

INDIAN CHRONICLE

31 March, 2026 | Tuesday | Volume No:1 | Issue No:58

Pages: 12+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Krishna (Andhra Pradesh)

₹ 3

Srinivas receives National Sports Award Award presented in Amritsar, Punjab

“Jagityal Correspondent , March 30 (Indian Chronicle): “Marripelli Srinivas, a karate master from Jagityal district in Telangana state, received the Excellence Achievement Award 2025-26 in the sports achievement category, organized by Youth & Sports Development Association India in Amritsar, Punjab. Srinivas spoke on the occasion, saying it's a proud moment to be selected for this award from Telangana at the national level.”“On receiving the national award, Srinivas was congratulated by Jagityal DYSI Dr. Ravi Kumar, Olympic Association presidents and secretaries Mahipal and Janardan Reddy, SGF Secretary Chakradhar Rao, PETA district presidents and secretaries Padala Vishw Prasad and Ashok, Okinawa Martial Arts Academy Deputy Grand Master Vasanth Kumar, PDs Krishna Prasad and Lakshmi Ram Naik, and senior karate masters Marripelli Lingayya and Anantula Kantaravu, among others.

Inspection of Indiramma House Slab Level in Bambara – Sarpanch Bendaré Krishnaji Participates

“Indian Chronicle, Jade Srinivas, March, 30”“In Bambara Gram Panchayat of Wankidi mandal, the slab-level stage of an under-construction Indiramma house was inspected by Sarpanch Bendaré Krishnaji. The house belongs to Srinivas, husband of Jade Kalpana, and has reached the slab level of construction. “During the inspection, AE Nagaraju verified the slab-level work and supervised the process of capturing photographs through the official app for bill processing. He reviewed the progress and quality of the construction to ensure it meets the prescribed government guidelines. On this occasion, officials and public representatives advised the beneficiaries to complete the construction works at the earliest. They emphasized that all houses should be completed within the stipulated time frame without compromising on quality. Beneficiaries were also instructed to ensure proper documentation and timely updates in the app. The inspection was attended by Sarpanch Bendaré Krishnaji, Vice Sarpanch Jade Santosh, Village Secretary Durgam, Dharmayya, Ramakrishna Chary, Tirupati, and other local representatives.

India free of Naxal terror: Shah; blames Cong leaders for LWE



New Delhi, March 30

Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday declared India free of Naxal terror even as he laid the blame for decades of Left-wing extremism (LWE) in the country at the doors of Congress leaders from late Indira Gandhi to Rahul Gandhi.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on the eve of March 31, 2026, the government's deadline for the elimination

of the LWE, Shah said Naxal-sympathising Congress leaders had themselves become Naxalites over time.

He rejected as “false” the narrative that the LWE stemmed from lack of development and was a movement against injustice.

“I firmly dismiss the narrative that Naxalism stemmed from a lack of development. Naxalism stemmed from the Left ideology which Indira accepted and promoted in the 1970s,” said Shah, alleging that the late PM, who took help from the Left to get VV Giri elected as President in 1969, remained “captive to Naxals for long”.

Shah quoted late PM Manmohan Singh's admission that the LWE was a bigger threat than the terrorism in Kashmir and the Northeast and said, “Yet the Congress did nothing about it. PM Narendra Modi came in 2014 and Naxalism has been eliminated.”

Noting that the entire central and state leadership of Naxals had either surrendered or been neutralised, the minister attacked Rahul Gandhi for often being seen with Naxals and Sonia Gandhi for accommodating Naxal

sympathisers in the National Advisory Council (NAC) which she chaired.

Questioning key appointments for Binayak Sen and PM Rural Development Fellowship for Mahesh Raut, a wanted Naxal, Shah asked, “When the government of the day was patronising Naxals and their sympathisers, how could their morale be broken.”

Shah credited the CAPF, CRPF, Chhattisgarh Police, District Reserve Guard and tribals for the milestone of elimination of LWE terror and singled out Rahul for a political attack.

“Rahul has often been seen with Naxals and their sympathisers. Many frontal organisations participated in his Bharat Jodo Yatra,” Shah said, mentioning a 2010 Odisha meeting between Rahul and Lado Sikoka; a 2018 Hyderabad meeting between the Congress leader and Naxal associate Gomandi Vittal Rao; and a May 2025 meeting he had with the Coordination Committee of Peace.

Shah also slammed Rahul for reposting a video fea-

turing pro-Hidma slogans after the Naxal leader's death. “Rahul reposted slogans favouring Hidma, the man who killed 172 jawans. People will answer them at the hustings,” said Shah, linking the rise of the CPI in India to the Russian Communist revolution and the birth of “China-backed CPM” to divisions in the Russian and Chinese communist streams.

Shah also took swipes at “urban Naxals” and said, “I am a born Hindu and believe in karma. Those who sympathised with Naxals even with words are as much sinners as are armed cadres.”

The Home Minister added, “The so-called champions of human rights never speak of the rights of the mother whose child Naxals armed or of the girl who they abducted and who has not seen lipstick, nail polish and henna her whole life until now.”

Shah said the government would talk to Naxal cadres who surrender but would answer the violent ones with a bullet. “Those who have surrendered are undergoing rehabilitation,” the minister informed Parliament.

Trump threatens to wreck civil infra; Iran calls Pak talks ploy to sneak in US troops

New Delhi, March 30

US President Donald Trump on Monday threatened widespread destruction of Iran's energy resources and vital infrastructure, including water desalination plants, if a deal to end the war was not reached “shortly”.

Iran, meanwhile, dismissed the talks in Pakistan as a “cover to bring more US troops to the region. “Iranian forces are waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever,” said Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf.

The conflict that started on February 28 has shown no signs of let-up as Tehran hit a water and electrical plant in Kuwait and an oil refinery in Israel. Separately, Israel and the US launched a fresh wave of strikes on Iran.

Trump's fresh threat came a day after Iran warned the US against sending ground troops, saying they would be “set on fire”. Also, Tehran threatened to launch its own ground invasion of Arab countries and mine the Persian Gulf if US troops set foot on its territory.

The US President issued the threat through a post on Truth Social. He said the US was in “serious discussions” with a “new and more reasonable regime” to end its war on Iran, but threatened to “obliterate” Iran's strategically crucial Kharg Island if a deal was not reached shortly.

“Great progress has been made but if for any reason a deal is not shortly reached, which it probably will be, and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately opened for business, we will conclude our lovely stay in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their electric generating plants, oil wells and Kharg Island and possibly all desalination plants, which we have purposefully not touched yet,” said Trump.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei on Monday acknowledged Tehran had received a 15-point proposal from the Trump administration, but said there had been no direct negotiations with Washington so far. “We have had only excessive, unreasonable de-



mands via intermediaries,” he said.

Iran's terms for the peace deal included Israel halting attacks on Iranian allies in the region, something Israel is unlikely to agree to. It has also sought compensation for war damage and the removal of US bases from West Asia.

Meanwhile, Trump is considering a mission to extract nearly 454 kg of uranium from Iran, US newspaper Wall Street Journal reported, citing unnamed US officials. Referring to Iran's uranium, Trump said, “They're going to give us the nuclear dust.” The mission would likely put American forces inside the country for days or longer, the report said.

Last night, Trump told reporters that “Iran must do what the demands are or they're not going to have a country”.

Hormuz is a crucial waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped and it is currently open to only Russia, China, India, Pakistan and Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iran and Israel have distanced themselves from the Pakistan-led mediation. Pakistan on Sunday hosted the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Türkiye for discussing a way forward. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said, “Pakistan's forums were their own; we didn't participate.”

AP Powers India's Biggest Energy Efficiency Drive Under PMAY

AP-EESL Colleberation..A role model in Housing program.

5 Lakh Homes Go Green Under Landmark EESL Partnership
MoU Exchanged in CM's Presence, Sets National Benchmark
Real Savings, Real Impact for Lakhs of Families.
Andhra Pradesh Leads with a National Vision..

Vijayawada, March 30: In what is set to become the largest-ever energy efficiency initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu has extended full support to the Union Government's call for a people-led national movement on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The landmark initiative was formally unveiled today, March 30, at Naidupeta in Tirupati district, marking a transformative step in India's climate and energy journey.

At a time when global uncertainties—particularly the ongoing West Asia crisis—are placing immense pressure on energy supply chains, the Chief Minister underscored that energy efficiency is no longer optional, but essential. He called for collective responsibility, urging all stakeholders to actively participate in energy conservation efforts to ensure sustainable economic growth and ecological balance.

Reaffirming India's leadership in climate action, the Chief Minister recalled Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi's early warnings on the catastrophic risks of climate change nearly a decade ago. He highlighted India's ambitious commitments, including reducing one billion tonnes of carbon emissions, cutting GDP emission intensity by 45 percent by 2030, and achieving Net Zero by 2070. He stressed that these goals can only be realised through mass public participation.

Aligning with national priorities, the Andhra Pradesh government has adopted the Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024—a comprehensive framework aimed at accelerating the transition to clean energy, promoting distributed renewable systems, and embedding energy efficiency across sectors. Within months, the State has signed multiple MoUs in the presence of Union Minister Sri Manohar Lal, spanning energy, rural and urban development, tourism, and industry.

A notable success has been the collaboration with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) under the Ministry of Power. Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a national benchmark by taking a strong initiative to distribute energy-efficient induction cookstoves, along with utensils, to over 55,000 Anganwadi centres—significantly benefiting women and child welfare programmes.

Taking this momentum forward, the State has now ushered in a new era in energy-efficient housing under PMAY. Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited (APSHCL), in partnership with EESL and AP SEEDCO, has entered into a tripartite MoU to facilitate energy-efficient, star-rated appliances for 5 lakh beneficiaries in the first phase under PMAY—setting a model for the rest of the country.

The MoU, originally signed at the India Energy Week (IEW) 2026 in Goa, was formally exchanged today in the presence of Chief Minister Sri. Chandrababu Naidu, Housing Minister Sri K.Parthasarathy and Municipal and Urban development Minister Sri.K.Narayana at Naidupeta. Senior officials, including Special Chief Secretary (Housing) Ajay Jain, Principal secretary MA and UD and Managing Director APSHCL Arun Babu, exchanged docu-



ments with EESL CEO Akhilesh Kumar Dixit and CGM Animesh Mishra..

In this connection the Chief Minister further said that the government is committed to provide permanent houses to all the eligible House holds by the end of 2029 in a saturation mode..At the same time as a responsible Government towards sustainable economic development and combatting climate change we are also keen to make these lakhs of households under PMAY as Energy Efficient with the support of the House holds.. These measures will be improving the quality of life and ensured monetary savings to the Beneficiaries the Chief Minister said.

Describing the initiative as a defining moment in India's sustainable housing journey, Ajay Jain highlighted its transformative impact. Under the programme, conventional electrical fixtures in PMAY homes will be replaced with energy-efficient appliances. Each beneficiary household, on a voluntary basis, will receive four 6-watt LED bulbs, two 20-watt LED tube lights, and two 30-watt BLDC ceiling fans.

This transition reduces the total connected load per household from 266 watts to 124 watts—more than a 50 percent reduction. Annual electricity consumption is expected to drop from 1,013.72 kWh to 456.88 kWh, saving approximately 556.84 kWh per household every year. This translates into annual monetary savings of around ₹3,341 per household and a reduction of 456.61 kg of CO2 emissions annually.

Beyond cost savings, the initiative ensures improved indoor comfort, enhanced energy security, and significant environmental benefits. For economically vulnerable families, these are not marginal gains—they are life-changing.

The programme also offers strategic advantages to the State's power sector, including reduced peak demand, lower stress on distribution networks, improved grid stability during high-demand periods, and more efficient long-term energy planning. It aligns seamlessly with Andhra Pradesh's vision of building a climate-resilient and future-ready power system.

The Chief Minister also commended the efforts of institutions such as MNRE, BEE, EESL, and CESL under the Ministry of Power. In 2023–24 alone, India achieved electricity savings of 321 billion units, resulting in monetary savings of ₹2 lakh crore and a reduction of 321.9 million tonnes of CO2 emissions—with Andhra Pradesh playing a key role.

7 IAS officers reshuffled in AP

Vijayawada, March 30

In a significant administrative reshuffle, the State government has transferred Guntur district Collector A



Thameem Ansariya, appointing her as the Director of School Education.

In total, the government shuffled seven IAS officers. The orders were issued through GO Rt No 675 by Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad on Sunday, with immediate effect.

As part of this reshuffle, several IAS officers have been reassigned to key positions to strengthen governance across various departments. CM Saikant Varma, a 2015 batch IAS officer, has been appointed as the new Collector and District Magistrate of Guntur, succeeding

Thameem Ansariya.

Other notable transfers include Sagili Shan Mohan, appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB), and Dinesh Kumar AS, posted as Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Limited.

Additionally, Muttimbaku Abhishikh Kishore has been appointed as the Collector and District Magistrate of Visakhapatnam, while MN Harendhira Prasad has taken on the same role in Kakinaada. Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema district Joint Collector Nishanti T has been named the Collector and District Magistrate of Alluri Sitharama Raju district.

A 2015-batch IAS officer, Thameem Ansariya, has a reputation for efficient administration and a people-centric approach from her tenure as the Collector of Guntur. She is known for effectively implementing welfare programs, strengthening revenue administration, and promptly addressing grievances.

In her new role as Director of School Education, she will oversee a key sector responsible for academic standards, policy implementation, and the management of government schools. Her extensive administrative experience is expected to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve learning outcomes, digital education, and infrastructure in the state's education system.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Signs of thaw in Indo-Bangladesh ties

After a prolonged diplomatic chill, the bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh are showing signs of a thaw. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal invitation to his Bangladeshi counterpart, Tarique Rahman, to visit India and the latter's ready acceptance indicate a sense of earnestness on both sides to reset ties and restore the traditional bond. Modi's outreach goes beyond ceremonial warmth and reflects a pragmatic recalibration of the relationship that suffered a strain in the recent past. After steering his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to a landslide victory in last month's national elections, Rahman signalled a willingness to bury the hatchet and make a fresh beginning by pursuing a forward-looking relationship with New Delhi based on mutual respect and national interest. This has set a positive tone for the restoration of traditional ties. Both sides appear to be keen to put the bitterness of the recent past behind them and strengthen the relationship rooted in a shared history and economic interdependence. While the issue of Sheikh Hasina's extradition poses a delicate challenge to India, reigning in the extremist and anti-India elements, ensuring safety and security for the Hindu minorities in its country and reversing some of the controversial policies of the previous interim administration are some of the challenging tasks before the BNP government. Pragmatism, rather than political expediency, should guide the process of resetting the ties. Armed with a strong mandate and carrying the burden of expectations of the younger generation, Rahman is well-positioned to take bold decisions in the larger interests of the people.

The BNP supremo's early communication to Modi underscores three vital aspects: recognition of shared historical bonds, a focus on delivering tangible benefits to citizens, and a commitment to advancing ties based on equality, dignity, and mutual respect. Notably, his reference to India's "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision suggests a willingness to align Bangladesh's developmental aspirations with India's long-term regional outlook. Indeed, there are challenges that the new government will have to take into account—Bangladesh's economy faces headwinds from global uncertainties, export dependencies, and energy vulnerabilities. India has long supported Bangladesh with infrastructure and energy projects, and this cooperation can be further strengthened, keeping in mind that Bangladesh is facing a tough time as it works to set its house in order. For long, India has been keen to keep its next-door neighbours happy and build good relations with them, which are mutually beneficial and help each other in times of natural calamities, pandemics, and economic crises. Bangladesh fits perfectly into India's "Neighbourhood First" policy. Enhanced cooperation with Dhaka facilitates connectivity to the Northeast, strengthens regional supply chains, and, above all, helps keep Chinese influence at bay. The need of the hour is that both countries must resolve pending issues like water-sharing and cross-border migration. Rahman's visit could go a long way in building lasting relations with Bangladesh.

Protest Against Government's Undemocratic Actions; ASHA Workers Intensify Agitation

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 30 (Indian chronicle):” “KAPRA: Leaders of the Telangana ASHA Workers Union (CITU) strongly condemned the state government's alleged undemocratic approach in suppressing the protests of ASHA workers. According to union leaders, a call was given for the “Chalo Hyderabad” program on March 28. However, in an attempt to prevent the protest, the government reportedly carried out pre-emptive arrests of ASHA workers and their leaders a day in advance. Condemning these actions, statewide protests and road blockades were organized. At a protest held at ECIL X Roads, CITU district assistant secretary K. Unnikrishnan criticized the government, stating that despite promises to safeguard democracy as part of its commitments, it has failed to uphold democratic values. Telangana ASHA Workers Union (CITU) state assistant secretary M. Revathi Kalyani alleged that ASHA workers who attempted to participate in the Chalo Hyderabad program were subjected to lathi charge by police. She further stated that the ruling party had prom-



ised a fixed monthly salary of Rs 18,000 to ASHA workers before elections, but instead of implementing the promise, the government has resorted to repression when questioned. She accused authorities of detaining women workers in police stations until late at night and treating them harshly. She also alleged that several workers were arrested from their homes and denied basic facilities during detention. Union leaders warned that governments that ignore workers' struggles have historically faced public backlash. They demanded immediate fulfillment of election promises, including: “Fixed monthly salary of Rs 18,000 for ASHA workers” “Reduction of additional workload” “Rs 50,000 towards work-related expenses Insurance coverage of Rs 50 lakh” “Special budget allocation for ASHA workers in the ongoing Assembly sessions They asserted that the agitation will continue until their demands are met. District leaders Radha, Yadamma, Komalatha, Manga, Kavitha, Praveena, and Latha, along with several ASHA workers, participated in the protest.

A Beacon of Humanity: Councillor Srilatha Kranti's Timely Support Brings Relief to Accident Victim.

“P. S. ASHOKAN “KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. ““Demonstrating exemplary compassion and a deep sense of public duty, Boyin Peta Ward Councillor Potharaveni Srilatha Kranti extended financial assistance of ₹21,000 to Akash, a differently-abled resident of Boyin Peta who recently met with a serious accident. “Akash had been receiving treatment at a private hospital in Karimnagar and, after a period of recovery, returned home safely. Moved by his situation, Councillor Srilatha Kranti personally visited his residence, enquired about his health condition, and offered both moral encouragement and financial assistance to support the family during their difficult time. The amount of ₹21,000 was (mobilized) through the generous contributions of her friends and well-wishers. “On this occasion, Kranti conveyed her heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Bharat Reddy of Apex Hospital for his dedicated and selfless medical service. She also extended her sincere thanks to the youth of Boyin Peta and her associates who stood by her in rendering timely help. “It is noteworthy that Srilatha Kranti has, on several previous occasions, extended support to families in distress within the locality. Her consistent efforts to stand by those in need reflect her unwavering commit-



ment to social welfare and community service. “The residents of Boyin Peta have widely appreciated her noble initiative and praised her for her generosity, leadership, and humanitarian spirit..

Anything is possible with discipline and persistence

Chairman Gundala Krishna, RJC Educational Institutions



INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY

“Fair Well Day of College D.Gree Students “RJC Educational Institutions Chairman Gundala Krishna stated that students can achieve anything with discipline and perseverance. The fair well day program of college degree students was celebrated in the seminar hall of the college on Monday in the middle of students' fun and games. He said that they have settled down in life as scientists, government officials, politics, cinema and sports. He said that his college which was started two decades ago has achieved many state level ranks. He said that he would be very proud to come and say we are the students of your college when he is out and about. He said that due to the efforts of his teaching team, the students have also achieved success in the fields of art and culture. He said that apart from studying in their educational institutions, they also provide training in institutions like NCC and NSS to develop patriotism among the students according to their taste. He said that as part of this, their students also participated in the Republic Day parade in the national capital, Delhi. He said that through NSS, their students have participated in many calamity programs and received medals. Considering these factors, the students of the current year have also been advised to climb high peaks and uphold the name of RJC educational institutions. College Principal A. Lingaiah, in-charge Anjaneyulu, teachers Sunanda, Ramesh, Ravi and others participated in this program.

