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## MP Raghunandan Rao launches digital X-ray mission at Sangareddy Government Hospital

Sangareddy March 28. Indian Chronicle Correspondent Sunil A new digital X-ray mission was launched at Sangareddy Government Hospital in collaboration with CRS NTPC under the leadership of Medak MP Raghunandan Rao. Speaking on the occasion, MP Raghunandan Rao said that the digital X-ray mission will be useful for Sangareddy Government Hospital in the coming days and thanked those who helped provide this digital X-ray mission. BJP leaders Kondapuram Jagan, Rajeshwara Rao Deshpande, Chandrashekhar, government hospital officials and staff participated in the program.



## Kuchipudi Dance Performance Enthralls Audience at Uppal Mini Shilparamam

— A captivating Kuchipudi recital presented by disciples of Guru Gonugunta Shaila Sri KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle). As part of the weekend cultural programs at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, a mesmerizing Kuchipudi dance performance was presented on Saturday evening by the disciples of renowned Kuchipudi dance guru Gonugunta Shaila Sri, who arrived from Vijayawada. The performance captivated the audience from start to finish, featuring a rich repertoire of classical pieces including Vinayaka Kautham, Brahmanjali, Kulukaga Nadavaro, Brochevarevarura, Neelamegha Shareera, Teeru Teeru Javaralu, Narayanate Namu Namu, Kanjadalayadakshi, Ksheera Sagara Shayana, Brindavana Nilaye, and Krishna Shabdham. The talented performers—Satyanandini, Lavanya, Kalyani, Chandravashini, Aarohi, Krithika, Shailaja, Rithika, Ramya Sahiti, Avika, Khyathika, and Bhavana—delivered graceful and expressive performances, earning appreciation from the audience.

## Israel defies US moratorium, hits Bushehr nuclear site; Houthis fire missile at Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv, March 28

Breaking away from the US President Donald Trump-imposed moratorium on targeting Iran's energy infrastructure, Israel launched an attack on Bushehr nuclear plant, while Iran claimed it struck US vessels and military bases in the region.

In a fresh twist to the month-old conflict, Iranian-backed Houthi rebels based in Yemen entered the war by launching a missile at Israel, which Tel Aviv said it intercepted.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian posted on X, chiding neighbouring countries in the Persian Gulf, saying, "To the countries of the region: If you want develop-

istry called for "unequivocal and firm condemnation" of the strike.

Iran kept firing missiles at Israel and Gulf region on Friday, including a strike at a military base in Saudi Arabia that US officials said wounded at least 15 US service members, two of them seriously.

The attack on Prince Sultan Air Base also damaged several US refuelling aircraft, said two US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters. One of the officials said two of the troops were seriously wounded.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said its naval units conducted a hybrid operation against the US and Israeli deployments at Al-Shaykh port as well as Dubai's coast and port. Elsewhere, drones struck Kuwait airport, damaging radar systems, and the key port of Salalah in Oman. Kuwait did not confirm the source of the drones, while Iran acknowledged an attack near the Omani port, claiming to have targeted a US "military support vessel".

Meanwhile, five Indians were injured in the UAE after debris fell near the Khalifa Economic Zones Abu Dhabi following the interception of a ballistic missile.

The entry of the Houthis, who control large parts of Yemen, poses a direct threat to the Bab al-Mandab strait at the southern end of the Red Sea, a second major choke point in global energy supply chains in West Asia after the Strait of Hormuz. Since the US-Israeli attack on Iran on February 28, Saudi Arabia has diverted some oil exports via pipelines to the Red Sea.

Amid the escalation, diplomatic efforts are also underway. Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said he expected Iran to hold talks with Washington "this week". Pakistan is preparing to host talks involving Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt aimed at ending the conflict, with foreign ministers set to meet in Islamabad. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he had held "extensive discussions" with President Pezeshkian.

At the same time, US troops are being deployed to the region, with Trump signalling a knockout blow if negotiations fail. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated that the US hoped to achieve its objectives without boots on the ground, but with marines in position, Trump could order a military action to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or weaken Iran's ability to block it.

Meanwhile, Indian-flagged vessel 'Jag Vasant' carrying 47,000 MT of LPG arrived at Vadinar port in Gujarat's Jamnagar after crossing the Strait of Hormuz amid the West Asia crisis, an official said on Saturday. The carrier was anchored at 8.30 pm on Friday, loaded from Mina Al Ahmadi Port, Kuwait.



## First GoM meet reviews risks to energy supplies

New Delhi, March 28

The informal group of ministers (GoM), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Saturday reviewed risks to energy supplies amid reports of unusual panic buying of fuel at retail outlets in some states. The GoM was constituted earlier this week to assess the impact of the West Asia crisis and mount a national response.

The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri, Food Minister Pralhad Joshi and Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was also present.

After the meeting, Rajnath said the group also discussed domestic availability of essential commodities, critical infrastructure resilience and robustness of India's supply chains in the wake of the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

"There was in-depth discussion on all measures being taken by the Centre. The NDA government under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi is closely monitoring the situation and it is committed to safeguarding the Indian people from any impact of the conflict," he said.

The meeting was held hours after the Centre acknowledged panic buying reports in some areas. "There were certain rumours which led to panic buying at some retail outlets in a few states, resulting in unusually high sales and heavy crowding at retail outlets. However, it is informed that there are adequate stocks of petrol and diesel available at all petrol stations in the country. The

government reiterates its advice to the public not to believe rumours," officials said.

Efforts are underway to expand piped natural gas supplies where possible. States have already come up with policies for faster right of user/right of way (RoU/RoW) permission to enable speedy laying of pipelines.

Further, the Centre has directed all city gas distribution entities to make every effort to connect residential schools and colleges, hostels, community kitchens, anganwadi kitchens, etc. through piped natural gas (PNG) within five days, wherever pipeline infrastructure is available in near vicinity.

To this end, the Ministry of Road has said they have adopted "accelerated approval framework for city gas distribution (CGD) infrastructure with reduced timelines" as a special measure for three months. This means applications pertaining to the CGD infrastructure will be processed on priority.

Meanwhile, the government said all refineries were operating at high capacity, with adequate crude inventories in place. "The country is maintaining sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel. Domestic LPG production from refineries has been increased to support domestic consumption," the officials said, adding that the delivery of domestic LPG was normal and only 54 lakh LPG refills were delivered yesterday — down from the March 13 peak of 88 lakh bookings.

"Commercial LPG allocation to states has increased to 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels and 33,781 MT non-domestic LPG has been lifted by commercial entities since March 14," they added.

## Revanth orders CID probe into illegal sand mining

Hyderabad: Turning the tables on the Bharat Rashtira Samithi which demanded that a House panel be constituted to look into allegations that 'Raghav Constructions', owned by the family of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, is involved in illegal mining; Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday ordered a CB-CID (Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department) inquiry into all mining leases granted from June 2, 2014 to date as well as all illegal mining and sand extraction activities conducted in the state since then.

After a lot of furore in the Assembly, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced that he was ordering an investigation into the illegal sand mining activities linked to former BRS Rajya Sabha member Joginpally Santosh Rao and his father, Ravinder Rao. The Chief Minister stated that, in addition to Raghav Constructions, he would also order inquiries into former minister and BRS legislator Gangula Kamalakar's illegal granite mining, BRS Rajya Sabha member Vaddiraju Ravichandra's illegal mining as well as the activities of Sircilla and Nerella 'sand mafia'.

He clarified that an investigation would be conducted into the activities of all the entities involved, not just Raghav Constructions.

The inquiry report would be placed before the House during the upcoming Assembly session, he said. Earlier, the BRS party had demanded the constitution of a House Committee, alleging that 'Raghav Constructions' was engaging in illegal mining. In this context, former minister Harish Rao specifically mentioned Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's name.

The Chief Minister alleged that Harish Rao and former minister KT Rama Rao had spearheaded illegal mining operations. He asserted that the inquiry would unearth the truth. The findings of the enquiry would be presented to the Legislative Assembly.

Revanth Reddy maintained that it was BRS leaders and their relatives who were behind the "sand mafia and illegal mining activities". He alleged that they had intimidated individuals like Vaddiraju Ravichandra to bring them



under their control. Furthermore, he claimed that Harish Rao's own brother, Maheshwar Rao, had personally run the sand mafia. "It was solely due to his irregularities that KTR took over the Mining Department," Revanth Reddy reasoned.

The Chief Minister asserted that the government would not be intimidated by the "blackmail tactics" of BRS leaders. He alleged that Harish Rao had engaged in rampant looting; noting that the Mining Department was initially under Harish Rao's purview and that, when a dispute arose between former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's son (KTR) and son-in-law (Harish Rao) regarding this matter, KCR resolved the issue by reassigning the department from his son-in-law to his son. The Chief Minister lashed out at BRS leaders, accusing them of levelling baseless allegations against Ministers who refuse to submit to them—a reaction stemming from their realisation that the public is recognising how the current administration has curbed their looting and boosted state revenues through the mining and sand sectors. He declared that they would not be intimidated by the mudslinging directed at them. Revanth Reddy observed that KTR had ousted his own sister, Kavitha, from both his home and the party due to disputes over property assets. He questioned what connection Ponguleti could possibly have with the business ventures of Srinivas Reddy's relatives.

ment and security, don't let our enemies run the war from your lands." He added that Iran "does not carry out pre-emptive attacks but will retaliate strongly if our infrastructure or economic centres are targeted".

International watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant was struck for the third time in 10 days. The IAEA said it was informed by Iran of a new strike in the area of the plant. "No damage to the operating reactor nor any radiation release reported, and the condition of the plant is normal, Iran says," Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said.

Grossi expressed "deep concern" over reports of military activity near the nuclear facility, warning it could trigger a major radiological incident.

Iran has threatened retaliation for the latest Israeli strike. "Iran will exact a heavy price for Israeli crimes," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted on X. Russia, which has nuclear specialists at Bushehr, also reacted, with Rosatom chief Alexey Likhachev saying the situation at the plant was deteriorating and attacks posed a direct threat to nuclear safety. The Russian Foreign Min-

## Introduce private bill in LS for 42% BC quota: VH to Rahul

Hyderabad: Senior Congress leader and former Rajya Sabha member V Hanumantha Rao has written to party leader Rahul Gandhi urging him to introduce a private member's bill in Parliament to secure 42 per cent reservation for Backward Classes (BCs).

In his letter, VH emphasised that introducing the Bill is crucial to demonstrate the Congress party's commitment to the welfare of BCs, irrespective of whether it is ultimately passed. He warned that failure to introduce the legislation would provide an opportunity for opposition parties to question Congress's sincerity on BC welfare.

The former MP noted that achieving BC reservations requires an amendment to the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. He also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, despite being from a Backward Class himself, for failing to deliver justice to these communities.

Highlighting ongoing advocacy efforts, VH pointed out that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the Telangana government staged a Dharna at Jantar Mantar in support of BC rights.

## Tribals lose traditional practices as they embrace modernity

"S. Harpal Singh, Adilabad, March 28" How did the ancient communities face the different types of seasons all round the year. The simplest answer is they did so relying upon their knowledge systems. Those who understand the tribal way of life will vouch for the knowledge systems based on which the Adivasis had chosen their lifestyle. "The arrival of modernity and its practices have the tribals jettisoning their good practices. And, as the time passes, they are losing the wherewithal that aided them in living under pristine conditions." For example, many of the tribals of Adilabad have forgotten how to brace themselves for facing the harsh summers in these parts. The day temperatures can sometimes go up to 47 degree C. but this did not prevent them from going outdoors whenever needed. "One of the old practices of keeping homesteads cooler is the sprinkling and smearing of cow dung paste on the walls of the huts and in the verandah. As the cow dung is thermostatic, the paste does not allow the surface to get hot. "The lower temperature of the surface helped in humans moving about bare foot. It is exactly this practice that the tribals of Adilabad hardly wore any footwear in the decades gone by." "At present, the number of cattle in any given village has gone down drastically due to scarcity of fodder. Also, the production of cow dung has decreased simultaneously in every village," pointed out Mesram Raghunath of Narnoor village. "Also, the forest dwellers are preferring pucca concrete houses given the fact that successive governments have promoted such housing. There is hardly any use of cow dung paste in such houses," he added.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Bihar government's decision and the Anand Mohan Singh case

The Bihar government's decision late last month to grant remission to Anand Mohan Singh is a disturbing political signal given the circumstances under which the remission was done. At the time of his release, the former MP, who was out on parole for his son's engagement, was serving life sentence after being convicted for the murder of the then District Magistrate of Gopalganj and young IAS officer, G. Krishnaiah, in December 1994. It was to avenge a police encounter death that a mob owing allegiance to Singh had murdered the Scheduled Caste civil servant, who hailed from a landless family. Apparently aimed at benefiting Singh, the government, on April 10, 2012, amended the Bihar Prison Manual, 2012, removing the "murder of a public servant on duty" clause from the case list for which remission cannot be considered. The Patna District and Sessions Court, in 2007, had awarded capital punishment to Singh, which was judicially commuted to life sentence. The tweaking of the rules was followed up with another notification ordering the release of 27 prisoners, including Singh (they had all spent at least 14 years in jail). The State's defence that it "followed all rules and regulations" is no argument as the change in rule appears to have been made to benefit a specific person. Also, the argument that the amendment has brought Bihar on a par with other States is weak because the original stipulation was meant to have a deterrent effect in a State that is notorious for the criminalisation of politics. That Singh's "good conduct" was a factor too falls flat as in October 2021, a search of his jail ward led to the seizure of mobile phones.

## Chinnambavi felicitated new SI Raman Goud

"Bachchalakura Swamy, recipient of the State Dalit Ratna Award" Leaders of Ammai Palli Ambedkar Youth Association" Wananparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle" The newly arrived Sub-Inspector Raman Goud of Chinnambavi Mandal Police Station was greeted with a shawl and welcomed at the police station. He demanded that good service be provided to all the people of Chinnambavi Mandal and that equal justice be done to all without showing any bias. He also demanded that law and order be constitutionally enforced in all the vil-



lages of Chinnambavi Mandal and that appropriate legal action be taken against those involved in anti-social activities and that a just society be established. Wishing you to be partners, Chinnambavi Mandal Ammayi Palli Gram Rashtra Dalit Ratna Awardee Bachchalakura Swamy and Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangam leaders welcomed SI Raman Goud. Chinnambavi Mandal SI Raman Goud said that it is our responsibility as a department to make the Mandal a crime-free Mandal, we need the co-operation of the people to be a crime-free Mandal, the people of the village should live together without any undesirable incidents or religious hatred in your villages and install CCTV cameras in your villages, and if anyone is involved in anti-social activities near government buildings, schools, temples, they should inform us as a responsible citizen. Bandaru Swamy, Bandaru Narayana, Bandaru Kavinder, Bandaru Dargayya, participated in the felicitation program.

## Chinnambavi felicitated new SI Raman Goud Koppunuru village BRS party leaders



## Alpha Curriculum Hypath Books Launched, Ushering A New Direction For Students' Future

"Indian Chronicle" (Jade Srinivas) "March, 28." "A Grand Inaugural Event Of The New Education System along with a parents' awareness seminar was held on Saturday at Vidyadhari School in Kagaznagar town of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. Speaking on the occasion, TRSMA Telangana State Working President Peddapelli Kishan Rao said that the "Alpha Curriculum Hypath Books" would play a significant role in shaping a bright future for students. "The event was attended by TRSMA District General Secretary Tirupati Chari, District Working President Dikonda Sanjay Kumar, Panchikaipet Headmaster Ganesh Biswas, and Om Prakash as chief guests. Special education experts from Lucknow, Bushra Rasheed Khan and Pragma Mishra, formally launched the "Alpha Curriculum Hypath Books." "Addressing the gathering, they explained that the curriculum, designed in line with modern educational needs, would enhance



students' thinking ability, creativity, and overall talent. The guests appreciated the efforts of Vidyadhari School in promoting quality education. "Students' cultural dance performances added charm to the event and impressed the audience. The school management also felicitated the trainers from Lucknow for creating awareness about the new education system. Teachers, students, and parents participated in large numbers.

## Quality education should be provided to students Collector inspects primary school and anganwadi center



"Jagityal Correspondent, March 28 (Indian Chronicle): District Collector Satyaprasad has instructed

the concerned officials to provide quality education and necessary facilities to the students. He inspected the primary school and anganwadi center in Vallampalli village, Medipalli mandal, Jagityal district, on Saturday. During the visit, he inquired about the facilities and basic amenities provided to the students. He also visited the anganwadi center and asked about the height and weight of the children, and reviewed the nutritional food and quality of meals provided to them. He directed the officials to take special care of the health of the children and provide them with a balanced diet. "He also inspected the anganwadi center under construction and directed to speed up the work and complete it within the stipulated time. The Collector emphasized that measures should be taken to provide better facilities to the children. "Later, he inspected the 10th class examination center at the Zilla Parishad High School in Medipalli mandal headquarters and directed the flying squad teams to conduct regular inspections. Korutla RDO Jeevakar Reddy, Tahsildar, MPD, and officials from the concerned departments participated in the program.

## Grand Launch of Vaarahi Silver Jewellery in Hyderabad



"Hyderabad, March 28, 2026:" "Marking a significant milestone in their entrepreneurial journey, renowned business owners Manideep Yechuri and Dr. Spandana Maddula proudly announced the grand launch of Vaarahi Silver Jewellery on March 28, 2026, in Kukatpally, Hyderabad. "The store was inaugurated in a grand ceremony by popular actors Teja Sajja and Meenakshi Chaudhary, adding glamour and prestige to the occasion. "Vaarahi Silver Jewellery, located on the 1st floor at Vaarahi Silks, Kukatpally, is a new destination set to redefine silver jewellery shopping in the city. "Having already established a strong legacy with Vaarahi Silks, which operates five successful stores, the founders are now venturing into the silver jewellery segment with their first exclusive showroom. With over 15 years of experience in the gold industry, Manideep Yechuri, coming from a family deeply rooted in the jewellery business, is widely regarded as a pioneer in the field. Recognizing evolving consumer trends and the rising popularity of silver, he now brings his expertise into this fast-growing segment. "Speaking on the occasion, the founders shared their vision of creating a one-stop destination for premium silver jewellery that combines exceptional craftsmanship, unique designs, and affordability. "Amid the current surge in gold prices, the brand aims to fulfill customers' aspirations of owning and wearing grand bridal jewellery by offering equally rich and luxurious alternatives in silver, ensuring elegance without compromising on affordability. "For the first time ever, silver jewellery is being presented with the richness and finish of gold—if not better. The collections at Vaarahi Silver Jewellery feature an extraordinary range of designs, including deep nakshi work with gold polish, which stands out as the brand's key USP. In addition, the store offers Victorian, diamond, and Kundan collections, showcasing a variety that has never been seen before in the market. "From delicate nose pins to grand bridal sets, the store caters to every jewellery need. However, the true highlight of the brand lies in its highly designer and statement bridal jewellery, crafted to offer a luxurious look at exceptional



value. "To celebrate the grand launch, the brand has introduced a range of exciting offers for customers: "On a purchase of ₹1,50,000 – receive a ₹50,000 voucher along with gold coin and silver coin. "On a purchase of ₹1,00,000 – receive a ₹30,000 voucher along with a silver coin. "On a purchase of ₹50,000 – receive a ₹15,000 cash voucher along with a silver coin. "On a purchase of ₹25,000 – receive a ₹7,500 voucher along with a silver coin. "In addition, customers can participate in an exclusive lucky draw featuring never-before-seen prizes: "1st Prize: A brand-new Tata Tiago car. "2nd Prize: Refrigerator. "3rd Prize: ₹50,000 worth Vaarahi Silks coupon. "This grand launch marks a new chapter for the Vaarahi brand, reinforcing its commitment to innovation, quality, and customer delight. With its stunning range of jewellery, never-seen-before designs, and unmatched inaugural offers, Vaarahi Silver Jewellery is poised to become a premier destination for silver jewellery lovers in Hyderabad.

"Wananparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle" He welcomed the newly arrived Sub-Inspector Raman Goud of Chinnambavi Mandal Police Station with a shawl and greeted him politely. He requested that good service be provided to all the people of Chinnambavi Mandal and that equal justice be done to all without showing any bias. He requested that law and order be implemented constitutionally in all the villages of Chinnambavi Mandal and that appropriate legal action be taken against those involved in anti-social activities and that you become partners in establishing a just society. Chinnambavi Mandal Koppunuru Gram Bharat Rashtra Samithi leaders welcomed SI Raman Goud. Chinnambavi Mandal SI Raman Goud said that it is our responsibility as a department to make the Mandal a crime-free Mandal, and to be a crime-free Mandal, we need the cooperation of the people, and that the people

of the village should live together without any undesirable incidents or religious hatred in your villages and install CCTV cameras in your villages. If anyone is involved in anti-social activities near government buildings, schools, temples, they should provide us with information as a responsible citizen. He also said that no one should do any illegal activities in all the villages of Chinnambavi Mandal. A call was made to the people. In this program, Koppunuru village BRS party leaders Nandi Rajeshwar Reddy, Anand Yadav, Vaddeman Ramakrishnudu, Agganagari Venkatrama Reddy, Thagaram Auto Kurumaiah, Kathi Narayana, Thagaram Vakeel Balakishaitah, Thagaram Nagaraju, Thagaram Ugra Narasimha, Polamoni Kurumurthy, Badikala Babu Yadav, and Velturu village BRS leader Pusalapati Nagamaddileti participated in the felicitation program.

## CC Road Works Launched in Ankusapur Under MGNREGS

"Indian Chronicle" (Jade Srinivas) "March, 28." "A new step towards the development of Ankusapur village in Kagaznagar mandal has been taken with the grand launch of CC road construction works under the leadership of Sarpanch Kursang Mohan. The works are being undertaken with funds from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), the Sarpanch stated. The initiative aims to address the



difficulties faced by residents during the rainy season due to muddy roads in several localities of the village. Once completed, the new CC roads are expected to significantly improve transportation facilities and make daily life easier for the villagers. The Sarpanch emphasized that village development is their top priority and assured that efforts are being made to provide all basic amenities in a phased manner. He also added that NREGS funds will be utilized effectively to enhance infrastructure in the village. Ward members, Sogala Vasanth Rao, former MPPTC Lakshman, Koneri Sheshagiri Rao, Gautre Muralidhar Rao, "village elders, officials, and villagers participated in the program.

