explain it to him. I took help of others." Coming from Rewa in MP, Ishwar wasn't comfortable with English. "I wanted to speak to Allan Donald, but my sentences were not clear." Coming from Rewa in MP, Ishwar wasn't comfortable with English. "I wanted to speak to Allan Donald, but my sentences were not clear." (Illustration: Suvajit Dey) When the team decided a player had to give a speech in a team meeting, Pandey says, "pasina nikal aata hai." A seam bowler who could send down a delivery at 135 kmph, sweating at the thought of standing up in a room full of teammates and speaking in English. The ball he could control. The words he couldn't. The franchises, Pandey says, understood more than the state associations ever did. They monitored fitness year-round, planned body charts, gave players trainers, provided medical support. When Kuldeep Sen got injured, Rajasthan Royals ensured he was paid and his treatment was covered. "Franchise take care of players like their son-in-law. If a player is going through a bad phase, they stood by the player. Sometimes state associations lack that quality."

The relationship ran deeper than contracts. Players from smaller towns, without networks or connections, found in the franchise a support system that domestic cricket had never offered. The franchise called. The franchise checked. The state association, often, didn't. But the world the franchise offered was the same world that could swallow you. The glamour and the support came in the same package. The bathtub and the apsarain were in the same hotel.

Pandey was part of the Indian squad but never got to play for India. He played for Pune Warriors, Chennai Super Kings, and Rising Pune Supergiants. Back in Rewa, things changed. No cricketer from there had played for the national team before him. People came to meet him, get photos, shake hands. "They make you feel like you're a very special person." Builders arrived with brochures, trying to coax him into investing in discounted properties in upcoming townships. Local politicians visited. Strangers made requests he didn't know how to handle. "Many don't know me by face but the whole town thinks that there is an India cricketer from this place and they can get anything done through me."

After the IPL, Ishwar Pandey became famous. Builders came with brochures and tried to convince him that he should invest in their projects. After the IPL, Ishwar Pandey became famous. Builders came with brochures and tried to convince him that he should invest in their projects. (Illustration: Suvajit Dey) In Rewa, he was the man who had made it. In the IPL hotel rooms, he was still the boy figuring out the buttons. He had watched the IPL from inside — watched boys arrive from towns like his and try to make sense of a world that was built for people who already knew what a bathtub was for. Every auction cycle brings a new batch. The towns change — Rewa, Raipur, Ranchi, some village in Uttar Pradesh nobody has heard of — but the bewilderment is the same. "The players have to keep in mind that their focus should be on the game," Pandey says. "If we don't focus on the game, we won't get what we are getting. We are there in the team because of our cricket." He pauses. "I didn't understand this before. I used to think that cricket khel raha hoon, toh le hi lenge. But that is not the case." He knows now. The bathtub, he figured out eventually. The rest took longer. And every April, a new boy from a new small town checks into a new hotel room and sees, for the first time, a bathtub he doesn't know how to use.

Jarvis, which will provide real-time alerts such as stand-specific crowd density updates. Importantly, these live feeds will also be accessible to the city Commissioner's office for continuous monitoring and quick intervention when required during matchdays. "We have significantly strengthened crowd management measures. We have implemented AI-led CCTV solutions across the stadium, including inside, the concourse, and surrounding areas, powered by an AI tool called Jarvis. This system provides real-time alerts, including stand-specific crowd counts, to ensure better monitoring and control. These CCTV feeds will also be accessible to the Commissioner's office for real-time monitoring." "We have invested approximately Rs 7 crore towards enhancing crowd management infrastructure, including multiple baggage scanners and command centers," Menon said. Fan movement protocols have also been redesigned based on recommendations from local authorities. Entry and exit systems have been streamlined to minimise congestion, reduce bottlenecks, and improve overall safety inside and around the stadium on matchdays. To further enhance convenience, ticket holders will be entitled to metro access on matchdays, while parking facilities can be pre-booked in advance. Stadium gates will open four hours prior to the start of the match. In IPL 2026, RCB will play five matches at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium and two additional home fixtures at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium in Raipur.