Cancel Building Permissions: Victim Appeals to GHMC Officials

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 30 (Indian chronicle):” “Kapra: M. Chandrasekhar Reddy has submitted a complaint to GHMC Commissioner and Kapra Deputy Commissioner requesting immediate cancellation of building permissions allegedly obtained in violation of rules at a disputed property. According to the complainant, the permissions were secured by suppressing facts and concealing ongoing court cases. He urged higher authorities to conduct a detailed inquiry and take appropriate action. Explaining the issue, Chandrasekhar Reddy stated that he owns a half share in a 110 square yard property bearing House No. 1-9-337 located at Kushaiguda village. A partition suit related to the property is currently pending before the Malkajgiri Court (O.S. No. 929/2021). He alleged that his brother Yadireddy and his daughter Singireddy Soujanya created false documents in an attempt to illegally claim ownership of the property. The complainant further stated that earlier, without obtaining any permissions, the existing old structure on the site was demolished and a hotel named “Aswad Quick Bites” was being operated. He also recalled that he had approached the High Court earlier (W.P. No. 1881/2023), where directions were issued to GHMC to take

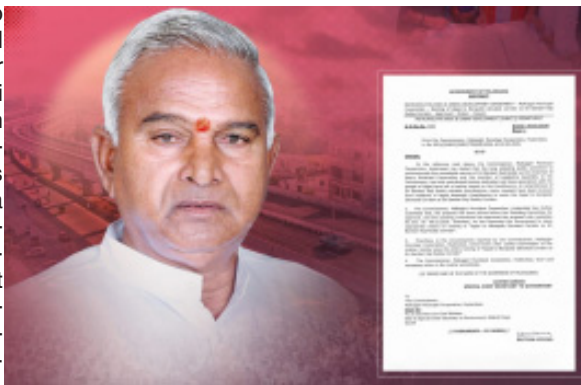


action in accordance with law if any illegal constructions were found. Recently, he came to know that Soujanya obtained building permission from GHMC (Permit No. 4463/GP/KAPRA/C/2025) to undertake permanent construction at the same site. He questioned how such permission was granted despite the matter being sub judice and despite submission of objection documents to GHMC. Chandrasekhar Reddy demanded immediate cancellation of the permission obtained with alleged false information, stating that failure to act would result in serious injustice to him. Copies of the complaint and court orders have been submitted to the concerned authorities.

Government Issues G.O. Naming Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor as “Bandari Rajireddy Corridor

Happiness expressed by Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy's family members

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 30 (Indian Chronicle):” “The government has issued G.O. Ms. No. 104, officially naming the “Elevated Corridor from Uppal to Narapally,” which is highly beneficial to the people of Uppal constituency, as the “Bandari Rajireddy Corridor,” in honor of former Uppal MLA Bandari Rajireddy. Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy expressed his happiness over this decision and conveyed his gratitude to the state government and concerned officials. He stated that naming the corridor after his late brother, former MLA Bandari Rajireddy—who holds a permanent place in the hearts of the people—while respecting public opinion, is highly commendable. “He further mentioned that this is an important step towards the development of the Uppal constituency and expressed hope that the government would continue to support more development programs in the future. He also assured that he would continuously strive to fulfill the aspirations of the people. On this occasion, MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy said that his family has had a 50-year association with the Indian National Congress Party. He noted that their mother served as a ward member from the Congress Party in Mallapur Gram Panchayat. He also highlighted that his late brother Bandari Rajireddy served the people for a long time as Kapra Municipal Chairman, the first MLA of Uppal Assembly constituency, and as a member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board, all under the Congress Party. “He added that in 2019, Bandari Rajireddy worked tirelessly for the victory of Revanth Reddy, the Congress candidate from Malkajgiri Parliamentary constituency. He further stated that he himself contested as a Congress candidate for Uppal MLA in 2014 and served as the constituency in-charge of the Congress Party. In 2023, he received a ticket from the BRS party under K. Chandrashekar Rao, contested, and was elected as MLA. Recognizing the services rendered by Bandari Rajireddy to the Congress Party and Uppal constituency, MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy, on behalf of his family, extended special thanks to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Rajya Sabha Member Vem Narender Reddy for naming the Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor after him.



Call for Applications for Awards

Lousiana University State Coordinator Kayita Shankar

“Jagtlial Correspondent, March 30 (Indian Chronicle): “The Louisiana University (USA) is inviting applications for Honorary Doctorate, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Award, Phule International Award, and other International General Awards for individuals who have rendered distinguished services to society, said Dr. Kayita Shankar, State Coordinator of Louisiana University (USA), in a statement on Monday. He stated that the selected candidates will be presented the awards by university officials on April 19th in Pune (Maharashtra). Applications will be accepted until April 10th. Those applying are requested to contact the WhatsApp number 94913 22556.



Telangana Passes Comprehensive Gig Workers Welfare Bill

Unique ID & Welfare Board for Gig Workers: Minister Vivek Venkataswamy

“Hyderabad: In a landmark step for the rights and security of gig workers, the Telangana Assembly on Monday passed the Telangana Platform-Based Gig Workers Registration, Social Security and Welfare Bill 2026. “Labour, Employment and Mines Minister Dr. G. Vivek Venkataswamy, who introduced the Bill, said the government has brought this legislation to give legal recognition to gig workers in the digital economy and protect their rights, dignity and livelihood. “As per the Bill, platform companies will have to submit details regularly and file electronic returns every three months. Strict penalties have been prescribed for non-compliance — ₹50,000 for the first violation, ₹1 lakh for the second, ₹1.5 lakh for the third, and up to five times the arrears thereafter. “A special Welfare Board will be constituted for gig workers. Every registered gig worker will be given a unique ID. A welfare fund will be created through a 1-2% levy on transactions, from which insurance, pension and maternity benefits will be provided. A maximum of 5% of the fund can be used for the board's operating expenses. “The Bill also mandates transparent policies — platforms must clearly disclose salary and deduction details, and there can be no arbitrary use of algorithms that affect workers. “Minister Vivek Venkataswamy informed the Assembly that the government first discussed the problems of gig workers with unions and then prepared a draft bill, which was placed in the public domain for 30 days. “As many as 65 suggestions were received and incorporated. He said he had personally held five meetings since taking charge as Minister to address the concerns of unions. “The Welfare Board will have 20 members, including representatives of gig worker aggregators, and will meet annually. Platform-level committees with special officers will be formed to resolve complaints quickly. “Through this Bill, we are ensuring security and rights for gig workers who are an important part of the digital economy,” the Minister said. “The Bill is expected to benefit lakhs of delivery riders, cab drivers and other platform workers across the state.

Telangana Activist Tadoori Gagan Kumar Preventively Arrested

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 30 (Indian chronicle):” “Tadoori Gagan Kumar, State Media Convener of the Telangana Activists Forum, was taken into preventive custody by Jawahar Nagar police early this morning. Police personnel reportedly reached his residence at around 6:00 AM and shifted him to the police station. The preventive arrest was carried out amid inputs that members of the forum might attempt to lay siege to the State Assembly as part of their ongoing protest demanding the government to fulfill assurances given to Telangana activists. He was later released at around 10:00 AM. According to forum sources, although a plan had initially been made to organize an Assembly siege, the program was postponed after Forum President Oruganti Anand recently met the Chief Minister and received a positive response regarding their demands. However, suspecting possible attempts by activists to proceed with the protest, police conducted preventive arrests of Telangana Activists Forum members across the state. The forum stated that despite the postponement of today's program, the agitation will continue, and the Assembly siege will be carried out at a later date if there is any delay in the implementation of promises made to Telangana activists.



Power Artisans Intensify Protest, Call for Indefinite Strike from April 8

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal -

Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, March 30 (Indian Chronicle):“SAINIKPURI: The agitation by power distribution artisans of the Southern Power Distribution Company (TGSPDCL) has intensified as workers continue to press for their long-pending demands. As part of the statewide protest, artisans staged a second phase of demonstrations on Monday in front of division offices at Sainikpuri, expressing strong dissatisfaction over the alleged indifferent attitude of both the government and management. Protesters stated that despite repeated peaceful demonstrations, their issues remain unresolved, forcing them to escalate their agitation. The Artisan Employees Joint Action Committee (JAC) announced the next phase of protests, including a large-scale demonstration and a “cook-and-protest” programme in front of circle offices on April 2. With a strike notice already served, JAC leaders confirmed that all artisan workers across the state will go on an indefinite strike from April 8 if their demands are not addressed. They warned that the movement will continue until justice is delivered and accused the authorities of ignoring workers who contribute significantly to the organisation’s functioning. The leaders urged the management to initiate immediate talks, stating that failure to respond would lead to serious consequences. JAC leaders Venkat Reddy (Habsiguda Circle Chairman), Christopher (Co-Convener), Bal Reddy, Rangu Janayya Goud, Upender Reddy, Santosh Reddy, Yadagiri, Malla Reddy, Ramu, Johnny, Rama, Mamata, and Suguna participated in the protest. The agitation by power distribution artisans of the Southern Power Distribution Company (TGSPDCL) has intensified as workers continue to press for their long-pending demands. As part of the statewide protest, artisans staged a second phase of demonstrations on Monday in front of division offices at Sainikpuri,



expressing strong dissatisfaction over the alleged indifferent attitude of both the government and management. Protesters stated that despite repeated peaceful demonstrations, their issues remain unresolved, forcing them to escalate their agitation. The Artisan Employees Joint Action Committee (JAC) announced the next phase of protests, including a large-scale demonstration and a “cook-and-protest” programme in front of circle offices on April 2. With a strike notice already served, JAC leaders confirmed that all artisan workers across the state will go on an indefinite strike from April 8 if their demands are not addressed. They warned that the movement will continue until justice is delivered and accused the authorities of ignoring workers who contribute significantly to the organisation’s functioning. The leaders urged the management to initiate immediate talks, stating that failure to respond would lead to serious consequences. JAC leaders Venkat Reddy (Habsiguda Circle Chairman), Christopher (Co-Convener), Bal Reddy, Rangu Janayya Goud, Upender Reddy, Santosh Reddy, Yadagiri, Malla Reddy, Ramu, Johnny, Rama, Mamata, and Suguna participated in the protest.

Provide us access to the Press Club building or take it under control

Memorandums submitted to Uppal Zonal Commissioner, Tahsildar, and ACP by club members
Request from Uppal Press Club (Print & Electronic) representatives



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 30 (Indian Chronicle):“Members of the Uppal Press Club (Print & Electronic) Media Club have requested the authorities to either grant them access and participation in the Press Club building or take over the building under official control.“On Monday, under the leadership of Uppal Media Club President Vaddepalli Kishore, the representatives submitted memorandums to the Uppal Zonal Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, MRO (Tahsildar), ACP, and Uppal Station House Officer. They stated that about ten years ago, journalists working in the Uppal area collectively constructed the Press Club building on municipal land located the Uppal main road. However, recently, the Press Club has split into three separate

committees. They alleged that one committee, which has fewer than ten members, has forcefully taken control of the building by holding the keys and is denying entry to others. Around 85 members working in print and electronic media are reportedly not being allowed into the Press Club, nor are they being given access to the keys.“The members requested the authorities to ensure that all media personnel are allowed access to the Press Club building, which was built collectively on municipal land. They also urged that they be allowed to conduct meetings and events in the same premises. Furthermore, they appealed that if the issue is not resolved, the municipal authorities should take back control of the land and the building currently under illegal “occupation. Representatives of the Uppal Print and Electronic Media Club participated in the program.

Khammam Girl Akhila Naga Ramya Shines in CMA Exams



“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau March 30, (Indian Chronicle):“A student from Khammam city, Arvapalli Akhila Naga Ramya, has brought pride to her district by excelling in the national-level CMA (Cost and Management Accounting) examinations. She was honored on a prestigious ??? in Bengaluru for her outstanding achievement.“Coming from a modest middle-class family, Akhila’s success is not only a personal milestone but also a proud moment for her parents, reflecting their hard work and dedication. Her achievement has also become a source of inspiration for many students. Akhila is the daughter of Arvapalli Nagesh and Srilakshmi from Mamillagudem in Khammam. She showed academic excellence from an early age. She completed her schooling from Mount Fort School, scoring a 9.5 GPA in her 10th grade and emerging as the school topper. She then pursued her intermediate education at Sahithi Junior College, where she continued to secure top grades in both first and second years.“Recognizing her potential, her parents supported her higher education despite financial challenges and enrolled her in the reputed “Master Mind” college in Guntur for the CMA course. In the recently announced results, Akhila secured a top national rank and was felicitated at a ceremony in Bengaluru.“Speaking on the occasion, Akhila said, “My parents are the main reason behind my success. Their hard work and encouragement have brought me to this level. I dedicate this achievement to them.“Her success has been widely appreciated by locals, teachers, relatives, and well-wishers. Adding to the family’s academic dedication, her younger sister, Yuva Nagasri, is currently pursuing a Chartered Accountancy (CA) course in Guntur.“Akhila’s journey once again proves that determination, hard work, and family support can lead to remarkable success.

Change Began in Uppal with Srujana: Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy

Former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, March 30 (Indian Chronicle):“Former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that a new phase of transformation in the Uppal area began with the establishment of Srujana School by the late Raghunandan Reddy. She noted that he played a key role in providing private English-medium education even to children from poor and middle-class families.“The annual celebrations of Srujana High School were held grandly at Shilparamam in Uppal. Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest and addressed the gathering. She recalled that Raghunandan Reddy ran the school not as a business, but as a charitable initiative, and urged his family members to continue the same spirit.“Discipline is the Foundation – Education is the Weapon“Speaking at the event, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy emphasized that the slogan “Quit addiction – step into the playground; give up bad habits – excel through education” is not just a phrase but essential for the future generation.“Her speech at the Srujana School annual day deeply resonated with parents, teachers, and students.““Mobile Phone is a Modern Hell“Expressing concern over children becoming addicted to mobile phones, she described mobile usage as a “modern hell” and advised parents to avoid giving phones to children unnecessarily. She also warned that

excessive television influence is contributing to increasing criminal tendencies in society.“Quoting the proverb “Bend a plant while it is young,” she stressed the importance of imparting value-based education from an early age. She advised parents not only to pay school fees but also to spend quality time with their children and remain aware of their friendships. She also remarked that the tendency to complain against teachers for disciplining students should change, stating that discipline is essential.“Recalling an incident from her childhood where a teacher disciplined her, she said that such discipline helped shape her success.“She concluded by urging that schools should be treated like temples, and only with dedication toward education can a bright future be achieved. She emphasized that coordination between teachers and parents is crucial to bring positive change in students and build a better society.“ParticipantsThe event was attended by Chairperson Srilatha Reddy, Managing Director Dinesh Reddy, Vice Chairman Sujeeth Reddy, Academic Director Alekhya Reddy, Principal Pratibha, teachers, and local leaders including Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Tummala Devi Reddy, Alwal Bhaskar, Alugu Anil, Vijay Kumar, Raju, Prashanth Reddy, and others.

Councillors Petition MLA to Remove Over 2,000 Survey Numbers Listed Under GO 22-A: Barre Pujitha Jahangir, Jaligam Vignesh, Jangiti Vinod

“(Mandava Srishailam – Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – March 30): Local Bhuvanagiri Municipal Councillors—Barre Pujitha Jahangir, Jaligam Vignesh, Jangiti Vinod, Bonthala Narsingarao, and Pasham Amarnath—have requested officials to remove over 2,000 survey numbers currently listed under Government Order (GO) 22-A. The councillors stated that they submitted a memorandum to MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy and Municipal Chairperson Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikummar, urging them to introduce “Table Agendas” (supplementary agenda items) during the council meeting to address this issue. They requested that the council members pass a unanimous resolution to remove the aforementioned 2,000-plus survey numbers from GO 22-A and subsequently forward the resolution to the government for necessary action. Consequently—and due to the overzealousness of certain officials—many poor residents of Bhuvanagiri town, who had built homes on plots allotted to them by the Indiramma Congress government over the past 50 years, now find themselves in a state of confusion. They are unable to secure loans from banks or other sources to meet future necessities, such as their children’s marriages, education, or other essential needs. In light of this situation—and to prevent our government from acquiring a bad reputation while ensuring that the poor are provided with necessary amenities within the “Indiramma Rajyam”—we earnestly request the government, through you, to revoke this Government Order (G.O.).



Collector Anudeep Durishetty Calls for Festival-Like Gram Sabhas in Khammam

“Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter March 30, (Indian Chronicle):“District Collector Anudeep Durishetty has directed officials to conduct Gram Sabhas in a festive atmosphere as part of the “Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika” program. During a review meeting held at the Collectorate conference hall, the Collector, along with Additional Collectors Dr. P. Srija and P. Srinivasa Reddy, assessed the arrangements for organizing Gram Sabhas across the district. The Collector stated that as part of the 99-day “Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika” initiative, Gram Sabhas should be conducted in every Gram Panchayat on April 2. He emphasized that officials from all departments must actively participate. Instructions should be issued to ensure mandal-level officers attend the Gram Sabhas in various villages.“Special officers at the mandal level were also asked to take part in the program. The Collector directed that invitations be sent to all public representatives to ensure their participation.“He further instructed that printed materials detailing the welfare and development programs implemented by the state government over the past 2.5 years in each Gram Panchayat should be distributed. Information about schemes such as Abhayastam guarantees and fine rice distribution must be clearly explained to the public during the meetings.“To create a festive environment, arrangements like LED screens, sound systems, and stage decorations should be made. The Gram Sabha will begin with the state song, followed by the Chief Minister’s message, presentations from various departments, de-



tails of beneficiaries of welfare schemes, feedback from beneficiaries, and messages from public representatives.“The Collector also noted that funds have already been allocated to each village for organizing the Gram Sabhas and instructed officials to utilize these funds effectively. Panchayat officers were asked to take special responsibility for ensuring smooth conduct of the meetings.“The meeting was attended by DRO A. Padmashri, ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, District officials, Collectorate AO K. Srinivasa Rao, and others.“

Awareness on road safety is a must: Vira ACP



INDIAN CHRONICLE KHAMMAM K SANJAY “Vaira ACP Sarangapani said that the cooperation of people is the key to road safety. To reduce road accidents and prevent loss of lives as a part of the Public Governance Development Plan, through the special program “Arrive Alive” undertaken by the police department, with the aim of “arriving safely” and “staying alive” at the Bonakal police station on the importance of traffic rules, helmets and seat belts for motorists. “Sarpants, Vice Sarpants and local people were made aware. Speaking on this occasion, ACP suggested that safety awareness among the people must be increased keeping in mind the dangers that are happening every day. Similarly, negligent actions like driving under the influence of alcohol, wrong-side driving and signal jumping are the main causes of these accidents, he said. He said that the precautions taken by motorists while traveling are the safeguard to a safe destination. “Madhira Rural CI Madhu and SSI Venkanna participated in the program.

Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Reconstruction of Bangaru Maisamma and Renuka Yellamma Temples: Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairperson Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... March 30): A groundbreaking ceremony (Bhoomi Puja) was conducted for the reconstruction of the Bangaru Maisamma and Renuka Yellamma temples. Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairperson Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar and Market Committee Chairperson Kanukuntla Rekha Baburao participated in this ceremony, breaking coconuts and performing special prayers. On Monday, the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Renuka Yellamma and Bangaru Maisamma temples—which are set to be reconstructed within the Rythu Bazar premises in Bhuvanagiri town—was performed jointly by Bhuvanagiri Market Committee Chairperson Kanukuntla Rekha Baburao and Municipal Chairperson Tangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar, with the support of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy. Speaking on this occasion, they stated that ever since the people-centric government assumed power, it has been striving not only to implement various welfare schemes for the poor but also to develop existing temples and construct new ones, in accordance with our ancestral customs and traditions. They urged farmers to make the best use of the assistance being provided to them by the State Government, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy. It was stated that as soon as irrigation water began flowing into the Baswapuram Project from the Yellampalli Project, Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil



Kumar Reddy completed the canal development works, thereby ensuring long-term benefits for the farmers. It was noted that the previous government had failed to initiate work on the canals leading from the Baswapuram Project to the downstream areas for over a decade. It was further remarked that only after the formation of the Congress government—and with the cooperation of MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy—did these canals finally see completion, ensuring that farmers in Bhuvanagiri and Valigonda would receive water in a timely manner. Market Committee Directors Taduri Narasimha, Ranga Kristayya, and Chinnam Srinu; Rythu Bazar Association President Yatta Nagaraju; Estate Officer Sailu; and others participated in this event.