## Pay Taxes on Time and Be Partners in Town Development: Municipal Chairperson Mengre Akash

"Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. March, 28." "Kumram Bheem Asifabad Municipal Chairperson Mengre Akash urged the residents of the town to pay their house tax, water tax, and trade license fees on time and actively participate in the development of Asifabad town. On Saturday, as part of the "Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika" program, a special sanitation drive was conducted in Ward No. 16 under the Asifabad Municipality limits. Chairperson Akash participated in the program along with Vice Chairperson MD Ahmed and Commissioner Gajanand. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson emphasized that maintaining cleanliness in the town is everyone's responsibility. He advised residents to segregate household waste into wet, dry, and hazardous categories. He also encouraged citizens to adopt home composting methods to contribute to environmen-



tal protection. Municipal Vice Chairperson MD Ahmed stated that special drives are being carried out in wards to control mosquitoes, including spraying of anti-social chemicals. He urged residents to ensure that water does not stagnate in their surroundings. "Municipal Commissioner Gajanand informed that a special drive is currently underway across all wards for tax collection. He requested those with pending dues to clear them immediately and make proper use of municipal services. Ward No. 16 Councillor Dudala Lakshmi, BRS leader Dudala Ashok, municipal staff, and local residents participated in the program.

## Follow traffic rules - reach destination safely : Vira ACP

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY "Vaira ACP Sarangapani said that everyone should follow the traffic rules and reach their destination safely. "As part of the Prajapalana Pragathi Plan program, the third phase of "Arrive Alive" special program undertaken by the police department to reduce road accidents and prevent loss of lives in Chintakani mandal Pandullapalli village, Sarpanches, local people, "Conducted awareness program for vehicle drivers. "On this occasion, eye tests were conducted for many vehicle drivers with the medical team of Akhil Kanti Hospital. "After that, ACP said that he advised people to follow the road safety standards and drive responsibly. He said that their main objective 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 appealed to everyone to 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 the district an ideal road safety with the participation of students, celebrities, public representatives and all government departments. "He said that in this campaign special attention has been given to the dangerous habits of two-wheeler riders not wearing helmets, not wearing seat belts in cars, using cell phones while driving, drinking alcohol, jumping signal, crossing the stop line, overloading autos on highways and overtaking from the left. "Tasildar Babji, MPDO Srinivas and SSI Virender participated in the program.



of the village should live together without any undesirable incidents or religious hatred in your villages and install CCTV cameras in your villages. If anyone is involved in anti-social activities near government buildings, schools, temples, they should provide us with information as a responsible citizen. He also said that no one should do any illegal activities in all the villages of Chinnambavi Mandal. A call was made to the people. In this program, Koppunuru village BRS party leaders Nandi Rajeshwar Reddy, Anand Yadav, Vaddeman Ramakrishnudu, Agganagari Venkatrama Reddy, Thagaram Auto Kurumaiah, Kathi Narayana, Thagaram Vakeel Balakishaitah, Thagaram Nagaraju, Thagaram Ugra Narasimha, Polamoni Kurumurthy, Badikala Babu Yadav, and Velturu village BRS leader Pusalapati Nagamaddileti participated in the felicitation program.

## Minister Damodaran Rajanarsimha visits Gaddar's wife undergoing treatment at NIMS Hospital

“Sangareddy March 28 Indian Chronicle Correspondent Sunil” Late singer Gaddar Vimala is undergoing treatment at NIMS Hospital due to illness. With this, State Health Minister Damodaran Rajanarsimha... went to NIMS Hospital and visited Vimala. He spoke to the doctors and ordered them to provide the best treatment. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Damodaran Rajanarsimha said... He prayed to God for Vimala's speedy recovery.



## Chief Minister's Relief Fund is a boon for the poor

Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy



Molakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj, financial assistance of ₹50,000 was sanctioned under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund through an LOC (Letter of Credit) for emergency treatment. “On Saturday, Uppal Constituency In-charge Parameshwar Reddy handed over the LOC document to the family members at his residence in Uppal. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has become a great support and a boon for poor people in times of distress. He added that beneficiaries who apply for assistance are receiving timely financial help, with the Chief Minister sanctioning funds promptly.” Senior Congress leaders including Bakaram Laxman, Aakiti Agam Reddy, Rajesh Mudiraj, Uppender Reddy, Ganesh Naik, Kandi Shraavan Reddy, Balayya Babu, Kishan Naik, Vijay Kumar, Gorge Mahesh, Rajanna, Naik, Sarfaraz, Bakaram Arun, Dharmender Naik, and Suman Naik, among others, participated in the program.

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “Radha Ram Aradhya, a resident of New Ram Nagar Colony under Chiluka Nagar Division, has been suffering from health issues and required treatment at NIMS Hospital. Upon being informed by senior Congress leader Aakiti Agam Reddy and Division President

## Government prioritizes vocational skill development: Jagtial MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar

“Jagtial Correspondent, March 28, (Indian Chronicle):” “The state government is giving high priority to vocational skill development, said Jagtial MLA Dr. M. Sanjay Kumar.” “At the Advanced Technical Centre (ATC) in Jagtial, as part of the public administration progress plan, the students presented a wooden portrait of MLA Sanjay Kumar to him at his camp office. The presentation was made by Jagtial ITI college principal Ravinder, Vice Principal Rajeshwar Reddy, and staff members Maunika, among others.” “On this occasion, MLA Sanjay Kumar said that the government is working to provide employment opportunities to the youth by upgrading ITIs with ₹35 crores each in the constituencies and providing skill courses through 65 ATC centers for skill development.” “He added that the ATC center in Jagtial was recently inaugurated by Minister Laxman Kumar. As part of the public administration progress plan, the ATC is offering six batches of certificate courses with a duration of 15 days, and the MLA urged the youth to take advantage of this opportunity.” “He also mentioned that a CC road worth ₹70 lakhs was laid with the initiative of Minister Sridhar Babu to ensure that students don't face any road difficulties.



## Parameshwar Reddy Participates in Sri Rama Navami Celebrations in Uppal



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, Parameshwar Reddy, Congress Party In-charge of Uppal Constituency, attended the celebrations held at the Sri Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Uppal Division. The event, organized by the Padmavathi Colony Welfare Association, featured the ceremonial Sita Rama Kalyanam (divine wedding of Lord Rama and Sita). Responding to the invitation of the temple committee, Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest on Friday night. He witnessed the Kalyanam and offered prayers to the deity.” “Speaking on the occasion, he said that Lord Rama is an ??? (great) ruler who sacrificed his life to uphold Dharma (righteousness). He wished that all the people of Uppal Constituency be blessed with happiness, good health, and prosperity. He also extended Sri Rama Navami greetings to everyone.” “Later, the temple priests and committee members honored him with a shawl

and presented theertha prasadam (holy offerings). Temple committee members, local Congress leaders, and a large number of devotees participated in the program.

## Resolve Traffic Issues at Survey of India & Pista House Junctions: BRS state Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj

“Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “At the request of BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Traffic ACP Sampath Kumar and CI Nagaraju conducted an inspection at the Survey of India junction and Pista House junction, where frequent traffic congestion has been causing severe inconvenience to residents of nearby colonies and Beerappa Gadda. “Locals expressed concerns that due to heavy traffic, commuters are unable to reach offices and schools on time. They also highlighted that during evening hours, they are often stuck in traffic for long periods while returning home.” “During the visit, traffic officials stated that they are considering implementing signal-based regulation and a one-way traffic system as a possible solution. They assured that a permanent solution will be introduced soon to ensure smooth traffic flow and to minimize inconvenience to the public. It was also brought to their attention that residents from surrounding colonies and Beerappa Gadda are facing great difficulty in crossing the road. A Foot Over Bridge has already been sanctioned through GHMC, and officials were urged to expedite its construction at the earliest.” “Leaders including Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Goud, Shyam, Balu Banti Goud, along with Pista House managers Sajid and Atesham, and traffic personnel participated in the program.



## Awareness Seminar on Journalism at Government Degree College

“Indian Chronicle. Jade, Srinivas. March, 28” “An awareness seminar on “Journalism – Fundamentals” was Ayojith on Saturday at the Government Degree College, Kagaznagar, under the aegis of the Telugu Department. Dr. Kambala Muralikrishna, Telugu Lecturer from Government Degree College, Bellampalli, attended as the chief guest and provided students with valuable insights into the basics of journalism. On this occasion, he explained how to write news reports and elaborated on the structure and elements of news writing in a simple and understandable manner. He also suggested that journalism can be chosen as a promising career option in the present times. College Principal K. Sridevi stated that such seminars offer additional knowledge and exposure to students, helping them in their academic and professional growth. Head of the Telugu Department, Dr. Lakshminarasimham, mentioned that students can secure good opportunities in the future by pursuing journalism courses after completing their degree. The program was attended by Academic Coordinator D. Janardhan, and faculty members J. Mahesh, Shambhavi, and Saniya, among others.



## Grand Celebrations of Pochamma Temple 12th Anniversary at Ram Reddy Nagar



“Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “The 12th anniversary celebrations of Sri Pochamma Thali Temple, located in Ram Reddy Nagar Colony under Venkat Reddy Nagar Division of Uppal constituency, were held with great devotion and grandeur.” “Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President, Aakarapu Arun Patel, attended the spiritual event as the chief guest. On this occasion, he offered prayers to the presiding deity and performed special puja (rituals), seeking the blessings of Goddess Pochamma for the well-being, prosperity, and good health of all residents of the colony. The temple committee members felicitated Arun Patel with great respect and presented him with Theertha Prasadam. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that such annual celebrations not only strengthen devotion but also promote unity and brotherhood among the residents. Several prominent personalities and devotees participated in the event, including Reporter Santosh Raj, Harinethram Lingamurthy, Chander, Rayudu, Ramesh, Venkatesh, Chevella Mallayya, Tillu, Godke Sattaiah, Siddu Raju, Bhanu, Suresh, Siddu, Bhaskar, Ashok, Chota Rajesh, Ravinder, Nani, Sai, Mittu, Chiru, Sunitha, Sujatha, Prabhavathi, along with colony residents, Congress party leaders, and a large number of devotees.

## Budget Completely Ignores Public Welfare Government's Work is Anti-Farmer

“We Will Question the Government for Implementing Promises” “We Will Welcome Those Who Work for Public Welfare into the Party...” “L. Ramana, MLC, Karimnagar Local Bodies” “Jagithyal Correspondent, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “L. Ramana, MLC of Karimnagar Local Bodies, criticized the government's stance, stating that the Congress government in Telangana has completely ignored public welfare, evident from the recently presented budget. Ramana held a media conference at his residence in Jagithyal district center on Saturday.” “Speaking on the occasion, MLC L. Ramana alleged that there was no mention of welfare in the Assembly and Council sessions. The budget has severely disappointed the state's people, and the Chief Minister is limited to frequent trips to Delhi. BRS is fighting in various forms on public issues, but there's no response from the government even after bringing their failures to their notice.” “Ramana criticized the government's anti-farmer stance, stating that the Governor's speech didn't mention fee reimbursement and that the Congress government is working against farmers by providing Rythu Bandhu for only 3 crops instead of 6. He questioned the Kamareddy Declaration and stated that BRS spent 43,000 crores on development in 9 years, and they will continue to question the government until every promise is implemented.” “Ramana clarified that it's natural to be



in a party where one gets respect, and KCR has 50 years of political experience, 25 years of party leadership, and 10 years of governance experience, and they will move forward by following his advice.” “He stated that BRS will welcome anyone who works for public welfare and understands public issues into the party. The party's high command will provide opportunities to those working for the people.” “Ramana handed over checks worth 5 lakh 10 thousand rupees to 24 beneficiaries from the CM Relief Fund. The program was attended by town president Venkatswar Rao, councilors Korukanti Ramu, leaders Ailneni Sagar Rao, Avari Shivakeshari Babu, Dayyal Mallareddy, Thelu Raju, Padigela Gangareddy, and others.

## Grand Procession of Lord Rama Organized by Dharmapuri Colony Sai Baba Temple Committee

BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj Participates in the Procession



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):” “On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, a grand procession of Lord Rama was organized with great pomp and devotion under the aegis of the Dharmapuri Colony Association, following the Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony on Friday evening.” “BRS party state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj participated in the procession. Despite the rain, devotees enthusiastically took part in large numbers. The procession featured horse-drawn chariots, band music, devotional songs, traditional Kolatam dances, and fireworks.” “The procession commenced from the Dharmapuri Colony Sai Baba Temple and passed through Bank Colony, Kalyanpuri, Raghavendra Nagar, and Sairam Nagar. At every junction, devotees welcomed Lord Sita Rama with Harathi and prayers.” “The procession concluded at the Sai Baba Temple. Colony members, youth, children, and a large number of devotees actively participated in the event, making it a grand success.

## Illegal Gates Block Public Roads in Kagaznagar Market

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 28, “Kagaznagar (Komaram Bheem Asifabad District): Public roads are increasingly being turned into private spaces in Kagaznagar. In the market area, some traders are unlawfully occupying roads, treating them as their own property.” “Iron gates have been installed across roads, completely blocking pedestrian movement and restricting public access.” “In addition, public roads are being misused for private parking. Vehicles such as cars and bikes are parked on these roads, while “No Parking” boards are ironically displayed to prevent others from using the same space.” “Residents have expressed strong anger over the negligence of municipal authorities, alleging that repeated complaints have gone unanswered.” “The people of Kagaznagar have demanded the immediate removal of all encroachments obstructing public movement and strict action against those violating the rules.



## No shortage of LPG gas, petrol, diesel products 3,44,088 LPG gas connections in the district..

### Daily delivery of gas sufficient for 4135 bookings

..Cases filed against 52 people for misusing cylinders...“People should not believe rumors about LPG shortage...“District Civil Supplies Officer Jitender Reddy, Jagityal...“Jagityal Correspondent, March 28 (Indian Chronicle): “There is no shortage of LPG gas, petroleum, and diesel products in Jagityal district, said S. Jitender Reddy, District Civil Supplies Officer, in a statement on Saturday. The supply system is functioning normally, and all arrangements are being made for continuous supply.”“There are 3,44,088 LPG connections in Jagityal district, and daily gas delivery is sufficient for 4135 bookings. The officer advised people not to worry about LPG

shortage. Petroleum products are available in all gas agencies and petrol pumps, sufficient for the district's needs. Consumers can check their booking status online or through the LPG app and contact the toll-free number 8886808092 for information and complaints.”“Jitender Reddy revealed that cases have been filed against 52 people for misusing domestic cylinders, and the cylinders have been seized. The authorities are taking legal action against those misusing gas, in coordination with the civil supplies and police departments, and are constantly monitoring petrol pumps.”[6:33 PM, 3/28/2026] +91 80198 13525: End

## Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) Consoles Bereaved Family in Beerappagadda

““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 28 (Indian Chronicle):““Irshad Khan (popularly known as Uppal Khan), a local Congress minority leader, visited the residence of the late Bommaji Laxman from Beerappagadda and consoled the bereaved family members.”“Bommaji Laxman, who recently passed away, was the father of Laddu Raj, a member of Uppal Khan's team. On this occasion, Irshad Khan met Laxman's mother, sister, and other family members and expressed his deep condolences.”“He conveyed his shock over Laxman's demise and prayed for the peace of the departed soul. He also extended moral support to the grieving family during this difficult time and provided financial assistance towards the funeral expenses.



## Khammam Cyber Crime Police Arrest Two Cyber Fraudsters

“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau March 28, (Indian Chronicle):““Khammam Cyber Crime Police have arrested two accused involved in a major online investment fraud case, according to Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt.”“As per the case details, fraudsters contacted a businessman from Khammam district through WhatsApp and lured him with promises of high profits by investing in online trading through the “Fx Pro” platform. Believing their claims, the victim invested nearly ₹2 crore via trading links shared on WhatsApp and was eventually cheated. During the investigation, police traced ₹7 lakh transferred to certain bank accounts. The account holders, identified as MD. Sadiq (35) and Shyam Babu (21), were arrested in Tanuku town of West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh. They were produced before the Khammam Cyber Crime Court and remanded to judicial custody.”“Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt appreciated the efforts of the cyber crime team, including DSP CH.R.V. Phaninder, Inspector Kondaparthi Naresh, SI Ranjith Kumar, and constables Venkata Krishna Rao and Kishan Rao, for their role in solving the case.



## Midnight detention of ASHA workers by police

### Police overreach... taken to the police station in their nighties

““Devulapalli Srinivas, Warangal Bureau, March 28 (Indian Chronicle): Police took into custody at midnight ASHA workers who have been protesting for the past few days with key demands such as job security, insurance, and salary increases based on seniority, and urging the government to respond immediately and provide benefits. As a call was given for “Chalo Assembly” on Saturday, ASHA workers from various villages under the Madikonda police station limits were taken into custody on Friday midnight and shifted to the police station. There is widespread outrage over the fact that women activists, who should have been spending time with their families during the Sri Rama Navami festival, were not even given a chance to change clothes and were taken to the police station in their nighties. ““ASHA workers expressed anger that male police personnel detained them at night without even the presence of women police. They said that despite pleading to be allowed to change clothes, they were taken to the station in their nightwear. Family members alleged that one of those arrested had recently undergone a stent operation, and despite her condition, the police abused her verbally and behaved harshly. ASHA workers also alleged that the women at the station were not provided even basic drinking water or food, and their mobile phones were seized, leading to harassment.”“Among those detained were ASHA worker representatives from about 15 areas including Kadipikonda, Rampet,



Madikonda, Ayodhyapuram, Bodagutta, Indiramma Colony, Kancharavada, and Kandaladabba—such as Adanda Swaroopa, Prabhavati, Yakobi, CH Srivani, Rajamani, Vijayalakshmi, and others. They are demanding an immediate inquiry into the incident and action against the responsible police officials.

## \* Sapta Kalala Sammelanam to be Held in Khammam Today

““Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter March 27, (Indian Chronicle):““A grand cultural event titled Sapta Kalala Sammelanam will be organized on Sunday, March 29, 2026, at 6:30 PM at Bhakta Ramadasu Kalakshetram, Khammam. The event is being presented by Fire Prardhavika and Pandu Entertainments, and everyone is invited to attend.”“Kuruvela Praveen Kumar, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of Mitra Group, will attend as the Chief Guest. The program will be presided over by Velpula Vijeta, General Secretary of Khammam Kala Parishat.”“Distinguished guests include Dr. Naga Battini Ravi and V.V. Appa Rao, along with Bommrajeswara Rao, Honorary President of Khammam Kala Parishat and Chairman of Bomma Group of Institutions. Other notable attendees include Gurrum Kantharao, TRSMA Khammam District President; Chella Seshagiri Rao, President of Khammam District Private Junior Colleges; MD Jaffer Mateen, TRSMA Division President, and Kalla Paparao from Telangana Agency.”“Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Naga Battini Ravi and Vijeta Madam highlighted that the event will feature a variety of cultural performances. These include Bomma Dance, performances by TV and cinema artists, dance acts by Junction Seenu (Junior Chiranjeevi duplicate), Double Hit Dance, Hello Men Dance, Spring Dance, and other variety dance shows.”“Special performances by artists from Chennai such as Arun Kumar (Cycle Rim Dance) and Prabhu (Single Leg performance) will also be showcased. Additionally, cultural performances representing the united Khammam district and Telangana traditions will be presented. The Fire team will entertain the audience with fire magic, juggling, ring performances, Bharatanatyam on skates, and more. Organizers have appealed to poets, artists, and the general public to attend in large numbers and make the event a grand success.



## Edulapuram Municipality, Khammam City

INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY

“A placements training and orientation program was successfully conducted at the local Daripalli Anantaramulu College of Engineering and Technology (Diploma | B.Tech | MBA) College courtesy Bajaj Fin Serv. A large number of students and lecturers attended this program.”“On this occasion, Trainer Chandravadana said that free placements training will be provided to the final year students of the degree. Interested students are advised to register their names at Daripalli Anantaramulu Engineering College and attend the training programs conducted every day.”“Dr. Kiran Daripalli, principal of the college, said that in the current situation, job opportunities are decreasing due to lack of required skills among the students. In this context, Daripalli Placement Wing has designed this program with the aim of preparing students for jobs through 120 hours of comprehensive training and providing them with placements.”“Only limited seats available.”“Students are advised to contact College AO Chiranjeevi on 8886667138 for more details.”“On this occasion, Head and Principal of Daripalli Educational Institutions Dr. Daripalli Kiran, Correspondent Daripalli Swathi, Vice Principal Chaitanya, as well as Heads of Departments AO Chiranjeevi, Saddaf, Ravi Kumar, Prasad, Ramyasree, Praveen Prasanna, Rahmati, Vijayabhani and Vidyarthi students participated and made the program a success.



## Police Commissioner Visits Wyra Road Accident Spot



“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau March 28, (Indian Chronicle):““Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt visited the site of a recent road accident in Wyra and instructed officials to install signboards and speed breakers to prevent future mishaps. The accident occurred near Reliance Trends in Wyra on Saturday, where an RTC bus collided with a lorry container, leaving several passengers seriously injured. Police responded immediately, shifted the injured to the hospital in a 108 ambulance, and cleared the traffic. A case has been registered and an investigation is underway.”“Following the incident, Commissioner Sunil Dutt inspected the accident spot and inquired about the causes. He directed concerned officials to immediately install proper signboards, set up speed breakers, and repair the slip road at the earliest. He stated that as part of the government's 99-day “Prapalana Pragathi Pranalika” program, this week is dedicated to the “Arrive Alive” campaign aimed at spreading road safety awareness among the public.”“Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner emphasized that safe driving is crucial for every individual to reach home safely. He appealed to families, especially wives and mothers, to encourage their husbands and sons to follow traffic rules and drive carefully.”“He also mentioned that in Khammam, police along with various departments are conducting “Arrive Alive” awareness programs, installing signboards, filling potholes, and clearing garbage as part of corrective measures to improve road safety.

concerned officials to immediately install proper signboards, set up speed breakers, and repair the slip road at the earliest. He stated that as part of the government's 99-day “Prapalana Pragathi Pranalika” program, this week is dedicated to the “Arrive Alive” campaign aimed at spreading road safety awareness among the public.”“Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner emphasized that safe driving is crucial for every individual to reach home safely. He appealed to families, especially wives and mothers, to encourage their husbands and sons to follow traffic rules and drive carefully.”“He also mentioned that in Khammam, police along with various departments are conducting “Arrive Alive” awareness programs, installing signboards, filling potholes, and clearing garbage as part of corrective measures to improve road safety.