## India announce squad for women's T20I series against South Africa

GNS News Agency, March 26

Hyderabad: The Women's Selection Committee has picked India's squad for the upcoming five-match T20I away series against South Africa. The matches will be played from April 17 to 27 in South Africa.

India's squad for South Africa tour: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Thakur, Kranti Gaud, Sree Charani, Shreyanka Patil, Kashvee Gautam, Bharti Fulmali, Uma Chetry (WK), Anushka Sharma



## Ashish Nehra says Gujarat Titans need no change in approach



GNS News Agency, March 26

Hyderabad: Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra said that he does not think there would be a need to think differently this season for his team in the IPL starting on March 28. Speaking at Shubharambh 2026, a landmark evening that brought together the full squad, franchise owners, partners and fans, Nehra said the Titans were not looking to change their way of playing. "I don't think there's a need to think differently this season. In fact, I don't have to

think, the players do. They have to think. They have to play; I'm sitting outside," he said, highlighting the team's trust in players and their decision-making.

Reinforcing the team's mindset, Nehra added, "From day one, our mindset has been clear. We are not here to participate, we are here to compete and win. For a new team, it's easy to think it might take time, but that was never our approach." Since joining the IPL in 2022, Gujarat Titans have been one of the most consistent teams, reaching the playoffs in three of their first four seasons and winning the title in their inaugural campaign in 2022. On continuity within the group, Nehra said, "You're talking about a captain who has been with the team from day one and has seen that journey. I don't think we are looking to do anything different this season." Shubharambh 2026 marked the start of the new season, while reflecting on the franchise's five-year journey. Showcasing the unity, ambition and Gujarat-first ethos that continues to define the franchise, the event blended reflection, recognition and cultural celebration, reinforcing the team's deep-rooted connect with its fans and the state. Gujarat Titans will begin their campaign against Punjab Kings in Mullanpur on March 31, before returning to Ahmedabad for their first home fixture on April 4 against Rajasthan Royals.

## Mumbai Indians launch 'Fans Nahi Fam' campaign for 2026 season



Hyderabad: For nearly two decades, Mumbai Indians has been more than just a cricket team. It has been a part of the everyday life of its fans. From Mumbai's local trains to living rooms across the country, the team has been woven into moments big and small, emotional and unforgettable. This season, Mumbai Indians brings that relationship to the forefront with the launch of its 2026 campaign: 'Fans Nahi. Fam.' At its core, the campaign is built on a simple but powerful truth. This isn't just fandom, this is family. A family that celebrates, debates, worries and stands by the team through every high and low.

A Campaign Rooted in Real, Everyday Connections Bringing 'Fans Nahi. Fam.' to life, the campaign places the MI players directly within the everyday world of the fans, not as distant icons, but as one of them. A series

of slice-of-life films capture this raw, unfiltered bond, with players stepping into homes, routines and conversations filled with celebration, banter and honesty. The storytelling reflects the emotional depth of the relationship where paltan do not just cheer, they feel. This narrative extends across marketing this season that shifts the language and identity, from fans to fam, reinforcing a deeper sense of belonging. The campaign goes beyond storytelling to a fan-first experience across touchpoints: Tickets starting at just Rs 499, making the live match experience accessible to more fans and bringing them closer to the game; city-wide activations, including dugout-style bus stops, that bring the MI world into everyday spaces; together, these initiatives blur the line between the stands and the field, making the season more immersive, inclusive and personal. A key highlight of this season's marketing approach is The MIX, a first-of-its-kind fan festival that brings together cricket, music, fashion and culture in a single immersive experience. Designed as an extension of the 'Fans Nahi. Fam.' philosophy, The MIX places fans at the heart, creating a space where they engage with the team, the brand and each other beyond match days. From live performances and player interactions to gaming zones and fan-led moments. An MI spokesperson said, "Mumbai Indians doesn't just represent this city; it belongs to it. As we approach two decades, we wanted to celebrate and acknowledge the raw, honest, and often emotional relationship we share with our fans and paltan. This season is a tribute to the family that stays loud when we win and stands by us when we're silent. They aren't just fans. They are Fam."