Congress fails to provide irrigation water to farmers

BRS former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy



“Devulapalli Srinivas, Warangal Bureau (Narsampet), March 30 (Indian Chronicle): Former MLA and senior BRS state leader Peddi Sudarshan Reddy warned that farmers' crops are drying up due to the failure to complete the Rangayya Cheruvu project works, and if the canal works are not completed within a month, a farmers' revolt will be inevitable. On Monday, farmers staged a protest by sitting on the road in Rudragudem of Nallabelli mandal in the constituency, demanding completion of the Rangayya Cheruvu canal works and supply of water to their crops. BRS former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy participated in the protest and expressed solidarity with the farmers. “Speaking on the occasion, he criticized that the Congress is troubling farmers by not completing the construction of the Ramappa-Rangayya Cheruvu canals, which are part of the Pakala project. He stated that under the leadership of Telangana's first Chief Minister KCR, works to divert 3.5 TMC of Godavari waters to Rangayya Cheruvu for the Narsampet constituency were successfully completed, but even after two years of the Congress government, canal construction remains incomplete. He said that despite the availability of Godavari water in Rangayya Cheruvu, crops have been drying up for the past two years due to unfinished canal works, while the Congress government remains indifferent. “He alleged that although about 87% of the work has been completed, the Congress government is allowing crops to dry up by not finishing the remaining work. He said the credit for neglecting the Rangayya Cheruvu project—which provides irrigation water to 68 villages across Narsampet, Nallabelli, and Duggondi mandals—goes entirely to the Congress government. He

found it strange that the local MLA and the irrigation minister have not reviewed the project. He explained that the project, designed to irrigate 32,500 acres, was developed and redesigned during KCR's tenure when he was an MLA, ensuring no submergence of land, conducting special surveys for every pond, and obtaining multiple approvals. The project was structured to supply water through left and right canals connected by a main canal. “He stated that 87% of the work was completed during the BRS regime, and in the 28 months since the Congress government came to power, not even 1% of the remaining work has been taken up. He said no new funds are required, as ₹40 crore is already available through a mega agency tender, and urged the government to utilize these funds to complete the project and support farmers. “He set a one-month deadline for the Congress government to complete the remaining work, warning that otherwise the government and MLA Madhava Reddy would face a farmers' uprising. He said this protest is only the beginning and that they would lay siege to the Collectorate along with farmers of the Narsampet constituency. He cautioned against harming farmers for the sake of contracts and commissions and said that if there are political differences, they should be directed at him. “Zilla Parishad vice chairmen, constituency coordinators, mandal party presidents, mandal election conveners, former MPPs, former ZPTCs, constituency leaders, mandal party leaders, cluster in-charges, vice MPPs, leaders of affiliated organizations, former sarpanches, MPTCs, sarpanches, deputy sarpanches, party leaders, workers, and a large number of farmers participated in the program.

Mobile App for Transparent Sand Supply Launched: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty

“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau March 30, (Indian Chronicle): “District Collector Anudeep Durishetty announced that a mobile application named Mana Isuka Vahanam has been developed to ensure transparency in sand supply. The app was officially launched at the Collectorate conference hall by the District Collector along with Additional Collectors Dr. P. Srija and P. Srinivasa Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that as per the directions of the State Chief Minister, the Mana Isuka Vahanam mobile app will come into effect from April 1. He explained that earlier, sand transportation was carried out through physical coupons, which left room for irregularities. To curb illegal sand transport and bring transparency, the government has introduced this mobile app, where all processes will be handled online. “He further stated that anyone requiring sand must apply through the app, after which a unique QR code will be generated. Based on this QR code, sand will be delivered to the respective beneficiaries. “The Collector also made it clear that physical coupons for sand supply will no longer be issued in the district. He directed officials to release a special circular to Tahsildars regarding this change. He added that the app has been designed in a user-friendly manner so that even common people can easily access and use it. District Revenue Officer A. Padmashri, ZP CEO Diksha Raina, Assistant Director of Mines and Geology R. Sainath, and officials from various departments participated in the program.



JGU Achieves Historic Higher Rankings in Law, IR & Business: QS World University Rankings By Subject 2026

“Hyderabad, 30 March, 2026: O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) has achieved a historic and global milestone in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, delivering exceptional performance across Law, Politics & International Studies, Business & Management, Arts & Humanities, Economics, and Social Sciences—firmly establishing itself as one of India's leading multidisciplinary global institutions and a rising force in international higher education. “Law & Legal Studies in a Historic Breakthrough is now #35 globally, Politics & International Studies enters the Global Top 100 at #90 with a jump of 145 positions and Business & Management Studies post one of the biggest global jumps at #151-200 globally (up from 451-500); marking a change of over 300 positions in a single year! “GLOBAL EXCELLENCE ACROSS DISCIPLINES” “LAW & LEGAL STUDIES – A Historic Breakthrough” • #1 in India for the 7th consecutive year” • #35 globally (up from #78 in 2025) – Highest ever rank for an Indian law school in QS history” • India's youngest university to enter the global Top 35 in any subject” • Only South Asian university in the global Top 35 in Law” • #14 globally in Academic Reputation (Score: 88) “POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES – Enters Global Top 100” • #1 University in India (across public & private universities)” • #90 globally (up from 201-250) with a jump of 145 positions” “BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES – Biggest Global Jump” • #1 Private University in India” • #151-200 globally (up from 451-500) with a change of over 300 positions in a single year” “ARTS & HUMANITIES – Leading Among India's Top Institutions” • #1 Private University in India & #323 globally” “SOCIAL SCIENCES & MANAGEMENT – Rising Above Premier Institutions” • #1 Private University in India and #232 globally” “ECONOMICS & ECONOMETRICS – Emerging Strength” • #1 Private University in India” The QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026 evaluated 6,277 institutions across 55 disciplines worldwide, making JGU's achievement a landmark moment not only for the university but for Indian higher education as a whole. Founded just 17 years ago, JGU's rise across multiple disciplines demonstrates that a young Indian university can achieve global excellence, scale, and transformative impact across fields. “Mr. Naveen Jindal, the Founding Chancellor of JGU, said: “JGU's success across disciplines represents a defining moment of national pride for India. Being ranked among the top 50 in the world in Law, top 100 in the world in Politics & International Studies, and top 200 in the world in Business & Management Studies, along with being #1 in India across multiple disciplines, reflects the growing global stature of Indian higher education. This achievement is also a celebration of our enduring commitment to philanthropy—an unwavering belief that building world-class institutions is central to nation-building. Above all, it is a tribute to the extraordinary contributions of our students, faculty, and staff,

whose dedication and excellence are helping realise India's aspiration of becoming a global knowledge superpower.” “Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Founding Vice Chancellor of JGU, said: “While our ranking of #35 in Law is undeniably historic—placing us among the world's leading law schools—what is truly significant is that across all disciplines, JGU has emerged among the top institutions in the world and is ranked #1 in India across multiple disciplines. This achievement reflects the visionary philanthropy and nation-building commitment of our Chancellor, which has enabled the creation of a truly world-class university in India. It is equally a tribute to the outstanding contributions of our faculty members, students, and staff, whose collective efforts have built a culture of excellence across disciplines. Together, these accomplishments position JGU as a global benchmark for multidisciplinary education and research, setting new standards of excellence and offering a powerful model for the future of Indian higher education.” “Professor Padmanabha Ramanujam, Dean of Academic Governance, added: “These rankings are a powerful testament to the strength, resilience, and dynamism of JGU's academic ecosystem. Our rise into the top tier globally across disciplines, alongside being ranked #1 in India in multiple domains, reflects a deeply embedded culture of excellence and innovation. Above all, this milestone belongs to our students, faculty, and staff—their passion, hard work, and shared sense of purpose continue to drive JGU's success and contribute to realising India's vision of world-class universities that can compete with the very best globally.” “A Trajectory of Sustained Excellence” “JGU's rise is marked by consistent and strategic progress across disciplines, with standout achievements including:” • Entry into the Global Top 35 in Law” • Entry into the Global Top 100 in Politics & International Studies” • One of the largest global jumps in Business & Management” “This momentum is driven by world-class faculty, cutting-edge research, global collaborations, and a forward-looking interdisciplinary academic model. This milestone is a testament to the collective efforts of JGU's faculty, students, staff, and alumni, whose dedication, ambition, and commitment to excellence continue to drive the university's global success.” “Looking Ahead” “With multiple disciplines ranked globally and strong upward momentum, JGU is poised to further strengthen its position as a globally recognised, multidisciplinary institution from India, shaping the future of higher education through excellence, innovation, and impact on a global scale.” “O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) is a leading multidisciplinary institution located in Sonapat, India. Founded on the principles of global education, interdisciplinary research, and social impact, JGU has emerged as one of India's foremost universities with a strong and growing international reputation.

Jnanaratna National Award Presented to Scholar Dr. Guggilla Divyamurthy

“Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter March 30, (Indian Chronicle): “Dr. Guggilla Divyamurthy, a distinguished scholar from Kothakothuru village in Nelakondapalli mandal of Khammam district, has been honored with the prestigious Jnanaratna National Award. “The award was conferred by the Vasundhara Vignana Vikasa Mandal in recognition of his excellence in the field of education. Acknowledging his talent and contributions, the organization selected him for this honor. “The award was formally presented at the Congress Party office in Khammam by District Congress Committee President Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud. On the occasion, he praised Divyamurthy, stating that talented individuals like him are essential for society and serve as an inspiration to today's youth. “Following the award presentation, Dr. Divyamurthy was felicitated with a shawl in a grand manner. Expressing his ??? (happiness), he said he was delighted to receive the award and the recognition. He also shared that he has received 72 awards so far and has been honored on 131 platforms. “Several dignitaries attended the event, including noted social activist Boora Saidarao Goud, Annem Gopal Rao, Congress SC Cell District President Boddu Bondayya, National Social Service Award recipient Boddu Baburao, Sudheer, Volishetty Nagaraju, Kandula Mahesh, Vanguri Surya, and others.



Take Preventive Measures to Avoid Heat Stroke: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty

“Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter March 30, (Indian Chronicle): “District Collector Anudeep Durishetty has directed all line departments to take effective preventive measures to protect people from heat stroke in view of the rising temperatures in the district. “A review meeting was held at the Collectorate conference hall on heat wave preparedness and the responsibilities of various departments. The meeting was attended by the District Collector along with Additional Collectors Dr. P. Srija and P. Srinivasa Reddy, and district officials. “Speaking on the occasion, the Collector emphasized that protecting public health during the summer is the top priority. He instructed the Medical and Health Department to strictly follow heat stroke treatment protocols in all hospitals and ensure the availability of ORS and emergency medicines. He also directed that wide awareness be created among the public on precautions to be taken during heat waves as part of the Prajapalana Pragati program. “The Municipal and Rural Development Departments were advised to set up cooling centers in areas with high public movement and to revise the working hours under employment guarantee schemes. He suggested preparing plans to adjust school timings during periods of extreme heat. “The Labour Department was instructed to ensure that construction workers are given breaks during the afternoon and provided with shade and drinking water facilities. The Collector

stressed the need for special attention towards vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, outdoor workers, and people with chronic illnesses. District Revenue



Officer A. Padmashri, ZP CEO Diksha Raina, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Ramarao, and other district officials participated in the meeting.

SIR is a war on have-nots, says activist



cretionary manner, with some rules in one State and a completely different set of rules in other States. "The Union Budget has set aside 76,000 crore for National Population Register. SIR will lead to NPR, which, in turn, will lead to the National Register of Citizens. All this goes to show that the SIR is the first step towards a series of moves that will bleed the liberal secular republic into a lifeless body politic. The government had move away from NRC and CAA after nationwide protests. But now, it is using this opportunity for introducing such destructive tools openly through SIR," he alleged.

Speaking at a workshop on SIR organised by May Sahitya Mela, Manava Bandhutva Vedike, DSS and other associations here on Saturday, he said the Union government was utilising the Election Commission to force SIR on legitimate citizens only to take away their rights. It was taking away our citizenship by way of small and silent steps. But the victims were not able to defend themselves as the process is complex and the documents sought by the government were not easily obtainable by the poor people. It is in this way that SIR has become an FIR on the 140 crore Indians, he said. "A lot of people believe that SIR is an exercise to rectify errors in electoral rolls like removing names of dead voters and adding new voters. However, the whole exercise is aimed at excluding voters, using some excuses. What is sad, however, is that major Opposition parties like the Congress do not seem worried about it. We have to get to the streets and lead a mass movement," he said.

"The names of nearly seven crore voters have been left out of electoral rolls in the first round of SIR that is going on in 11 States. It is easily estimated that around 20 to 25 crore voters will be eliminated by the time SIR ends. By reducing the number of citizens by a large proportion, the government wants to wash its responsibility of providing food, clothing and other amenities and a life of dignity," Mr. Sundar said. D.B. Gawani, retired professor introduced the topic. He said that the BJP-ed NDA government was undermining all the progress achieved by the Constitution that was based on liberal, secular and progressive values. "One of the fundamental principles of Indian democracy is One Person, One Vote. This was guaranteed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. But SIR is aimed at undermining this principle," Mr. Gawani alleged. Writer Sarala Satpute, Mehboob Subhani Nattu Paris and others responded. S.G. Chikkanaragund, writer spoke. Activists Ladai Basu, Manjula Kamble, Maruti Dhagennavar, Indira Holkar, Jayanand Madar and others were present.

He said that the ECI was implementing rules in a dis-

Each Minister handles his responsibility, says Piyush Goyal on trade deal, Russian oil



opening in all of these products. Wherever we need those products, we have opened them. Wherever we think we need to also keep a restriction, we have kept quotas. In some cases, we're giving a margin of preference, not a full duty reduction. In some cases, it's a phased elimination over a period of time. So, different tools have been used to protect our farmers, so I see absolutely no reason for any farmer to complain. One general concern has been the commitment to buy \$500 billion of US goods... Well, it's an intention. And it comes out of the fact that we have a big demand for particular goods that you don't have in India, which we have to import. For example, energy such as crude oil, LNG, LPG, we have to import, we don't have it in sufficient quantity in India. In aircraft, we have already placed orders worth \$50 billion with Boeing. In addition to that, we need engines and spare parts. Plus the airline companies tell us they're placing more orders. We'll probably need anywhere between \$80-100 billion of planes and their parts and engines in the next 5 years. On ICT products, when we give concessions to data centres and hope to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in data centres and AI and quantum computing, we will need equipment, we will need NVIDIA chips and GPUs. We made an assessment and we realised that even today we are importing \$300 billion of these goods from different parts of the world. A large part of it comes from geographies that are not our preferred sources.

Opposition parties had alleged that even Mr. Jaishankar was not answering the question, and was instead passing it on to the Commerce Minister, citing an interview Mr. Jaishankar gave during his trip to Washington. "If you ask the Agriculture Minister about the trade deal, he won't answer," he added. "If you ask me about what's happening with, let's say, the oil mission, I wouldn't be able to respond. I would have a general idea, but I would not like to make a statement on record without full knowledge of facts. Each person handles his own responsibility."

Mr. Goyal also sought to address the concerns of the farmers unions as well, asserting that "not a single farmer had anything to worry about" as sensitive items have been excluded from the deal, while others have been dealt with through quotas, phased duty eliminations, and margins of preference. "Different tools have been used to protect our farmers, so I see absolutely no reason for any farmer to complain," he said.

What has been the departure in this deal from India's previous relationship with the U.S.?

I think it's in continuation of our very strong and important strategic relationship. They are one of our most important partners in the world. We are both large democracies. We have shared interests in several sectors. We have a strong defence partnership. We have a strong technology partnership. We have a strong critical minerals partnership. We also are members of two Quads together, so it's a very, very powerful relationship. The trade agreement further enhances our relationship and elevates it to a much deeper friendship.

But didn't these trade issues create a knot in that relationship?

As much as we expand our cooperation and engagement with the world's largest economy, a \$30 trillion market that is opening up for us, I'm sure it will only be good for the country.

Were the negotiations difficult?

Not at all. It was just like any other negotiation. Every country has to work towards getting a fair, equitable and balanced agreement. Everybody has sensitivities, just like we have sensitivities of, let's say, certain farm produce. They have sensitivities on certain produce on their end. Everybody ensures that you take care of your defensive interests. And clearly everybody is looking for openings, new opportunities to expand trade in a manner that the people, the businesses of both countries can benefit.

Could you give us some insight on the behind-the-scenes process?

I would think more work happened virtually. And that's one of the learnings from COVID. Most negotiations happened virtually right until the end. I was here, my teams were here, and they were there. We would have phone calls of and on if the issue was small, if it was substantive we would have video conferences.

What was the one issue that took time to reach an agreement on?

I don't think there's any such issues, any one issue that was a road block to the agreement. It was a very smooth and very amiable dialogue in a very friendly atmosphere with a lot of fun and frolic and laughter and also intense negotiation. Our red line was related to agriculture... Largely. All of India's sensitivities, every single one of them, have been safeguarded. The sensitivities have been protected by carefully seeing what are the products where India is self-sufficient, farmers have good production, we don't import at present or will not be required to import, and we have excluded these from the scope of this agreement. So meat is not covered, for example, except turkey. Poultry is excluded. Dairy is excluded. No GM food products are included. No concessions have been given on soybean, corn, rice, wheat, sugar, cereals, millets like jawar, bajra, raggi, kodo, amaranth, fruits like banana, strawberries, cherries, citrus fruits, pulses in which we are self-sufficient in India, like green peas, kabuli chana, moong, oil seeds, certain animal feed, ground nuts, honey, malt and its extracts, non-alcoholic beverages, flour and the meals made of flour, starch, essential oils, ethanol for fuel, and tobacco, among others. So after this, the farmers have really no cause for complaint and have absolutely nothing to be worried about. But some farmer groups, such as those growing cotton, are unhappy... This will help cotton farmers because exports can grow leaps and bounds. We have a competitive edge in textiles compared to our competitors. Now, markets in the U.K., Europe, EFTA countries, Australia, New Zealand, so many new markets, all in the developed world, at 0% duty are going to support our textiles. In America, our reciprocal tariff of 18% is amongst the lowest among our peer group of competing economies, so effectively the demand for cotton is going to go up.

We do need to import the extra long staple cotton, which we don't have in India in insufficient quantity. So, if we give them an opening in or a quota in cotton, it's actually good for the Indian ecosystem. Exports will grow, and as exports grow, the demand for domestic cotton also grows. There's so many items where they are opening up the large U.S. market for our farm produce and processed foods to be exported. We already are a large exporter. We export \$54 billion-\$55 billion every year of these products. In that situation, we are now looking at how we can double that.

Sadly, the opposition parties have such a small and weak mindset that they're trying to distort the story and misguide our innocent farmers. I want them to understand that we are opening up new opportunities in Europe, US, Australia, New Zealand. Further to that, with the U.S., we have also got 0% reciprocal tariff on a large variety of agriculture products such as spices, masalas, tea, coffee and their extract, copra and coconut oil, many nuts like areca nut, Brazil nut, cashew nut, chestnut, which you make in India, fruits and vegetables like avocado bananas, guavas, mangoes, kiwis, papayas, pineapples, shiitake mushrooms.

What are the areas where American demands could be accommodated?

There are many areas, like tree nuts, for example. We have been importing pistachios for decades, right from the Congress time. There are certain things in which you don't have in sufficient quantity and we've done a very calibrated

Is this deal concentrating our supply chain towards the US?

This \$300 billion that we are importing right now is growing every year. We estimate that in the next 5 years, we will need \$2 trillion of all of these products, which can also come from the US. I have a full intention to buy that and to diversify from our existing sources.

The joint statement mentions that the two countries would take "complementary actions to address non-market policies of third parties". Is this aimed at China?

I would not like to speculate on any one particular geography, but any country that has non-market economy practices, we have to take care against such countries that distort the market. They affect jobs, business opportunities, and investments in our country, and therefore, we work with trusted partners and America is one of our most trusted partners. We would like to engage with them on these issues in a spirit of cooperation. Our trade deals with some other countries involved liberalising Indian labour movement, but this one does not...

None of the trade deals ever deal with immigration. Trade deals have an element of people for implementing the objectives of the trade deal. So, for example, if somebody gets a contract to do the plumbing in a hotel in Switzerland, I will need to send people to do the plumbing. So trade deals only address mobility from that perspective. Even with the European Union, the deal we have provided is that if somebody goes as a student, they will get a nine month visa to be able to work there. Every trade deal stands on its own legs, but bear in mind, immigration is never discussed in a trade deal. So even with the European Union, the mobility partnership is outside the trade deal. It's a separate partnership.

The joint statement also had a line that says that both countries can modify their commitments if the other changes agreed upon tariffs. Did India insist on this inclusion?

It's a standard WTO provision, that if any country changes the situation that exists at the type of entering into an agreement to the detriment of the other country, by which the effects of the free trade agreement don't flow as they are intended to flow, then the other country has a right to rebalance. It's also not that we are doing it for the first time.

Do you think that now the older multilateral organisations, especially economic ones like the WTO are now redundant?