## Earth Hour Awareness Programs Held Grandly at Triveni

““Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter March 28, (Indian Chronicle):““Triveni School management, along with Khammam district NCSC Coordinator Venkateswarlu, called upon everyone to participate in the Earth Hour initiative by switching off unnecessary lights and electrical appliances for one hour—from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM on Saturday, March 28—to help protect the planet. As part of this initiative, a large-scale awareness campaign was conducted with the participation of students.”“On this occasion, various competitions such as essay writing, elocution, and drawing were organized successfully for students.”“Dr. Gollapudi Veerendra Chowdary, School Director, stated that millions of people around the world observe Earth Hour every year to raise awareness about climate change. He urged everyone to voluntarily turn off lights during the designated hour as a gesture of support.”“Principal Rajendra Prasad explained that Earth Hour was first launched in 2007 in Sydney, Australia, under the initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and has been observed globally every year since then.”“The program was attended by Directors of Krishna Veni-Triveni Educational Institutions Yarlagaada Venkateswara Rao, School CRO Katragadda Muralikrishna, Vice Principals Swapna and Mustafa, Campus In-charges Charles and Sandeep, along with the teaching staff.



## Initiated for Public Library Development in District: Addl Collector David

““Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 28,““The District Library Organization's Person-in-Charge and Additional Collector, M. David, stated that concrete steps will be taken to develop libraries across the district.”“On Saturday, the Additional Collector chaired a review meeting at his chamber with officials from the Panchayat Raj, Education, Library, and Municipal departments. During the meeting, he instructed officials to actively work towards the development of libraries in the district.”“He emphasized that adequate arrangements must be made to ensure that readers visiting libraries do not face any inconvenience. Facilities such as safe drinking water, chairs, tables, toilets, and fans should be provided in all libraries.”“Considering the summer season, he directed officials to ensure the availability of cool drinking water and ORS packets for visitors.”“He also instructed that libraries should be equipped with a variety of Telugu and English magazines and publications, including general knowledge resources, employment news, Kuruksheeta, Yojana, Consumer Voice, and other informative materials. Adequate study material should be made available for candidates preparing for competitive examinations.”“Further, he directed Panchayats and Municipal bodies to ensure payment of library cess for the development of libraries. The annual action plan for the financial year 2026-27 was also approved during the meeting.”“District Library Secretary A. Sarita, District Panchayat Officer Bikshapathi, librarians Sadanandam and Praveen, along with officials from the Education and Municipal departments, were present at the meeting.



## April 6 Deadline for Journalists' Accreditation Applications

““Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), March 28,““Strict Guidelines Issued for Journalists' Accreditation Process”“Special Commissioner of the Information and Public Relations Department, Priyanka, has advised journalists across Telangana to apply for accreditation cards on or before April 6.”“In a statement issued on this occasion, she said that journalists must submit their applications along with a recommendation letter from their respective media organizations, required newspaper clippings, and educational qualification certificates.”“Independent journalists are required to submit relevant news clippings along with a letter from the concerned editor certifying that they have contributed news reports to the publication. Applicants must also attach all necessary eligibility documents.”“Further, applicants must submit a self-declaration stating that they are not engaged in any other professions or holding positions such as society chairman, director, government employee, advocate, sarpanch, or any other post.”“The completed application should be uploaded online, and a hard copy must be submitted to the respective District Public Relations Officer (DPRO) office.”“The Special Commissioner clarified that accreditation cards will be issued only to eligible candidates as per the guidelines issued by the government. She also warned that strict action will be taken against those who provide false information.”“She further stated that the State Accreditation Committee has already met twice to discuss the implementation of government orders and procedures. The process is being carried out in a fair manner to ensure equal opportunities for all.”“Applications received so far are being reviewed, and steps are being taken to issue accreditation cards to eligible journalists who meet the criteria.



## Don't create artificial shortage by queuing outside petrol pumps, hoarding fuel: CM Devendra Fadnavis



GNS News Agency, March 28

Fadnavis also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reducing the excise duties on petrol and diesel, saying the decision will bring a huge relief to people. Fadnavis also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reducing the excise duties on petrol and diesel, saying the decision will bring a huge relief to people. (Image: @CMOMaharashtra/X) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said Friday there is enough stock of petrol, diesel and cooking gas,

and urged people not to hoard fuel as it would lead to unnecessary artificial storage. Speaking to media persons in Mumbai, Fadnavis said, "Don't believe in rumours of fuel scarcity. It is my ardent appeal to people not to queue up in petrol pumps".

"There will be no lockdown in India... All those trying to build a fake narrative should refrain from doing so. If anybody continues to spread rumours about the lockdown, they will be dealt with firmly," he added. The chief minister said that the supply of LPG cylinders for commercial use has been restored to 40 per cent from 20 per cent, and gradually it will be increased to 50 per cent. "This will help commercial establishments normalise the situation and bring huge relief". Fadnavis also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reducing the excise duties on petrol and diesel, saying the decision will bring a huge relief to people. "The Centre is taking all necessary measures to address the concerns arising due to the West Asia conflict that led to an escalation in international crude prices." On Friday, the Union Government reduced special additional excise duties on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each, bringing the Centre-imposed taxes down to Rs 3 per litre of petrol and to zero for diesel.

## 'Eid gift for PM': Bomb threat at high-security Gujsail in Gujarat turns out to be hoax

GNS News Agency, March 28

The chief security officer of Gujsail and other authorities alerted the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) regarding the threat, leading to a meeting of the "bomb threat committee" at the airport. The chief security officer of Gujsail and other authorities alerted the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) regarding the threat, leading to a meeting of the "bomb threat committee" at the airport. The Gujarat State Aviation Infrastructure Limited (Gujsail) on Wednesday received a bomb threat that turned out to be a hoax.

According to the First Information Report, the email received at 8 am stated that the blast would "be an Eid gift to the prime minister and home minister" and it "demanded the release of an accused, previously arrested by the Crime Branch in a bomb threat case". Notably, the Gujsail building is located inside the premises of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad. It handles the state's aviation assets, including the official chief minister's aircraft and helicopters, and the air ambulance. Its hangar was also used to store parts of the AI 171 aircraft after the June 2025 crash during the preliminary investigation by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). The chief security officer of Gujsail and other authorities alerted the



Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) regarding the threat, leading to a meeting of the "bomb threat committee" at the airport. The police launched a thorough check of the entire premises of Gujsail with the help of the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS), dog squad, and other security agencies and declared the threat a hoax. The police registered a case against an unknown person under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections for criminal intimidation, criminal intimidation through anonymous communication, circulating false rumours, and Section 66(c) of the Information Technology Act.

## Punjab Milkfed suspends 3 officials after Army rejects contaminated milk powder consignments

GNS News Agency, March 28

The Punjab State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (Milkfed) has suspended three officials of the Ludhiana-based Verka Milk Plant (VMP) after the Indian Army rejected two large consignments of milk powder owing to contamination. The action follows official communication from Army authorities flagging quality concerns in supplies routed through the Ludhiana District Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd. Acting on the reports, Milkfed placed Daljit Singh, General Manager, VMP, Gurqbal Singh, Manager (Quality), VMP, and Paritosh Mishra, Manager (Production), VMP, under suspension with immediate effect, citing a grave lapse in quality control.

The rejected consignments, together amounting to over 124 metric tonnes, were supplied in two batches and subsequently failed quality checks, prompting the Army to return them. Officials said the matter was formally conveyed to the Federation in communications dated February 12 and March 16. In its order, Milkfed termed the lapse "major misconduct" under its service rules, pointing to negligence in duty and acts prejudicial to the organisation's interests. During the suspension period, all three officials will be entitled to a subsistence allowance as per the rules, and their headquarters have been fixed at Chandigarh. Sources indicated that internal scrutiny of procurement and testing protocols may follow as the Federation seeks to contain reputational fallout.

## 'Chargesheet' first, manifesto next: Amit Shah to release document listing failures of TMC government



GNS News Agency, March 28

Party sources further said that issues concerning tea garden workers, youth unemployment, the failing healthcare system, and problems in the education sector may also be included. Party sources further said that issues concerning tea garden workers, youth unemployment, the failing healthcare system, and problems in the education sector may also be included. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to release a "chargesheet" against the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal on Saturday. The document, according to party sources, will outline a series of allegations targeting the state government.

Shah is expected to arrive in Kolkata late Friday night, unveil the "chargesheet" the following day, and then return to Delhi. He is also likely to hold meetings with senior party leaders to review the election campaign in the poll-bound state and finalise strategies. The BJP is expected to publish its manifesto, Sankalp Patra, by the first week of April. Suggestions received from the public during the recent Parivartan Yatra are likely to be incorporated into the document, sources said.

The 'chargesheet' is likely to concentrate on the 'failures' of the Mamata Banerjee government, including the collapse of law and order, systemic political violence, rampant corruption, and demographic changes that pose an internal security threat to the country, as per the BJP. It will also highlight alleged scams such as the Rose Valley chit fund scam, the School Service Commission scam, irregularities in ration distribution under central schemes, etc. A senior party leader said the document will also mention the 'denial of dearness allowance, non-implementation of the

Seventh Pay Commission, and shelter provided to infiltrators". It will also speak about the collapse of law and order and "the betrayal of women by the ruling government while turning the state into an industrial graveyard". Party sources further said that issues concerning tea garden workers, youth unemployment, the failing healthcare system, and problems in the education sector may also be included. Earlier this week, BJP national president Nitin Nabin visited the state for two days and held marathon meetings with senior leaders and party workers.

## Telangana DCA issues urgent advisory as generic semaglutide floods market

Hyderabad: The Drugs Control Administration (DCA), Telangana on Tuesday issued a high-priority public advisory on the usage and safety of Semaglutide-based drugs that have flooded the market, following the landmark patent expiry of the drug.

The move comes as several Indian pharmaceutical giants including all the top drug manufacturers from Hyderabad launched affordable versions of the popular weight-loss and diabetes drug, triggering a huge public demand.

The TS DCA has expressed serious concern over the potential for misuse. With prices for Semaglutide formulations (vials and pre-filled pens) dropping significantly, the TSDCA warned the general public that such drugs are "Prescription Only" and must not be treated as over-the-counter (OTC) lifestyle supplements. "The public is strongly advised not to self-medicate with Semaglutide for weight loss or any other purpose. The treatment must be conducted under the direct medical supervision of a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP)," DCA advisory said.

The advisory said that while Semaglutide is effective for Type-2 Diabetes and obesity management, it belongs to GLP-1 receptor agonist class, which could impact metabolic functions.

## Why Gujarat is the only state where the public can't watch proceedings in the Legislative Assembly live



GNS News Agency, March 28

A scheduled hearing on a public interest petition seeking mandatory live telecast of proceedings in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly could not be taken up by the Gujarat High Court on Friday (March 27). The PIL has been pending in the court for six years now. The Gujarat Assembly is the only one of the 31 state Assemblies in India that does not livestream its proceedings. (See how proceedings are shown to the public in other states below.) No videography or photography is allowed without authorisation in the Assembly.

Back in September 2023, after Gujarat adopted the National eVidhan Application (NeVA) that put the management of all legislative processes on a secure digital platform, Speaker Shankar Chaudhary had said that the Assembly was "thinking about" livestreaming proceedings, but he could not "say exactly when" that might happen.

"There is nothing from the government saying 'don't do this', but there are some aspects," the Speaker had told The Indian Express in an interview. "...I have already readied the [Assembly's] YouTube [channel], and the website we have developed through NeVA, but there are some limitations..." he had said. Gujarat Legislative Assembly in Gandhinagar under an overcast sky leading to a sprinkle on Monday. (Express Photo by Bhupendra Rana) Gujarat Legislative Assembly in Gandhinagar under an overcast sky leading to a sprinkle on Monday. (Express Photo by Bhupendra Rana) However, the Assembly Secretariat has been opposing the petition seeking live telecast of proceedings citing the privileges of the United Kingdom's House of Commons and certain provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. The Opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had demanded that proceedings of the Assembly be telecast live during the month-long Budget Session of the Gujarat Assembly that concluded on March 25, during which several important Bills including the adoption of a Uniform Civil Code, and an important amendment to the Disturbed Areas Act, were passed.

The Opposition Congress had made a similar demand last year. The PIL filed in 2020 asked the court to direct that proceedings in the Assembly be mandatorily telecast live, and that the text of all legislation, transcripts, and list of questions and answers be made available on the website of the Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the RTI Act, as well as the obligations of the state under Articles 19(a) (freedom of speech and expression) and 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution. The petitioners, social activists Neeta Hardikar and Dr Siddharth Jitendra Pathak, argued that the Legislative Assembly is obligated to update information on its website in Gujarati and English, like other Assemblies in the country do.

REFERENCE TO TRADITION IN THE UK: In April 2021, the Gujarat Assembly Secretariat submitted two affidavits opposing the PIL citing privileges similar to the House of Commons in the UK. Deputy Secretary Reeta Mehta submitted in the affidavit-in-reply on behalf of the Gujarat Assembly Secretariat that "there is no legal duty on part of the [Secretariat] to comply with the obligations (under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 21 of the Constitution)... as the fundamental rights are not absolute in nature and are subject to reasonable restrictions." The affidavit-in-reply submitted that the history of Article 194 of the Constitution ("Pow-

ers, privileges, etc., of the House of Legislatures and of the members and committees thereof") can be traced to "the privileges that are claimed by the House of Commons of Parliament in the United Kingdom at the commencement of the Constitution of India..."

With a view to curtailing judicial interference in determining privileges, this provision was amended in 1976 to provide that the privileges of the House "shall be those that are evolved by the said House from time to time...", but the same was amended in 1978 and "restored the position with respect to privileges as they existed prior to the 1976 Amendment", the affidavit said. "As a result, privileges of the House will be the same as the privileges claimed by the House of Commons... at the commencement of the Constitution (of India)... The House of Commons claims to control the publication of debates and proceedings. As a result thereof, the Hon'ble Apex court on various occasions has recognized that every House has the privilege to control or prohibit the publication of its proceedings..." it said.

REFERENCE TO RTI ACT: On the contentions of the petition regarding the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005, the affidavit-in-reply submitted that Section 8 of the Act, which provides for "Exemption from Disclosure of Information", "confers a discretion on the State Legislature as regards disclosure of information that breaches its privilege...". The reply said that "it is settled law that each House is the sole judge to determine whether its privilege has been infringed and the decision... cannot be questioned by courts." In a rejoinder to the affidavit-in-reply filed on July 31, 2021, the petitioners submitted that it was "not correct to submit that there is no legal duty on part (of the respondents) to comply with the obligations" prayed for in the petition. "It is submitted that the Petitioner has prayed for the compliance of obligations under section 4(1)(b) of the RTI Act only, and therefore the Respondent is under a legal obligation to comply with the legal duty," it said. The petitioner submitted that there is a "crucial difference" between the right to "publish", as in the case of the press, and the right to "know", as in the case of the petitioner and other citizens. The affidavit stated: "The Petitioner is a citizen of India and the members of the legislative house are only her representatives who act on her behalf. The right of the petitioner in knowing the proceedings of the legislative house stems from the foundational values of representative democracy." The petitioner stated that the PIL "seeks compliance of statutory and constitutional duties on part of the Respondent and the same does not infringe the privilege of the House in any manner". Documents already in public domain, says Assembly In an affidavit filed on September 30, 2021, then Deputy Secretary of the Gujarat Legislative Secretariat C B Pandya stated that the state Assembly had "uploaded all the public documents on the website of NeVA, a link of which has also been appended on the Home Page of its official website", thus making them "available in the public domain".

The affidavit also stated that "the privilege of the State Legislative Assembly is not merely to prohibit publication of proceedings by the press, but it empowers the Assembly to control the publication of the same as it deems fit". The affidavit reiterated that "different State Legislative Assemblies in the country have chosen different modes for publishing their proceedings", as well as "the extent to which the same should be published". The affidavit submitted that all important proceedings of the day when the Assembly is in session are "telecast in form of a special program named 'Lokshahi Na Dhakara' i.e., 'Heartbeat of Democracy' on all Regional Gujarati Channels such as DD Girmar every day at 06.30 pm, as well as on YouTube, lasting about half an hour"; the Budget Speech is telecast live on all regional Gujarati channels and on YouTube; and the text of the entire debate proceedings is available on the NeVA website. The Secretariat also submitted that merely because the information has been disclosed on the "NeVA website instead of the official website of the State Legislative Assembly, does not in any manner discredit the same". The affidavit denied the suggestion by the petitioners that the NeVA website was temporary and could be removed by the central government.

## In maiden budget, Bengaluru East City Corporation proposes footpaths, flyovers, and Miyawaki forests in IT Corridor



GNS News Agency, March 28

In its first budget, the newly formed Bengaluru East City Corporation (BECC) has bet big on infrastructure development by allocating more than Rs 600 crore for it in the 2026-27 fiscal. During his budget speech, Ramesh D S, Commissioner, BECC, said Friday that they would soon be introducing performance-based allocation. Unveiling a Rs 3,890 crore budget outlay, Ramesh further said, "Each rupee spent from the budget is answerable to these three questions: Will it improve civic life? Will it generate a long-term profit? And will it be implemented transparently?" According to the budget proposal, BECC will fund two major infrastructure projects - a grade separator on Alpine Eco Road (Rs 50 crore) and a 2 km elevated flyover from Varthur to Gunjiri (Rs 150 crore) - through newly proposed municipal bonds. While the Karnataka government has sanctioned a Rs 450 crore project to construct a durable Outer Ring Road from Silk Board Junction to KR Puram, new flyovers, grade separators, and over 100 km of footpaths are also planned, along with a 9 km footpath along the Metro viaduct on the Outer Ring Road for Rs 160 crore. These will be funded by the Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA), the budget document said. The BECC has also earmarked Rs 40 crore for the construction of new roads and road widening projects. The stretches that will be widened include Bileshivalaya Main Road, Bellathuru Main Road SH-35 to Medehalli, Nallurahalli Main Road, OAR Road to ITP Main Road, and Whitefield Main Road-Varthur Main Road to Kadugodi Road. The construction of an approximately 4.5 km-long road from the New Outer Ring Road to Satya Sai Hospital Metro Station has also been planned.

The BECC has also proposed the 'Sponge City' model

to tackle floods. The commissioner informed that 58 flood-prone areas have been identified within the BECC limits. World Bank funding of Rs 629 crore has been channelled into stormwater drain upgrades across both Assembly constituencies in the corporation area. He added that the Panathur storm water drain, which flooded in June last year, has been made flood-free, and the Geddalahalli railway vent work is set for early completion. The budget proposed 15 new primary health centres and 10 Namma Clinics, apart from allocating Rs 35 crore for healthcare infrastructure within BECC limits. Further, Rs 3.50 crore has been earmarked for afforestation, Miyawaki tree parks, and Rs 28 crore has been allocated for lake maintenance across the Corporation's 45 lakes. The Miyawaki forest technique is creating dense and self-sufficient forests in urban places by planting a mix of native trees in less than three years. The method was initially developed by and named after Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki. The Corporation has projected an annual revenue of Rs 3,888 crore, which includes property tax, cess, and state government grants.

## Sankara Eye Hospital launches glaucoma awareness and screening drive in Hyd

Hyderabad: Sankara Eye Hospital, Hyderabad, conducted a glaucoma awareness and screening initiative aimed at early detection and patient education on one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness. The programme witnessed strong participation with patients coming from across the city for consultations, screening, and counselling sessions. In addition to screening, the initiative also focused on patient education. The initiative was aimed at helping individuals understand when to suspect glaucoma, the importance of periodic eye examinations, and the available treatment options. Addressing patients during the initiative, Dr Sriram Simakurthy, Chief Medical Officer, Sankara Eye Hospital, Hyderabad, said, "Glaucoma-related vision loss is irreversible, but it is largely preventable with early diagnosis and consistent management. In India, a large proportion of patients remain undiagnosed until advanced stages, which significantly impacts outcomes".

## 'Double fix' for MB Road: How Rs 1,471-crore proposed transit corridors will decongest key South Delhi route



GNS News Agency, March 28

Two key infrastructure projects to improve traffic congestion on South Delhi's Mehrauli-Badarpur Road have been announced by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta in the government's 'Green Budget'. One involves the construction of a six-lane integrated elevated flyover and underpass from Saket G Block to Sangam Vihar. The second is an elevated corridor from Maa Anandmayee Marg to Pul Prahaladpur. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation will provide consultancy services, said officials in the Public Works Department (PWD), adding that both projects fall along the alignment of DMRC's Phase IV metro. The project is estimated to cost Rs 1,471 crore. The DMRC and PWD have been directed to prepare the Detailed Project Report as soon as possible, said officials. Why is the transit corridor being planned?

The key aim behind this proposal is to provide free flow of traffic, save the valuable time of commuters, avoid traffic jams, save fuel and reduce air pollution. The stretch of this corridor is 12 km long. The Mehrauli-Badarpur road is an important arterial corridor located in the extreme South of Delhi. It connects major hubs in the NCR like Gurgaon and Faridabad and passes through important locations like Tughlakabad, Tigr, Khanpur, Saket and Mehrauli. The Delhi

Metro's Yellow and Violet lines connect to the project corridor at Saket and Tughlakabad metro stations. The corridor also connects to the defence area, air force station and residential quarters, heritage zone of Mehrauli and Tughlakabad Archaeological Park, said officials. "The road section is interspersed with residential colonies and mixed land-use sections like Pul Prahaladpur, Lal Kuan, Sangam Vihar, Khanpur village and Saket. Certain sections along Pul Prahaladpur, Lal Kuan and Khanpur are very congested involving heavy on-street parking, bus stops and pedestrian movement. After observing all this, the proposal for an integrated six-lane elevated road along the alignment of the DMRC corridor was proposed," said an official. The proposal would meet and serve the requirements and objectives of the department to decongest the corridor, said officials. The proposal includes elevated roads at two locations — one from Saket-G block to Sangam Vihar and from Maa Anandmayee Marg to Pul Prahaladpur. In the first, an integrated elevated structure will be designed and constructed by DMRC.

"Portion of corridor from Maa Anandmayee Marg to Pul Prahaladpur work will be carried out by DMRC. It will construct their tunnel and elevated corridor/flyover for PWD," said the official. "The present road capacity is inadequate to cater the traffic demand," said officials. "The project is required for smooth and safe flow of traffic. Road safety and efficiency study has been carried out," said officials. Besides these two corridors, the Delhi government also has plans to construct an elevated road along the Yamuna river, parallel to Ring Road, along with the Phase IV Metro Corridor from Majlis Park near Soorghat Station. Officials said in a recent meeting, the PWD's Flyover Zone was directed to provide all the data sought by the DMRC related to the project. Meanwhile, the DMRC has requested early release of payment with respect to various PWD projects being undertaken by it. In response, the DMRC was informed about the efforts being undertaken by the PWD to release their payment and assured early release, said officials.