## Axar Patel highlights team energy ahead of IPL season



Hyderabad: Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel says that what excites him the most is the energy in the group (Capitals team). "When players are motivated and ready to give their best, it reflects on the field. As a captain, that gives you confidence that the team is moving in the right direction and building something strong together," Axar said at a promotional event in Delhi on Monday.

Heading into his second season as captain, Axar spoke about the added clarity in leadership and the importance of trust within the Delhi Capitals setup. "Second year as captain, there is more clarity in how we want to play as a team. Last season, you learn a lot about situations, about players and about yourself as a leader. Now the focus is on being positive and aggressive, but also building trust within the group. When players feel backed, performances follow and that is the environment we want to create," Axar explained.

Reflecting on the team's outlook, Axar reiterated that the focus remains on moving forward rather than dwelling on past results. "As a team, we don't sit and talk about what has happened before. Everyone knows where we could have done better, but the conversation is always about improving from here. It is about staying positive and focusing on what we can control as a group," he added. Head Coach Hemang Badani underlined how the evolution of the T20 format continues to shape the way teams approach the game.

"The format has evolved to a point where intent is everything. Scores of 220 or more are becoming common and teams that adapt quickly are the ones that stay ahead. It is not just about phases anymore, it is about being proactive throughout and understanding how the game is constantly changing," Badani said. Backing Axar's leadership, Badani also spoke about the importance of continuity within the setup. "He understands the environment and what it takes to lead in a tournament like this. We saw some very strong phases last season and that reflects the potential of this group. Continuity in leadership gives us a chance to build on that and move forward with more clarity," he added. Director of Cricket, DC (IPL), Venugopal Rao emphasised the importance of stability while also highlighting the franchise's focus on scouting and building for the future. "Continuity in leadership is important and Axar brings that understanding of the team and the fans. At the same time, our focus is also on building for the future. Someone like Sahil Parakh is a great example of the work being done at the scouting level. He is a young player with strong potential and these are the kind of players we want to identify and develop within Delhi Capitals," Rao said.

## Maradona Junior: 'If my father was God at Napoli, Scott McTominay is Jesus'

Diego Maradona's son compared Scott McTominay's presence to his legendary father's presence at Napoli. (AP/Reuters) Diego Maradona's son compared Scott McTominay's presence to his legendary father's presence at Napoli. (AP/Reuters) Diego "God" Maradona, followed by Scott McTominay?

The two names would not rank in that order for the most decisive footballers in history by popular choice, but Diego Armando Maradona Junior certainly thinks so after McTominay's second-minute strike that powered Napoli's Serie A win over Cagliari on Monday.

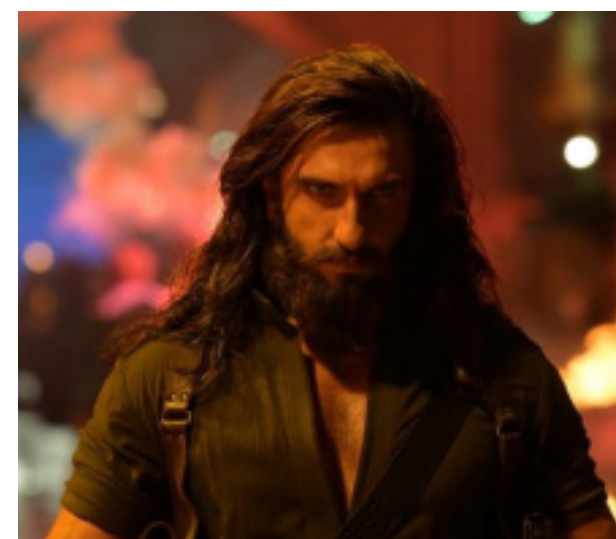
The 29-year-old McTominay secured the 1-0 victory for the Partenopei on Monday, marking Napoli's fourth consecutive win. While they remain in third place, Napoli cut the gap to seven points behind league leaders Inter Milan, who have managed only one point in their last three outings. Since leaving Manchester United to join Napoli in 2024, McTominay has emerged as one of the most important players in Antonio Conte's side, including a place in the Ballon d'Or rankings and being honoured as the Serie A player of the year.