Not at all. Multilateral organisations play a very important role. India respects WTO rules of trade. I believe they add value to the global order, to the rules-based global trading business. But I think we have to accept that with changing times, there will be some changes. We are actively in dialogue at the WTO to look at WTO reforms. The question of great interest is on India's policy on Russian oil... I don't deal with that subject. It is not part of my joint statement or the trade deal. But your colleague in the Ministry of External Affairs made a statement that he's not dealing with that issue and that you are. See the question to which he replied. The question was about the nuances of the trade deal. So if there's anything about the trade deal, obviously I will reply. People have mixed up two different issues. If you ask the agriculture minister about the trade deal, he can't answer. If you ask me about what's happening with, let's say, the oil mission, I wouldn't be able to respond. I would have a general idea, but I would not like to make a statement on record without full knowledge of facts. Each person handles his own responsibility.

Do you still feel that we will see the formal agreement by mid-March?

Oh yes. Unlike with other countries, where we did the framework agreement and then got down to the nitty-grities, in the U.S. case, we've done a full negotiation of all the issues literally line by line. So, the negotiation part is nearly complete. We'll be able to close it quickly. The joint statement came before because the reciprocal tariff has to come down to 18%. The executive order of reducing it to 18%, we hope to see next week.

Maintaining status quo

The Reserve Bank of India's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.25% is guided by strong economic growth, despite external headwinds, and benign inflation. In its first meeting in the new year, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously opted for a neutral stance at a time when macroeconomic conditions are encouraging — consumer inflation levels being well below the target level; domestic demand resilient and global trade linkages getting realigned. The successful completion of the trade deals — first with the European Union and now with the United States — augurs well for the economy, prompting the RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra to take an optimistic position about strong growth momentum in the days ahead. India's long term growth outlook remains favourable, with GDP growth estimated at 7.4% for the financial year 2025-26. Stability in benchmark lending rates, combined with a supply-side push in the recent Union Budget, is expected to complement demand traction across sectors. Global growth, supported by tech-investments, accommodative financial conditions and large-scale fiscal stimulus, is expected to be marginally stronger in 2026 than projected earlier. However, the confluence of escalating geopolitical frictions and rising trade tensions could be a matter of concern. The pause in repo rate provides stability for capital-intensive sectors like construction and infrastructure, supporting credit flow and long-term investment. This aligns strongly with the Union

Rs 7 crore penalty, only Rs 1 lakh recovered: CAG flags empty tanks, fish shortfall at India's 'largest public aquarium' in Ahmedabad

GNS News Agency, March 30

Ahmedabad's Aquatic Gallery, touted as the largest public aquarium in the country, functioned with 11 of its 68 tanks understocked for nearly two years after it opened in 2021, and the Gujarat Council of Science City (GCSC) that runs it recovered barely 0.15 per cent of the penalty from the contractor, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has flagged in a report tabled in the Gujarat Assembly budget session. In fact, five of the tanks—meant to house stone fish, cuttlefish, octopus, moon jellyfish, and spotted jellyfish—were empty for certain periods of time, the audit found. The maintenance contract was awarded to Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Pvt Ltd (SPCL) in consortium with New Zealand's Marinescape Limited. While the penalty amounted to Rs 7.12 crore—calculated at one per cent of the monthly maintenance price for each non-compliant tank for the duration of the default—the CAG found that only Rs 1 lakh was recovered by the GCSC.



ber of months taken for replenishment after the first instance of default and found that the contractor took between two months and 18 months. What the maintenance contract stated The GCSC, a society established in 1999 with the objective of "promoting and exhibiting interaction of science, technology, energy and environment with human life", awarded the CMC of Aquatic Gallery to SPCL and Marinescape Limited in October 2017. The scope of work included maintenance services for the project, including maintenance, feed, and veterinary support of the aquatic species.

The total construction work, including 68 tanks, was completed at a cost of Rs 257.51 crore, and the gallery was opened to visitors in July 2021. The contractor was bound by the CMC with respect to the maintenance conditions—the maintenance period was 60 months with effect from July 2021, and during the maintenance period, the contractor was responsible for 100 per cent replacement of the deceased aquatic species within one month at their own cost.

India will stop importing fruits, vegetables, flowers: Union Minister Chouhan

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday (February 8, 2026) said India aims to achieve self-reliance in the production of fruits, vegetables, and flowers, asserting that imports in these sectors would no longer be necessary. Addressing a review meeting with officials at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IHR) here, Mr. Chouhan said the focus was on identifying high-demand crops and ensuring their domestic production is profitable for farmers.



he added. On vegetables, Mr. Chouhan said India does not face any compulsion to import. "In terms of vegetables, there is no situation requiring imports," he said. Highlighting post-harvest challenges, the Minister said shelf life remained a major concern for farmers. "Another problem faced by our farmers is shelf life. They want to increase the shelf life of tomatoes," he said, adding that similar demands were emerging for other crops. "Now they are demanding an increase in custard apple's shelf life," he said. Reiterating the broader vision, Mr. Chouhan said self-reliance in agriculture was essential for a self-reliant India. "For a self-reliant India, we have to be self-reliant in vegetables and flowers as well. We will not import them," he said, adding that research would focus on farmer-friendly varieties capable of delivering profits.

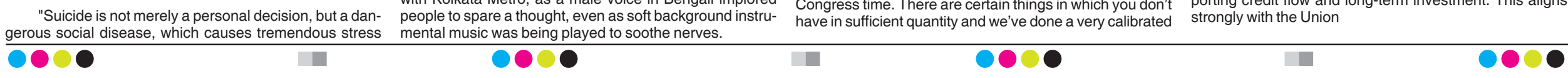
Outlining the government's approach, he said, "Two or three things are our target. We will not import fruits, flowers, and vegetables. We have to become self-reliant in this field."

The Union Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare noted that India had already made significant progress, calling current production levels "historic." Referring to crops previously dependent on imports, Mr. Chouhan said, "We were importing avocado; now we have started producing it." He stressed the need to extend this approach to other emerging crops, adding, "We have to become self-reliant in dragon fruits." He said officials had been directed to identify fruits that must be produced domestically and to promote their cultivation among farmers. "I have told officials to identify fruits which have to be produced in India. We will encourage farmers to grow them," he said, underlining that profitability would be the key driver. "They will take up production only when it is profitable,"

Kolkata Metro Railway launches audio message across stations discouraging suicides

The Kolkata Metro Railway has launched an audio message, which will be played at several stations along the North-South corridor, discouraging people from ending their lives. The initiative was launched in association with an FM channel in the backdrop of several suicide bids along the Blue Line in the last three months. As per available figures, there were three suicide bids in November last year, two in December, three in January and two in February. Of these 10 passengers who jumped onto the tracks, most could not be saved.

and hardship on the family concerned. Please don't take any extreme and hasty steps. If you are faced with any serious mental crisis situation, immediately contact our counsellors, who are just a phone call away 24x7. Their numbers are displayed in numerous posters and banners, digital display boards at numerous parts of the platform," the voice note streamed on 107 FM Rainbow said. It will be played through the public address systems at stations on the Blue Line. The message was recorded in collaboration with Kolkata Metro, as a male voice in Bengali implored people to spare a thought, even as soft background instrumental music was being played to soothe nerves.



How 2 brothers turned a sluggish steel supply chain around



GNS News Agency, March 30

The Navi Mumbai airport, which was inaugurated in October 2025 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was still under construction when they needed a specialised grade metal part that was not available in the market. A call went out to a Pune-based company, Enlight Metals, which was disrupting the steel supply chain. "They gave us a timeline to deliver the material. This was a challenge but we were able to successfully procure the raw material from a mill and deliver it," says Vedant Goel, Founder-Director of Enlight Metals. In the Financial Year 2025-26, the company had delivered 75,000 tonne of metals at the end of the third quarter. By the end of this quarter, they are targeting 1.25 lakh tonne. There are more than 500 customers, including Tata Motors, Mahindra, Pune Metro and the airports in Pune, Udaipur, Ratnagiri and Navi Mumbai. Most people don't think about steel, except when something goes wrong. When a metro line is delayed or a car launch pushed by months. The official cause given is "raw material unavailability" which, in many cases, means a problem with steel. But, the issue is not that there is a shortage of steel in India. The

country produces enough steel. The shortcoming is, possibly, reliability. Steel arrives late or is the wrong specification or with unfair pricing. At the origin of Enlight law Vedant's deep disappointment with how inefficient the industry was. He had a long experience working in the steel sector. "If steel is delayed, there is a ripple effect. The labor cost rises, there is an interest cost and deadlines are missed," he says. His brother, Dhananjay Goel, the tech brain of the family, would hear him out. It was a matter of time before the two decided to work on solving the issue. Dhananjay is also Founder-Director of the company.

In 2024, they set up Enlight Metals, a Swiggy or Zomato for manufacturers who are looking for products, such as Cold Rolled and Hot Rolled steel coils, Mild Steel Round Bars, pipes, beams, joists, plates and channels. At that time, it would take three to four days to get deliveries. Enlight harnessed Artificial Intelligence and other technologies and logistics to bring in the concept of 24-hour delivery. Not many people, initially, thought the idea would work. The steel trade is based on personal engagement and agreements and there was uncertainty about booking steel online. The brothers persisted in overcoming the scepticism — they would come to work at 9 am and stay there till 3 am — and it paid off. "We have two dark stores currently — in the MIDC areas of Pune and Mumbai. And we are soon setting up 10 dark stores," says Vedant. "Wherever we have a good pocket of industrial areas, we are going to set up dark stores so that the regular items can be delivered within 24 to our customers," says Dhananjay. He adds that the current government is pushing Digital India a lot, which is giving them a boost. The visitor count to the platform, enquiries and orders are steadily increasing. In the next financial year, Enlight is targeting to triple its business. "From 500 manufacturers, we want to scale it up to 1,500. Our plans are to start going pan-India very soon," says Vedant.

From Lahore to Patiala, a shared classroom legacy endures



GNS News Agency, March 30

As the Partition forced thousands of young students to migrate between India and Pakistan, Lahore's iconic Aitchison College was effectively replicated in India. This led to the establishment of Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala, in 1948. The founder of YPS was Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, the last ruler of the Patiala princely state, who wanted a school on the Indian side on the lines of his own and his father's alma mater in Lahore. Both Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh were alumni of Aitchison College, Lahore. YPS also served as an alternative to Aitchison, and many students who were abruptly uprooted from Lahore continued their education at YPS Patiala. Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala (Source: School's official Facebook page) Yadavindra Public School (YPS), Patiala

Seventy-eight years after Partition, the two iconic educational institutions in India and Pakistan, bound by a shared history, legacy, and heritage, are set to celebrate their "old boys" and their cherished memories. However, given the strained relations between the neighbouring countries and no immediate signs of a thaw, the celebrations will be held separately, without any formal collaboration. Founded in 1886, Aitchison College, Lahore, will celebrate its 140th Foundation Day, with events at its colonial-era campus scheduled from February 13 to 15. Aitchison is currently a semi-private school for boys, though it uses the term "College" in the traditional British sense to denote a prestigious secondary institution. Meanwhile, YPS Patiala will hold its celebrations on February 2 and 3 to mark its 78th Foundation Day since its establishment in 1948. The Special Assembly on February 3 at YPS Patiala will witness a particularly memorable moment. Indian alumni who once studied at Aitchison and later moved to YPS after Partition will be invited and honoured.

Alumni of Aitchison College in 1890 photograph (Special arrangement) Alumni of Aitchison College in 1890 photograph "We have managed to contact at least 15 such alumni who will be invited and honoured at the Special Assembly on February 3. They studied at Aitchison and later moved to YPS after Partition. Very few of them are alive now, but we are trying to get in touch with as many as we can," said Navin Kumar Dixit, headmaster, YPS Patiala.

The student association of YPS is known as the Aitchison Yadavindra Old Students Association (AYOSA), reflecting the fact that some Indian alumni studied at both institutions due to migration after Partition. Meanwhile, peace activists in India and Pakistan are attempting to ensure that the shared alumni legacy is celebrated, if not physically, then at least online. Aitchison alumni Ajit Singh Butalia and Haq Niwaz Tiwana with their sports trophies, 1931. The original of this photo was donated in 2025 by Butalia family to Aitchison Archives. Aitchison alumni Ajit Singh Butalia and Haq Niwaz Tiwana with their sports trophies, 1931. The original of this photo was donated in 2025 by Butalia family to Aitchison Archives. Tarunjit Singh Butalia, founder of Jeevay Sanjha Punjab, an organisation working for peace on both sides of the border, said: "We are in touch with all the 15 living boys in India who attended Aitchison till 1947 and later moved to YPS. We are also in the process of re-connecting cross-border descendants of old boys who were friends before 1947 at the college. We have already connected six pairs of such families — the Raza and Bedi families, Manawala and Raza families, Bharwana and Bhadaur families, Bajwa and Zulqarnain families, Tiwana and Butalia families, and Bedi and Taarar families." "These are heart-warming reunions of families after a long time, built on lifelong Aitchison friendships and memories of their ancestors who were friends at the Lahore college. It is an ode to the old boys and their good old memories, which can never die despite Partition creating physical borders," Butalia said. "After over 78 years, a Sikh worship service will be held on February 13 at the Aitchison Gurdwara for the first time since Partition.

The hope is that the event will be broadcast live on Facebook so that the living boys in India who are unable to travel to Lahore can join this historic occasion," Butalia added. Originally named Punjab Chief's College on January 2, 1886, Aitchison's foundation stone in Lahore was laid on November 3, 1886, by the Earl of Dufferin and Ava, the then Viceroy and Governor General of colonial India. On November 13, 1886, it was renamed Aitchison College to honour the services of Sir Charles Umpherston Aitchison, who is credited with establishing the institution. A prominent Scottish colonial administrator in British India, Aitchison served as Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab from 1882 to 1887, during which time he played a key role in founding the college. Aitchison College began as one of the five Chiefs' Colleges of northern India, with an initial enrolment of twelve boys in 1886. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh is mentioned as one of the alumni on the official website of Aitchison College, Lahore. (Source: College website) Maharaja Bhupinder Singh is mentioned as one of the alumni on the official website of Aitchison College, Lahore. (Source: College website) On the Indian side, YPS Patiala's founder, late Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, is succeeded by his two sons — former Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh and his younger brother Malvinder Singh — who continue to head the school's governing body.

In Gurgaon Metro push, Haryana says can seize land if owner won't sell



GNS News Agency, March 30

The Haryana government has notified a new policy allowing Gurugram Metro Rail Limited (GMRL) to directly purchase private land for the upcoming Metro corridor through negotiated settlements — warning that if a landowner "refuses to sell, raises objections... or declines to participate", it could result in compulsory acquisition under a central law. The Town and Country Planning department issued the notification on January 8. The policy applies to land required for the 29.05 km Millennium City Centre-Cyber City Metro corridor — a critical mass transit project under Gurugram's Comprehensive Mobility Plan, which targets nearly 200 km of Metro and mass transport networks by 2041.

While most of the Metro alignment passes through government land, officials admit that several strategically unavoidable stretches cut through private properties. "These include viaduct sections passing close to existing buildings, properties that need demolition, and a Metro depot that despite being planned on public land requires a small but crucial patch of private land. Even minor delays in acquiring these parcels could derail the entire project schedule," an official, privy to the developments, told. The land acquisition under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013, the official said, "is legally robust but painfully slow". The law mandates multiple notifications, social impact assessments, hearings, objections, and statutory waiting periods, often stretching land acquisition timelines into years. To bypass this bottleneck, Haryana has introduced the 'Direct Purchase through Mutual Negotiation' model. "Landowners are being offered compensation

that is 25% higher than what they would ordinarily receive under the 2013 Act, with rehabilitation and resettlement benefits deemed to be included in this enhanced amount. Payments will be made directly to bank accounts through electronic transfer, stamp duty on land registration will be waived, and the entire cost will be borne by GMRL," another official said.

The policy, however, also makes it clear that this is not an open-ended negotiation. "If a landowner refuses to sell, raises objections that cannot be resolved, or declines to participate in the negotiated settlement process, the government reserves the right to initiate compulsory acquisition proceedings" under the 2013 Act, as per the policy. Once this is done, landowners, most likely, will lose the option of negotiated pricing, face longer timelines, and be bound by statutory compensation mechanisms decided by the authorities.

Officials familiar with the policy say this dual-track approach is deliberate. "By offering higher-than-normal compensation upfront, the government is incentivising voluntary cooperation. At the same time, by explicitly retaining the power of compulsory acquisition, it is sending a message that holding out indefinitely will not stop the Metro project", an official explained. A high-powered land purchase committee headed by the deputy commissioner of Gurugram will oversee the process — from identifying land parcels to fixing compensation and conducting negotiations.

Before any land is purchased, joint inspections will be carried out, ownership records will be verified from revenue documents, and public notices will be published in newspapers, giving landowners 30 days to raise objections related to ownership or interest. Only after this window closes will negotiations begin, and once an agreement is signed, landowners will be required to give a written undertaking that they will not seek higher compensation in any court or legal forum in the future. Urban planners say the policy could mark a turning point for Gurugram's long-delayed Metro expansion. "With traffic congestion worsening and daily commute times rising sharply, any further delays could have economic and social costs for the city. By compressing land acquisition timelines from years to months, the government hopes to keep construction on track and restore investor confidence in large urban infrastructure projects," an official said.

Chandigarh pharmacy firing: 2 accused shooters injured in gunfight with cops



GNS News Agency, March 30

Two shooters, allegedly involved in the firing incident at a Chandigarh pharmacy last week, sustained injuries in an exchange of fire with the police near Ziri Mandi Chowk in Sector-39 Wednesday morning. The accused were identified as Rahul and Rocky, said Dhiraj Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Crime Branch. The incident took place around 6 am, during which both the shooters sustained bullet injuries, police sources said. They were

rushed to a government hospital in Sector-16 for treatment.

On January 15, two masked men had allegedly fired gunshots at Sewak Pharmacy in Sector-32. The shop owner's son, Tanish Luthra, 23, who was sitting at the counter, narrowly escaped bullet injuries. Soon, the shop owner Jagdish Luthra, a resident of Sector-32, informed the police about the incident. Police teams rushed to the location and forensic officials recovered an empty cartridge from the spot. During the subsequent investigation, CCTV footage showed two youths arriving on an Activa scooter, opening fire and fleeing the scene.

On Monday, the police said they arrested Rahul Bisht, a private laboratory owner and a resident of Sector-46, for allegedly playing a key role in planning the attack, even as efforts were on to trace the shooters. Once the shooters were found to be travelling in a vehicle on Wednesday morning, a Crime Branch team caught up to them and signalled the accused to stop. However, the situation escalated, following which the police opened fire in retaliation. Officers also seized the vehicle used by the accused. The police said interrogation of the accused is underway and added that more arrests in the case are likely soon.

TET must for teachers' promotion: Govt amid confusion over implementation



GNS News Agency, March 30

The decision has disappointed many teachers awaiting promotion and drawn criticism from teachers' organisations. The Maharashtra government has clarified that only teachers who have cleared TET will be eligible for promotions in primary schools. Teachers in Maharashtra who have not passed Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) will not be eligible for promotions, a letter by the school education department stated. This is the first letter in this regard by the state government, amid confusion over its intentions on implementation of the Supreme Court ruling which made TET mandatory for school teachers.

As per the SC mandate, teachers who are working without TET qualification have two years to obtain it to continue their service. However, as per the state's letter, dated January 19, this relaxation will not be allowed to those seeking promotion in Maharashtra in primary schools. Responding to a query raised by Director Primary Education on seeking clarity in matters of promotion of teachers, at the backdrop of the SC's TET ruling from September 2025, letter by under secretary from school education department Sharad Makane states, "Subject to the condition of passing the TET within period of two years from the date of delivery of the judgement, promotions from teaching cadre to the posts of graduate teacher, headmaster, cluster resource centre coordinator and extension officer (education) cannot, at present, be granted.

Only those teachers who have passed the TET and who also possess the other qualifications required for promotion are eligible for promotion. "As per the SC ruling, TET is made mandatory not only for new appointments but also for in-service teachers who have more than five years of service remaining. In regards to the latter, the SC ruling states that they will have to clear the TET within the next two years or accept compulsory retirement. Whereas for those who have less than five years of service, they can continue on the job but will not be eligible for any

promotion. The state government letter highlights that it has written to the central government and National Council for Teacher Education with queries related to overall implementation of the SC's TET ruling and their response is awaited. According to sources, seniority list for Zilla Parishad (ZP) schools was due and this clarity on TET requirement for promotion was sought for the same.