## Karnataka ex-MLA's son Raju Bolashetti killed over relationship, Rs 2 lakh dispute: Dharwad police

GNS News Agency, March 28

Karnataka ex-MLA's son Raju Bolashetti killed over relationship, Rs 2 lakh dispute: Dharwad police. The case came to light on March 24, when the police found the charred body inside a burnt car in a field near a railway track at Rampur village. Days after a charred body was found in Karnataka's Dharwad district, the police confirmed Friday it was Raju Bolashetti, the son of former MLA Baburao Bolashetti, following the arrest of two people. Gunjan Arya, Superintendent of Police, Dharwad, said the accused have been identified as Munera Sherif Dillunaika, 32, Mrutyunjay Devappa Kambar, 26, and a minor, all residents of Bidaragaddi in Bailhongal taluk. The case came to light on March 24, when the police found the charred body inside a burnt car in a field near a railway track at Rampur village in Dharwad taluk. The condition of the body had raised suspicions of foul play, prompting a detailed investigation.

The police said preliminary findings indicate that the murder was committed elsewhere, and the body, along with the car, was later set on fire in an attempt to destroy evidence. Investigators, drawing on both technical and field-level evidence, traced and arrested the accused within hours. The police said further inquiry has revealed that the murder was premeditated and driven by revenge, linked to an illicit relationship. According to police, Raju Bolashetti was



involved in a relationship with the woman accused and had given her over Rs 2 lakh during their association, adding that financial transactions led to disputes between them. On the day of the incident, Raju reportedly called the woman to a farmland. The police said the woman, along with her associate and the minor, murdered him there. The accused then transported the body in the car to a forested area near Rampur. "They placed the body in the rear seat, poured petrol and set the vehicle on fire to destroy evidence," a police officer said. After the crime, the accused fled the scene but were later apprehended.

## Indian Railways to recruit 11,127 assistant loco pilots; applications open from May 15



GNS News Agency, March 28

The Indian Railways has announced that it will invite applications for 11,127 Assistant Loco Pilot (ALP) posts starting May 15. This recruitment is part of the Centralised Employment Notification (CEN) No. 01/2026 issued by the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs). The application window will remain open until June 14 at 11.59 pm.

The vacancies are available across all zones of Railways, and candidates can submit their applications through RRB websites across 21 cities — Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Bilaspur, Chandigarh, Chennai, Gorakhpur, Guwahati, Jammu-Srinagar, Kolkata, Malda, Mumbai, Muzaffarpur, Patna, Prayagraj, Ranchi, Secunderabad, Siliguri, and Thiruvananthapuram. Candidates from the Pune region may apply through the Mumbai RRB website. Alternatively, all candidates can apply directly at <http://www.rrbapply.gov.in>. The Solapur Division of Central Railway, which covers parts of Maharashtra, has urged eligible candidates in the region to begin preparing their documents ahead of the May 15 opening date. During the registration process, applicants must verify their personal details using their Aadhaar card. The name and date of birth on the Aadhaar card must match those on the Class 10 certificate.

Candidates are also advised to update their Aadhaar with a recent photograph and biometric details before submitting their applications, as applications not linked to Aadhaar will undergo detailed scrutiny at every stage, potentially causing delays. While this initial notice is intended to help candidates prepare their documentation in advance,

the detailed eligibility criteria and terms and conditions will be published in full on the official RRB websites. Candidates are encouraged to rely solely on official sources and to avoid engaging with touts or intermediaries that claim to facilitate recruitment.

This recruitment drive is part of the Railways' Annual Recruitment Calendar, introduced in 2024 for Group C posts. The calendar-based approach was designed to make the recruitment process more predictable and transparent, giving aspirants a clearer sense of when examinations will be held and reducing the long, uncertain waiting periods that had long frustrated job seekers. Railways says the structured cycle also ensures that newly eligible candidates get a fair chance every year, rather than waiting years between recruitment drives as was previously the case. Assistant Loco Pilots are a critical part of railway operations, supporting train drivers and playing a key safety role across the network. With Railways undergoing rapid modernisation, including the expansion of Vande Bharat trains, dedicated freight corridors, and increased route capacity, the demand for trained operational staff has grown considerably.

## CBI registers FIR in 'digital arrest' case following HC orders

GNS News Agency, March 28. Details in the 'digital arrest' FIR indicate that the fraud involved multiple financial transactions routed through different bank accounts. Details in the 'digital arrest' FIR indicate that the fraud involved multiple financial transactions routed through different bank accounts.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a fresh FIR in connection with a cyber fraud case involving alleged digital arrest-style cheating, after the Punjab and Haryana High Court directed transfer of the probe from Punjab Police. The case has been registered at the CBI's Special Crime Branch in Chandigarh, pertaining to offences under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 66(D) of the Information Technology Act, relating to cheating and impersonation using digital platforms. According to the FIR, the case was originally registered in 2025 at the Cyber Crime Police Station in Jalandhar.

## Days after viral stunt, Ricky Rai faces fresh case over fake number plate, Lamborghini seized



GNS News Agency, March 28

Booked again: Days after viral stunt, Ricky Rai faces fresh case over fake number plate, Lamborghini seized. The police said the car was seen being driven rashly around 2.40 am, endangering public safety. Days after being booked by the Bengaluru police over a viral Lamborghini stunt, Ricky Rai, son of former underworld figure Muthappa Rai, faced another case on Friday, with authorities seizing a Lamborghini Huracán allegedly used for dangerous driving and fitted with a fake "fancy" registration plate.

According to the Cubbon Park Traffic Police, the case came to light after a video showing the luxury car drifting at Anil Kumble Circle in the early hours of March 21 went viral on social media and was tagged to the Bengaluru City police's account. Acting on the complaint filed by a police constable, authorities traced the vehicle bearing registra-

tion number KA-05 NR 0009 and registered a case. The police said the car was seen being driven rashly around 2.40 am, endangering public safety. The vehicle was subsequently seized and taken into custody for further investigation.

During verification, officials from the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Bengaluru South, confirmed that the "fancy number" displayed on the car had not been officially allotted to any vehicle. Officers further found that the Lamborghini Huracán was originally registered in Delhi as DL 1 CT 1515 but had not been re-registered in Karnataka as required under law. The police said a counterfeit number plate was installed to mimic a premium registration and evade identification while committing traffic violations. Based on the findings, a case was filed under sections 318(4) (cheating), 340(2) (use of forged document as genuine), and 341 (possession of counterfeit instruments for forgery) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The police said further investigations are underway. Days after the stunt video went viral, a similar clip surfaced showing the same Lamborghini performing stunts near the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, raising concerns over reckless driving. Rai, through his advocate, has challenged the police action, claiming that he was not driving the vehicle at the time of the incident. The defence maintained that the driver was merely navigating a bad stretch of road and did not engage in stunt driving. "The driver should be appreciated for handling a difficult patch rather than being penalised," the lawyer told the media, disputing allegations of rash and dangerous driving.

## Pune schools hit by LPG shortage: A canteen scales down menu, a cafeteria shuts down

GNS News Agency, March 28

The LPG shortage due to the war in West Asia has begun to impact school canteens in Pune, forcing institutions to scale down or completely shut food services, causing inconvenience to students and administrators alike. At The Bishop's Co-Ed School, Undri, the administration has reduced its canteen or tuck shop menu. In a notice to parents, the school cited limited LPG availability as the reason for cutting down items that require cooking or heating. Parents have been advised to send meals from home to ensure students do not face inconvenience. The school assured that the situation is temporary and updates will be provided once normal services resume.

The situation is worse at Kalyani School, where the cafeteria has been shut down due to the ongoing crisis. "Earlier, teachers were provided tea and snacks, but now they are required to bring their own food from home. We are only managing to provide tea, and that too depends on the availability of gas," Principal Nirmal Wadden said. She added that the school had sent hand-delivered letters to two major gas supply agencies, but has yet to receive a response. Exploring alternatives has also proven difficult. "Switching to induction would require a complete overhaul of utensils, which is a significant investment. Using wood fire is not an option as it is harmful to the environment. The situation is critical," Wadden added.

In contrast, Symbiosis International School has managed to keep its canteen operational for now. Agnes Dsouza, the school's food coordinator, shared that while



daily meals are still being served, the school is taking precautions for larger events. "For occasions like Graduation Day, we have opted for catering services and are focusing on food options that consume less fuel, such as tandoor-based items and packaged food," she explained. However, she acknowledged the uncertainty ahead. With the school scheduled to close for the Easter break next week, authorities are monitoring the situation closely. "After the break, we may have to consider alternative arrangements if the LPG supply does not stabilise," Dsouza said. The Centre assured on Thursday that the LPG supply situation is improving with additional domestic production of the fuel, along with additional cargoes coming in from non-West Asian suppliers. It said that around one month of LPG supply is "firmly arranged" through imports from non-West Asian suppliers, and additional procurement is being tied up.

## 2 Mumbai constables arrested for abducting forex delivery man, stealing \$10,000



GNS News Agency, March 28

Two Mumbai police constables have been arrested for allegedly kidnapping a forex company delivery executive and robbing him of 10,000 US dollars. The police said the stolen cash has not yet been recovered, and efforts are on to trace three other accused. The Juhu police identified the arrested accused as police constable Sandeep Shinde, 33, from Bandra-Kurla-Complex police station, and Gajendra Rajput, 40, who was posted at the Jogeshwari police station. While Shinde was a constable from the 2011 batch, Rajput was from the 2008 batch.

According to the police, the incident occurred on

Wednesday afternoon. The delivery executive, who is in his early thirties and works for a Bandra-based forex company, had gone to deliver foreign currency in Juhu. "Around 2 pm, the accused allegedly abducted him from Road No 10 near Juhu Circle in an Ertiga car. They reportedly assaulted him inside the vehicle and threatened to implicate him in a false case. The accused then drove him to Dahisar, where they allegedly snatched his bag containing \$10,000 and continued to assault him," a police officer who is a part of the probe said.

The delivery executive resisted and raised an alarm, prompting passersby to intervene. A police patrol vehicle reached the spot, following which the accused attempted to flee. Shinde was apprehended on the spot, while the others managed to escape, an officer said. Shinde was initially taken to the Dahisar police station and later handed over to the Juhu police for further investigation. Based on the victim's complaint, a case was registered in the early hours of Thursday under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections related to the charges of kidnapping, extortion, dacoity, and impersonating a public servant. Subsequently, Rajput was arrested at his Thane residence on Friday and is set to be produced in court. Police teams are scanning CCTV footage along the abduction route, and multiple teams have been formed to trace the remaining accused, officials said.

## Cyber fraudsters 'warn' of disconnecting domestic gas connection, dupe Pune senior citizen of Rs 8.91 lakh

GNS News Agency, March 28

Online fraudsters duped a Pune-based senior citizen to the tune of Rs 8.91 lakh by threatening to disconnect his domestic gas connection. The victim, a 62-year-old resident of Mahatma society in Kothrud, lodged the First Information Report (FIR) in this case at the Kothrud police station on Thursday. As per the FIR, the scam took place between November 2025 and March this year.

The police said the fraudsters sent a message to the victim over his cell phone on November 13, 2025, claiming that the bill for his Maharashtra Natural Gas Limited (MNGL) connection is pending. The fraudsters warned that his MNGL piped gas connection would be disconnected if the bill was not paid immediately. The victim then received a link from the fraudsters, who asked him to click on it to clear the MNGL bill.

However, when the victim clicked on this link and submitted certain information, the fraudsters took control of his cell phone and misused it for transferring money online from his bank account to other bank accounts, without his knowledge and consent, the police said. Inspector Anil Mane, the investigation officer of this case, said the fraudsters trans-



ferred Rs 8.91 lakh from the victim's account into other bank accounts through five online transactions. "The victim is a businessman and runs a private firm," added Mane.

The police said the victim filed a complaint, which was verified, and then an FIR was lodged against the unidentified fraudsters as per Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 318 (4), 319 (2), and sections of the Information Technology (IT) Act. The police are probing the mobile phone numbers and bank accounts used by online fraudsters to cheat the senior citizen.

# What is driving the fall in gold prices? | Explained



Gold, long seen as a safe haven in times of crisis, is behaving differently this time since the onset of the West Asian conflict on February 28. Since the start of the war, gold prices have fallen sharply. In India, 24-carat gold, which was trading close to ₹1.9 lakh per 10 grams in late January, has dropped to around ₹1.3 lakh per 10 grams. In most crises over the past two decades, gold has either held its value or risen. During the 2008 financial meltdown, gold surged as banking systems faltered. It rose sharply again during the COVID-19 pandemic as economies shut down and central banks flooded markets with liquidity. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, gold surged nearly 10% in the weeks following the start of the conflict. "Everybody should turn to gold as a safe haven when there is a political crisis, a military crisis, a financial crisis, or an oil crisis. That's the first thing we do," Bhagwan Das, former associate professor of Economics at Loyola College, Chennai, said. So why isn't that happening now?

Why does gold usually rise in a crisis?

Gold does not pay interest, unlike other common assets. So, when returns on other safe assets such as U.S. government bonds rise, gold becomes less attractive because investors can earn a steady income from bonds. But when bond yields fall or uncertainty spikes, the reverse happens, and investors move into gold to preserve their wealth. There is also the dollar factor. Gold is priced in U.S. dollars globally. When the dollar weakens, gold becomes cheaper for buyers using other currencies, pushing up demand and prices. A weaker dollar and lower interest rates combined — which was the case in several past global crises — are gold's best friends.

What changed this time?

Several things changed at once, and all of them have pushed gold prices down. Factors that usually support gold, low interest rates, and a weaker dollar, have all moved in the opposite direction. When the West Asian conflict began, oil prices jumped sharply, crossing \$120 a barrel and breaching \$100 per barrel for the first time since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The war created one of the largest supply disruptions in the global oil market, according to a March report by the International Energy Agency. Higher oil prices push up the cost of almost everything, raising fears of inflation. In response, central banks typically raise interest rates to cool demand. While rates have not yet risen further, expectations have shifted. Markets now expect rates to stay higher for longer. When investors expect interest rates to remain high, government bonds, which pay a fixed return, become more attractive. Gold, which yields no interest, has to compete with that. Even without an actual rate hike, the mere expectation that rate cuts are off the table is enough to push investors toward bonds and away from gold. Before the conflict, inflation had been easing globally, and major central banks had been signalling rate cuts to support slowing economies. The oil shock changed that calculus.

"The changing expectation of central bank policy actions has been a key factor," said Kavita Chacko, Research Head for India at the World Gold Council. Higher expected interest rates also make dollar-denominated assets such as U.S. Treasury bonds more attractive. As money flows into these assets, the dollar strengthens — and a stronger dollar makes gold more expensive for foreign buyers, dampening demand. "The strengthening dollar increases the opportunity cost of holding gold," Ms. Chacko said. "That has been a key factor influencing prices."

Why are investors now selling gold specifically?

Gold had been having a strong run. Internationally, prices touched over \$5,000 per troy ounce before the conflict began. In India, prices hit an all-time high of nearly ₹1.8

lakh per 10 grams of 24-carat gold in late January 2026, capping a streak in which prices had more than doubled over two years, driven by geopolitical uncertainty, central bank buying, and a weakening dollar through most of 2025. When prices fall sharply from such highs, a chain reaction can set in. Investors who had set automatic sell orders to limit their losses see those orders trigger, flooding an already falling market with supply. That pushes prices down further, triggering more sell orders yet. The fall in prices feeds itself. Compounding this is a liquidity crunch amidst looming fears of a prolonged war and potentially long-lasting oil supply disruption. Stock markets have fallen sharply since the conflict began, and when one part of a portfolio bleeds, investors often sell what is still in profit to cover the damage. Gold, sitting on years of gains, is an obvious candidate. "It is a liquidity issue. Other asset classes have seen sharp falls, so you make up for shortfalls there, cover losses there by booking some profits here," Ms. Chacko said.

Is the dollar now the haven gold used to be?

To some extent, yes, at least in the short run. There is a growing push to move away from the dollar. Its share in global foreign exchange reserves has declined from about 71% in the early 2000s to under 60% in recent years, as countries diversify into other currencies and gold, according to the U.S. Federal Reserve. But that shift has limits, and the dollar still dominates a third of all global trade denominated in it. It remains the currency countries need when they buy oil or pay for imports. For now, when a crisis hits, the world still reaches for dollars. When oil, also priced in dollars, becomes more expensive, countries need more dollars to pay for their imports, driving up demand for the dollar.

"American dollar is the go-to currency whenever there is a threat of inflation caused by rising crude oil prices," Mr. Das said. "Gold has lost its appeal temporarily. The emphasis is going back to the dollar." But gold has not lost its shine yet. Central banks that are among the largest and most consistent buyers of gold have not stopped accumulating it. Purchases slowed modestly in 2025 compared to the three years prior, but remained well above historical averages, Ms. Chacko said. The World Gold Council's data for February 2026 points to a strong rebound in central bank buying. After the U.S. and its Western allies froze Russian financial assets held in Western banks following the Ukraine invasion, many governments pivoted to concluding that financial assets alone were insufficient as reserves. Gold, which is a physical asset that cannot be frozen or sanctioned, became more attractive.

Should ordinary investors be worried?

Price corrections of this kind are not unusual, Mr. Das said. Gold has experienced sharp pullbacks before, including after its peaks in 2011 and 2020, only to recover and move higher eventually. In India, the picture is more nuanced. Physical demand for jewellery has softened as consumers adjust to higher prices. But investment demand, particularly through gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs), has remained resilient. Gold ETF inflows in India were positive for the tenth consecutive month in February, according to World Gold Council data, even as some investors booked profits. Physical demand for gold told a similar story. While February gold imports were 38% lower than January, they were still over 80% higher in volume compared to the same month last year. "The underlying demand is still there," said Ms. Chacko. "When there has been a correction and people see prices stabilise, there is often an immediate rush to buy. The sentiment appears to be quite positive and bullish."

What happens next then?

Much depends on how the West Asian conflict unfolds. If oil prices stabilise or fall, inflation fears will be eased, rate hike expectations will recede, and gold's appeal as a non-interest-bearing asset will increase again. If the conflict deepens and oil climbs further, stagflation which is prolonged slow growth combined with high inflation, becomes a real concern, which has historically also been good for gold. "Price correction is a normal thing in every market," Mr. Das said. "Gold will certainly appreciate in the future. This is a temporary situation." The short-term picture is volatile and uncertain, and how far prices will move remains anyone's guess. The longer-term forecast, analysts say, remains intact.

# How do echoes take place?



An echo happens when a sound is reflected back to the listener after it hits a surface. When you shout nice and loud, your voice travels as sound waves. These waves move outward until they hit a large, hard surface. The surface bounces off the sound and it returns to your ears. Think of it like a ball bouncing back from against the wall. You throw the ball towards the wall and it bounces back.

Not an everywhere instance. Of course, not all places are built for echoes. There are some factors that need to be taken into consideration for that echo factor. The reflecting surface needs to be far enough for the returning sound to be heard separately, usually 17.2 metres or more. If it is any closer, the reflected sound mixes with the original sound. This mix of the echo with the original sound is what we call reverberation.

Echoes occur best with hard, smooth and large surfaces are required for that reflection. Rock, cement, marble,

and glass are common materials which can facilitate an echo. Soft materials like carpets, curtains, and grass absorb the sound waves rather than reflecting it. That's why they are often used in soundproofing rooms during studio recordings, and why auditoriums and halls are often decked with carpets and curtains. So, where are echoes commonly heard? They are common in areas such as a mountain, large, abandoned buildings, canyons, and cliffs. The Gol Gumbaz is the tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah (r. 1627-1656) in Bijapur (now Vijayapura). It is a spectacular and majestic monument set in a serene garden. The hemispherical dome is one of the largest free-standing domes in the world. It is also very echo prone. The Gol Gumbaz is the tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah (r. 1627-1656) in Bijapur (now Vijayapura). It is a spectacular and majestic monument set in a serene garden. The hemispherical dome is one of the largest free-standing domes in the world. It is also very echo prone. | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A formula. As we all know, sound travels at a very high speed, at 343 metres per second in air that is at 20°. The distance between the reflecting surface and the source of sound is calculated with this very formula. While echoes may not be needed in studio recordings, they do come handy elsewhere. Echoes are used for navigating and detection, like in SONAR, which measures ocean depth and finds objects underwater, in ultrasound; and in industrial testing, to find internal cracks, voids or flaws. Animals like bats and dolphins use it to navigate themselves in dark environments. Echoes are a fascinating example of how sound behaves in the environment. From mountain valleys to advanced technology, they reveal the remarkable journey that sound waves take through the world around us.

# What is mineral water and how does it naturally contain dissolved minerals?



Mineral water is water that naturally contains dissolved minerals and trace elements. It comes from a protected underground reservoir, like a spring or aquifer, and has a specific composition of minerals.

Millions of people around the world drink mineral water every day because their tap water is unsafe or because they prefer the taste. It's packed with naturally occurring minerals that support bone and muscle health and governments and health organisations promote it as a clean, reliable source of hydration.

What is mineral water?

Mineral water is water that naturally contains dissolved minerals and trace elements. It comes from a protected underground reservoir, like a spring or aquifer, and has a specific composition of minerals. Unlike ordinary tap water, which treatment plants produce by filtering and purifying water drawn from rivers or groundwater, mineral water retains the natural minerals it has acquired from geological processes it has been a part of over years, decades or even centuries. As rainwater and snowmelt slowly percolate through layers of limestone, granite, sandstone or volcanic basalt, the minerals from the surrounding rocks dissolve in the water, and the differences in pressure underground push this enriched water back towards the surface, where it emerges as a spring or collects in a subterranean reservoir. Producers then drill wells or tap natural springs and flow the water into containers, using pumps if required.

How is mineral water regulated?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Parliament and the Council both have regulations that stipulate that mineral water must come from a geologically stable source, which producers must undertake to protect; that separate batches of the same water must have the same profile of minerals; and that producers must not chemically treat it to alter its mineral composition. In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) stipulate that natural mineral water must come from underground sources such as natural springs and borewells, must be protected by various formations that ensure the water is free from pollution, and should ideally be collected in conditions that guarantee the original bacteriological and chemical composition.

As in the U.S. and the EU, the BIS standard IS 13428 requires the water's TDS and the relative proportions of various minerals to be stable over time and across producers' batches. Producers are also prohibited from treating the water to change its mineral composition, and instead are only allowed to filter or decant it, aerate it, and sterilise it. Chemical decontamination, such as by adding chlorine, is also disallowed. Finally, unlike many food products in India, mineral water requires mandatory certification: to sell mineral water, producers must have both an FSSAI license and a BIS certificate and every bottle must carry the ISI mark (according to IS 13428). The FSSAI also requires the bottle to be labelled with the location and name of the source and the levels of various minerals, and disallows the packager from claiming the water has any medicinal or healing properties.