McTominay has built on the previous season's ex-



plots, improving his tally to 11 goals and four assists in 36 games. The performances called for almost otherworldly praise from Maradona Jr., who likened McTominay's divine midfield presence. "God and Jesus." "After my father, McTominay is the most decisive player in the history of Napoli," said Maradona Jr. on Telemovero. A former Napoli player himself, Maradona Jr. currently manages the Italian fifth-division side, Portici.

## Dhurandhar 2: Aditya Dhar genuflects and the story sinks into subservience



tossed across streets like footballs. Homes, factories, warehouses, all ignite in flames. One act of brutality begets another; an eye for an eye is the only logic the film can follow, as if only through multiplying wounds can one reach closure, even if it leads to collective blindness. Wrath binds every frame; it is the film's DNA, tangible in each scream, each swing of a weapon. You can almost feel the weight of it, the years of fury Dhar has carried, now finally released onto the big screen. And yet, there is a difference between unleashing rage to cleanse, to find catharsis, to critique, and employing it with the intent to infect, with the aim to thrust it into the veins of the masses. The film is an act of utmost shame for those who openly disregarded the prequel's propagandist undertones, because here, Dhar no longer disguises his genuflection to power. And that was largely expected: in the original, his hero, Ajay Sanyal (R Madhavan), was waiting for an "ache din," and here, as Hamza makes inroads into terror outfits in Pakistan, we also witness the collective rise of the BJP following their 2014 general election victory. The Prime Minister makes a few cameos; demonisation is validated to such an extent that those across the border seem fearful of this "chai-wallah." Somewhere in between, the surgical strikes in Uri are mentioned, and so too is the 2019 Ram Mandir verdict.

There is one thing in aligning with any establishment or ideology, but there is another entirely in using every resource at your disposal to sacrifice every bit of nuance, structural complexity, and character motivation so as to transform the plot into a vehicle for state glorification. The second half, in particular, functions less as an organic story and more as a manifesto, cataloguing political achievements at the expense of diegetic logic.

It is, then, rather amusing, in a perverse sense, that Dhar appears to abandon any genuine engagement with the substantive concerns of the plot. Instead, he leans heavily on a melange of whataboutery, arguments that often resemble the intellectual calibre of forwarded messages, eventually resulting in a display of profound subservience. So, then, what remains but craft? But what becomes of craft that others entire communities? What becomes of a narrative that collapses a nation as plural as ours into the image of a single religion? What becomes of a Sikh protagonist when the very land he belongs to is villainised? What becomes of a Muslim antagonist whose identity survives only as a conduit for venom? What becomes of intent that enforces allegiance at gunpoint, while minorities are lynched in the name of proving the same loyalty? What becomes of form when a funeral is scored to the beat of 'Tamma Tamma Loge'? What becomes of a film that claims fiction yet bends real tragedy to its convenience? What becomes of a filmmaker whose art exists only as a matter of opportunism?

There are two scenes in Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar The Revenge that reveal, almost against its own instincts, what it might have been. The first comes just after the interval. Ranveer Singh, as Jaskirat Singh Rangji, stands before the remnants of his past. But in the same breath, he is already being compelled into becoming Hamza, forced to decide the fate of his handler. The second precedes it and belongs to the film's antagonist, Major Iqbal (Arjun Rampal).

If the earlier scene examines becoming, this one concerns unravelling. And, much like Singh, Rampal is divided between two failures: as a son before a father who withholds approval, and as a commander before a nation that demands certainty he is unable to provide. Both scenes settle into that uneasy space between the personal and the professional. Both scenes hint that what should be duty is contaminated by memory, what should be private has already been weaponised. Both scenes ask the film, if only briefly, to abandon its posturing, to relinquish its appetite for bloodshed, and to simply observe: the burdens these men carry, the private costs of their choices, the ways these costs harden into identity.