"Many teachers due for promotion had requested state to continue as per existing practice, which did not include TET qualification in eligibility criteria for promotion, and take an undertaking from them that they will clear TET, within two years. The response, however, has now made it clear that all primary teachers seeking promotion need to have TET qualification and promotion cannot be granted on the condition of the undertaking," said an official from the school education department. This has led to disappointment of many teachers who were now due for promotion after years of waiting, but did not have TET qualification. Furthermore teachers organisations have questioned the haste in which decisions are taken by the state government regarding with TET. Tanaji Kamble from Maharashtra Purogam Shikshak Sanghatana, a teachers' association, said, "When the central government is considering revision in case of TET, it is questionable why the state government is acting in such a haste."

Woman, child jump into Godavari from Bhadrachalam bridge; rescued by locals

GNS News Agency, March 30

Kothagudem: A woman, along with her child, jumped into river Godavari from the bridge at Bhadrachalam and the duo survived miraculously.

The devotees going back to their homes in the afternoon hours after attending Lord Rama 'Pattabishekam' at Bhadradi Temple raised alarm on noticing the woman jumping into river in a suicide attempt. The locals and fishermen rushed to their rescue and saved them.

The woman, Swaroopa hailing from Paloncha in the district, sustained injuries due to the fall from the bridge and was rushed to Government Area Hospital for medical treatment. The woman and her child were said to be stable now. The woman was said to have lost her husband recently.

'To ensure smoother traffic, resolve waterlogging': Govt clears 3 major projects to ease bottlenecks in Delhi

GNS News Agency, March 30

In a bid to ease bottlenecks on several arterial roads in the Capital, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh on Tuesday approved three major projects. The government is set to construct a flyover on the Janakpuri-Pankha Road that connects West Delhi to Central and South Delhi; and repair the Zakhira and Seelampur flyovers, which connect North East Delhi to Central Delhi and are infamous for traffic jams, said officials. "The Delhi government aims to ensure safer roads, smoother traffic movement and stronger infrastructure and resolve waterlogging issues across the Capital," the Minister said. On the new flyover set to come up at Janakpuri's Pankha Road from DESU Colony to Janakpuri D-Block, an official said, "The government has approved the engagement of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study and prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for a proposed flyover... The consultant will also study if the proposed section on Pankha Road and Mayapuri can be merged till Delhi Cantonment to make the entire stretch signal-free and smooth connectivity." The DPR will help examine traffic volume, road geometry, land availability, engineering feasibility and future mobility requirements. The exercise is aimed at ensuring that the proposed flyover is need-based, technically sound and future-ready, rather than a short-term traffic management measure, said officials. Apart from this,



PWD has sanctioned Rs 20.18 crore for the repair and rehabilitation of Zakira Flyover, one of Delhi's most critical junctions and a waterlogging hotspot during the monsoon season. Zakira Flyover carries heavy daily traffic and has faced structural stress over the years. Under the upgrade work, repair of spalled and honeycomb concrete, replacement of expansion joints, elastomeric bearings will be done. The objective is to address both structural safety and long-term resilience, particularly in view of repeated waterlogging and traffic disruptions at the location, said officials. Further, the government has approved Rs 17.85 crore for comprehensive repair and rehabilitation of Seelampur Flyover, another vital route in East Delhi. "Delhi's flyovers must be safe not just today, but for decades ahead.

Pakistan, IMF strike deal over disbursement of \$1.2 billion fund



Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). "IMF reaches Staff-Level Agreement on the Third Review for the 37-month Extended Arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the Second Review for 28-month arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)," Pakistan's Ministry of Finance said on X.

IMF mission chief Iva Petrova said, subject to IMF board approval, Pakistan will have access to about \$1.0 billion (SDR 760 million) under the EFF and about \$210 million (SDR 154 million) under the RSF. She said that Pakistan authorities remain committed to pursuing sound and prudent macroeconomic policies to preserve the recent gains in macro-financial stabilisation, while deepening structural reforms to accelerate growth and strengthening social protection to mitigate the impact of volatile energy prices on the most vulnerable.

Pakistan joined the IMF's EFF programme of \$7 billion in 2024, which focuses on strengthening the economy, rebuilding market confidence, sustaining fiscal reforms, and reducing energy sector inefficiencies. Last year, Pakistan got a Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) facility worth \$1.4 billion, aiming to build climate resilience, strengthen disaster management, improve water efficiency, and bolster green financing.

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached a staff-level agreement (SLA) for the disbursement of approximately \$1.2 billion under two separate arrangements. The two sides successfully concluded the third review of the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), the IMF said. The IMF mission held talks with Pakistani officials in Karachi and Islamabad from February 25 to March 2, but left without an agreement. The talks continued in virtual format, and an agreement was reached.

The fund confirmed the development through a statement, saying "IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on the third review under

U.S. weighs sending up to 10,000 troops to West Asia: reports



The United States is weighing sending up to 10,000 extra troops to West Asia, U.S. media reported on Friday as speculation grows that Washington may be preparing a ground operation in Iran. The deployment would mark a significant boost to Washington's military presence in the region, despite U.S. President Donald Trump insisting that Tehran was taking part in peace talks with Washington to end the war.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the move would aim to provide Mr. Trump with "more military options" in West Asia, engulfed by war since U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28. The troops would join thousands of paratroopers and Marines who have already been ordered to the region. An Iranian official said on Wednesday (March 26, 2026) that Tehran would retaliate to a ground invasion of its territory by Washington by activating its Houthi rebels in Yemen to attack shipping in the Red Sea. That would open up a new front in a war of spiralling economic, political and military repercussions. Mr. Trump has repeatedly said he does not plan to send ground troops into combat with Iran. "It is unclear where precisely forces will go in the Middle East, but they will likely be within striking distance of Iran and Kharg Island, a crucial oil export hub off Iran's coast," the Journal said. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment. Mr. Trump has pushed back his deadline for strikes on Iran's energy assets, assuring that talks on ending the war were "going very well." Israel's military, meanwhile, said early Friday (March 27, 2026) that it carried out "a wide-scale wave of strikes targeting infrastructure of the Iranian terror regime in the heart of Tehran".

The key to India's multi-domain deterrence, capabilities

China's military poses a serious challenge to India. New Delhi has no choice but to pursue a robust industrial strategy to offset China's military advantage. Otherwise, it risks the widening of the capability gap. But bridging this gap requires political expediency to make urgent, hard policy choices — what to buy, what to build, and the potential costs and benefits. The challenge is that technology is evolving faster than doctrine, making precise choices even more difficult. The question is how India should reconceptualise its doctrinal and technological choices and adopt a credible defence-industrial strategy to deter the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Hard choices, systemic vulnerabilities There could be three contrasting ways to approach the issue. First, India could adopt a bold approach. It would imply betting on the right technological trends and investing in a completely new bundle of war-fighting technologies. The risk is if implementation fails, it can create acute capability vulnerabilities and further weaken the margin of deterrence with India's adversaries. Besides, India lacks the industrial heft to produce technologies at scale and speed to neutralise China's advantage. But, if successful, it could help reduce the capability gap. Second, India could consider a more conservative strategy. This would entail integrating a wide range of emerging technologies with those in-service to make the existing force more effective. It would also entail enhancing India's cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to digitise the battlespace, to streamline and condense the kill chains. This is entirely doable, but it would not alter the balance of power. Perhaps, this strategy is more suited to fight a short war with Pakistan, not a protracted conflict.

Third, India could explore the middle path. While it continues to rely on legacy platforms, it invests in the creation and deployment of enabling layers, to enhance its ability to deter China. While, multi-domain operations (MDO) should be the obvious choice; India is not there yet for a mix of reasons. Besides, MDO as a concept is difficult to define, and even more difficult to operationalise. This would entail fielding a set of crucial enabling layers — of Command and Control (C2), Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), deep-strike, close-battle, infrastructure and logistics, which are critical to war outcomes. As these layers evolve, India's military would shape into a syncretic, multi-domain force. Historically, military transformations have adopted well-known paths. It entails aligning research, development and industrial capacity, doctrines and structures and technology and tactics across institutions, and over time, to deter threats. National security institutions, including the military, have to work together to develop a common picture of the deterrence that the state wishes to create. Since India's margin of deterrence against China is uncertain, India's endeavour should be to analyse the factors that explain the systemic challenges to building a robust posture. Two aspects stand out. First, India's industrial challenges are well known. Its ability to translate its military requirements into industrial targets is doubtful. The issue is not its technological competence but its defence-industrial base, which is not structured to deliver at speed and scale. Missiles, munitions and drones are urgent industrial investments of the day; so are the ISR and C2 networks and shortfalls in legacy platforms. India needs to expand its defence-industrial base in conjunction with private industry; otherwise, it may continue to face constraints.

While there is no one-off solution to coordinating industrial capacity, technology and doctrine, incremental steps can generate benefits in the long term. Removing red tape, ensuring budgetary stability, and providing long-term contracts especially for specialised platforms could prove helpful. A mindset change recognising that private players can build military systems more efficiently than the government sector, is needed. It is never too late to shore up the system, but the window for industrial reform is clearly



shrinking. Second, India's procurement system has to focus on evolving and not constraining the fighting force. The system has to adapt faster and be rooted in an efficient defence-industrial base that can produce what an evolving force needs. India needs to spend more, but spend smarter by making hard choices in prioritising key deterrent capabilities. This will require the broadest possible debate and consensus on what needs to be done, and why. It is also the military's job to explain its roles and tasks to the political leadership, the costs of inaction and possible trade-offs, and how they impact the deterrence that India wishes to achieve.

Fixing the enabling layers Strengthening India's deterrence would mean altering China's military confidence, while preventing it from assuming that any single capability could prove decisive. This is more so when India has no single capability which is exquisite enough to alter the military balance. By creating and operationalising the enabling layers — C2, ISR, deep-strike, close-battle and others — India can aspire to field a capable multi-domain force, to deter the Chinese.

India must have two top priorities. First, to identify those military vulnerabilities that present an advantage to China. Its fledgling C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) is one such concern. Dominating the C4ISR battle is key: the side that can see can continue to fight. India needs cheap ISR platforms, in numbers which it can afford to lose, yet maintain ISR capacity. It even needs superior cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive and degrade the adversary's ISR platforms. A layered C4ISR — one that enhances one's ISR capacity, while limiting an adversary's ability — is vital.

There are other layers, as well. For instance, the integration of missiles, aircraft and drones as the strike layer to dislocate the enemy in depth. The coordinated employment of land-based platforms such as tanks, guns, and infantry vehicles as a layer to fight front-line battles is crucial. A robust logistic layer that integrates all rear-zone elements including logistic installations, supply chains, and infrastructure is essential for fighting a protracted war. Equally important, in India's case, will be its nuclear deterrent, and how much nuclear capability it needs to compensate for a lack of conventional deterrence to dissuade a nuclear adversary such as China. Second, India needs to incentivise the right parts of the defence industrial base, by making one-off budgetary allocations in select capabilities. China has a sizeable missile inventory and has the industrial capacity to produce thousands more, during conflict. If a conflict erupts, it can use these against India, with devastating effect. Even if India were to withstand the initial PLA strikes, it would put severe pressure on India's surge capacity. This inventory gap is a risky bet. India has to incentivise defence production, in the absence of which, China might be tempted to drag India into a protracted fight. India should, therefore, be spending less time admiring the service-specific acquisitions, and fix the critical enabling layers in the deterrence system. Besides, theatre-isation alone might not help create these layers, unless it is rooted in deep doctrinal convergence.

Missile fired from Yemen as Israel and U.S. target Iran

GNS News Agency, March 30



if they're not there for us? They weren't there for us." Israeli strike on Iranian steel factories Israel's military said on Saturday (March 28) it had detected incoming missiles from Iran, and Syrian state television reported explosions heard above the capital Damascus from Israeli intercepts of the Iranian missiles. The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain also reported "missile attacks early on Saturday, with five people injured and fires reported after a missile was intercepted near Abu Dhabi's KEZAD economic zone. At least five people were killed and seven injured after a U.S.-Israeli attack on a residential unit in Iran's northwestern city of Zanjan, Iranian media reported early on Saturday. The Iran University of Science and Technology in Tehran was also struck, media reported. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on X that Israel, in coordination with the U.S., had also hit two steel factories and a power plant. "Attack contradicts POTUS extended deadline for diplomacy. Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes," Mr. Araghchi said on Friday (March 27), using an acronym for President of the United States.

Israel said on Saturday (March 28, 2026) it had detected a missile fired from Yemen, the first since the Iran war began, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. expected to conclude military operations within weeks, not months. A month after the U.S. and Israel launched strikes on Iran, the conflict has spread across the West Asia, killing thousands and causing the biggest disruption ever to energy supplies, hitting the global economy and fuelling inflation fears. While Israel said it was again hitting targets across Iran's capital on Saturday, it identified what it said was a missile launched from Yemen. Hours earlier, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said they were prepared to act if what the group called an escalation against Iran and the "axis of resistance" continued, but did not say what form any intervention would take.

Houthi involvement in the war would risk broadening the conflict, given their ability to strike targets far beyond Yemen and disrupt shipping lanes around the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea, which they had done in support of Hamas in Gaza after October 7, 2023. Mr. Rubio told reporters after meeting Group of Seven counterparts in France that Washington was "on or ahead of schedule in that operation, and expect to conclude it at the appropriate time here - a matter of weeks, not months". The war has driven a wedge between the U.S. and its traditional allies, who have stayed on the sidelines. President Donald Trump said this lack of support had implications for NATO, the West's most important alliance. "We would have always been there for them, but now, based on their actions, I guess we don't have to be, do we?" Mr. Trump told an investment forum in Miami on Friday. "Why would we be there for them

Rubio sees U.S. action in Iran completed in weeks as airstrikes rumble on



GNS News Agency, March 30

More strikes while Trump speaks of negotiations Washington has dispatched two contingents of thousands of Marines to the region, the first of which is due to arrive in coming days on a huge amphibious assault ship. The Pentagon is also expected to deploy thousands of elite airborne soldiers.

The deployments have raised concerns that the war could turn into a prolonged ground battle. Stock markets tumbled sharply on Friday (March 27) while the Brent crude oil benchmark topped \$112, having risen more than 50% since the war began. In the U.S., where Mr. Trump is politically vulnerable to rising fuel prices, diesel in California hit a record average high of \$7.17 a gallon, the American Automobile Association said. Mr. Trump has appeared eager to wind down the unpopular war, emphasising this week what he called productive negotiations aimed at a diplomatic solution - despite repeated assertions from Tehran that no such talks have begun. On Thursday (March 26), Mr. Trump extended a deadline by 10 days for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face attacks against its civilian energy grid. At least five people were killed and seven injured after a U.S.-Israeli attack on a residential unit in Iran's northwestern city of Zanjan, Iranian media reported early on Saturday (March 28).

The Iran University of Science and Technology in Tehran was also struck, media reported. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on X that Israel, in coordination with the U.S., had also hit two steel factories and a power plant. "Attack contradicts POTUS extended deadline for diplomacy. Iran will exact HEAVY price for Israeli crimes," Mr. Araghchi said on Friday (March 27), using an acronym for President of the United States. Israel's military said on Saturday (March 28) it had detected incoming missiles from Iran, and Syrian state television reported explosions heard above the capital Damascus from Israeli intercepts of the Iranian missiles.

Hyderabad's rapid urban expansion: Resetting the lines of control

GNS News Agency, March 30

As an aircraft descends over the capital of India's youngest State, the city unfurls in layers. The dense sprawl around the Charminar gives way to arterial roads slicing through packed neighbourhoods, feeding into the glass-fronted towers of the western IT corridor. Newer landmarks flash by — the cable-stayed bridge, stretches of green like the University of Hyderabad — before the city pushes outward again into ever-expanding residential edges.

Overspeeding, lack of lane discipline of driver led to Markapuram bus accident, say officials

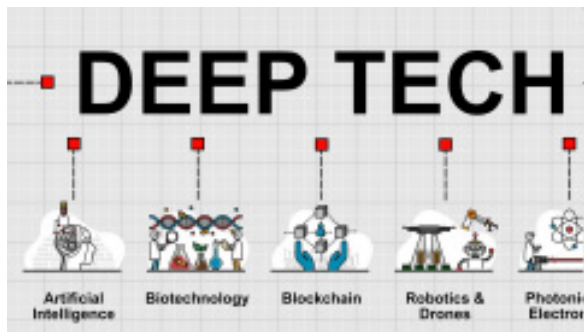
The semi-sleeper bus, which went up in flames near Rayavaram village in Markapuram district on Thursday, killing 14 passengers, was travelling at a high speed, the Fire Services Department officials said. The bus hit a tipper which was coming in the opposite direction, leading to the fire. "The semi-sleeper bus swerved to the right instead of left and hit the diesel tank of the lorry. Diesel spilled from the broken tank of the tipper helped the fire engulf the bus," said Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Response and Fire Services in-charge Director General P. Venkata Ramana. The accident occurred as the bus driver swerved the vehicle in the wrong direction and crossed the lane, which was "negligent driving", he said.

"Lack of lane discipline and poor awareness on highway markings led to the accident. Use of highly flammable material in bus manufacturing helped spread the fire, Mr. Venkata Ramana opined. Stating that a majority of accidents occurred due to man-made mistakes, he said drivers should be monitored. "Double drivers should be arranged for long-distance journeys. Speed limits must be followed, consid-



ering road curvature, visibility, and traffic conditions, he said. "Drunk driving should be avoided. The fitness of vehicles should be maintained. Drivers should be aware of blind spots and should not enter 'No Driving Zones,'" the Director General said. In Markapuram bus accident, the emergency door helped save the lives of around 20 passengers and awareness on emergency exits should be created among passengers.

India's new startup rules for deep tech | Explained



A 'startup,' — the DPIIT says — is a company that is less than 10 years old or has a turnover less than ₹200 crore. According to the gazette notification, a deep tech company can consider itself a 'startup' for as long as 20 years and a turn-over of upto ₹300 crore — indicating the longer runway such companies have and the time it takes to come to fruition.

To be counted as a deep tech startup, companies must apply to the DPIIT for a certificate. The DPIIT is the final authority that determines whether a company qualifies as a startup or a deep tech startup. It will decide this based on "guidance" from an Inter-Ministerial Board of Certification, which includes a Joint Secretary, DPIIT (Convener); a representative from the Department of Science and Technology (DST); a representative from the Department of Biotechnology, according to the notification. The notification also prohibits a defined startup from investing in activities that are not directly connected to its core mandate of working and creating new knowledge — for instance investing in real estate or "speculative assets," or shares and securities — unless they are core to the company's knowledge production. The deep-tech, the notification says, must spend most of its money on research and development (R&D) activities; owns or is in the process of creating significant novel intellectual property (IP) and taking steps to commercialise the same; faces extended development timelines, long gestation periods, high capital and infrastructure requirements, and carries large technical or scientific uncertainty.

What are the opportunities for deep techs in India?

These definitions are important given the Centre's thrust on technology driven startups. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) is the custodian of the ₹1-lakh crore Research and Development Innovation Fund that is expected to invest, over 7 years, in emerging technology and fund research. A part of these investments, which will be through secondary fund managers such as financial institutions, will go to deep-tech startups. Science Minister, Jitendra Singh, said this week that companies with RDI funds could get financing at concessional rates of around 2-4% with tenures up to 15 years. What is the international ecosystem for such startups? The Draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) 2023 identifies several international programs and entities that serve as models for supporting deep-tech ecosystems. Key examples of deep tech-focused incubators and support programs from outside India include: Wallonia Brussels Startup Launchpad (WSL), Belgium; U.K. Catapult, United Kingdom; the EXIST Program, Germany; Innovation Superclusters Initiative, Canada; Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) & Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR), USA. These setups nurture a range of businesses though it is unclear if they are aimed at deep tech's specifically.

How does India define deep tech?

India's official engagement with deep tech began with a 2023 policy document by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor. This document sees deep-tech in India as a strategic framework designed to bolster an ecosystem for startups that leverage fundamental scientific breakthroughs and engineering advancements. It recognises deep tech as a critical driver for economic growth, national security, and societal development. Deep tech, according to this document, must secure India's economic future, help India transition to a knowledge-driven economy, achieve technological sovereignty through "Atmanirbhar Bharat," and foster ethical innovation. The policy outlines nine thematic priority areas, including nurturing research and development, strengthening intellectual property (IP) rights, facilitating long-term funding, and creating conducive regulations and standards to help startups overcome the "Valley of Death" — the last one being a phrase to describe companies that fold because they couldn't garner the funding to survive.

So who is a 'deep tech' according to the DPIIT?