How is mineral water packaged?

To meet these strict criteria, producers usually bottle the water directly at or near the source. Once they extract the water, they filter it to remove particulate matter and elements such as iron to ensure the liquid is clear. Producers may also pass it through ultraviolet light for disinfection and adjust the level of dissolved carbon dioxide to produce still or sparkling variants. Finally, the producers store the water in tanks and package it in glass bottles, PET bottles or aluminium cans at or near the source to avoid contamination or changes in composition. That said, the storage materials come with tradeoffs of their own. For instance, glass is chemically inert and doesn't react with the water but it must be handled with care; PET is light but can leach small amounts of plastic over time, especially when it's hot; and aluminium cans are most recyclable but require an internal plastic lining to prevent the metal from reacting with the water, which reintroduces concerns about chemical leaching and increases costs. Packaged drinking water is not always the same as natural mineral water. Producers may

start with tap or groundwater, purify it through reverse osmosis, then add back small amounts of minerals to improve taste. Similarly, spring water comes from a natural underground source but doesn't need to meet the same strict standards for mineral consistency.

That said, under 'bottled water', the U.S. FDA encompasses Artesian water, mineral water, sparkling bottled water, spring water, and purified water (including distilled, deionised, and/or demineralised water or water that has undergone reverse osmosis). Artesian water is groundwater being pushed to the surface due to pressure created underground by impermeable rocks.

What effects do minerals have?

The minerals present in mineral water depend on its natural source. The most common minerals include calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, bicarbonates, sulphates, chlorides, silica, and sometimes fluorides or iron in trace amounts. Calcium and magnesium make water 'hard' and give mineral water the mouthfeel people are familiar with and have come to expect, including a slight weight and body. Higher calcium levels render a smooth or slightly chalky sensation, while magnesium introduces a subtle bitterness. Similarly, bicarbonates neutralise acidity and give the water an almost sweet finish, sulphates — associated with magnesium-rich springs — add a slightly crisp taste, and sodium imparts a faint saline note.

Dissolved minerals also raise the water's content of total dissolved solids (TDS) and change how it interacts with food, soap, pipes, and tissues, with different chemical and thermal environments (e.g. cooking), and with tissues in the human body. You may know from common experience that harder water deposits 'scales' in kettles and washing machines and doesn't lather well with soap. Its inherent chemical properties also mean hard water supports bone density and aids muscle function, although the contribution of drinking water to these outcomes is generally much smaller compared to nutrition. Bicarbonates may improve digestion.

What are other forms of water?

When water is distilled, it means it is boiled into steam and condensed back to liquid, in the process leaving all dissolved solids, including minerals as well as contaminants, behind in the vessel. As a result the condensed water is nearly pure H<sub>2</sub>O, and tastes very different, almost hollow. It does not form scales on metal surfaces and behaves in the sort of predictable way that research laboratories and diagnostic labs prize. However, while it is safe to drink, distilled water is not advised for regular human consumption because, aside from being devoid of minerals, it can also draw minerals out of surfaces it comes in contact with, including food and, potentially to a small degree, biological tissue.

Industries also treat water according to their needs.

They may soften it to remove calcium and magnesium, deionise it to strip it of almost all dissolved ions or alter its chemistry to use in boilers or cooling systems. They could also demineralise it to prevent scaling and/or add compounds like sodium phosphate to lower its corrosion potential. Industrial water is neither safe nor suitable for human consumption. To prepare municipal tap water, finally, treatment plants draw water from natural sources like rivers and groundwater, remove pathogens and chemical pollutants by filtering and chlorinating it, and add disinfectants such as chlorine. Unless a local authority specifically softens it, tap water retains its dissolved minerals. Its mineral content varies enormously by region: London's tap water is noticeably hard because it comes from chalk aquifers while many Scandinavian cities supply naturally soft water low in minerals.

How is tap water 'made' in India?

The main source of water that eventually becomes tap water in India is rivers and deep borewells. Because the pathogen loads are higher in tropical areas, municipalities subsequently disinfect it more aggressively than in temperate or cold regions like North America or Scandinavia. Among other steps, they add alum to make dirt clump together so that it filters out more easily, and add residual chlorine, meaning more chlorine than what is required to disinfect the water, so that water disinfected at first becomes reinfected later if, say, a leaky pipe exposes it to sewage.

In fact, such 'mixing' is so common that most Indian municipalities don't guarantee potable tap water. Among the few exceptions are Puri in Odisha and parts of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Tap water is a State responsibility while the Union government sets the standards. The IS 10500:2012 standard prescribes limits for the quantity of minerals in potable water but also has room for variations. For instance, while the TDS limit is 500 mg/l, it can go up to 2,000 mg/l if no alternative source is available. Rajasthan, Gujarat, and parts of Delhi/NCR have very high mineral content, including calcium and magnesium, because their groundwater lies in aquifers rich in minerals, whereas cities and States drawing water from Himalayan rivers or areas with high rainfall, such as Mumbai and parts of Kerala, have much softer water with lower mineral levels.

# Indian Navy launches 'Operation Urja Suraksha' to secure energy lifelines through Strait of Hormuz



GNS News Agency, March 28

Amid rising tensions in West Asia, the Indian Navy has launched an operation to escort, guide, and safeguard India-bound energy shipments through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, which has been blockaded by Iran. The operation, called Urja Suraksha, is being conducted with calibrated precision and minimal publicity to ensure the uninterrupted and secure movement of Indian-flagged vessels carrying critical energy supplies, officials said. All India-bound ships transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and crude oil have been identified for protected transit. "We are escorting and to some extent helping ships in navigation for smooth movement through the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, till the Arabian Sea," said a senior official, adding that Naval operations under the mission go beyond escort duties. Warships are actively providing route-specific guidance and navigational support to crews to help them safely traverse the narrow and sensitive waters of the region.

Naval escort. Earlier this week, the Navy had safely escorted LPG carriers Pine Gas and Jag Vasant, which are carrying a cumulative load of nearly 92,000 tonnes of cooking gas. The vessels are expected to reach Indian ports between March 26 and 27. Other ships escorted so far include LPG carriers Shivalki and Nanda Devi, along with crude oil tanker Jag Laadki. Indian Navy destroyers and frigates are also extending protection beyond the Strait, ensur-

ing layered maritime security until vessels reach safer waters. The operation underscores India's commitment to securing its energy supply chains and maintaining maritime stability in a region critical to global oil and gas flows, the official added.

# Pak-linked agent held in Rajasthan, shared pictures of key locations across states

Jaipur: In a major breakthrough, Rajasthan Police have busted a suspected espionage network with links to a Pakistan-based terrorist, arresting a youth accused of conducting reconnaissance across multiple states and sharing sensitive videos, said police officials on Friday.

The accused, Akashdeep (20), a resident of Chak Kera and originally from Village 12 H under Kesrisinghpur police station, was arrested by Lalgarh Jatan police for allegedly maintaining contact with Pakistan-based terrorist Shahzad Bhatti through social media platforms. District Superintendent of Police Hari Shankar said that, given the district's proximity to the international border, intelligence inputs are closely monitored.

Acting on specific information about suspicious activity, police launched an investigation that revealed Akashdeep was in regular contact with Pakistani numbers (+92) via Instagram and WhatsApp, including voice chats. During interrogation, the accused confessed that he had been carrying out reconnaissance of key locations across Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Chandigarh, and Ambala (Haryana) on the instructions of Bhatti. He reportedly filmed crowded and strategically important areas and sent these videos to Pakistan via WhatsApp, along with details on access routes. Police have seized the accused's mobile phone and SIM card, uncovering chats with several suspicious Pakistan-based contacts.

## 'Trade deal with India not far-off, but there are still gaps': U.S. official



GNS News Agency, March 28

The U.S. and India are not "far off" from finalizing an interim trade deal, but need to bridge some negotiating gaps, such as over discussions on pulses and the staging of tariff reductions, according to a U.S. official. We're not that far off from finalizing the interim trade deal, but some gaps remain," the official told The Hindu in recent days.

Officials in Washington are working out the nitty-gritty of trade agreements following the U.S. Supreme Court's February 20 ruling that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which was the basis for President Donald Trump's 'reciprocal tariffs', was unlawfully applied. The administration is now working towards re-establishing the reciprocal tariffs using other legislative tools, including 'Special' 301 trade investigations conducted by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR). One of the gaps in India-U.S. discussions, as per the U.S. official, is around pulses, with India seeking to safeguard the market for this agricultural commodity and the U.S. wanting greater access to it. Politically, agriculture is a deeply sensitive issue for both countries, with the administration in DC and government in New Delhi not singing from the same song sheet—or, more literally, 'fact sheet'.

Last month, the White House put out a 'fact sheet'—including the term "certain pulses" on a list of items that, it claimed, India would cut tariffs on. This and other discrepancies with the joint statement issued by Washington and New Delhi had created a political furore in India. The White House quietly reissued the 'fact sheet'—a political statement, rather than a statement of fact—this time omitting the reference to pulses and correcting certain other

discrepancies. However, the U.S. side still appears to be pushing for market access on pulses. Additionally, The Hindu has learned that Washington is seeking reduced staging (i.e., the speeding up of a phased reduction in tariffs) and this is currently one of the gaps in negotiating positions and is under discussion. Conversations The Hindu has had in recent days suggest that right now, however, trade officials in Washington are not focused on closing the gaps in trade deals but are busy conducting Special 301 investigations launched in March against tens of countries, including India, ostensibly for excess capacity in manufacturing and forced labour. Farmers' pulse: On India and its demand for pulses While the U.S. did sign a trade deal since the latest set of 301s was launched, this was with Ecuador, (on March 13), a country with an economy at least 30 times smaller than India and whose bilateral trade with the U.S. is a fraction of U.S.-India bilateral trade.

These probes—which are conducted annually on different countries—will enable the imposition of tariffs on top of the universal tariff rate of 10%, imposed on February 24 using Section 122 of the U.S.'s Trade Act, following the Supreme Court ruling. Section 122 tariffs, applied temporarily when there is a balance of payments issue, can be applied for no more than 150 days and cannot exceed 15% as per law.

Mr. Trump had said in February that he would increase the universal 10% rate to 15%. However, this has not happened and officials in DC appeared unsure whether it would happen at all. A question to the White House on the timing of any such hike went unanswered. The USTR also did not provide information on possible rate hike, when approached by The Hindu. Hiking this universal tariff to 15% would also complicate Washington's agreements with countries that had reciprocal tariffs of less than 15%. Additionally, the White House has been focused on Iran in terms of foreign policy and the Department of Homeland Security shutdown, domestically. Meanwhile, countries are busy with another part of the trade agenda: the World Trade Organization's 14th ministerial conference in Cameroon March 26-29. Among the contentious topics is trade in e-commerce, where Indian and American positions are not aligned. India has for long wanted an end to the moratorium on tariffs on various forms of e-commerce (software downloads, digital music, etc.) while the U.S. would like to make this permanent.

## Pakistan says 'U.S.-Iran indirect talks are taking place'



GNS News Agency, March 28

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed on Thursday (March 26, 2026) that indirect negotiations between the United States and Iran were being held to end their war, using Islamabad as an intermediary. Mr. Dar, who is also deputy Prime Minister, described speculation about "peace talks" as "unnecessary", adding: "In reality, U.S.-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan."

There has been unnecessary speculation in the media regarding peace talks to end ongoing conflict in the Middle East. In reality, US-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan. In this con-

text, the United States has shared "In this context, the United States has shared 15 points, being deliberated upon by Iran. Brotherly countries of Turkiye and Egypt, among others, are also extending their support to this initiative," he wrote on X, using Turkey's official name. Mr. Dar's comments are the first on-the-record confirmation from Islamabad that Pakistan is playing a facilitating role. Two senior officials told AFP on Wednesday (March 25) that the U.S. plan had been "conveyed to Iran via Pakistan", but spoke anonymously as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Islamabad has been touted as a go-between given its longstanding ties with both neighbouring Iran and the United States, as well as its network of regional contacts. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Mr. Dar have both been in regular contact with senior Iranian government officials, as well as their Gulf allies, notably Saudi Arabia.

The powerful head of the Pakistan army, Field Marshal Asim Munir, has equally been involved in the diplomatic efforts, and spoke to US President Donald Trump last Sunday (March 22), officials said. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has denied any "negotiations" with the administration in Washington but conceded that messages were being exchanged through "friendly countries". "At present, our policy is the continuation of resistance," he said on state television late on Wednesday. "We do not intend to negotiate—so far, no negotiations have taken place."

## India eyes local currency payments for West Asian oil amid price surge; rupee fall hurts finances



GNS News Agency, March 28

The Indian government is "experimenting" with conducting trade with the West Asian countries in local currencies, in a bid to mitigate the fiscal double-hit of surging oil prices and a depreciating rupee, according to two senior officials in the government. Another objective is to save on currency conversion costs. If this fructifies, it would mean India would be paying for about 80% of its oil imports using local currencies rather than the U.S. dollar. "India is working out a mechanism to pay for imports from the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries in local currencies," a senior government official told The Hindu. The triggers for this move, he explained, were the upward spiral of oil prices and the downward spiral of the rupee.

The price of the Indian basket of oil—which is a weighted average of the prices of various types of oil from Oman and Dubai and of Brent crude—stands at \$123.15 per barrel currently, as per government data. This is up from an average of \$69 per barrel in February 2026.

Simultaneously, the rupee touched an all-time low of

₹94.1 against a dollar earlier this week, before settling slightly higher. The exchange rate was at about ₹91.3 per dollar before the Iran war broke out. A combination of these two factors has meant that Indian importers have had to pay much more for each import transaction conducted in the U.S. dollar, especially for oil. Currency conversation savings

According to another official in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the other advantage India will see through such a local currency mechanism, is a drastic reduction in currency conversion charges. "It is an experiment on which we are working," the second official said. "Primarily to save on the cost of currency conversion at several stages. You save on the charges on converting the rupee to the dollar, the dollar to the local currency there, the local currency back to the dollar, and then the dollar back to the rupee. "Each conversion costs about 1-2% of the total transaction value, and so about 5-6% will be saved if we just deal in local currencies, which is a lot when it comes to high value transactions," he added.

Oil trade in local currencies India currently already pays for Russian oil using a combination of local currencies and dirhams. Russia accounted for 30.4% of India's oil imports in the April 2025 to January 2026 period. The GCC countries account for another 49%. Taken together, such a local currency deal would mean close to 80% of India's oil imports would be paid for in currencies other than the U.S. dollar. Moving away from using the dollar for such high value transactions might, however, attract American ire. U.S. President Donald Trump has in the past threatened a 100% tariff on countries looking to adopt alternate currencies to the dollar. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision might have removed this threat, but Mr. Trump's determination to use tariffs as a compulsion tool remains.

## Supreme Court voices concern over growing 'menace' of citing AI-generated non-existent judgements

GNS News Agency, March 28

The Supreme Court has voiced concern over the growing "menace" of litigants and lawyers citing non-existent judgements generated by artificial intelligence. A Bench comprising justices Rajesh Binal and Vijay Bishnoi said the practice is becoming increasingly rampant across courts in India and throughout the world.

The observations were made by the top court while expunging remarks made by the Bombay High Court on a plea filed a director of a company. "As a matter of indulgence, we expunge the remarks made in the aforesaid paragraph. However, the fact remains that this menace is rampant in all courts now, not only in India but throughout the world. Everyone needs to be careful about this. In fact, this court is already seized of this matter on judicial side," the Bench said.

The High Court had noted in its order that the submissions of the appellant were generated using ChatGPT, including a judgement which had no citation in the real world. "The respondent has filed written submissions in February 2025 and April 2025. From the overall tenor of the written submissions and a few give-away features, such as green-box tick-marks, bulletpoint-marks, repetitive sub-



missions etc., this court strongly feels that the submissions are prepared using an AI tool such as ChatGPT or alike. "A strong pointer is seen from a reference made to one alleged caselaw 'Jyoti w/o Dinesh Tulsiani Vs. Elegant Associates'. Neither citation is given nor a copy of judgement is supplied by the respondent. This court and its law clerks were at pains to find out this caselaw but could not find. This has resulted in waste of precious judicial time," the High Court had said.

## Beyond burnout: The silent crisis of collective exhaustion



GNS News Agency, March 28

The World Health Organization has formally recognised burnout as an occupational phenomenon, but what was once confined to workplaces is now spilling into homes, relationships, and identities. In India, multiple surveys suggest that over half the workforce reports significant burnout symptoms. | Photo: iStock/Getty Images The world stood still in 2020 for a virus, a physical invader that we fought with masks and isolation. But as we move further into this decade, a second, more insidious pandemic is brewing, one for which there is no laboratory-made cure. If COVID-19 was a crisis of the lungs, the next global shutdown will be a crisis of the soul. We are hurtling toward a mental pandemic of collective exhaustion, and the bitter truth is that we are entirely unprepared. The lockdowns were supposed to be a temporary retreat, yet they became a permanent bridge to a hyper-digital, "always-on" existence where the boundary between life and labour didn't just blur; it vanished. We survived a biological threat only to succumb to a psychological one, as the "unlocking" of our economies never led to the unlocking of our minds. Rising trend of emotional policing

This is not a metaphor; it is a trajectory. The evidence is no longer anecdotal. The World Health Organization has formally recognised burnout as an occupational phenomenon, but what was once confined to workplaces is now spilling into homes, relationships, and identities. In India, multiple surveys suggest that over half the workforce reports significant burnout symptoms. Having worked in the field of mental health for nearly two decades, I have begun to encounter a quieter, more unsettling shift. Clients are not merely distressed, they are depleted. The emotional bandwidth required for therapeutic engagement itself seems compromised. This is not a failure of therapy; it is a reflection of the environment in which individuals are now trying to heal. This exhaustion is now manifesting at an alarmingly young age. Chronic stress is no longer a mid-life milestone but a childhood companion, leading to a pervasive state of brain fog. This is not just a post-viral symptom, but a permanent cognitive clouding where focus shatters and the mental agility required for basic problem-solving feels like wading through sludge. We are witnessing a neurological protest against constant over-stimulation, compounded by the rising trend of emotional policing. Our culture now demands a performative resilience; we are forced to curate

our joy and sanitise our struggles to fit "optimised" versions of ourselves. We are effectively policing our own depletion, masking our true state until the mask itself becomes a weight we can no longer carry. Disregulation at scale

The real symptoms of this emerging pandemic are social and psychological ruptures. Relationships are fraying through absence. Conversations are shorter, attention spans thinner, and empathy scarcer. There is a disappearance of emotional regulation at a societal level; there is little pause between feeling and reaction, and little space for reflection. Irritability, withdrawal, and emotional numbness are becoming common behavioural patterns. When individuals operate in a state of chronic overload, emotional responses are no longer moderated, they are either amplified or shut down entirely. This is dysregulation at scale.

The irony of our current era is that as we pour our remaining cognitive energy into keeping pace with the rise of Artificial Intelligence, we are becoming more robotic ourselves. AI is rapidly taking over the complexities of logic and data, while humans are losing the simple, essential capacity for emotion. We are draining our mental batteries to compete with algorithms that do not tire, while discarding the very traits; empathy, deep reflection, and presence, that make us human. We are building a world that is becoming too complex for the human spirit to inhabit, opting for intricate digital entanglements over the restorative power of simplicity. The danger we face is not a gradual decline, but a total human outage. At a certain threshold, burnout ceases to be an individual condition and becomes a collective crisis. Productivity drops, decision-making falters, and institutions begin to strain under the weight of human exhaustion. Unlike the previous pandemic, there will be no rapid recovery curve and no vaccine for a hollowed-out mind. Our only survival strategy lies in a radical return to minimalism, intentionally scaling back the noise, rejecting the performance of "busy-ness," and reclaiming the off-switch. We must choose to simplify our lives and value human presence over digital transactions now, or wait for our minds to force a shutdown that we cannot undo.

## Engineering student dies by suicide at Ibrahimpatnam college hostel

Hyderabad: An engineering student died by suicide in his hostel room at an engineering college premises in Ibrahimpatnam on Saturday. The youth, identified as Kandimalla Sai (20), a native of Srirangapuram village in Nandigudem of Nalgonda district, was pursuing Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) second year at the college. According to the police, Sai, who was visibly upset over an unknown issue for the past few days, is suspected to have died by hanging from the ceiling fan inside his hostel room.

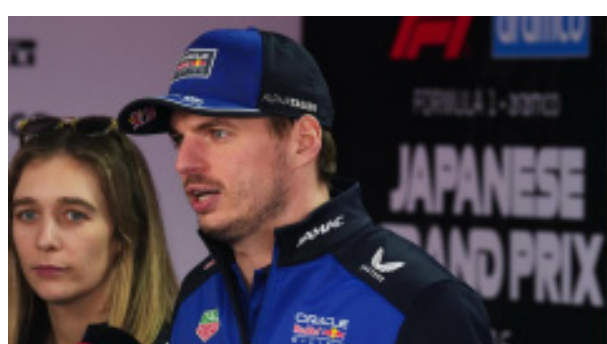
## Max Verstappen demands journalist leave media session at Japanese Grand Prix

GNS News Agency, March 28

Max Verstappen ordered a journalist to "get out" of a scheduled media session at Formula 1's Japanese Grand Prix on Thursday (March 26, 2026) after objecting to a question he asked last year. "I'm not speaking before he's leaving," Verstappen said, indicating reporter Giles Richards of British newspaper The Guardian, as the question-and-answer session was due to begin in Red Bull's hospitality area.

Richards approached the table where Verstappen was sitting and tried to plead his case. Verstappen told him to "get out" and Richards left. Verstappen indicated he objected to a question Richards asked in December after the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Richards asked Verstappen whether losing out to Lando Norris by two points for the title might lead him to regret an incident earlier in the year when he collided with George Russell at the Spanish Grand Prix. That earned Verstappen a time penalty, which cost the Dutch driver valuable points.

"You forget all the other stuff that happened in my season. The only thing you mention is Barcelona. I knew that would come," Verstappen answered. "You're giving me a stupid grin now. I don't know. Yeah, it's part of racing at the



end. You live and learn. The championship is one of 24 rounds. I've also had a lot of early Christmas presents given to me in the second half, so you can also question that." Four-time champion Verstappen heads into Sunday's race at Suzuka, the third of the season, after a difficult start to the year. He and Red Bull have so far been unable to match the pace of leading team Mercedes, and Verstappen has made clear his dislike of F1's new era of regulations, which place more emphasis on electrical power.

## Steel ministry seeks intervention for mills facing LPG shortages, source says

GNS News Agency, March 28

India's federal steel ministry has sought assistance from the oil ministry to ensure that steel plants are "not affected by liquefied petroleum gas shortages, a source with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Thursday.