But, oh, well, these are only sporadic sparks in an almost four-hour-long exhausting saga of vengeance, replete with a storm of fury so thick that the story itself seems lost within it. Because beyond a point, the film loses its bearings; it behaves like a directionless youth, unsure of what its own rage seeks. Its characters speak only in the language of hatred, think only with the mind of a bigot, and act only with the heart of a warmonger. Violence is a necessary ritual here: eyes are smashed, legs severed, heads

## The 'mass' formula is broken in Telugu cinema: Why even Pawan Kalyan's Ustaad Bhagat Singh couldn't save a dated template



zero traction with younger audiences, the same Gen Z viewers who now determine whether a film builds momentum or collapses on day two. The promise of vintage magic there is another tactic that has quietly become standard practice in Telugu mass entertainers, and Ustaad Bhagat Singh leaned into it as hard as any recent film: using vintage music as a substitute for genuine emotional engagement.

The popular romantic number "Ee Manase Se Se" from the 1998 film Tholi Prema was remixed for Ustaad Bhagat Singh and pictured on Pawan Kalyan and Sreeleela, marketed as a special surprise for fans. The move was deliberate. Tholi Prema is one of Pawan Kalyan's most loved films, and the original song carries two decades of emotional memory for his core audience. The idea was that recreating it would create a guaranteed theatre moment, a wave of nostalgia strong enough to generate cheers regardless of what was happening in the story around it.

The film also featured a sequence where Pawan Kalyan dances to popular songs of Chiranjeevi and Mahesh Babu, moments designed purely for fans rather than to serve the narrative. A veteran film critic and writer from the industry, who wanted to stay anonymous, told SCREEN, "This is not a new trick, but it has become more frequent and more calculated. When a film cannot generate its own emotional high points organically, it reaches backward into a catalogue that already has a relationship with the audience. The problem is that this strategy works for exactly one showing. A fan cheers hearing the opening notes of a beloved old song. On the second viewing, or in a conversation the next morning, the question becomes: what else did the film give you? If the answer is nothing, the borrowed nostalgia cannot save it. Your movie neither resonates with present audience, or will appeal audience in future as vintage"

This is also a symptom of a deeper issue: the industry's confusion between fan service and storytelling. Fan service is a moment. Storytelling is what makes someone want to come back, recommend the film, or feel something that lasts beyond the ride home. Tollywood's mass entertainers have been building almost entirely for the first and hoping it will somehow produce the second.

The pattern goes beyond Ustaad Bhagat Singh. Prabhas's The Raja Saab opened strongly during Sankranti 2026 but saw a sharp weekday drop, with the general consensus being that it leaned more on its star's image than on storytelling that could sustain repeat viewings. Even films that succeeded commercially, like Chiranjeevi's Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu, worked largely on the goodwill of their stars and the festive mood of their release window, not because they cracked a new approach to the genre.

There is a consistent pattern across all of these: strong opening day, steep drop by day three or four. That is the signature of a film that brings audiences in on the promise of a star and sends them back out without giving them anything to talk about.

What the rest of 2026 looks like

The rest of the year is stacked with big names, including Jr NTR, Ram Charan, and Prabhas again, with most of the announced lineup described in familiar terms: action extravaganza, emotional family entertainers, and mass entertainers with strong star appeal. If Ustaad Bhagat Singh was meant to be a reset moment for the industry, the upcoming slate does not suggest anyone has pressed that button yet.

## Did Badshah tie the knot with Isha Rikhi? Isha's mother drops wedding photos, fuels speculation



Singer-rapper Badshah has reportedly tied the knot with Punjabi actress and model Isha Rikhi. The speculation stems from a series of photos shared by Isha's mother, Poonam Rikhi, on Instagram, where the couple is seen taking part in what appear to be wedding rituals in the presence of close family members. In the photos, Badshah is dressed in a brown kurta paired with a golden saafa, while Isha is seen in a traditional red salwar kameez. In several photos, the two are wearing wedding garlands, smiling and posing for the camera. Poonam Rikhi captioned the post, "God bless you ?? ????". Poonam also shared a video where Badshah and Isha Rikhi are seen performing wedding rituals. Neither Badshah nor Isha has issued an official statement confirming the marriage so far. Badshah and Isha's relationship Badshah and Isha Rikhi have reportedly been in a relationship for nearly four years. According to reports, the two first met at a party through mutual friends, and their bond gradually turned into a romantic relationship. Who is Isha Rikhi?