Why did Anthropic's Claude Cowork plugins spook markets? |



On January 30, Anthropic released 11 open-source plugins for Claude Cowork, its AI workplace suite. Unlike conventional chatbots, Cowork functions as an autonomous digital colleague: it reads files, drafts documents, reviews contracts, and executes multi-step workflows across legal, finance, sales, and marketing—with minimal human instruction. Days later, Anthropic followed with Claude Opus 4.6, a model capable of coordinating teams of AI agents for financial research and due diligence.

The market reaction was swift and brutal. A Goldman Sachs basket of US software stocks fell 6% on Tuesday, February 3. Thomson Reuters plunged 15.8% (a record), LegalZoom sank 19.7%, and RELX dropped 14%. Nearly \$285 billion in market capitalisation was erased globally. In India, the Nifty IT index fell 5.87%—its steepest fall since March 2020—wiping out nearly ₹2 lakh crore. TCS and Infosys each fell over 7% on the day; Tech Mahindra lost over 5%. For the week, the index declined 6.4%, with Infosys down 8.2% and Tech Mahindra 7.1%. The core fear: if one AI agent can do the work of teams, India's headcount-based outsourcing model faces existential repricing.

2. What is the 'SaaS Apocalypse' and why are SaaS companies threatened?

The term—coined by Jefferies—captures the fear that AI is replacing software, not just enhancing it. Traditional SaaS charges per user seat; when AI agents execute workflows autonomously, fewer humans need the software. As CNN reported, "Why do I need to pay for software if internal development now takes developers less time with AI?" asked Thomas Shipp of LPL Financial. Salesforce is down 26% year-to-date, the S&P 500 Software & Services Index has fallen roughly 20%. Bank of America called this an "indiscriminate selloff" resembling the DeepSeek moment of January 2025, when China's DeepSeek shook the assumption that AI required massive capital and Nvidia lost \$589 billion in a day. That panic proved overblown. BofA argues this selloff rests on contradictory premises: AI capex collapsing while AI adoption becomes so pervasive it makes software obsolete. Yet the structural shift is real. The question is whether markets are pricing a decade of disruption into a single week.

3. What are real-world examples of AI disruption in legal, financial, and health services?

None of this should have been a surprise. The trajectory was clearly visible. In March 2023, Bloomberg released BloombergGPT, a 50-billion parameter LLM trained on 363 billion tokens of proprietary financial data—the largest domain-specific financial dataset ever assembled. Bloomberg's CTO Shawn Edwards said it would "enable us to tackle many new types of applications" with "much higher performance out-of-the-box." BloombergGPT proved that domain-specific AI could outperform general models on financial tasks by significant margins: sentiment analysis, entity recognition, news classification, and query automation. It was the proof of concept. Claude Cowork's finance and legal plugins are the logical extension—taking what BloombergGPT demonstrated within one platform and making it available as an autonomous agent across any enterprise. Legal: Claude's legal plugin—automating NDA

trials, contract review, and compliance tracking—triggered the sharpest market reaction. Thomson Reuters recorded its largest single-day drop ever. LegalZoom fell nearly 20%. RELX (LexisNexis's parent) and Wolters Kluwer each lost over 13%.

Financial: If BloombergGPT was the industry building AI for itself, Goldman Sachs embedding Anthropic is the industry letting AI run itself. Goldman disclosed a six-month partnership with Anthropic to build autonomous agents for trade accounting, compliance, and client onboarding. CIO Marco Argenti said the bank was "surprised" at Claude's capability beyond coding—particularly in parsing regulatory documents and applying rule-based judgment. The shift from BloombergGPT (a domain model assisting analysts) to Goldman-Anthropic (autonomous agents replacing back-office processes) is the leap that spooked investors. FactSet fell 10%; S&P Global and Moody's declined sharply. Healthcare: Cognizant's partnership with Palantir embeds agentic AI within its TriZetto healthcare platform—which processes over half of US medical claims—handling patient routing, claims adjudication, and supply chain tasks, with human oversight for exceptions.

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has warned AI could displace half of entry-level white-collar jobs within 1–5 years. Salesforce's Marc Benioff has said the company will not hire additional engineers or lawyers because of AI. Andrej Karpathy described his own experience with Claude code to state that he went from 80% manual+autocomplete coding and 20% agents in November 2025 to 80% agent coding and 20% edits+touchups. Semianalysis published this week in "Claude Code is the inflection point" that 4% of GitHub public commits are being authored by Claude code right now, and that will be 20% by year-end.

4. How are Indian companies addressing this disruption, and how should they?

Indian IT firms are investing, but incrementally. TCS-TPG has committed \$2 Billion to Hypervault AI data centres; Wipro earmarked \$1 Billion for AI360; Infosys has partnerships with NVIDIA and Intel. Cognizant's Palantir-TriZetto integration is the most forward-looking—combining domain expertise with a leading agentic platform.

The challenge is pace. As Rest of World noted, Cowork's plugins automate precisely the high-volume, repetitive work that is Indian IT's bread and butter. The "slower enterprise adoption" defence rings hollow when Goldman Sachs is embedding Anthropic engineers in its back office to co-design autonomous agents, and when the Pentagon has consolidated 75 software contracts under Palantir's \$10 billion enterprise service agreement construct. The required pivot is from labour arbitrage to AI deployment partnerships. Indian firms possess unmatched domain expertise in banking, insurance, and healthcare—the Cognizant-Palantir model, where domain knowledge meets platform capability, is the template.

5. Does this hurt Indian IT employment or create a new kind of opportunity?

The immediate signal is concerning. TCS has reduced headcount by approximately 11,000 recently; multiple CTOs have stopped hiring freshers entirely. Entry-level testing, maintenance, and compliance roles are most at risk. One fintech firm told The Ken fresher hiring on certain teams has gone from 80% to zero.

Yet new demand is emerging. Every AI agent that performs autonomous work in a regulated environment—healthcare claims, financial audits, defence logistics—requires what the industry calls HITL (Human-in-the-Loop) processes: oversight, validation, exception handling, governance, and ethical review. These roles demand domain knowledge and judgment, not just coding ability. Palantir itself, despite its autonomous capabilities, emphasises that its ontology-driven approach requires humans to define the business logic and maintain governance frameworks.

Modi vows stronger India-Malaysia ties; says 'no compromise' on terrorism



India and Malaysia on Sunday (February 8, 2026) vowed to expand their ties in the high-priority sectors of trade and investment, defence, energy, advanced manufacturing and semiconductors, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that both sides are committed to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Following his wide-ranging talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Mr. Modi reiterated India's position on combating terrorism as he said, "Our message on terrorism is clear: no double standards, no compromise." The two sides inked a total of 11 agreements and documents to expand cooperation in a range of key areas, including a framework pact for deeper engagement in the semiconductor sector.

Both Mr. Modi, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday (February 7, 2026), and Mr. Ibrahim appreciated efforts to promote the usage of local currencies—the Indian Rupee and Malaysian Ringgit—for trade settlement. During the visit, Mr. Modi also met Malaysia's Indian-origin Ministers, MPs and Senators and interacted with four leading industry leaders of Malaysia. "We will pave the way for economic transformation through strategic trust," Mr. Modi said, describing the India-Malaysia relationship as "special." "We are maritime neighbours. For centuries, our peoples have had deep and cordial ties," he said in his media statement. Mr. Modi also announced India's decision to establish an Indian Consulate General in Malaysia. In his remarks, Mr. Ibrahim noted India's economic growth and said his country would benefit immensely if it could secure more ways and opportunities to collaborate with New Delhi.

"It (India's economic growth) is one spectacular rise in the international economy and trade scene," he said, describing the decision to use local currencies for bilateral trade as "remarkable." In the talks, Malaysia extended its support for India's permanent membership in a reformed United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Elaborating on engagement in the security domain, Mr. Modi said cooperation in counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, and maritime security will be strengthened, adding that both sides will further expand defence ties. "Along with AI and digital technologies, we will advance partnerships in semiconductors, health, and food security," he said, noting that the discussions at the CEO Forum opened new opportunities for trade and investment. The Prime Minister touched upon India's position on the Indo-Pacific and its steadfast views on the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) centrality in the region. "The Indo-Pacific region is emerging as the world's growth engine. We, along with ASEAN, are committed to development, peace, and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region," he said. "With the support of friendly countries like Malaysia, India will further expand its rela-

tions with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). We agree that the review of the ASEAN-India Trade Agreement, ITIGA, should be completed expeditiously," he added. Mr. Modi said he and Mr. Ibrahim also had a "meaningful discussion" on regional and global issues.

"In this environment of global instability, the growing friendship between India and Malaysia is of vital importance to both countries... We share the view that reform of global institutions is essential to address today's challenges. We will continue to support all efforts for peace. And our message on terrorism is clear: No double standards, no compromise," he added. "We appreciate your commitment to India-Malaysia relations. Let us together realise your dream of a prosperous Malaysia and our resolve for a developed India," he said. The two Prime Ministers also "unequivocally and strongly condemned" terrorism in all its forms, including cross-border terrorism and called for "zero tolerance" of terrorism, according to a joint statement.

The two leaders also called for concerted global efforts to combat terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner and agreed to work towards countering radicalisation and violent extremism. They also resolved to work towards combating the financing of terrorism and preventing the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in countering terrorism, including in the U.N. and FATF (Financial Action Task Force), the statement said. Mr. Modi and Mr. Ibrahim also agreed to strengthen cooperation in multilateral fora, including at the U.N., and support reforms of international institutions. "They pledged to work together to enhance multilateralism, reflective of contemporary realities so as to make international organisations, including the UNSC, more representative," the joint statement said. "Reflecting the strong spirit of mutual support in multilateral forums, the two Leaders discussed mutual support for various international candidatures. India deeply appreciated Malaysia's support for India's permanent membership in a reformed UNSC," it said. During his meeting with Malaysia's Indian-origin political leaders, he appreciated their active role in strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The PIOs included Tuan Gobind Singh Deo, Minister of Digital; Ramanan Ramakrishnan, Minister of Human Resources; M Kulasegaran, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department; and R Yuneswaran, Deputy Minister of National Unity, among others. "The PIO leaders expressed their appreciation for Prime Minister's leadership in building the Comprehensive Strategic partnership between the two countries and initiatives aimed at advancing the India-Malaysia relationship," according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs. He also interacted with four leading industry leaders of Malaysia—Tengku Muhammad Taufik, president and Group CEO of PETRONAS; Vincent Tan Chee Yioun, founder of Berjaya Corporation Berhad; Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir, managing director of Khazanah Nasional Berhad; and Pua Khean Seng, founder of Phison Electronics. Mr. Modi highlighted the initiatives and reforms undertaken in India in recent years to promote ease of doing business and create a stable, efficient and predictable business and policy environment. He called upon businesses in Malaysia to explore the opportunities offered by India, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, renewable energy, digital technology, semiconductors,

Sanae Takaichi wins elections: Who is the country's first female leader?



Japan's PM Sanae Takaichi won a landslide victory on Sunday (February 8, 2026) in a surprise snap election. Her ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its coalition partners won a two-thirds majority in the 465-seat House of Representatives. Ms. Takaichi, made headlines on October 21, 2025 and became the first woman leader of a country known for its male-dominated political landscape. Here's all you need to know about the Prime Minister.

Who is Sanae Takaichi?

Sanae Takaichi came into the political arena in Japan in 1993 as an independent candidate. But later joined the Liberal Democratic Party or the LDP and became a protégé of the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Ms. Takaichi has most notably served as the country's Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication, a tenure marked with strict media regulations and enhancement of the country's telecommunication infrastructure. Sanae Takaichi's early life Born in Nara, Japan's ancient capital, Ms. Takaichi's mother was a police officer, and her father worked at a machinery maker. As a child, she enjoyed listening to her parents recite an 1890 imperial document that praises paternalistic family values and loyalty to the government, Ms. Takaichi said in 2012. Though she was admitted to pres-

tigious Tokyo schools, her parents made her attend Kobe University while living at home, something that was normal then for unmarried daughters of conservative families. She was briefly an intern for a U.S. Democratic lawmaker in Denver in the late 1980s and, after returning to Japan, worked as a television personality, an author and a critic.

"Sanaeconomics" "Sanae-economics" or "Sanaeconomics" became associated with Ms. Takaichi, an economic ideology that advocated for greater military spending and aggressive fiscal spending. She has also time and again expressed her wish to amend the country's pacifist constitution with some key changes. The changes include a formalisation of the Self-Defence Forces and solidifying the country's stance to maintain "war potential" in face of threats from China and North Korea. Ms. Takaichi, with the formalisation of the SDF (Self-Defence Forces) in the Constitution, wishes to clearly specify the military's role in the Constitution. Notably, Sanae Takaichi views the 1947 Japanese Constitution as one "imposed" by US occupation forces. This is paradoxical, because Ms. Takaichi has shared a deep bond with US President Donald Trump and has interacted on multiple global forums. First female Prime Minister In October 2025, Ms. Takaichi became the first woman leader of the country, a shift from the generally male-dominated polity of Japan. Her appointment by her party became a global talking point with speculation about the changing societal norms in Japanese society.

Why did she call for 'snap elections'?

Ms. Takaichi called for 'snap elections' on January 19, 2026, leading to the dissolution of the lower house on January 23, and the nationwide vote then occurred on February 8, 2026. She called for the snap elections mainly for seeking a public mandate, as she was appointed by her party, and not elected. She stated that she wanted to ask the "sovereign people" to decide if she fit to lead. Ms. Takaichi has also enjoyed record-high popularity ratings of around 70% and analysts noted that she wanted to lock-in the benefits of the favourable period before the ratings decline eventually.

Karnataka approves ultrasound training for MBBS doctors to strengthen maternal healthcare

In a move aimed at strengthening maternal and child healthcare services in Karnataka, the State government has issued an order granting administrative approval to provide six-month ultrasonography training to in-service MBBS doctors of the Health Department. The decision follows the shortage of radiologists in several district hospitals, which has affected the delivery of quality antenatal and postnatal services. To address diagnostic gaps, the government has also decided to create 114 new radiologist posts. Currently, there are only 75 sanctioned radiologists in 189 facilities (148 taluk hospitals and 41 community health centres). A total of 11 hospitals across the State have been identified as training centres. These include K.C. General Hospital and Jayanagar General Hospital in Bengaluru; Lady Goschen Hospital and Venlock Hospital in Mangaluru; Chigateri District Hospital

in Davanagere; and district hospitals in Chikkaballapur, Dharwad, Tumakuru, Vijayapura, Ballari, Kolar and Bagalkot, according to the Order. The government aims to train 69 MBBS doctors under the guidance of 23 faculty members, maintaining a teacher-student ratio of 1:3. Only in-service MBBS doctors will be eligible for the programme. Doctors who complete the training will be required to provide ultrasonography services exclusively in government hospitals. To ensure uninterrupted public healthcare services, district health officers have been directed to appoint doctors on a contractual basis in place of those undergoing training. The Health Department is working on rationalising deployment of specialists under the Mother and Child Health (MCH) triad—gynaecologists, anaesthetists and paediatricians—across taluk hospitals and community health centres (CHCs).

Vanished lives: Kerala sees a surge in missing person cases



A newly printed photograph of Thomas John, a 42-year-old farmer, hangs on the wall of Pazhamchirayil House, a small concrete residence at Kavumkudi, near Alakode, in Kannur district. Simi, his wife, and their three children are yet to come to terms with the sudden loss that has befallen them. She's yet to overcome the grief caused by the loss of her husband. The thoughts of her life partner, who went missing in November last year, only to be found dead near a river, still haunt her. "We approached the local police station within a few hours of confirming his disappearance. As he was upset over the repayment of debt in the preceding weeks, we were worried when he just vanished," recalls Simi, who nurses a grievance that the police refused to consider her complaint seriously. "Had the police responded quickly, he would have been among us now," she says.

Simi complains that the police delayed the search on the reported grounds that they couldn't track his mobile phone location. "They said the search could be launched only after waiting for at least 24 hours. Because of their indifference, we searched with the support of residents. Sadly, we found him, dead, the same day," she wails.

The latest figures with the police confirm that the State is seeing a surge in the number of cases related to missing persons over the past five years. Official data show that cases of 8,742 missing persons were registered in 2020. It increased to 9,713 in 2021 and to 11,259 in 2022. Next year, it was 11,760 and 11,897 in 2024. "Despite the high number of missing persons, Kerala maintains a relatively high success rate in tracing them. Timely reporting of the cases and the proactive approach of the police are making the difference," claims a senior police officer with the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in Kerala. The uneven trends in the number of missing cases become clear in the district-level data compiled by the State Crime Records Bureau. In the rural areas of Thiruvananthapuram district, the number of missing cases showed an increasing trend in the past few years. The total number of cases which was 630 in 2022 almost doubled and reached 1,177 in 2023. But there was a slight fall in 2024. The rural areas of Ernakulam district also witnessed an increasing trend from 508 in 2020 to 892 in 2023. Later, the numbers dropped slightly to 648 in 2024. In Idukki, the police registered over 1,000 missing cases in 2023. In northern Kerala, districts such as Kannur (rural) and Kasaragod witnessed comparatively lower figures, say police sources.

As per the Crime Records Bureau data, over 10,000 child missing cases have been reported in Kerala over the past five years, though most children were traced. The police and the families are clueless about over 500 missing children about whom nothing is known after their disappearance. Family disputes, relationship and financial issues, and the influence of social media are the contributing factors for their disappearance, say police officers. "Delayed reporting of the incidents, lack of an integrated real-time database, and jurisdictional constraints often affect investigation in the early stages," says S. Muralaeeharan, a retired police officer who had worked with the AHTU squad. With the number of missing person cases going up, there is a need for early registration of complaints, improved data-sharing mechanisms, coordination between government and law enforcement agencies, and greater public awareness, he points out.

Police officers with regional crime squads concede that delayed reporting is one of the most important obstacles in missing person investigations. In many cases, families are advised to wait for some time before lodging a complaint, especially when an adult goes missing. This practice, investigators feel, could delay the investigation. "Investigation during the first few hours of the disappearance of a person is often critical in collecting digital evidence, tracing their movements, and identifying potential witnesses," notes S. Ranjith, a police officer with the High Tech crime inquiry

cell. He points out that delays can result in the loss of mobile phone data, surveillance footage, and other time-sensitive information, crucial in the investigation. A substantial number of missing person cases in Kerala involve adolescents and young adults. Data from districts such as Kozhikode, Emakulam, and Thiruvananthapuram show that individuals aged between 16 and 25 years account for a major share of the reported disappearance cases. "Many of these cases eventually turn out to be instances of elopement, voluntary departure or temporary estrangement from families," says a senior woman police inspector involved in the probe of a few such cases in Kozhikode. She observes that cyber interactions, exposure to unknown networks, and impetuous decision-making often end up in family conflicts, provoking youngsters to leave home. "Girls account for a high number of reported missing cases. Many girls leave their homes due to failed personal relationships or family disputes. They are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, trafficking or other forms of abuse," says a former member of the Child Welfare Committee. She says instances of missing children from various shelter homes under government control need to be seriously looked into. A. Nireesh, former coordinator of a helpline for children, says that the factors that trigger the disappearance of people, especially children, need to be looked into. There shall be programmes for long-term protection, counselling, and rehabilitation of such persons, he suggests. Rights activists also observe that there could be involvement of criminal elements at least in a few cases of disappearance of persons. The missing case of K. Hemachandran, a Wayanad native temporarily residing in Kozhikode city, is one such case.

Hemachandran, who ran a private chit fund in the city, went missing in August 2023. It was after 16 months that the police succeeded in solving the mystery that shrouded the disappearance of the businessman. The police found out that he had been murdered and the body buried. "Hemachandran was abducted and murdered following some financial disputes. His body was recovered from a forest area at Cherambadi in Tamil Nadu, where it was buried," says a senior police officer who was part of the investigation team. Hemachandran's family members say a leaked telephone conversation of one of his abductors helped crack the case. They, however, maintain that a focused probe would have helped in solving the case. In contrast, there are many high-profile cases that still remain mysterious. There is no clue yet about the disappearance of a prominent realtor Mohammed Attoor, alias Mami, from Kozhikode in 2023. The two-year-long probe, initially by the local police and later the Crime Branch, could not solve the mystery. Despite extensive interrogation covering nearly 200 individuals linked to Mami, and other investigations, a breakthrough has remained elusive. P. Rajeevan, a friend of Mami, fears that he might have been abducted. He accuses the police of failing to pursue the case with alacrity.