India, the world's second-biggest crude steel producer, is in the midst of its worst LPG supply crisis in decades as shipments from key producers in West Asia have been disrupted because of the Iran war. "We have taken up with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to see within the existing conditions what best can be done," the source said.



## How will new codes change labour laws? | Explained



pliance support rather than punitive action," are some of the other features.

How have employers responded?

Almost all employers' organisations have welcomed the Codes. The president-designate of the Confederation of Indian Industries R. Mukundan told The Hindu that the labyrinthine labour law framework needed to be simplified, harmonised and modernised. "The Labour Codes do exactly that. They will create jobs, ensure social protection and maintain industrial harmony in a fast advancing economy," he said. He argues that the uniformity across States, digital filings, reduced disputes and the emphasis on flexibility will make India a more attractive destination for doing business. However, representatives of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are sceptical. The Association of Indian Entrepreneurs (AIE) fear that the new Labour Codes may significantly increase operating costs for MSMEs and disrupt business continuity across key sectors. "While AIE fully supports progressive labour reforms and the need for a modern workforce framework, the organisation has cautioned that the immediate impact on MSMEs could be severe unless governments provide clarity, transitional support, and flexible implementation mechanisms," it said in a statement. It is seeking a transitional grace period with reduced penalties for MSMEs.

What are the concerns of trade unions?

Barring the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), all Central Trade Unions (CTUs) are opposed to the Labour Codes. Ten CTUs and associated federations organised strikes against the proposed Labour Codes in 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 and on July 9, 2025. The BMS has welcomed the implementation of two Labour Codes, the Code on Wages and Code on Social Security, and has questioned provisions in the Industrial Relations Code and the OSHWC Code. The CTUs worry that the codes will take away several federal rights, including the right to decide minimum wages in the States. The floor wage, according to them, is a joke played on workers as in the past too, the Centre had failed to address the demands and realities of workers. On social security, the CTUs argue that 93% of the workers are not covered under any social security and the codes have no provision to improve the scenario. Also, the threshold of workers for factory licence has been increased and this will exclude a lot more workers from the social security and minimum wages provisions, allege trade unions. On the Industrial Code too, they have issues as there will be "unwarranted restrictions" on the functioning of trade unions, including "limitations on membership, restrictions on outsiders serving as office-bearers, and the introduction of concepts such as the sole negotiating union and the negotiating council." The right to strike also sees curtailments in the code. Trade unions have questioned the reduction of retrenchment notice pay, limiting the period for workers' money claims, exclusion of house rent allowance from the definition of "wages", the overall emphasis on contractualisation and allowing women workers in night shifts in sectors such as mines.

What lies ahead?

The Government has announced that all stakeholders will get 45 days to respond to the draft Rules of the Codes which it will again pre-publish with some modifications. Opposition-ruled States have reservations: Kerala said it will not implement the codes, while Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have also questioned the Centre's "unilateral" approach. The trade unions have urged the Government to convene the Indian Labour Conference, the tripartite forum that has not met for over a decade, at the earliest. Employers also want to the government to facilitate more discussions at the factory level so that relations are not

The story so far: On November 21, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced the implementation of four Labour Codes — the Code on Wages, 2019, Industrial Relations Code, 2020, Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHCW) Code, 2020. Parliament had passed these codes between 2019 and 2020.

Why is the process taking time?

As labour is in the concurrent list, both the States and Centre have the power to makes Rules. The Centre published draft Rules for each code between July 7, 2020 and November 19, 2020; and as on July 2025, 32 States and Union Territories have also pre-published draft Rules under the four Labour Codes. According to a statement in Parliament during the last Monsoon session, West Bengal and Lakshadweep have not pre-published draft Rules under any Labour Codes. Delhi has pre-published draft Rules only under the Code on Wages. Tamil Nadu is yet to pre-publish draft Rules under the Code on Social Security. The Centre stated that the delay in implementing the Rules was mostly because of the lag in States.

What are the key features?

The Code on Wages repeals the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. The Industrial Relations Code amalgamates the Trade Unions Act, 1926, the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The Code on Social Security nullifies nine Acts including the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008. The OSHWC Code repeals Acts such as the Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act, 1952, and the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. The Government repealed and codified 29 Acts that decided the structure of labour rights from the colonial period to the first United Progressive Alliance government.

What are the major changes?

According to the Government, the Labour Codes promote formalisation of employment, expand social security coverage, ensure minimum and timely wages for more workers, provide for engaging more women in the workforce and reduce compliance burden for employers. Some of the other features include mandatory appointment letters to all workers, social security such as provident fund and State insurance for all workers including gig and platform workers, and a statutory right for minimum wage payment. Women can now work at night and in all types of work across establishments, and they will have equal opportunities in high-paying roles. A national floor wage will be set to ensure no worker receives a wage below the minimum living standard. Gender-neutral pay and job opportunities, prohibiting discrimination against transgender persons, and "shifting enforcement towards guidance, awareness and com-

## India's population to stabilise by 2080 due to dip in fertility rate: IASP



India's population is expected to stabilise by 2080 at 1.8 or 1.9 billion due to dipping total fertility rate, which is currently below the replacement level at 1.9, an official said. India is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, with the birth rate dropping sharply over the past two decades, he said. "In 2000, our TFR was 3.5 and today it stands at 1.9. This is a drastic decline," Indian Association for the Study of Population (IASP) general secretary Anil Chandran told PTI.

He said India's population is expected to peak at 1.8 or 1.9 billion by 2080, when growth is expected to stabilise. "All estimates show that India's maximum population will remain below two billion," Mr. Chandran added. He attributed the fall in fertility primarily to increasing development and education levels. Increased female literacy, he said, has directly shaped decisions around marriage and childbearing, leading to smaller families. Greater use of con-

traceptives and wider access to birth control have further accelerated the decline, he said. "Couples today are better informed and exercise greater control over when and how many children to have," Mr. Chandran said. He said that late marriages and growing economic opportunities — especially for women pursuing careers — have also significantly influenced reproductive choices. "Development is inversely proportional to birth rates. Illiterate groups still have fertility levels above three, but among the educated, TFR ranges between 1.5 and 1.8," he said. Citing Kerala's example, Mr. Chandran said the State achieved replacement-level fertility (2.1) between 1987 and 1989 and now has a TFR of around 1.5. West Bengal's fertility rate has also seen a sharp fall. According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2023, the state's TFR has dropped to 1.3, down from 1.7 in 2013 — a decline of nearly 18% and well below the replacement level of 2.1. West Bengal now ranks among the lowest in the country, on par with Tamil Nadu and just above Delhi, while recording the lowest urban TFR and the second-lowest rural TFR nationally, he said. The demographer noted that while birth rates are falling, life expectancy continues to rise due to improvements in healthcare. "More people are living beyond 60, and this brings new challenges of elderly care, especially as younger people migrate for work," he said, adding that solutions such as elderly day-care facilities are increasingly being discussed. IASP, founded in 1971 and comprising around 1,100 demographers and population scientists, regularly deliberates on such issues with support from bodies including UNFPA, the Population Council and the Population Foundation of India.

## Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla foresees defining decade for India's space exploration

Hyderabad: Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla on Thursday said that the next five to ten years are going to be really defining times for India as far as space exploration is concerned, as a lot of things are going to happen. In an interactive session on the sidelines of space startup Skyroot's facility inauguration here, Shukla said there are only a few countries which have done what India has achieved already and there are even fewer which are doing what India is planning to do in space.

He further said space voyages will not be restricted in future as the government is in the process of formulating how to make entire structures for selection, and how people from different fields can apply. "I think that the next five to ten years are going to be really defining times for our country as far as space exploration is concerned. A lot of things are going to happen. And I think it is going to be bright, shiny

for the kids who are coming up to explore this (space) and go forward in this domain," he said replying to a query. He also said there is a need to re-evaluate the existing global frameworks, treaties and laws, which are not binding on anyone, as anything done in outer space is going to affect each and every person on the planet Earth. He was part of the Axiom-4 private space mission that lifted off from Florida on June 25 and docked at the ISS on June 26. He returned to Earth on 15 July. On students opting to become astronauts, he said, "You could be an engineer, scientist, researcher, medical professional. You can apply to be an astronaut, but will have to follow these three things that I mentioned in the previous answer — physical fitness, medical fitness and psychological fitness." Recalling his experiences in the International Space Station, Shukla said the body changes a lot in the initial few days as all the blood

## Chandigarh battle: Why did Centre backtrack from bringing Punjab & Haryana's capital under its control



Punjab and Haryana. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJP's predecessor) opposed the reorganisation of Punjab terming it a "betrayal of public confidence".

1970: In face of threats of self-immolation by Akali Dal leader Sant Fateh Singh, then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi promised to hand over entire Chandigarh to Punjab. In exchange, Haryana will be given the Hindi-speaking area of Fazilka including the famous Abohar market. As this area did not border Haryana, a 6.43 km-long corridor would be constructed to access it, declared Ms. Gandhi. With the help of Centre's aid, Haryana was to build a new capital and leave Chandigarh by 1975. This award was never implemented and even Punjab urged Centre to reconsider handing over Fazilka to Haryana. 1985: Years later, taking another stab at the Chandigarh issue, then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the Rajiv-Longowal accord on July 25. The 11-point resolution awarded Chandigarh to Punjab and Haryana was to be compensated by the transfer of the Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab. A commission was to be set up to demarcate these areas by December 31, 1985 and the two transfers was to be effected on January 26 next year. It also promised to set up a commission to examine the remaining territorial claims and counter-claims of Punjab and Haryana. Though it was not specified, the future of Abohar and Fazilka, which under Mrs. Gandhi's award of 1970 were to be included in Haryana, too, would be settled by this commission. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President of Akali Dal Sant Harchand Singh Longowal exchanging documents after signing a Memorandum of settlement on Punjab issue, in New Delhi on July 24, 1985. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President of Akali Dal Sant Harchand Singh Longowal exchanging documents after signing a Memorandum of settlement on Punjab issue, in New Delhi on July 24, 1985. This resolution was also never implemented amid Opposition from Haryana and other political parties. The signatory of the accord - Akali Dal chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, who had also allowed sharing of rivers Sutlej and Beas' waters with Haryana, was murdered along with the chief engineer of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal. The river dispute still remains with the project stalled. Recent incidents

Story so far: Beating a hasty retreat, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), on Sunday (November 23, 2025), clarified that it has 'no intention of introducing a Constitutional Amendment Bill to bring Chandigarh under Article 240 of the Constitution'. On November 21, the Centre had listed ten bills including a Bill to put Chandigarh under the Centre's ambit and 'ensure uniform treatment as other union territories without legislature'. The Bill would allow Centre to appoint an independent administrator in Chandigarh, bringing the Union Territory directly under Central control — like other UTs. Currently, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria acts as Chandigarh's administrator.

The listing of the Bill had created uproar from not only Opposition parties in Punjab like Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), but from Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Punjab unit itself. Punjab Congress leaders Pratap Singh Bajwa and Manish Tewari asserted that Chandigarh was meant to be Punjab's capital and any attempts to snatch it away would be an open attack on Punjab's rights. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal called the Bill a 'betrayal on all commitments made to Punjab to hand over Chandigarh to it', while AAP MP Manvinder Kang called upon all Punjab MPs to 'unite and defeat this Bill in Parliament'. Caught unaware by Delhi, BJP Punjab chief Sunil Jhakar assured that 'Chandigarh is an integral part of Punjab' and rushed to meet Amit Shah to 'resolve the confusion'. Within two days, the Centre rescinded the Bill and clarified 'The proposal does not in any way involve altering the governance and administrative arrangements of Chandigarh or the traditional relations of Chandigarh with Punjab or Haryana. An appropriate decision will be taken only after adequate consultation with all stakeholders'.

In 1948, the partitioning of Punjab resulted in the state losing its capital — Lahore, to Pakistan. After much debate, the foundation for a new capital located at the foothills of the Shivalik Himalayas, was laid by India's first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, on April 2, 1952. Designed by a team of European experts led by French architect M. Le Corbusier, the city was one of India's first to follow modern town planning standards with clear, equal-sized divisions for residential areas with its own market, cinema, library, police and fire service. Linked by main roads, residential areas in Chandigarh fall in different sectors separated from the area housing the Capitol, Town Hall, shopping centre, commercial centre, recreation centre, museums and the University. It was inaugurated by then-President Dr. Rajendra Prasad on October 7, 1953. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President, performed the opening ceremony of the Punjab New Capital, Chandigarh at an impressive and colourful investiture held on the occasion on October 07, 1953. Photo shows Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President pressing the button to unveil the gigantic plan of Chandigarh. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President, performed the opening ceremony of the Punjab New Capital, Chandigarh at an impressive and colourful investiture held on the occasion on October 07, 1953. 1953-1966: Chandigarh remained Punjab's capital city and construction of the High Court, the Secretariat and the Assembly buildings was completed. However, with the formation of Haryana in 1966, where Hindi-speaking areas of Hisar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Mahendragarh, Ambala, Jagadhri and Naraingarh were handed over to the new state and Chandigarh was made a Union territory and a joint capital of

2005: Haryana asserted its claim on Chandigarh demanding a separate High Court for Haryana via a resolution. It urged the Centre to suitably amend the Punjab Reorganisation Act. As of date, no such changes have been made. 2022: MHA notified rules aligning the service conditions of all employees of Chandigarh with the Central Civil Services. About 60% of employees are from Punjab and 40% are from Haryana, in Chandigarh's civil services. The move was welcomed by the employees as it meant better benefits and salaries. In response, the Punjab Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to immediately transfer union territory of Chandigarh — the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, to Punjab. Countering it, Haryana passed a resolution to retain its right to the two States' joint capital territory of Chandigarh. Meanwhile, the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation passed a resolution to remain as a Union Territory. 2024: Haryana government had offered 12 acres of land in Panchkula in exchange for 10 acres of land near IT Park Road in Chandigarh to construct its new Assembly building. Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had reportedly granted environmental clearance for the land offered by Haryana. Outraged, all major parties in Punjab — Congress, BJP and even AAP, opposed the move urging the Punjab Governor to not allow the project, asserting that Chandigarh belonged to Punjab. In February this year, the Chandigarh administration rejected the land swap stating that the property offered by Haryana was not upto the UT's urban building standards. It claimed that the Panchkula land 'lacked proper access, had a natural drain (nullah) running through it and was in a low-lying area' while the IT Road land was a prime property valued at around ₹640 crore. The Centre's backtracking of its recent move to resolve the Chandigarh conundrum shows lack of political will to settle it and that the tussle for the joint capital is likely to feature in the 2027 electoral campaign for Punjab.

## Paying attention in a digital world

Even before digital devices fragmented attention spans, teachers exhorted students to "Pay attention". When I was in school, in the 1970s and 1980s, teachers would use this phrase, sometimes banging on a desk with a wooden duster, to get our attention. The use of the verb 'pay' suggests that we have always perceived attention as a scarce resource, not to be frittered away. However, over the last decade, as gadgets made deeper inroads into our everyday lives, there is a growing recognition that our attentions are being parcelled and monetised, often leaving individuals distraught and dismayed. Is it possible to regain control of our attention spans? Attention, like many other psychological phenomena, is hard to define. Even without the tug of social media, we are bombarded by a plethora of sensations, only a fraction of which may be relevant to us in a given moment. Though the term 'attention' is used as if it's a "single entity," in Altered Traits, Daniel Goleman and Richard Davidson posit that it actually consists of a set of abilities that includes selective attention, vigilance, goal focus and meta-awareness.

Paying attention is hard work in the analogue world. However, it becomes exponentially harder when we are fed a continuous diet of digital "brain rot". Social media platforms are designed to lure our flickering attention only to fill our heads time and again with largely banal stuff. An article in The Economist



(dated September 13, 2025) likens this to a form of 'theft' because when we direct our attention to our device, it prevents us from engaging in something else, which, in turn, can dampen our productivity. Because attention is controlled by both voluntary and involuntary mechanisms, tech companies take advantage of the latter to keep us scrolling endlessly.

Two types of ADHD?

In an article in Psyche, three psychiatrists, Paul Kudlow, Karline Treunicht and Elia Abi Jaoud observe that the incidence of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has mushroomed in both children and adults over the past two decades. Further, they argue that the disorder has morphed and the condition is more akin to a spectrum with two extremities that they refer to as Type I and Type II ADHD. As our ability to pay attention is determined by both biological and environmental factors,

most of us "fall somewhere between these two poles." According to the psychiatrists, Type I ADHD is the "classical form" which typically manifests in early childhood as a "neurodevelopmental condition". Given appropriate support either in the form of a structured learning environment or stimulant medication, most children with this form of ADHD get better with age. However, of late, the psychiatrists have been encountering a subset of patients who show a different profile. They don't necessarily have problems staying focused as children. However, in their teens or 20s, they start exhibiting a lack of focus, impulsivity and disorganisation though they weren't like this earlier. The authors posit that Type II ADHD possibly results from countless hours spent scrolling and swapping screens. Brains then get rewired, predisposing them to continually

crave instant gratification. As a result, people find it difficult to engage in tasks that require a slower but deeper and more deliberate form of engagement like reading a book or listening to a lecture. The psychiatrists add a caveat that most studies regarding digital usage and symptoms of ADHD are correlational. However, the preliminary longitudinal evidence that exists suggests that heavy digital reliance precedes the onset of symptoms of inattention and impulsivity. According to the authors, the most effective treatment might be to curb digital usage to "deliberate windows" of short durations and engage in offline activities that enhance focus. As early as 1890, William James notes in Principles of Psychology that the skill of repeatedly redirecting a meandering mind is "the very root of judgment, character and will". Given how consequential attention is, everyone.

## SEBI begins review of former HDFC Bank Chairman Atanu Chakraborty's resignation



personal values and ethics."SEBI Chairman had recently highlighted the critical responsibility of independent directors to uphold ethical standards and refrain from making "insinuations". "Independent directors are expected to act responsibly," Pandey told reporters on Monday, when asked about Chakraborty's exit. Pandey said the market regulator will be investigating all the aspects of the matter and look to bring out all facts.

Chakraborty, in a letter to the Chairman of Governance, Nomination, Remuneration Committee of the HDFC Bank had said, "Certain happenings and practices within the bank, that I have observed over the last two years, are not in congruence with my personal values and ethics. This is the basis of my aforementioned decision."

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had appointed Keki Mistry as the interim part-time Chairman of HDFC Bank with effect from March 19, for a period of three months. Mistry was the Vice-Chairman of HDFC Ltd before its merger with HDFC Bank. A day after Chakraborty's exit, Mistry said on a call with analysts that there was no power struggle within the bank, and no discussion regarding governance within the board of directors had taken place. A day after Chakraborty's exit, Mistry said on a call with analysts that there was no power struggle within the bank, and no discussion regarding governance within the board of directors had taken place. Saying that the board is united, Mistry said it had not witnessed "any kind of complete difference in opinion" in its meetings. "And as far as our seeking some explanation from Chakraborty goes, the board will of course meet very soon and take a call on how to deal with the problem," he had said. Last week, the RBI clarified it has not identified "any material concerns" regarding the conduct or governance of HDFC Bank. The banking regulator said it will continue to engage with the board and management going forward. The HDFC Bank on Tuesday announced that the board of directors had appointed external law firms — domestic and international — to review Chakraborty's resignation letter.

A day after Chakraborty's exit, Mistry said on a call with analysts that there was no power struggle within the bank, and no discussion regarding governance within the board of directors had taken place. A day after Chakraborty's exit, Mistry said on a call with analysts that there was no power struggle within the bank, and no discussion regarding governance within the board of directors had taken place.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has started a review of the resignation of former part-time chairman of HDFC Bank, Atanu Chakraborty, probing any potential violations of regulations governing directors of listed companies. Chakraborty had resigned from the bank's board last week citing concerns about ethics and values. "This is a preliminary inquiry by the regulator to determine if any violation occurred. The aim is to thoroughly examine the claims made in the (Chakraborty's) resignation letter," said a source. The mails sent to SEBI and HDFC Bank seeking response on the issue did not elicit any response. In an exchange filing earlier this week, the bank said, "we wish to inform you that Chakraborty did not mention any happenings and practices which were not in congruence with his

## West Asia war: As India's oil imports from Gulf countries crash, Russian oil flows surge 82% to near-peak levels

Amid a major disruption in oil supplies from West Asia, India's rapid ramp-up of Russian oil imports has significantly cushioned the supply hit. India's Russian oil imports in March are nearing historic peaks and a similar trend is expected in April as well, according to tanker data and industry insiders and experts. Meanwhile, due to the effective halt in vessel movements through the critical maritime chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz since early March, imports from West Asia suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait have crashed this month.

India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its crude oil needs; 2.5–2.7 million bpd of India's crude imports—around half of the overall oil imports—have transited the Strait of Hormuz in recent months, while the longer-term average is around 40%. This oil is mainly from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. It is critical for energy exports from West Asia, with one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows usually transiting the chokepoint.

Crude oil imports from Iraq and the UAE so far in March have crashed 69.2% and 72.8%, respectively, on a month-on-month basis, while those from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are down 45.1% and 45.8%, respectively, according to vessel tracking data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler. On the other hand, oil imports from Russia have jumped by 82.3% from February levels to 1.9 million barrels per day (bpd) in the March 1-25 period. So far in March, Russia's share in India's oil imports stands at 45.2%, up from 20.1% in February. Trade sources indicated that India's Russian oil imports for the entire month could be 2 million bpd, and a similar level is expected in April going by the buying behaviour of Indian refiners amid global supply disruption. Indian refiners have already bought about 60 million barrels of Russian crude for delivery through April, according to market sources.

Before the West Asia conflict began on February 28 with Israel and the US hitting Iran with military strikes and Tehran retaliating with striking neighbouring Gulf countries that house American assets, New Delhi's oil imports from Moscow were expected to be around 0.8-1 million bpd in March. In February, India's oil imports from Russia stood at 1 million bpd. "In historical context, India's highest monthly procurement of Russian crude since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war was in the around 2–2.1 million bpd range. The current surge is therefore approaching prior peaks, though not materially exceeding them at this stage. What stands out is the speed of the rebound: as Middle Eastern supplies via Hormuz dried up, Indian refiners were able to lift Russian purchases by close to 0.8–1.0 million bpd, helping cushion the disruption without materially affecting refinery runs so far," said Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst, Refining & Modeling at Kpler. "Overall, India's total crude imports are currently down by about 800,000 bpd as of date compared to January-February levels, or pre-conflict levels. However, this has not yet materially impacted refinery runs, which remain broadly stable. Refiners have drawn down commercial inventories to sustain throughput, while product exports continue to track near historical norms. Looking ahead, Russian crude is expected to remain the



backbone of India's import slate," he added.