Isha Rikhi, a Chandigarh-based actress, began her career in Punjabi cinema with Jatt Boys Putt Jattan De in 2013, which also featured Sippy Gill and Om Puri. She later made her Bollywood debut with Nawabzaade in 2018 along-

side Varun Dhawan, Raghav Juyal, and Punit Pathak. Badshah's first marriage Badshah was earlier married to Jasmine Masih. The former couple, who separated in 2020, shares a daughter, Jessamy Grace Masih Singh. They continue to co-parent their child. In 2024, Badshah opened up about the separation on the podcast Prakhari Ke Pravachan, explaining that the decision was made keeping their daughter's well-being in mind. "We both tried everything. We tried our best and gave everything that we had. We separated because it was not healthy for our child. I get to meet my child but not that often as she lives in London," Badshah said. Talking about her daughter, he said, "She was at my concert. But she's not a fan. She listens to Blackpink. As a musician, buying another musician's merchandise for your own child is a little painful."

In an earlier conversation with Lallantop, Badshah opened up about his relationship with his ex-wife Jasmine Masih. "I loved her with all my heart. We met on the internet, on Facebook. Then we met at a friend's party in Chandigarh. After dating for 1.5 years, we got married." He revealed that while his parents did not oppose the marriage, they did express concern. They had asked him, "Are you sure? Since she was born and brought up in London, it might create problems." Badshah admitted that those concerns did play out. "She could not adjust to the culture and it got really messy. But we tried our best in that relationship." He shared details about his daughter, noting that she follows Christianity like her mother and enjoys his track "Paani Paani." When asked whether the experience affected his faith in marriage, Badshah said, "Marriage is a flawed concept in today's day and age. Some modifications need to be done. There's a lot of pressure. I think one should get married after thinking about it properly and after having a certain amount of maturity." "You should get married once you are extremely sure, or else the marriage suffers and the institution of marriage is maligned. A relationship is a duty, a full-time job. To co-exist with someone with an opinion is a full-time job, especially when you are strongly opinionated," Badshah said.

## The 50 winner Shiv Thakare slams Prince Narula and team for distracting Mr Faisu during finale task: 'He worked hard to be in the top 2'

Reality show star Shiv Thakare won The 50 on Sunday, defeating Mr Faisu, Krishna Shroff and Immortal Kaka to take home the trophy. While Shiv secured a spot in the finale after Prince Narula sacrificed his place for him, the reality star admitted he was initially upset by the decision. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Shiv spoke about his win and addressed whether Mr Faisu was more deserving of the title. Talking about how it felt to win the first season of The 50, Shiv Thakare said, "I am elated to win the show. What makes me happier is that a fan got Rs 50 lakh. Because of me, someone's life is made. It was not like everyone was playing for the fans; half of the contestants were just there because of the fame this show had. We always knew that the winner would not get the prize money, so while performing, some people focused on entertainment rather than earning money for fans. No, everyone thought about the fans."

Discussing claims that female contestants on The 50 faced unfair treatment and were perceived as weak, Shiv Thakare said the women chose to play it safe. Defending their stance, he said: "When the show was announced, they said we were 50 players; there was no distinction between men and women. Women could have kept their opinions, made their team, but they chose to play it safe. We gave them chances to take the lead, but they didn't do that either. 10 girls made a group, but they couldn't decide. A few sensible women were not playing the girl card; they were playing as equals. Some kept playing that victim card, which I find is wrong. A few things were wrong; they should have gotten the respect they asked for. But Rajat, Prince, Faisu, and I always respected the women."