Drug connection Incidents of substance abuse have also been found contributing to the increasing number of missing cases. It was after a five-year-long probe into the disappearance of 35-year-old Vijil from Elathur that the police were able to establish it as a case of death due to a drug overdose. His friends allegedly buried him to cover up the incident rather than report it to the police. Police officers feel that narcotics-induced deaths are an under-recognised factor in missing person cases. They point out that it often involves concealment driven by fear and misinformation. "When missing persons move from one location to another, their tracking becomes difficult for want of coordination between the agencies based at different locations. The absence of a unified real-time missing persons tracking system often results in the generation of fragmented information," says an IT expert with the police cyber cell. He also points out that shortage of hands, heavy workload, and the growing number of cybercrime limit the operational capacity of the police force. Meanwhile, professional counsellors, who often deal with the rehabilitation of missing persons, believe that there should be a shift in the approach to handling the persons. According to them, the police often look into procedural aspects of the case first when they come across a complaint, rather than understanding the complainant's concerns and the need for prompt intervention. A fast-track investigation should be ensured with all supporting agencies to trace the missing person. A proactive intervention is often needed to help the victims come back to society, they feel. Psychologists A. Dhanya and P. V. Jincy say there should be interventions to remove the procedural and technical hurdles involved in tracking the missing persons and rehabilitating them.

How Indira Canteens lost flavour among patrons in Bengaluru



It is breakfast time, around 7.30 a.m. Gangamma and Nagalakshmi, who work as pourakarmikas (civic workers), are among the many waiting outside the Indira Canteen located next to the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Majestic metro station in Bengaluru. The canteen is open, but the food has not arrived yet. Between this Indira Canteen and Majestic bus stand on the other side, lies a heap of garbage — plastic covers, leftover food, damp waste. Partially cleared, but not enough to ignore. When breakfast finally arrives, *bisi bele baht* and *pongal*, it is served quickly. Filling meals that workers, like Nagalakshmi, say give them enough energy to last until their shifts end at 11 a.m.

Nagalakshmi, a sanitation worker who eats at the canteen along her daily work route, ate in quick mouthfuls, checking the time on her phone between bites. She had about eight minutes, she said, before moving on to cleaning Gandhinagar, and then rushing to catch a bus to her home at DJ Halli. Every day, she relies on this canteens to fit a meal into her work schedule and budget. Designed as a universal scheme rather than a targeted welfare scheme, the canteens offer breakfast at ₹5, and lunch and dinner at ₹10. While workers like Nagalakshmi do rely on these canteens daily, many are not convinced of their reliability. An auto driver, when asked if he ever ate at these canteens, shook his head, saying "Why take the risk?" He had never even tried the food, he said, because he had 'heard' too many stories about poor quality rice, finding worms in pulses, and about kitchens being unhygienic. This perception is a far cry from the reputation enjoyed by Indira Canteens in the early days.

Promise of universal access Indira Canteens were introduced by the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka in August 2017 as an urban food security measure, to provide affordable, cooked meals to anyone, specifically targeting people who spend most of their day outside their homes — daily-wage workers, sanitation staff, construction workers, students, the elderly, and commuters navigating long work hours and rising food costs. The canteens promised hot, filling and nutritious meals served at fixed timings and in easily accessible public locations, such as bus stands, hospitals and markets. During the launch at Jayanagar, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi had breakfast at the Indira Canteen, and stated that even the 'poorest and weakest' in the country must not go hungry. In 2024, in his second tenure as Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah inaugurated the Indira Canteen at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru and tried the food with his Cabinet colleagues.

An urban need The canteens addressed a real urban need — highly subsidised meals for people whose workdays are long and physically demanding. That need has only grown, but, over the years, a combination of delayed payments, staffing shortage, unreliable operations, and gaps between announcements and implementation, have weakened the scheme's ability to function consistently. During our visit to 12 Indira Canteens across Bengaluru, we observed people of very different occupations, age groups and income levels accessing these canteens regularly because the prices and availability accommodate even the most financially constrained. With an average of at least 400 persons visiting each Indira Canteen daily, as per data from Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), maintaining consistency in hygiene, nutrition and food preparation cannot be an option. Over the past three months, West City Corporation has received around 30 complaints related to quality of the food and hygiene, while the other four corporations — South, North, East and Central — reported an average of three to five complaints per month. Nutrition gap One of the persistent criticisms of Indira Canteens has been the limited nutritional value of the food served. While the meals are affordable and filling, they are cereal-heavy, with rice forming the bulk of the menu, and very little in the way of protein or dietary diversity. This raises questions about whether the canteens are merely addressing hunger in the short term rather than contributing to basic nutritional security, especially of those who depend on these meals regularly. You can see the dominance of rice across meals — *bisi bele baht* and *pulav* for breakfast; rice with *sambar* and *curd rice* for lunch; and flavoured rice, generally *chitranna* (lemon rice), and rice with *rasam* for dinner. On some days, *khara baht* is offered as one of the two breakfast options, or *ragi mudde* (millet ball) is added at lunch alongside rice, but the overall composition continues to be heavily skewed towards carbohydrates. In Tamil Nadu, Amma Canteens follow a menu that routinely includes lentils, fermented foods and dairy along with cereals. Even in Rajasthan, Annapurna Rasoi, which offers a meal for ₹8, serves a fixed menu that includes *rotis* or rice, *dal* and cooked vegetables, with pulses and vegetables being a part of every meal.

This, public health experts like Dr. Sylvia Karpagam argue, contrasts with Karnataka's approach in its mid-day meal programme. Over the years, the State has introduced eggs to address protein deficiency among schoolchildren, recognising that cereal-based meals alone are nutritionally inadequate. Eggs are now part of the menu in many government schools, with alternatives such as bananas or *chikkis* offered where eggs are not consumed. That recognition, however, has not extended to Indira Canteens. Despite serving adults, senior citizens and daily-wage workers who often depend on these meals as their only assured food of the day, there has been no move to introduce basic nutritional add-ons, such as buttermilk, *ragi malt* or eggs, even as optional top-ups, she pointed out.

At the time of its launch in 2017, Indira Canteens had a menu that included *khara baht*, *pongal*, *puliyogare*, *chitranna* and *bisi bele baht* for breakfast, while lunch and dinner centred on rice with *sambar* and *curd rice*. The structure of the menu remains largely unchanged. The meals continue to be predominantly rice-based across breakfast, lunch and dinner. In 2023, after Siddaramaiah-led government came back to power, items such as bread and jam, and *Mangaluru* buns were proposed to be added to the breakfast menu, but the proposal was not implemented. The notable addition, in practice, has been the inclusion of *ragi mudde* at lunch. Not just about a meal While mixing rice with *sambar* on his plate, Selvaraj P., 72, complained that the food is often served cold, and that the *sambar* usually has no vegetables. He has been eating at the Indira Canteen at Rajajinagar ever since he lost his wife in September 2018. His first visit, he recalled, was on a Sunday in the same

year, the only day in the week the canteen serves *kesari baht* along with *khara baht* for breakfast. An elderly man having a meal at the Indira Canteen in Benson Town, in Bengaluru on February 10, 2026.

Over the years, the canteen became part of his daily routine. "The food is cheap, and I made a few friends during my visits to the canteen," he said, referring to a group of elderly men he eats with most mornings. But the quality, he added, has declined. "The food is not consistent in quality or taste. One day the *sambar* is thick, the next day, it is watery," he said. Selvaraj further gestured towards the open space where people stood eating, and added that even a bench or two would make a difference for people of his age. Access, proximity to workplace or dwelling, affordability and the social ease of eating alongside others are all factors that make Indira Canteens important for the likes of Selvaraj. Safe places for working women Beyond nutrition and pricing, spaces like Indira Canteens have also come to occupy a major role in the public life, particularly for working women in labour-intensive and informal jobs. Mumtaz Mehrum, a garment factory worker, points to the row of small food stalls she passes on her 1.3-kilometre walk from the Indira Canteen at Mahadevapura to her workplace. "After 8.30 p.m., the places we can afford are usually packed with men," she said, adding that a place like Indira Canteen gives shelter and a safe space to eat at minimal cost. At the same time, Indira Canteens provide relief for women who carry a disproportionate burden when it comes to feeding their families. For women like Nagalakshmi, whose day begins at 5 a.m. and is split between paid labour and household responsibilities, breakfast at the Indira Canteen eases a significant portion of her daily load, she said. Footfall is highest in the morning. In fact, breakfast sees the highest footfall in these canteens. At the Indira Canteen near Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), breakfast is served to around 1,600 people every day, with cab and bus drivers forming a large part of the patrons. Across other wards and kitchens in Bengaluru, the average breakfast turnout ranges between 280 and 300 people per day, while dinner sees a smaller crowd of 75 to 90, according to GBA figures. Repetitive menu, repetitive problems A man who works at one of the Indira Canteens gestures as he pours *sambar*, highlighting that the broth is thin. "Besides, the food is repetitive. Even we are tired of serving the same thing every day. People sometimes ask if there will be something different, or what kind of rice is being served that day, but even we don't know until the food arrives from the central kitchen," he added. He believes breakfast could be improved, noting that the canteen sees its highest footfall between 7.30 a.m. and 10 a.m. "If lunch and dinner are repetitive, at least breakfast should have variety. Our customers specifically ask for *dosa*, *idli* and *pongal*. The menu should be decided after consulting the beneficiaries," he said.

A server at the canteen near Majestic said, "This is not a restaurant, it's a government kitchen. What can you expect? People eat here only because they have no other option. The government knows this." Starved of funds The core problem behind many of the concerns raised about Indira Canteens lies in the budget. In its early years, the programme received substantial State funding — ₹100 crore in 2017-18, which increased to around ₹145 crore the following year to support rapid expansion across Bengaluru and other urban centres. At the launch, the then Food Minister U. T. Khader had promised that Indira Canteens would serve better food than Tamil Nadu's Amma Canteens with no compromise on quality. After 2019, the BJP government was accused of 'starving' the programme of funds, leaving the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to scrape by with meagre resources. By the 2022-23 budget, just ₹60 crore was earmarked for Indira Canteens, a fraction of the original allocation. When Siddaramaiah returned to power in 2023, there was hope that the programme he had once championed would finally see the revival it deserved. While he spoke of revival, kitchens remain underfunded and under-maintained.

When Indira Canteens were launched in 2017, the plan was to establish one outlet in each of Bengaluru's 198 wards, combining with mobile units in areas where space was not readily available. In the first phase, 18 mobile 'canteens on wheels' were introduced to serve meals near bus stands, hospitals and other high-footfall public spaces. At its peak, the network grew to include around 174 permanent canteens and over 20 mobile units across Bengaluru. However, not all of them functioned consistently over the years, with several units becoming irregular due to funding and operational constraints. At present, more than 190 Indira Canteens are operational in Karnataka. In 2024, the Chief Minister had announced addition of 50 more canteens in Bengaluru at an estimated cost of ₹220 crore, with the cost being shared between the State and the erstwhile BBMP.

Glimmer of hope for revival The possibility of a potential revival of Indira Canteens through renewed corporation funding is one option. Under the newly-formed GBA, five city corporations will, for the first time, prepare separate budgets. Corporation Commissioners have acknowledged that many canteens need more than infrastructural upgrades. They also need improvements to their menu to better serve users. There is some hope that the upcoming State Budget would focus on this flagship scheme.

Aiming for 50 more airports in 5 years, will provide huge real estate opportunities: Aviation Minister Naidu

Noting that airports are the "scaffolding" for the real estate sector, the minister also said that he is working actively to address issues related to height restrictions for buildings near airports without compromising on aviation safety. India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets and currently, there are 165 operational airports in the country. On an average, a new airport or a new terminal is built every 33 days, Mr. Naidu said. He was speaking at the National Urban and Real Estate Development Conclave 2026 organised by real estate industry body Naredco in the national capital. Highlighting the growth potential of the country's real estate sector, he said the segment is projected to be worth USD 1 trillion by 2030 and further increase to be valued at \$5-7 trillion by 2047. He also emphasised the importance of focusing on quality of living along with the standards of living in real estate development. The focus on standards of living will create assets and with the focus on quality of living "we will be creating well being", the minister said amid issues of air pollution.

U.S., Taiwan finalize deal to cut tariffs, boost purchases of U.S. goods

Trump administration officials signed a final reciprocal trade agreement that confirmed a 15% U.S. tariff rate for imports from Taiwan, while committing Taiwan to a schedule for eliminating or lowering tariffs on nearly all U.S. goods. The document released by the U.S. Trade Representative's office on Thursday (February 12, 2026) also commits Taiwan to significantly boost purchases of U.S. goods from 2025 through 2029, including \$44.4 billion of liquefied natural gas and crude oil, \$15.2 billion of civil aircraft and engines, \$25.2 billion of power grid equipment and generators, marine and steelmaking equipment. The agreement adds technical language and specific details to a trade framework deal first reached in January that cut tariffs on Taiwanese goods, including from its powerhouse semiconductor industries, to 15% from the 20% initially imposed by Mr. Trump. That puts Taiwan on an equal footing with its closest Asian export competitors, South Korea and Japan.

The January agreement included a pledge by Taiwan that its companies would invest \$250 billion to boost production of semiconductors, energy and artificial intelligence in the U.S., including \$100 billion already committed by Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. The Taiwan government would guarantee another \$250 billion in U.S. investments, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said. The final language did not provide further details on those investments, but said Taiwan's representative office in the U.S. would collaborate with U.S. authorities to facilitate additional new greenfield and brownfield investments "in strategic high-technology manufacturing sectors, including AI, semiconductors, and advanced electronics."

The deal will immediately eliminate Taiwan's tariffs of up to 26% on many U.S. agricultural imports, including beef, dairy and corn. But some tariffs, including the current 40% tariff on pork belly and 32% on ham, will only fall to 10%, according to the tariff schedule. The U.S. said under the deal, Taiwan will remove non-tariff barriers on motor vehicles and accept U.S. auto safety standards as well as those on medical devices and pharmaceuticals. U.S. Trade Repre-



The deal will immediately eliminate Taiwan's tariffs of up to 26% on many U.S. agricultural imports, including beef, dairy and corn

sentative Jamieson Greer said in a statement that the agreement will boost export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, fishermen, workers, and manufacturers. "This agreement also builds on our longstanding economic and trade relationship with Taiwan and will significantly enhance the resilience of our supply chains, particularly in high-technology sectors," Mr. Greer added. For the first 11 months of 2025, the U.S. trade deficit with Taiwan ballooned to \$126.9 billion from \$73.7 billion for all of 2024, largely due to the large increase in imports of high-end AI chips from Taiwan, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

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



ings and practices which were not in congruence with his 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. 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 happen-

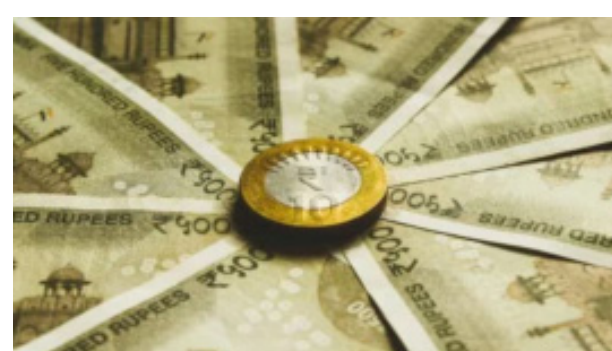
Bond yields jump to 6.93% as fears over inflation, monetary tightening loom

India's benchmark 10-year bond yield on Friday shot up by 6 basis points to 6.93 per cent from the previous day's close of 6.87 per cent, raising concern over the possibility of a rise in inflation and monetary policy tightening by the Reserve Bank of India. High Brent crude prices of over \$ 100 per barrel intensified inflationary fears, while the rupee's slide below 94 level against the dollar compounded pressure on the country's fiscal and external balances amid the backdrop of ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which has rattled global markets and heightened risk aversion.

With Friday's rise, bond yield has risen by 26 basis points in the last one month. Bond prices and yields move in opposite directions — when prices rise, yields fall and vice-versa. On the other hand, benchmark bond yield in the US has risen by 48 basis points to 4.42 per cent in the last one month. In Japan, the five-year yield rose 3 basis points to a record high of 1.770 per cent, while the benchmark 10-year yield rose 3 bps to 2.300 per cent. The rise in yields in the last couple of days signals a swift repricing of risk by investors, who are now demanding higher returns to compensate for mounting uncertainties. Elevated crude prices threaten to widen India's current account deficit and strain public finances through higher import bills and potential subsidy burdens. If oil rises further, yield can even cross the 7 per cent mark in the coming days, analysts said.

At the same time, a weaker rupee makes imports costlier, feeding directly into domestic inflation. A sharp rise in bond yields typically means investors can expect higher inflation and the RBI is likely to raise interest rates. Analysts said the bond market's reaction reflects deep concern over the inflation trajectory and the possible policy response from the RBI. Higher inflation expectations typically push yields upward, as investors anticipate tighter monetary conditions or prolonged policy rigidity. The RBI kept the main policy instrument — Repo rate — unchanged at 5.25 per cent and hiked the GDP forecast to 7.4 per cent from an earlier estimate of 7.3 per cent in the February 2026 policy review. It also revised upward the projection for consumer price index (CPI) inflation to 2.1 per cent from 2 per cent.

The RBI is likely to keep the Repo rate unchanged in the forthcoming policy review in April and watch the inflation trajectory. The US Federal Reserve had kept the rates unchanged at 3.50-3.75 in its meeting on March 18. While



the pump prices of petrol and diesel have been held steady by the government, the sharp increase in the crude oil prices will soon impact the economy which is driven by petrochemicals and their intermediates across the entire supply chain of manufacturing and logistics. "Inflation is expected to rise on a low base of previous quarters on the back of expensive raw materials which may compel the RBI to start increasing rates sooner than the market's expectations," said Phanisekhar Ponangi, Co- Founder and head of Investments, Mavenark.

Moreover, the rising trade deficit on the back of expensive crude imports and reduced remittances from West Asia are likely to exert a downward pressure on the rupee. "The RBI will be mindful of proactively addressing inflationary pressures before it leads to a wage-price spiral which can be extremely challenging to manage," Ponangi said. The surge in yields is not an isolated move but a sharp adjustment to a rapidly deteriorating macroeconomic environment. Investors are recalibrating their positions in the wake of rising external risks, currency fragility and the inflationary impact of expensive energy. Unless there is a meaningful easing in crude prices or stabilization in the rupee, upward pressure on bond yields is likely to persist. The market is indicating the fear of economic disruption which can range from a few months to a few years. As the war drags on longer, the risk of damage to critical oil infrastructure rises manifold along with multi-faceted escalatory actions being resorted to by both sides. What started as a short-term price risk for oil is quickly turning into long-term supply risk which is spooking the markets.

Women saw higher wage growth than men across all job types in 2025

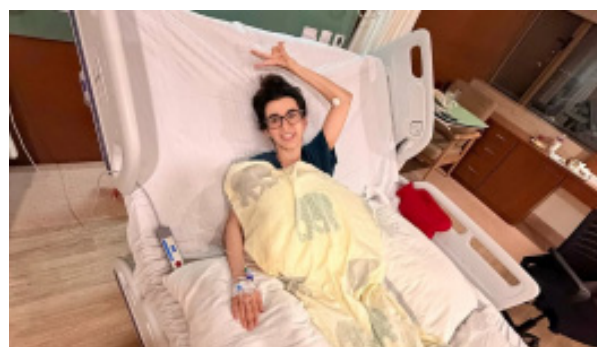
Wages for women rose at a faster pace than for men across all three categories of jobs in 2025, according to the statistics ministry's Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for the last calendar year, released on Friday. According to the data, 2025 saw earnings of females rise 7.2%, 8.8%, and 5.4% for salaried jobs, self-employment, and casual labour, respectively, compared to 2024. Meanwhile, earnings for males posted a growth of 5.8% and 8% for salaried jobs and self-employment, respectively, but fell by 0.2% for casual labour. To be sure, women continue to earn much less than men. In salaried jobs, females in 2025 earned only 76% of what males earn, little changed from 2022. Meanwhile, in casual labour, income inequality saw slight improvement in 2025, with females earning 69% of what males did, up from 66% in 2024. Women, however, fare the worst when it comes to self-employment, earning only 36% of what males earn, the PLFS data showed.

In another positive development, the PLFS — the Indian government's flagship jobs survey — showed that the proportion of women in salaried jobs rose to 18.2% in 2025 from 16.6% in 2024, with the fraction in self-employment declining to 64.2% from 66.5%. Casual labour saw an increase to 17.6% from 16.9%. The trend was somewhat similar for males. At an all-India level, the proportion of employed with salaried jobs rose to 23.6% from 22.4% in 2024. Salaried jobs are indicative of higher-quality employment as they provide social security cover, among other benefits.