India had, in recent months, cut down significantly on its oil imports from Russia amid trade negotiations with the US, as Washington made it a pre-requisite for scrapping its 25% additional penal tariff on New Delhi. But with the Strait of Hormuz closed for all intended purposes, Washington is now more than happy with India, as well as other importers, consuming more Russian crude, even from sanctioned entities and tankers.

After issuing the US a temporary "waiver" specifically to Indian refiners for buying Russian crude that was already sitting in tankers on water, Washington extended the waiver to all countries. Apart from providing temporary relief to India, experts also see it as part of Donald Trump's effort to prevent a further and sustained spike in international oil prices—and the consequent rise in domestic fuel prices in the US—given the midterm elections later this year. There are expectations that the waiver could be extended further till vessel flows through the Strait of Hormuz normalise. A similar waiver has now also been issued for Iranian oil already loaded on tankers. Earlier this month, a senior government official had said that India never stopped buying Russian crude, and this waiver appeared to be more for Washington's own legal and procedural requirements considering the Trump administration had imposed sanctions on various suppliers and tankers involved in Russian oil trade. Nonetheless, the waiver has evidently emboldened Indian refiners to aggressively procure Russian oil cargoes. Before the West Asia war, millions of barrels of Russian oil were languishing on the high seas with few willing buyers. This stock build-up was partly due to Indian refiners cutting oil imports from Russia. That oil is now in high demand, with Russian crude even commanding a premium over benchmark Brent crude, as against the usual discount. "Russia's role in India's crude slate has become much more critical in the current environment... India's recent increase has been more directly linked to replacing lost Middle Eastern barrels. In other words, India and China remain the larger structural buyer of Russian crude overall, but India's current surge is more pronounced from a substitution and energy-security standpoint," Ritolia said. "Indian refiners have effectively cushioned the loss of Hormuz-linked crude through a sharp increase in Russian imports, supported by alternative Middle Eastern routes and inventory drawdowns. While some pressure on runs is expected, the system remains resilient, with no immediate risk to domestic fuel supply and continued strength in product exports," he added.

## Centre raises commercial LPG allocation to 70 per cent amid supply disruption

New Delhi: The Central government on Friday increased the allocation of commercial LPG cylinders to 70 per cent of the required demand, from 50 per cent earlier, in order to provide relief to industrial and commercial users amid the shortage of gas caused by the disruption in imports due to the Iran war. Priority will be given to labour-intensive sectors such as steel, automobiles, textiles, dyes, chemicals and plastics as they also support other essential industries. Among these sectors, priority shall be given to process industries or those requiring LPG for specialised heating purposes that cannot be substituted by natural gas.

In addition to the existing 50 per cent allocation that is being made, another 20 per cent is proposed, which would bring the total commercial LPG allocation to 70 per cent of the pre-crisis level of packed non-domestic LPG, the government order said. The government, however, noted that to avail the additional 20 per cent allocation, all commercial and industrial LPG consumers must register with oil marketing companies and apply for PNG with the city gas distribution entity in their respective cities. "If industries speci-

fied in paragraph 1 of this letter (steel, automobile, textile, dye, chemicals, and plastics), where LPG is used in the process and for special purposes which cannot be substituted by natural gas, such requirement would stand waived," the order said.

The government also urged all states to immediately avail the 10 per cent reform-based allocation, if they have not already done so. "With this, the allocation to commercial/industrial LPG will rise to 70 per cent (with 10 per cent reform-based) and enable relief to industrial operations in the state," the order explains. The earlier additional 20 per cent allocation, which was issued on March 21, gave priority to sectors like restaurants, dhabas, hotels, industrial canteens, food processing/dairy, subsidised canteens/outlets run by state government or local bodies for food, community kitchens, as well as 5 kg (free trade LPG) FTL for migrant labourers. According to the latest data from the petroleum ministry, as of March 25, more than 37,000 – 5kg FTL cylinders have been sold to migrant labourers.

## Inside the ultra-luxury Thai villa in Koh Samui, where Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda spent their 'buddymoon'



Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda, who got married on March 4, gave their fans glimpses of their post-wedding "buddymoon" in Koh Samui, Thailand. In collaboration with Airbnb, the newlyweds chose a private villa on the island to unwind with close friends after their wedding celebrations. In the video, the Animal actor shares that she is still adjusting to calling Vijay "my husband." The couple is seen living the moments of slow mornings over breakfast, dancing around their exotic villa, and discussing their future. At one point, Vijay asks, "What do you think we will be doing five years from now?" to which Rashmika replies, "Travelling the world! Finding more places like this."

Sharing the video of their experience, Rashmika wrote, "After the wedding celebration, we wanted to slow down a bit for a couple of days. Quiet mornings, swims in the afternoons, and evenings of table tennis and pool and movie nights with laughter that lasted much longer. This @airbnb in Koh Samui felt like home almost instantly. Some moments from those days... with friends and home filled with laughter."

The star couple stayed at a luxury property in the Chaweng Noi Hills, Koh Koon. The property offers a range of services, including a dedicated villa manager and a round-trip airport transfer. Guests can choose one villa from 26

available, ranging from Breathtaking Koh Koon – Provence Meets The East Sleeps 14 Adults +8 Kids to Hillside Baan Lealay 4 Bedrooms Bophut Hill Amazing Sea Views. "The spectacular 7-bedroomed Koh Koon plus two kids' rooms sleeping 8 sprawls over seven Rai (11,200 SQM) of hillside with stunning views over Chaweng Bay, and could easily be mistaken for a Mediterranean countryside retreat. Here, 'East meets the Med', the official website reads. The expansive villa blends contemporary design with the tropical surroundings. Its bedrooms feature neutral-toned furniture, minimal décor, and white walls. The property offers a continental breakfast "with a twist," while a Chinese breakfast option is also included in the package.

The property serves food with organic ingredients, as the chef produces herbs and vegetables in the kitchen garden. Guests can enjoy their meals at different locations inside the property, such as a barbecue by the pool or a formal dinner indoors for special occasions. One of the villa's most striking highlights is its patio, which opens up to sweeping sea views. Designed as an outdoor lounge, it features comfortable sofas, a small table, and ambient lighting that enhances the setting in the evenings.

"Whether it's a family reunion, a wedding celebration, or just a much-needed break, Koh Koon makes an ideal choice for a relaxed, yet pampered Samui holiday. Guests have full access to the villa, pool, and gardens, except for the staff quarters. Includes a daily continental or asian breakfast, full-time staff, one return airport transfer, English-speaking villa manager and a Thai chef," the website added. Rashmika and Vijay got married in a Telugu ceremony and Kodava customs, highlighting the actor's cultural backgrounds. The couple hosted a traditional wedding in Udaipur and a grand reception in Hyderabad. For the wedding day, Rashmika opted for an Anamika Khanna's rust-coloured saree and paired it with gold jewellery from Shree Jewellers. Vijay wore an ivory dhoti, paired with a red vermilion angavastram.

## What Malaika Arora does to boost her immunity and fight dust, pollution: 'Not that haldi jo khaane mein daalte hain'

Malaika Arora, 52, recently reiterated that she swears by home remedies, so much so that she includes water therapies in her morning routine for immunity, with fresh haldi (turmeric) being non-negotiable. "Immunity is ginger, turmeric...not that haldi jo khaane me daalte hai (not the turmeric we use in food), but kacchi haldi or fresh turmeric. Grate it...you can put mint or tulsi...crush everything and put it in a juicer...add some water, or you can add coconut water or soaked chia seeds...strain and drink. It's great for colds, protects against them. We all live in an environment full of dust and pollution... so I think this is essential. You have this rather than popping pills and medications," she said.

Admitting that she "can't have coffee", the host and entrepreneur told CurlyTales, "Coffee is not good for me. It doesn't agree with my system. I take one teaspoon of pure A2 ghee. You can add to your diet...dal, roti, etc." Taking a leaf out of Malaika's wellness diaries, we asked consultant dietician Garima Goyal about the benefits of having fresh turmeric shots. "Her emphasis on using kacchi haldi instead of the regular powdered turmeric highlights an important nutritional distinction, as fresh turmeric contains higher levels of active compounds and volatile oils that may be reduced during processing," said Goyal.

From a functional nutrition perspective, this combination offers a "synergistic effect". Goyal said that fresh turmeric provides curcumin and other bioactive compounds with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, while ginger supports digestion, circulation and immune modulation. "Tulsi and mint contribute additional phytonutrients that help in respiratory support and may assist the body in coping



with environmental stressors such as dust and pollution. Using a liquid medium like water or coconut water further aids hydration, which is critical for mucosal immunity and detoxification pathways," said Goyal. However, while such natural preparations can support immune function, it is important to understand their role correctly. Goyal stressed that they act as supportive interventions rather than substitutes for a balanced diet, adequate protein intake, sleep and overall lifestyle. "Immunity is a complex, multi-system process, and no single drink can prevent illness on its own," asserted Goyal. "Incorporating fresh, plant-based ingredients with anti-inflammatory potential into daily habits can strengthen the body's baseline resilience. When combined with consistent lifestyle practices, such simple rituals can contribute meaningfully to long-term immune health, especially in environments with high exposure to pollution and allergens," said Goyal.

## 'Is yellowish urine a sign of Type 2 diabetes?'



Even small, everyday observations about our bodies are enough for a quick spiral into panic. One such scenario is spotting darker or more yellow urine and wondering if it signals something serious. With rising awareness around conditions like Type 2 Diabetes, many people tend to connect even minor bodily changes to larger health issues. A similar query recently surfaced on Quora: "Is yellowish urine a sign of diabetes type 2?"—a question that reflects just how common this confusion is. To settle this doubt, we reached out to Dr Satish Chander Wasoori, a Senior Consultant in Endocrinology at Paras Health Gurugram.

According to Dr Wasoori, the short answer is no. "Dark yellow urine is more commonly a sign of dehydration rather than Type 2 diabetes," he explains. In most cases, it simply means you're not drinking enough water or that certain foods or medications may be affecting you. While uncontrolled diabetes can lead to fluid loss and increased urination, its colour alone is not a reliable indicator of blood sugar levels. "People often misinterpret darker urine as a sign of diabetes, but in most cases, it simply reflects inadequate water intake or certain dietary factors." As per the endocrinologist, a change in urination frequency is a more "significant" symptom, as compared to colour, when it comes to Type 2 Diabetes.

What are the early signs of Type 2 diabetes?

Instead of focusing on urine colour, it's important to watch out for symptoms that are often subtle and easily ignored:

"These symptoms are often dismissed as lifestyle-related issues, which delays diagnosis," says Dr Wasoori. Additionally, individuals with risk factors — such as a "family history of diabetes, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, hypertension, or age above 35" — should undergo regular screening, even in the absence of symptoms. "Early detection is key to preventing complications," Dr Chander concludes.

## realme 16 5G to launch in India on April 2 with dual 50MP cameras

New Delhi: Smartphone photography continues to evolve as users increasingly look for a balance between premium design, intelligent imaging, and practical everyday usability, especially in the mid-range segment where expectations are rising rapidly.

Building on the strong legacy of the realme Number Series and carrying forward the innovation introduced with the realme 16 Pro Series, realme has announced that the realme 16 5G will launch in India on April 2. The upcoming device aims to bring advanced imaging and design-led innovation to a wider audience.

In line with this shift, the realme 16 5G places a strong emphasis on portrait photography, positioning itself as a best camera phone for photography in its segment through a combination of hardware, AI-led enhancements & Phone with Premium look.

At the core of the device is a dual 50MP camera system, featuring a 50MP front camera and a Sony IMX 852-powered 50MP rear camera phone (f/1.8, autofocus). This setup ensures consistent, high-quality output across both front and rear cameras, whether for selfies, group shots, or everyday photography making this the best camera phone in the segment.

## Sooryavanshi, Priyansh Arya, Ayush Mhatre, followed by Mukul Choudhary, Kartik Sharma and Prashant Veer – ‘T20 babies’ lining up to take IPL to next level



GNS News Agency, March 28

A week ago during Lucknow Super Giants' preparatory camp in Chennai as Mukul Choudhary kept sending the ball effortlessly out of the park delivery after delivery, their batting coach Lance Klusener watched it all in astonishment. As the 21-year-old continued his rough treatment of pacers and spinners alike for a good 45 minutes, the former South Africa all-rounder would turn to captain Rishabh Pant and remark, "Kids, these days!"

As the IPL turns 18, new-age T20 players, whom Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming termed 'T20 babies', are lining up to take the format to the next level. While par scores have been on an upward curve in recent years – especially after the Impact Player rule came in – last season witnessed the arrival of youngsters Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Priyansh Arya and Ayush Mhatre. And padded up waiting for their opportunity this season are Choudhary, Kartik Sharma, Prashant Veer and Aman Rao. They are not the future of the IPL anymore, but its present.

In a tournament where the likes of Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Shubman Gill are expected to take the mantle from MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, these T20 babies have also entered the ring. In many ways, despite the lack of experience, their arrival is no longer something even most orthodox T20 outfits like CSK could delay. For a team that always banked on experience, Fleming openly had doubts last season as to whether the brand of batting exhibited by 'T20 babies' can succeed in the long term. But as he watched his own 'Dad's Army' struggle to keep up with the T20 generation, the former New Zealand captain changed his mind. Having watched what Mhatre provided at the top and Dewal Brevis offered in the middle order, Fleming went in search of those 'T20 babies' and bought Kartik and Prashant at the auction for Rs 14.20 crore each – very un-CSK buys, but ones that shed plenty of light on where the IPL is headed.

## Why RCB coach Andy Flower feels IPL's Impact Player rule is a 'good innovation'

GNS News Agency, March 28

While players like Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma say that the introduction of the Impact Player rule takes away the skills out of the game, Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower feels differently. According to the former Zimbabwe player, the Impact Player rule was a "good innovation" as it offers tactical flexibility to teams in the Indian Premier League. "I think it has been a good innovation, it's interesting to be part of it. You're making decisions on the impact player, and I think it's interesting for the audience to debate what's right and what's wrong, so tactically it's quite an interesting addition to the game," Flower said on the eve of IPL's 2026 season-opener against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"I must say that one of the things I love about cricket is that when you select an 11, one of the challenges you have is balancing your 11 – the length of the batting order, balancing, perhaps, some guys that can't feel that well and it's one of the things that makes selection a little bit tricky. The impact player rule hides that selection problem a little, so I think one of the great things about cricket is some of the debates around selection and when you select single-skilled players, you weaken another area of your game, the impact player can hide that, so there are pros and cons I think to it," he added.

The Impact Player rule has recently been criticized by Gujarat Titans skipper Gill who said that he doesn't like the concept as it takes 'the skill out of the game'. "Personally

"My view used to be that experience was going to win, but now you have this fearless athlete that's been brought up on T20 cricket and has a skillset that's mouthwatering, and they just have no fear about what environment they need to exhibit these skills. So that is one thing to acknowledge, that T20 babies are now coming through," Fleming said. In a format in which batsmen with strike rates in the range of 135-150 were considered assets, in the last 18 months Abhishek (173.14), Tim David (162.31) and Brevis (153.77) altered perceptions. And then Sooryavanshi (204.37), Mhatre (175.46) and Arya (169.10) showed how far T20 batting has evolved on the domestic circuit. Beyond the trio who made their IPL debuts last season, came the likes of Kartik (162.92), Prashant (167.16), Aman Rao (162.70) and Mukul (165.35), who have all found a home in the IPL.

While batsmen with such strike rates were usually seen as ideal finishers, the thinking is witnessing a major shift. "India have been phenomenal in the last 12 months. There are a lot of them coming through their domestic system with phenomenal hitting power. Tim (David) and Brevis were looked at as finishers, but that is changing now and they are batting higher because teams are seeing their potential. They are all destructive batsmen. So the other teams need to identify similar players or else they are going to be left behind further," renowned power-hitting coach Julian Wood had told this masthead earlier. The new breed that Wood refers to and what Fleming calls 'T20 babies' have one aspect common in their batting. In a format in which hand-speed supersedes footwork, each of them have quick hands. And with the remarkable ability to pick length early, and having grown up after T20 became the popular format, their batting doesn't just speak of their boldness but also that of the format itself that has evolved and is vastly different to what it was when the IPL began in 2008. Not being exposed much to red-ball cricket, they have learnt to bat only in top gear, where intent overshadows other metrics. Fleming explains why the T20 babies are different. "It's just that mental aspect. Sometimes an experienced player can get caught up in himself, trying to work out where the game's going and what's going on. But these young players these days, they're just very free and only know one way. So there's real appeal, especially when the game is being played faster and faster. I think it's a byproduct of T20 being around for some time now and we're all learning, being involved with it, and the faster it gets, these young players seem to play better," the CSK coach said. Over the next two months, in a tournament where the Kohlis, Rohits and Dhonis would bring crowds to the stadium, the T20 babies are waiting to carve out a world for themselves. Fasten the seatbelts. Enjoy the breathtaking ride.



for me, I don't think there should be an impact player. I think cricket in general is an 11-players' game and on wickets where we play on the grounds that we play, adding an extra batsman, I think it takes the skill out of the game," he said on Thursday. Even Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel has spoken against the rule, saying it instinctively reduced the role of an all-rounder in the playing XI. "I don't like this rule, honestly, because I am an all-rounder (laughs)," Axar said in a media interaction when asked about the rule introduced in 2023. "Earlier, you would pick an allrounder for batting and bowling. Because of this rule, the team management goes for a particular batsman or bowler, thinking 'Why do we need an allrounder?'" "Since I am an allrounder, I don't like the rule. At the same time, rules are rules and we need to follow them. From a personal point of view though, I don't like the rule," remarked Axar.

## From MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli to Vaibhav Sooryavanshi – five records that can be broken this season



GNS News Agency, March 28

IPL 2026: The 19th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is set to get underway with reigning champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru taking on SunRisers Hyderabad at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. A contrasting spectrum of players will take the field yet again, ranging from the legendary 44-year-old MS Dhoni to the 15-year-old sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Along with the unbridled expectations from the 10 franchises, there is also the excitement and propensity of tumbling records in the season. Here's a look at the key records that can be set in the IPL 2026 season

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians have undoubtedly been the most successful batting side in the history of the tournament, and arguably, all of T20 cricket across the globe. MI lead the global leaderboard in sixes in the format, having smashed 1969 sixes since 2008. Hardik Pandya's side are only 31 sixes away from becoming the first T20 side in the world to smash 2000 sixes. MI are followed by the West Indies national side who have struck 1946 sixes

in 254 matches and the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) – 1873 sixes in 286 matches. MI are also set to become the first team to appear in 300 T20 matches among all Indian T20 sides when they take on Kolkata Knight Riders in their season opener at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. Only Pakistan (303) and Somerset (303) have played more T20 matches than MI in all of T20 history. From being the youngest captain to lift the IPL trophy at a time, legendary CSK talisman MS Dhoni is now set to become the oldest Indian player ever in IPL history. Dhoni's incredible longevity lasting 19 seasons will mean that he will surpass Praveen Tambe as the oldest Indian player to feature in a match during any game that he will step out in during the season. The leg-spinner Tambe was 44y 219d when he faced RCB in his last IPL match in 2016. On the eve of the IPL 2026 opener, Dhoni is 44y 263d old.

Returning to competitive action for the first time in two months, former RCB skipper Virat Kohli will be keen to continue his scoring streak and also become the first batter to reach 9000 IPL runs. With a tournament-leading 8661 runs in 259 innings, the 37-year-old Kohli will likely reach the landmark during the league stage of the tournament. Having already set the league ablaze as its youngest player and its fastest Indian centurion in 35 balls last season, the dashing Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is slated for a heftier role as the Rajasthan Royals opener this season. Staggeringly, the left-hander can be the most successful teenaged batter in IPL history in only his second season. Having racked up 252 runs in seven innings last year, Sooryavanshi is already half-way through to the milestone. Mumbai prodigy Prithvi Shaw remains as the most successful teenaged batter in the IPL, having registered 598 runs in 25 innings between 2018-19.

## Ruturaj Gaikwad recalls conversation with Sanju Samson a few years back about moving to Chennai Super Kings: 'Being a South boy...'



GNS News Agency, March 28

Even before the dream Chepauk move became a reality for Sanju Samson, there was a conversation some-time ago with the current Chennai Super Kings captain Ruturaj Gaikwad. The two men are currently either side of age 30, and have been friends for a long time, and also know a thing or two about having rollercoaster international careers. So when the topic came up, Ruturaj had no hesitation telling Samson that he'd be welcome in Chennai. "I remember a conversation we had two to three years back, we were in England. You know, he was asking about what is happening in CSK, how things are, and all that. And I said, I feel being a South boy, you should explore this opportunity, you should be here," Ruturaj said on the first episode of Super Kings Podcast, in a conversation with Abhinav Mukud.

"I don't know if I was the first one or not (to bring this up to him) but I mean, we have been friends for a long time

now and we we have been in and out of the Indian team, we kind of had the same journey, same struggles. So that's what I had expressed to him. The first thing I said to him when he asked will you be the next captain... I said I don't know, I don't really care about captaincy, I like playing here, I like the atmosphere." "I like how the culture is and I am really happy as a player as well. He, in fact, immediately replied 'I don't want to come in a situation where I want to be the captain there, I want to play under you, it is your team, it is your franchise and I will be happy to be there just as a player, but whenever I get an opportunity, I would definitely love to come'."

Samson eventually made the switch from Rajasthan Royals – where he was a franchise icon – to CSK before the auction for this upcoming season, and Ruturaj revealed that it was a long process to finalise the move. The trade also saw another CSK icon in Ravindra Jadeja heading the other way to Jaipur (and Guwahati). "So there were a lot of talks last year after the IPL. I was in regular touch with him, there were times where things weren't happening, there were times things were really close but there were again times where things went back two-three steps. As soon as it happened, I was really happy," the CSK captain said.

Ruturaj also said he and Samson shared a similar attitude. "We share a similar kind of attitude, where I feel he is not someone who wants to be star of the show, not to be always on the forefront. He always keeps the team first, and he is someone who keeps things really calm, not someone who wants to steal the show. That's where we bonded really well," the 29-year-old said about his 31-year-old teammate.

## R Ashwin on Delhi Capitals: 'Despite having a strong squad, they've found the magic recipe to get knocked out'



GNS News Agency, March 28

Delhi Capitals finished fifth last season in the initial stage of the tournament. They played some pretty good cricket, but in the second half, the wheels came off, and from a sure-shot playoffs team, they fell short of making it into the final four. Former Indian cricketer R Ashwin, analysing their chances, gave suggestions on what the side should do to improve. "There was a match against CSK, where KL Rahul played an exceptional knock on a two-paced pitch. Yet, they never opened with him again for a while after that. Make

sure he opens this season. He will have the Orange Cap if he does. Have Pathum Nissanka open with him at the top. Just do these basic things and leave it to the players," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. "By trying to do too much as a support staff, you can impact the team in unimaginable ways. Ashutosh Sharma produced one amazing knock, but it felt like he never played after that. Suddenly, Sameer Rizvi played a game," he added.