Krishna Shroff's entry into the finale also seemed like a consolation prize. After the finale seemed male-dominated, just to add some female representation, Krishna was chosen to compete as the fifth finalist. Sharing his views, Shiv laughed and said, "Krishna was my friend, I took her name since she was a strong player. But the situation was packaged as promoting girl power because that grabs attention, and in that, a lot of men end up suffering."

Shiv Thakare on Prince Narula's influencer debate Early in the show, Prince Narula took a dig at social media influencers, claiming they had disrupted opportunities for actors and lacked the ability to perform beyond 12 seconds. While his remarks drew backlash, Shiv did not support his stance. He said, "No one is big or small, everyone has their space, whether TV actors, film actors, or



influencers and creators. We all work equally hard. If you see even Bollywood actors go to influencers to promote their films, they do so because influencers hold some value. They have made their space, and we are all the same."

"Prince and team were wrong to distract Mr. Faisu during the finale task" While Shiv Thakare revealed that he was upset initially when Prince Narula gave him the ticket to the finale, that weight was lifted when he performed well in the final task. However, when asked if Mr. Faisu deserved to win, Shiv said, "When one person wins, supporters of the other person will have an issue. Faisu's fan following is a lot, and he worked hard, which is why he was in the top 2, and he was deserving. I have been on that side on a show, and I have seen that the winner was told I was deserving." During the task, Prince Narula and a few others made comments that distracted Mr. Faisu and added a few seconds to his time, which led to him losing the task. Calling this wrong, Shiv said, "That was wrong of them to do. I wasn't there, but there were two sides, and Lakshay also did something from the other side; if I sit down to explain them, the player inside me will get offended." Talking about his future plans, Shiv Thakare said, "Hard work pays, and I only feel blessed to have gotten this chance from the lakh of people who work here every day. Today, when I can provide for my family, I feel blessed. I used to get emotional, but not anymore. I came here to become a film actor, and I am working towards it."

## Actor playing Pinda opens up about real-life reference, reveals he didn't sleep for 3 nights while shooting interval scene

Dhurandhar 2, starring Ranveer Singh, has been making waves ever since its release on March 19 and the film is making history at the box office as it has already made Rs 850 crore at the global box office. Amid all the cheer for the film, the supporting actors in the film are also getting a lot of appreciation. Actor Udaybir Sandhu, who plays the role of Pinda in the film, gets to shine at a pivotal moment in the film and in a recent interview, Udaybir opened up about the real-life references, the crucial interval block of the film, and the encouragement he received from director Aditya Dhar.

In a chat with Faridoon Shahryar on his YouTube channel, Udaybir Sandhu, who plays Jaskirat Singh Rangji's (Ranveer Singh) childhood friend, was asked if his character was inspired by Harwinder Singh Sandhu aka Rinda. Rinda allegedly died in Pakistan in 2022 after a reported drug overdose. Much like Pinda, Rinda was a smuggler of arms and drugs and had connections with various terrorist organisations. Upon being asked about the real-life inspiration, Udaybir said, "No. I am hearing this for the first time. I was just told that this is a friend's role. Just to make the story very interesting... And to show how he comes back

in Jaskirat's life. I don't think there are any real-life references for him."

In Dhurandhar 2, the audience sees Pinda in the opening sequence with Jaskirat as they arrange arms for Jaskirat's character. After Jaskirat goes on a killing spree and is repeatedly called for court hearing, Pinda is shown to be with Jaskirat's family as he marries Jaskirat's sister. Decades later, Pinda meets Hamza (also played by Ranveer), in Pakistan and is the first person who recognises his old self, which leads to a brawl between them. By this time, Pinda is one of the biggest drug lords in Punjab and is a heavy drug user. Aditya Dhar said, "You don't know what you have done" Talking about working with Aditya Dhar, Udaybir Sandhu shared that they worked on the film for about two years, as he is one of the only characters who appears in a significant role in the flashback portions, and the present-day sequences. Udaybir recalled shooting the pivotal bathroom sequence, which makes for the interval block of the film and said that just after shooting this scene, Aditya told him, "You don't know what you have done." He shared, "The first compliment I got was from Aditya sir, right after that bathroom scene."