Speaking on the bowling attack Ashwin said: "Natarajan has dropped drastically in speed when I last saw him. Hopefully, he comes and delivers for them because he is a high-value pick. But even otherwise, they have a great bowling lineup. If Starc doesn't play, they have Lungi Ngidi. Mukesh Kumar has been bowling the yorkers brilliantly. Kuldeep Yadav had the ball on a string last season. He and Axar Patel are banks as solid Indian spinners. Auqib Nabi should play and open the bowling with the new ball," said Ashwin

"DC have a good chance if they don't constantly change their 11. Despite having a strong squad, they've found the magic recipe to get knocked out. If they utilise their resources well, they can give even MI a run for their money. Such is the strength of DC's squad. But my prediction is they'll just about have a chance to qualify by stuttering through the season," concluded Ashwin.

## 'Too many people in England laughed about my attitude over the last few years': The time Uruguay's Luis Suarez scored a double vs ENG in 2014 FIFA World Cup



GNS News Agency, March 28

With England and Uruguay set to meet in a friendly on Friday night, it marks a rare occasion when these two former world champions face each other in the beautiful game. The last time these two teams had met was back in 2014 when Uruguay had virtually knocked the Three Lions out of the FIFA World Cup. After that meeting, the two teams have played 2 more World Cups but haven't crossed paths in 2018 or 2022. They haven't even faced each other in international friendlies in over 12 years leading to Friday's encounter being one of those matches that haven't been run into the ground in a football era chock full of big clashes.

The teams have played each other 11 times in history with England winning 3 and Uruguay winning 5 while 3 matches were draws. One important point to note here is that England haven't ever beaten their South American counterparts in any competitive matches, losing to them in 2014 World Cup and the 1954 World Cup while drawing in the 1966 edition. All three England wins against Uruguay have come in friendlies.

What happened the last time they met?

The two teams met each other in a high voltage Group D encounter in the 2014 World Cup and after the dust settled, only one name was etched in the minds of the fans – Luis Suarez. The Uruguayan striker was coming off an iconic season with Liverpool where he won the EPL golden boot, scoring 31 goals in 33 matches. This led to him signing for Barcelona in July which eventually saw the formation of the iconic MSN trio (Messi-Suarez-Neymar) who would help Barcelona win the treble in the 2014-15 season.

Coming back to the England encounter, a lucky break in midfield sent the ball out wide to Edinson Cavani and Suarez escaped the attentions of Phil Jagielka to nod back across Joe Hart for a 1-0 lead. Suarez, who had been well policed by England's centre backs until that point, wheeled

away with a huge smile on his face, kissing his wrists and gesturing frantically in delight. England gradually regained the initiative with Wayne Rooney as fullback Glen Johnson worked his way into the box after delightful work by Daniel Sturridge, and his square ball was rammed home by the Manchester United striker at the far post, sending the massed ranks of England fans behind the goal into a frenzy. England were in the ascendancy but when Gerrard failed to deal with Uruguay keeper Fernando Muslera's punt Suarez was away, outpacing Gary Cahill and slamming the ball past Hart. "I have been thinking about this, it was something I dreamed about happening quite a lot. I'm enjoying this moment, because of all I suffered, the criticism I received. So there you go," Suarez told reporters after the match. "Before the game too many people in England laughed about my attitude over the last few years," he said. "This is a very good time for me. I want to see what they think now. "It was one of the best games I've played. It's an amazing moment for me. Maybe a few days ago I thought this wouldn't be possible."

## Imperial CC edge Charminar in thrilling HCA B-Division final

GNS News Agency, March 28 Hyderabad: Centuries by S. Loknath (136, 122b, 20x4, 2x6) and Lokesh Myaka (105, 193b, 11x4) helped Imperial Cricket Club score a thrilling one-wicket win against Charminar in the final of the HCA

B-Division two-day league cricket championship here on Friday.

Batting first, Charminar scored 397 in 71 overs, and in reply, Imperial reached the target, losing nine wickets, thanks to big knocks by Loknath and Lokesh.

The scores: Final: Charminar 397 in 71 overs (Sahil Singh 84, G. Sankeerth 80, Aditya Singh Rathore 57, Ujjwal Yadav 53, Asad Ahmed 32, Siddu Nayak 5/83) lost to Imperial CC 401/9 in 85 overs (S. Loknath 136, Lokesh Myaka 105, Siddu Nayak 69, Varun Dhatrik 3/73).



## Beyond RRR: How Dhruva helped Ram Charan stop being a 'star's son' and become an actor



vegetarian diet throughout the shoot to achieve the leaner, sharper build the IPS officer role demanded. There is a particular kind of screen presence that comes with a body that looks like it was built for something specific, and Ram Charan in Dhruva had that. An IPS officer who looks like he could genuinely outrun, outfight, and outlast every person in a room carries a different weight than one who does not.

The film follows Dhruva, an IPS trainee who makes a deliberate and unusual choice early on. Rather than spending his career bringing down petty criminals, he sets his sights on finding the single most powerful criminal in the country and dismantling his entire operation. That target turns out to be Siddharth Abhimanyu, a scientist of considerable reputation who runs a secret criminal network through illegal medical operations, manipulating the pharmaceutical industry for profit while maintaining a respectable public face.

What made this structure compelling was that it inverted the usual hero-villain dynamic. Siddharth Abhimanyu was not physically threatening. He did not need to be. He was three steps ahead of everyone around him at all times, and the film took genuine pleasure in showing an audience a villain who could not be stopped simply by the hero being stronger or faster. Dhruva had to match him intellectually, which was a different kind of hero for Ram Charan to play. If Dhruva belonged to Ram Charan on paper, Arvind Swamy took it somewhere else entirely on screen. Both Ajith Kumar and R Madhavan were approached for the villain's role before Swamy was eventually chosen to reprise his performance from the original Tamil film. Swamy brought something to Siddharth Abhimanyu that few actors could have: a stillness that felt more dangerous than any amount of aggression.

Arvind Swamy proved through this performance that audiences can genuinely fall in love with a villain while still rooting for the hero, which is a difficult balance to strike. The confrontational scenes between him and Ram Charan are among the film's most watchable sequences, not because of action, but because of the intelligence both characters bring to their exchanges. His role elevated the film completely and pushed Ram Charan to deliver his best work. Looking at Ram Charan's career now, from where it was in 2016 to where RRR took it in 2022, Dhruva occupies a specific and important place. It was the film where he proved something to himself and to the industry, that he could carry a script-driven thriller. That he could hold the screen against Arvind Swamy. That he did not need to dominate every scene to make a film work. Two years after Dhruva came Rangasthalam, which many consider his finest performance. Six years after that came RRR and everything that followed. The line between those films and Dhruva is not always drawn, but it should be. Because Dhruva was the film where Ram Charan stopped asking what the audience wanted and started asking what the story needed. That shift, quiet as it was, changed everything that came after it.

By December 2016, Ram Charan needed a win. His previous film, Bruce Lee: The Fighter, had underperformed, and there was a quiet but real sense in Telugu cinema that he was still searching for his footing outside the mass entertainer mold that had defined most of his career. The films before it had not been disasters, but they had not moved the needle either. The question being asked, not always loudly but consistently, was whether Chiranjeevi's son could build a filmography that stood on its own terms. Then Dhruva arrived on December 9, 2016, and it changed the conversation. To understand what Dhruva meant, you have to understand where Ram Charan was at that point. He debuted in 2007 with Chirutha, which was a commercial success. Magadheera in 2009 had been a genuine landmark, both for his career and for Telugu cinema as a whole. But the years between Magadheera and Dhruva had been uneven. Films like Racha, Naayak, and Yevadu had their moments but none of them fully delivered on the promise of what Magadheera had suggested Charan could be.

Following the poor performance of Bruce Lee: The Fighter, the original producer stepped away from what would become Dhruva, and Allu Aravind stepped in to bankroll the project under Geetha Arts, his second collaboration with Ram Charan after Magadheera.

Dhruva was an official remake of the Tamil film Thani Oruvan (2015), directed by Mohan Raja. It had been one of the best Tamil films of that year. Its screenplay was unusually tight for a commercial entertainer, and its villain, played originally by Arvind Swamy, was the kind of character Telugu cinema rarely gave audiences: educated, composed, and genuinely frightening because of his intelligence. Before the film was released, what captured public attention was what Ram Charan looked like. The first look images and the introduction song teaser showed an actor who had clearly done something significant with his body.

For the introduction song shoot, Ram Charan reportedly trained under bodybuilder Rakesh Udiyar, the same trainer credited with Salman Khan's Sultan physique and Aamir Khan's Dangal transformation. He had begun training well before the film went on floors, switching to a strict

## BTS THE RETURN review: Seven men wrestle with fame, fear, and a heavy crown



Jimin struggles audibly with English lyrics, unable to make them feel like his own, and his frustration is not subtle. HYBE's leadership, including chairman Bang Si-hyuk and BigHit Music vice president Nicole Kim, makes the case for leaning further into English to widen the album's global reach. But Suga disagrees, arguing that the record is already heavy on English and that pulling it further in that direction comes at a cost. RM backs him, framing it as a question of staying true to who they actually are rather than performing a version of themselves built for market share.

What makes this scene land is not the disagreement itself but the fact that it exists in the film at all. Label-approved content tends to sand these edges down before they ever reach an audience. The decision to keep this exchange in speaks both to Nguyen's confidence as a filmmaker and to BTS' genuine willingness to let people see the parts of the process that do not look effortless. BTS: THE RETURN shows Big Hit executive creative director Boyoung Lee introducing the members to the story of the seven Korean men who visited Howard University in 1896, three of whom lent their voices to the first known recording of "Ainring." Lee also observes that the folk song may connect to feelings of longing BTS felt while away from music and fans.

Though the members are generally on board with the idea, RM expresses some hesitation about being compared to "heroes and legends." It is a small moment but shows a man who has spent years carrying a near-mythological public identity and still finds it uncomfortable to wear. The 14-track album, released March 20, just one week before this documentary dropped, grew out of sessions filled with doubt and disagreement. BTS knew "SWIM" was a risky choice for lead single. V calls it a shift in the "opposite direction" from what they originally had in mind; Jimin, despite enjoying it, asks if the song is really the correct choice since it is much mellower than people are expecting. But that deviation from BTS' norm is exactly why it felt right to the band in the end.

In arguably the most compelling cinematic sequence of the documentary, the camera pans to the members splashing around at the beach, laughing, and competing to see who can stay underwater the longest. The film is full of moments like this, small and unscripted, that do more work than any formal interview ever could. Through its insightful car chats and grainy camcorder POVs, the documentary serves as a reminder of why exactly the world fell in love with these seven guys in the first place. Jin expresses that he feels "too successful" for his own good, while Jung Kook wishes he could step back from the constant expectations and scrutiny.

Fame, the film quietly argues, is not a problem that success solves. At 93 minutes, the documentary moves fast. It feels shorter than it is, without rushing through the process. That is mostly a compliment, though there are moments where you wish Nguyen had lingered. The Seoul sessions, in particular, feel underrepresented compared to the LA portion. BTS: THE RETURN is a genuinely good documentary, not just a good BTS documentary. It earns that distinction by treating its subjects as artistes navigating real uncertainty rather than icons going through choreographed motions. V says at one point, "I feel like everything about us has changed, at least a little bit." The film does not try to resolve that feeling, it tries to sit with it. And that restraint is what makes it worth watching, whether you have followed BTS since 2013 or stumbled across it on Netflix with no context whatsoever.

Four years is a long time in any industry. In pop music, it is practically a lifetime. Trends shift, audiences move on, and the artistes who were once unavoidable become questions rather than certainties. When BTS stepped away in late 2022 to fulfill South Korea's mandatory military service, nobody knew exactly what they would be walking back into. BTS: THE RETURN does not pretend otherwise. The documentary sits inside that uncertainty and watches seven people try to find their footing again, and that honesty is what separates it from the kind of polished, carefully managed content their name usually produces.

What sets this documentary apart from most is its refusal to ease you in gently. BTS: THE RETURN drops you straight into a Los Angeles recording studio in the summer of 2025, where seven men who clearly care deeply about each other are also, quite plainly, trying to rediscover their creative footing after years of being apart. Bao Nguyen's camera does not arrive to applaud them. It arrives to watch them, and that single distinction changes everything about how the film feels. Nguyen, who previously directed The Stringer and The Greatest Night in Pop, had no interest in making a career retrospective. That would have been the easier film, and probably the safer one. There is no shortage of BTS content in the world; fans have had access to behind-the-scenes material, vlogs, and web series stretching back over a decade. What this documentary does instead is zoom in on one narrow, pressure-filled window of time: the creation of their comeback album, ARIRANG.

Getting to that moment took years. When BTS stepped back from their careers in December 2022, it was to fulfill South Korea's mandatory military service obligation, with each member enlisting individually for roughly 18 months. Jin and J-Hope were the first to return to civilian life in 2024. RM, V, Jimin, and Jung Kook followed in early June 2025, and Suga completed his service last, finishing on June 21, 2025. Work on ARIRANG began almost immediately after, with the group convening in Los Angeles in July. Jin joined them in August, arriving straight from the tail end of his solo tour, walking into sessions that had already been running for weeks without him.

The most telling sign of a good music documentary is what the filmmaker chooses not to remove. Nguyen earned a level of access that most directors in his position would use carefully, curating only the moments that reflect well on everyone involved. He does the opposite. BTS: THE RETURN holds space for uncomfortable exchanges between the members and their label, moments where creative instinct and commercial strategy pull in different directions, and then simply leaves them there for the audience to sit with. One of the clearest examples of this surfaces early. Not even a quarter of the way through the film, the question of language becomes a source of real friction.

## 'It's irritating': Malaika Arora reacts to her dating rumours, says she has good laugh about these things with son Arhaan Khan



Malaika Arora, fondly remembered as the "Chhaya Chhaya" girl, is among those celebrities who are constantly in the spotlight. Whether it's her incredible fitness at 50, her much-discussed walk (which she takes sportingly), or her dating life, Malaika often finds herself making headlines. However, she has largely maintained a dignified silence, choosing not to react to rumours—until now. In a recent interview, Malaika opened up about how such baseless speculations impact her and her son, Arhaan Khan.

Speaking about her bond with Arhaan, Malaika told Curly Tales, "I continue to give him advice all the time—from how to dress, what haircut to choose, to even holiday destinations. At the same time, we share a relationship where he can tell me, 'Think about this opportunity,' or even say, 'Mom, I think this is a bad idea.' I discuss everything with him. We are more like friends. We fight, we fire each other, but at the end of the day, each other's opinions matter a lot." When asked about relationships as a single mother, Malaika Arora said, "I am open to all possibilities. But there is a time and place for everything. I can't plan these things—if it has to happen, it will. There are enough opportunities, but like I said, everything has its own time."

Referring to her newly launched restaurant Sweeney Mumbai, she added, "Right now, I'm enjoying everything that's happening in my life and building things from scratch. That's what keeps me going. Of course, companionship is wonderful, but I'm not actively seeking it. I am a self-made woman, and I'm proud of that. I don't need an external person or a man to complete me. If I choose to be with someone, it will be on my own terms." Addressing constant dating rumours, Malaika admitted, "It is irritating, but now I treat it as a joke. I don't give it too much importance. Arhaan and I actually have a good laugh about these things." In 2026, Malaika Arora was spotted on multiple occasions with Harsh Mehta, sparking speculation about a possible relationship. However, her recent remarks suggest that such reports are largely unfounded.

## Ilayaraja slashed fee from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 50,000 for Adharvam, made at Rs 22 lakh, as he loved Mammooty's New Delhi; composed its 4 songs in just 30 minutes



Malayalam megastar Mammooty's unparalleled legacy is marked not just by his widely acclaimed and successful movies, but also by those that went under the viewers' radar despite being impressive works, as well as those that have etched themselves into the hearts of a niche audience. In fact, his oeuvre, comprising over 400 films across five decades, includes several underrated works, among which Adharvam (1989) stands out for its impressive explorations of the dark fantasy horror subgenre. The sophomore directorial venture of blockbuster screenwriter Dennis Joseph, Adharvam was penned by his longtime associate Shibu Chakravarthy and produced by one of Dennis' mentors, A Eraly. In fact, Dennis joined hands with Eraly as the latter was going through a challenging time and desperately needed a commercial success.

However, the writer-director himself once revealed that although he had presented Eraly with two options — Kottayam Kunjachan (1990), an out-and-out action comedy with better chances of being a hit, and Adharvam, which might not achieve the same level of success but would be a far superior cinematic endeavour — the producer chose the latter. Dennis attributed this decision to Eraly's penchant for making good cinema, even in the face of a crisis, rather than opting for no-brainers. Alongside Mammooty, the movie also featured Charuhasan, Silk Smitha, Parvathy Jayaram, and KB Ganesh Kumar in key roles.

Although Dennis had a close bond with legendary composer Shyam and worked with him on several movies, including his directorial debut Manu Uncle (1988), this was also the era when he was captivated by the musical brilliance of Ilayaraja. Thus, he wished to rope in the maestro for Adharvam. However, although Ilayaraja had done several Malayalam movies over the years — the best examples being Vyaamoham, Olangal, Aa Raathri, Sandhyakku Virinja Poovu, Oomakkuyil, Pinnilavu, Onnanu Nammal, Yathra, Kaveri, and Poomukhappadiyil Ninneyum Kaathu — by the late 1980s, he had become one of the highest-paid composers in Indian cinema and almost a superstar in his own right. Don't Miss | 'A cultural phenomenon': How Hariharan saw a trendsetter in Mammooty's Kottayam Kunjachan while others predicted a flop | Ilayaraja's official remuneration was almost 50% of Adharvam's budget

During an appearance on Safari TV's Charithram Enniloode programme, Dennis Joseph revealed that while Adharvam was envisioned with an estimated budget of Rs 22 lakh, Ilayaraja's remuneration in Tamil cinema at that time was Rs 10 lakh. This meant they would have to set aside almost 50 per cent of their total budget for the composer alone. Moreover, due to back-to-back projects in Tamil and Telugu, he had reduced the number of Malayalam films he did during this period. Nonetheless, Dennis decided to make an effort to persuade Ilayaraja to accept the project and reduce his fee so that they could afford him. After much effort, Dennis managed to obtain Ilayaraja's phone number. When he called, the composer himself answered. The director introduced himself and conveyed his request. Upon hearing it, Ilayaraja said he was already overwhelmed with work in Tamil and Telugu cinema. "However, he asked me which movies I had done before this. I told him I had written films such as Nirakkoottu, Shyama, and New Delhi. Upon hearing New Delhi, he immediately asked me to come over to his home. Apparently, he liked New Delhi a lot," Dennis recalled. Helmed by Joshiy, the movie featured Mammooty, Sumalatha, and Urvashi in lead roles and marked the megastar's comeback after a prolonged lull.

'How can you afford me?'

Ilayaraja liked Adharvam's story and agreed to do the movie. "With a smile, he then asked, 'Do you know my current remuneration? How can you afford me?' I told him we knew about it and informed him transparently that we couldn't afford him even if he demanded 1/10 of what he charged at that point. He liked our honesty. Ilayaraja asked, 'How much do you usually pay Shyam?' I replied, Rs 50,000. That itself was a huge amount considering that this was the era when even the biggest superstars' remuneration was around Rs 2 lakh. He asked, 'Can you pay me that amount (Rs 50,000)?' We immediately said yes, and that's how Ilayaraja came on board the project," he shared.

Ilayaraja's musical mastery and excellence know no bounds, and the entire world knows it. But his sheer brilliance lies in his ability to create an evergreen album in a heartbeat. In fact, he composed all four songs in Adharvam in just 30 minutes. "As we sat down for the composing session, he asked me if I had any reference for the Silk Smitha song. I named 'Poonthenaruvi' (Oru Penninte Kadha, 1971). As soon as he heard that, Ilayaraja began humming the tune of our song 'Puzhayorathil.' It took him just a fraction of a second to come up with that tune. We were stunned and impressed. Just like that, he composed all four tracks back to back, and it took him less than 30 minutes to finish the job," Dennis added. What's even more amusing is that none of these songs was hasty jobs, and three among them became chartbusters and are remembered to this day. The other tracks in Adharvam, aside from "Puzhayorathil," are "Ambilikkalayum Neerum," "Poovayi Virinju," and "Om Midhye." Although Adharvam didn't become a massive hit like Dennis Joseph's other films, it was still a success and enjoys cult status to this day.

## Naga Shaurya's Bad Boy Karthik to release worldwide on April 17

Hyderabad: The makers of director Ram Desina's eagerly awaited upcoming film 'Bad Boy Karthik', featuring Telugu star Naga Shaurya in the lead, on Friday announced that their film would hit screens worldwide on April 17 this year, much to the delight of fans and film buffs.

Sri Vaishnavi Films, the production house producing the film, took to its X timeline to announce the film's release date. It wrote, "Get ready to celebrate victory, madness and high-voltage entertainment. #BadBoyKarthik GRAND RELEASE IN THEATRES ON APRIL 17th. #BadBoyKarthikonApr17th." Expectations from the commercial action entertainer have been steadily growing ever since the makers released a teaser.

The teaser gave one the impression that Naga Shaurya played a rugged, aggressive, and stylish character in this film. It was packed with intense action sequences and high-octane moments. Apart from Shaurya, the teaser also unveiled key cast members such as Vidhi, Samuthirakani,

Naresh VK, Saikumar, Mime Gopi, Sridevi Vijaykumar, Vennela Kishore, and Brahmaji, hinting at a blend of intense drama and rib-tickling comedy.

The teaser gave the impression that director Raam Desina had crafted a commercial entertainer tailored for the masses, laced with style and energy. The up and coming action entertainer is being produced by Srinivasa Rao Chintalapudi under the banner of Sri Vaishnavi Films.

Vidhi plays the female lead opposite Naga Shaurya in this film in which Tamil actor Samuthirakani plays a character called Varadha Reddy. The film boasts a quality technical team. Cinematography for the film is by Rasool Ellore. Interestingly, music director Harris Jayaraj will be making a return to Telugu cinema with this film, which has Ramanjaneyulu as its art director. Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao is the editor for the film which will feature fight sequences choreographed by Supreme Sundar and Prithvi.