The PLFS data for 2025 comes days after the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) made public the results of its Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), which showed that pay in India's informal sector rose by just 3.9% in 2025, less than half the 13% increase seen in 2023-24 (October-Sep-

tember). At the same time, the informal sector saw a sharp reduction in the number of establishments it added, leading to far fewer workers being hired. As per the ASUSE survey, the number of establishments increased by 58.5 lakh, down from an increase of 83.5 lakh in 2023-24, to 7.92 crore. As a result, fewer jobs were created: 74.5 lakh in 2025 compared to 1.1 crore in the 12 months ended September 2024. In terms of the headline figures, the annual PLFS data showed that India's rural unemployment rate declined to 2.4% in 2025 from 2.5% in 2024, while urban joblessness fell to 4.8% from 5%. However, the rural Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) — the fraction of the population seeking work — inched down slightly to 62.8% in 2025, suggesting a smaller proportion of rural Indians were looking for jobs than the previous year. Unemployment among the youth — or persons in the 15-29 years age bracket — declined to 9.9% in 2025 from 10.3% the previous year, although female youth unemployment edged up to 11.3% from 11.1%. "Using the projected population figures of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the absolute number of workers aged 15 years and above has been estimated. On average, 61.6 crore persons (aged 15 years and above) were employed, in usual status (ps+ss), in the country during January-December 2025, of which 41.6 crore were male and 20.0 crore were female," the statistics ministry said in a statement. Usual status (ps+ss) refers to the method used to measure labour market activity, with 'ps' standing for Principal Status and 'ss' for Subsidiary Status. The estimate of the labour force in the usual status includes people who either worked or were available for work for a relatively long part of the 365 days preceding the date of survey as well as those persons among the remaining population who had worked at least for 30 days during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey.

'Worst 14 days of my life': Saba Azad recalls 'nasty parasite' that led to hospital nightmare, 4kg weight loss



Actor Saba Azad took to social media to share a recent health update, revealing that she was diagnosed with a parasitic infection due to Cyclospora cayetanensis that landed her in the hospital and led to a drastic 4kg weight loss. In the caption of her Instagram post, she explained her predicament in detail: "Worst 14 days of my life. Cyclospora cayetanensis, you nasty piece of work!! For someone who only eats home food and carries her water bottle everywhere, this bug came out of nowhere—at the busiest time of the year for me. I've lost 4 kgs that I didn't have to spare in two weeks and can barely walk. One day I'm training twice a day, doing pull-ups and lifting heavy, and the next I'm half my size, without the strength to lift a toothpick, let alone weights."

Azad also encouraged her fans to wash produce thoroughly before consuming to avoid ending up in her situation. "So pls for the love of your gut wash your salad leaves and veg like your life depends on it — cause sometimes it really does!! ?? Our new method is Baking soda + veggie

wash," she added in the caption. Dr Aishwarya R, Consultant-Infectious Diseases, Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru, explained that Cyclospora keratinensis is a parasite that infects drinking water or fresh produce. "Common sources are salads, including the seasoning that is used for salads like lettuce, coriander, as well as anything that is washed and directly added to salads and not cooked," she shared, adding that apart from these, fruits such as berries are also potential culprits. Saba Azad's Health Scare: How a Rare Parasite Led to Hospitalization and 4kg Weight Loss Wash your greens thoroughly. (Source: Freepik)

Symptoms and treatment Dr Aishwarya pointed out that symptoms of this condition include nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhoea, and multiple episodes, which may lead to dehydration. "Although it can occur throughout the year in warm, humid, tropical countries, in relatively cooler countries, the disease peaks around early summer," she warned. Dr Kiran Shinde, Consultant — Gastroenterologist, Sahyadri Super Speciality Hospital, Hadapsar, Pune said that treatment with antibiotics and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole will be the first choice. "It is equally important that supportive treatment (hydration and electrolyte replacement) be provided as well. The clostridium will respond to therapy with an appropriate dose in two to three days," he said. He mentioned that proper hygiene for both food and water will help to prevent possibly contracting Cyclospora. "Thoroughly washing raw vegetables and salad leaves, eating only well-cooked foods, and drinking only safe water are the most important preventative steps," said Dr Shinde. Adding that chemicals do not kill Cyclospora, unlike many other parasites, he reiterated that it is necessary to wash food properly and ensure food is safe to eat.

'What is the best way for a severely underweight person to gain muscle mass rapidly?'

For someone who is severely underweight, the idea of gaining muscle quickly can be tempting—but the body doesn't work well with shortcuts. It needs the right fuel, time, and a gradual build-up to grow stronger. This question recently came up on Quora, where a user asked: "What's the best way for a severely underweight person to gain muscle mass rapidly?" To get an answer, we spoke with Edwina Raj, Head of Services — Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, at Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore, who explains that the focus should be on steady, healthy weight gain alongside gradual muscle building, rather than rushing for visible results. "The safest and most effective way is to first focus on eating more healthy calories with balanced meals," the nutritionist says. This includes a mix of proteins, carbohydrates, and healthy fats, along with enough water, rest, and sleep to support recovery.

However, she also cautions against doing too much too soon. "It is very important to avoid heavy workouts at the beginning and stay consistent with small progress," she adds.

Weight gain and muscle building go together Raj emphasises that you don't need to choose between gaining weight and building muscle. "For a severely underweight person, the focus should be on healthy weight gain from the beginning while slowly adding light muscle-building exercises," she explains. The body needs enough fuel to grow stronger, so both should happen together in a balanced way. muscle it is very important to consult a doctor or nutrition expert to create a safe and personalized plan that supports steady weight gain, builds muscle gradually, and protects overall health. (Image: Pexels)

What kind of diet works best?

A simple, easy-to-digest diet is ideal, especially early on. Foods like rice, oats, bananas, cooked vegetables, eggs,



dairy or plant-based alternatives, lentils, chicken, or fish can support steady progress. Adding nuts and seeds in small amounts helps boost calories without causing digestive discomfort. Raj recommends eating smaller, frequent meals instead of large portions to improve absorption and prevent bloating, while limiting very oily, spicy, or processed foods.

Ease into strength training "Strength training is very important for building muscle," Raj says, but beginners should start slow. Simple exercises like squats, push-ups, lunges, and light weights done 2-3 times a week are enough at first. The focus should remain on correct form, gradually increasing intensity as the body adapts. Don't ignore underlying health issues Before trying to gain weight rapidly, it's important to rule out possible health concerns. Conditions like thyroid imbalance, digestive problems, infections, diabetes, or nutrient deficiencies can affect weight and overall health. "A doctor may suggest basic tests, review eating habits, and check metabolism to make sure the body is ready," she says—helping create a safe, personalised plan for steady weight and muscle gain.

Three warning signs of osteoporosis men frequently ignore

Bone loss doesn't happen overnight, but the problem is, it rarely announces itself clearly. In men, especially, the early signs are subtle, easy to dismiss, and often ignored until a fracture forces attention. While osteoporosis is often seen as a woman's condition, Dr J V Srinivas, Lead Senior Consultant — Orthopaedics & Joint Replacement, Aster RV Hospital, notes that men are just as vulnerable. In fact, osteoporotic fractures affect one in five men over the age of 50; yet many cases go undiagnosed because men are less likely to undergo routine bone density testing. One of the earliest signs is a gradual loss of height. "The body experiences height loss through its gradual progression, which indicates that compression fractures affect the spine when people experience decreased bone strength," Dr Srinivas explains. However, many men attribute this to normal ageing rather than underlying bone loss.

Persistent back pain is another red flag. "Persistent or unexplained back pain may result from tiny fractures in the vertebrae," he says, adding that it is often mistaken for muscle strain, poor posture, or routine wear and tear. A slightly hunched or forward-bent posture (kyphosis) can also signal weakening bones. Dr Srinivas notes that men may overlook this as a natural change with age, allowing the condition to progress unnoticed.

When "minor" injuries aren't so minor One of the most telling warning signs is fractures from minor incidents. "The occurrence of bone fractures through small accidents functions as a critical warning sign," he says. Healthy bones usually withstand minor trauma, so such fractures should not be ignored.

Dr Srinivas also highlights a more subtle but important change. "People who experience discomfort that leads them to avoid physical activity display decreased physical strength and balance, and they have a higher chance of bone fractures." This gradual decline in strength and mobility often goes unnoticed but significantly increases fracture risk over time. What makes osteoporosis particularly dangerous is that it is largely silent. There are often no obvious symptoms until a fracture occurs, by which time bone loss may already be advanced.

He adds that several factors can quietly increase risk,



While osteoporosis is often seen as a woman's condition, Dr J V Srinivas, Lead Senior Consultant — Orthopaedics & Joint Replacement, Aster RV Hospital, notes that men are just as vulnerable. In fact, osteoporotic fractures affect one in five men over the age of 50; yet many cases go undiagnosed because men are less likely to undergo routine bone density testing.

including ageing, low testosterone levels, smoking, alcohol use, long-term steroid treatment, and chronic conditions like diabetes or kidney disease. Despite this, many men delay seeking help due to the common misconception that osteoporosis primarily affects women. Early recognition is key. As Dr Srinivas emphasises, identifying these subtle changes and not dismissing them as "just ageing" can make a significant difference. Screening tools like bone density scans can help detect the condition early—before it leads to serious fractures and complications.

Tejaswin Shankar falls short of 8000 Mark in Decathlon amid wind-assisted performance



GNS News Agency, March 30

Decathlete Tejaswin Shankar started his outdoor season with a solid outing at the David Noble Relays 2026 in Texas on Friday. Competing for the first time in Decathlon this season, Shankar scored 7947 points falling 53 points short of 8000m mark in a wind-aided competition. While Tejaswin bettered his previous personal best of 7826 points, this performance won't be eligible for any records as three events (100m run, 110m hurdles, and Long Jump) were wind aided. The wind assistance in 100m and Long Jump were on the higher side with +4.7 m/s and +4.5 m/s while the 110m hurdles had +2.5 m/s reading. As per the rule of World Athletics, a combined events score is eligible for record if the average wind assistance for 3 events — 100m, long jump, 110 hurdles is less than 2m/s but in Tejaswin's

case it is 3.9m/s. Tejaswin registered personal best in 100m (10.59s), 110m hurdles (14.09s), Long Jump (7.66m), Shot Put (13.98m), and Pole Vault (4.35m) with the later two being without wind assistance. Despite the wind assistance, Tejaswin had a great outing overall ending his day one on 4454 points.

On the second day, he didn't lose the momentum and started with wind-assisted personal best in 110m hurdles (14.09s) and then a lifetime best of 4.35m in pole vault. He accumulated 6759 points from the 8 events, and the 8000 was looking inevitable, but then a sudden momentum dip in last two events stopped him from achieving that figure. "Not quite the 8000+ we were all hoping for as the oxygen ran out towards the end," said Tejaswin via a social media post after missing out on 8000 points. Last month, Tejaswin won a gold medal in the Heptathlon event at the Asian Indoor Championships making it his first major combined events gold medal. Tejaswin scored a total of 5993 points breaking his own national record of 5650 points from 2021 and the championship record of 5928 points from 2012. He aims to be the first Indian to break the 8,000-point barrier and has been training with a group of competitive decathletes is an advantage. "The idea is to be among 8,000-point calibre athletes so I can break that barrier. There are two guys here who are around 7800-7900 points. So it's a very strong group. Pole vault is one of their stronger events and one of my weaker ones. So I want to be where I'm pushed in training every day. Unlike in Delhi, where I was practising by myself and coaching myself," he told this paper earlier.

R Ashwin picks CSK's playing XI without MS Dhoni: 'This should be ideal'

CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson will open the innings for Chennai in IPL 2026. (Photo: CSK/X) CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson will open the innings for Chennai in IPL 2026. (Photo: CSK/X) Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin picked his Chennai Super Kings playing XI without MS Dhoni after the talismanic wicketkeeper-batter was ruled out of the first two weeks of IPL 2026 on Saturday. The 39-year-old picked Kartik Sharma to bat at number 7, a slot that Dhoni may have occupied had he been fit and ready to play the first match against Rajasthan Royals (RR) in Guwahati on Monday. They will play their first home match of IPL 2026 against the Punjab Kings on April 3.



ing Rs 14.2 crore each on both players, and in Dhoni's absence, both players could have key roles to play for the franchise in the initial matches of IPL 2026. Dhoni had led CSK for a major part of IPL 2025, after Ruturaj Gaikwad was ruled out of the tournament due to a fractured elbow. The five-time champions endured a torrid season, finishing 10th on the points table. A few months after the season finished, Ashwin announced his retirement from IPL cricket in a bid to play overseas leagues. He was set to become the first male player to feature in the Big Bash League last season, having signed up to play for Sydney Thunder, but had to withdraw after undergoing a knee operation.

"So! This should be ideal. Ruturaj, Samson, Urvil, Brevis, Dube, Sarfaraz/Ayush, Kartik Sharma, Akeal, Noor, Henry, Khaleel, Kamboj/Ghosh/Rahul/Gopal. After 2 weeks, there will be enough info available to tweak if needed," Ashwin wrote on X (formerly Twitter) on Saturday. Dhoni's absence from the first two weeks of the tournament should clear the path for Sanju Samson to take the gloves for the five-time champions. The 31-year-old was swapped from RR ahead of IPL 2026, in exchange for Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran in one of the most high-profile transfers in recent history.

CSK also splurged big at the 2025 auction on two youngsters — Kartik Sharma and Prashant Veer — spend-

MS Dhoni ruled out for first two weeks of IPL 2026 with injury, confirm CSK

Chennai Super Kings talisman MS Dhoni has suffered a setback ahead of his Indian Premier League return with a calf strain ruling him out of the first two weeks of the season, the franchise confirmed on Saturday. CSK are set to open their campaign against the Rajasthan Royals at the Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati on Monday evening.



In Dhoni's absence, CSK are likely to hand the wicket-keeping gloves to India opener Sanju Samson, who is considered the former India captain's successor at the franchise. Samson was traded in for Rs 18 crore ahead of the IPL 2026 auction last December, with CSK exchanging Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran to the Rajasthan Royals for his services. Dhoni has exclusively played in the IPL since announcing his retirement from international cricket in August 2020. Last season, Dhoni featured in all 14 matches for the Super Kings, aggregating 196 runs at 24.50 with a 135.17 strike rate. Dhoni also made a captaincy comeback early on in the season last year after an elbow fracture ruled captain Ruturaj Gaikwad out of the tournament. CSK eventually bagged the wooden spoon in 2025, finishing with only four wins in 14 matches. At 44, Dhoni's appearance at any point of the tournament this edition will make him the oldest India to ever feature in the

league, surpassing former Mumbai leg-spinner Praveen Tambe. The ageing CSK talisman has suffered from multiple injuries in recent seasons. Despite carrying a knee injury in the 2023, Dhoni eventually led CSK to their record-equaling fifth IPL title, beating Gujarat Titans in the final. Dhoni remains as the most capped player in the IPL and is one of only four players alongside Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Manish Pandey to appear for all 19 seasons of the tournament. In 278 matches, Dhoni has aggregated 5439 runs besides the 205 dismissals from behind the stumps.

Tiger Woods arrest: Golf legend jailed on suspicion of DUI after rollover car crash in Florida

Only days into his return to professional golf, PGA Tour legend Tiger Woods was arrested on Friday for driving under the influence (DUI) after surviving a rollover car crash near his home in Florida. Woods, according to authorities, displayed signs of "impairment" after his arrest. The Martin County police soon released a mugshot of the 50-year-old Woods on Friday evening. His eyes appearing bloodshot, Woods was taken to the Martin County jail in Florida. Authorities ruled out the influence of alcohol, though Woods refused a urinalysis. Woods was charged with a DUI with property damage and refusal to submit to a lawful test.



Martin County Sheriff John Budensiek told reporters that Woods was moving at "a high rate of speed" before suffering a collision with another car. Woods' vehicle then rolled over onto the driver's side. According to reports, neither party suffered any injuries. "DUI investigators came to the scene here, and Mr. Woods did exemplify signs of impairment. They did several tests on him. Of course, he did explain the injuries and the surgeries that he had. We did take that into account, but they did do some in-depth roadside tests," Budensiek added. "We really weren't suspicious of alcohol being involved in this case, and that proved to be true at the jail. ... But when it came time for us to ask for a urinalysis test, he refused. And, so, he's been charged with

DUI, with property damage and refusal to submit to a lawful test." This was at least the third time Woods has been involved in a car crash, most recently in February 2021 when his SUV ran off a coastal road in Los Angeles at a high rate of speed, leading to multiple leg and ankle injuries. Woods said later doctors considered amputation. Woods has played 11 tournaments since that 2021 crash, not finishing closer than within 16 shots of the winner the four times he finished 72 holes. He also was arrested on a DUI charge in 2017 when south Florida police found him asleep behind the wheel of his car that was parked awkwardly with damage to the driver's side. —

IPL 2026, RCB vs SRH Predicted Playing 11: Who will replace Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins; Will Venkatesh Iyer start ahead of Devdutt Padikkal



GNS News Agency, March 30

IPL 2026, RCB vs SRH Predicted Playing 11 Today Match, Full Squad The 18th season of the Indian Premier League will kick off on Saturday with a replay of the 2016 final between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Chinnaswamy. However, a lot has changed since that night; the hosts themselves won the title last season. However, coming into the opening encounter of the showpiece event, both teams have had their fair share of issues, and the team that can better fill the shoes of their big players might come out on top. Regardless, RCB on paper has looked a better-balanced side compared to SRH, who have all the artillery in their batting department.

And Chinnaswamy is one of those surfaces which will be conducive to batting with its small dimensions, hence it

might come down to which team has enough power on the night to hit more sixes that will fumble across. While Bengaluru have Rajat Patidar as the captain continuing, Hyderabad will start with Ishan Kishan as the skipper due to the injury of Pat Cummins. RCB predicted XI: Phil Salt, Virat Kohli, Venkatesh Iyer, Rajat Patidar, Jitesh Sharma, Krunal Pandya, Romario Shepherd, Tim David, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jacob Duffy, Suyash Sharma, Mangesh Yadav/Rasikh DarSRH predicted XI: Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan (captain), Heinrich Klaasen (wicketkeeper), Aniket Verma, Liam Livingstone, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshal Patel, Harsh Dube, Brydon Carse and Jaydev Unadkat.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Squad: Virat Kohli, Philip Salt, Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar(c), Tim David, Jitesh Sharma(w), Krunal Pandya, Romario Shepherd, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Suyash Sharma, Jacob Duffy, Josh Hazlewood, Rasikh Salam Dar, Venkatesh Iyer, Mangesh Yadav, Vihaan Malhotra, Vicky Ostwal, Abhinandan Singh, Jacob Bethell, Jordan Cox, Swapnil Singh, Kanishk Chouhan, Satvik Deswal

Sunrisers Hyderabad Squad: Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Ishan Kishan(w/c), Liam Livingstone, Heinrich Klaasen, Aniket Verma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshal Patel, Jaydev Unadkat, Harsh Dube, Eshan Malinga, Shivam Mavi, Smaran Ravichandran, Zeeshan Ansari, Salil Arora, Kamindu Mendis, Brydon Carse, David Payne, Praful Hinge, Sakib Hussain, Krains Fuletra, Amit Kumar

Jasprit Bumrah joins Mumbai Indians squad ahead of IPL 2026 opener against Kolkata Knight Riders

GNS News Agency, March 30

Ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah has linked up with the Mumbai Indians (MI) squad on the eve of their first Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 game against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday. The Indian Express understands that the 32-year-old joined the MI squad on Friday evening and will have his first practice session on Saturday. Bumrah did not practice with the MI squad on Friday, as he was asked to report to the Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru, where his workload has been monitored.



"He has joined the MI on Friday night, and he will be coming for practice on Saturday," a source confirmed. Bumrah played a key role in India's run to the T20 World Cup victory, and he was adjudged Player of the Final against New Zealand. He was in the COE for a few days after the medical team advised the board to send the ace pacer to work on his strength and conditioning. With India playing Afghanistan in a short series after the IPL and then touring England in July, the board will be keeping an eye on Bumrah's workload.

The board will remain in constant touch with him through the IPL. Bumrah has taken 186 wickets for the Mumbai

Indians in the league, and the franchise will once again hope that he keeps his form intact for the two-month long franchise cricket tournament. The five-time IPL champions had a lengthy training session at Wankhede Stadium on Friday, where their key players had a long stint in the nets. Former captain and batting talisman Rohit Sharma batted for a long time along with current skipper Hardik Pandya and India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav. Two foreign players, Will Jacks and Mitchell Santner, are yet to join the squad. MI have not won their opening IPL game since 2012.

Rohit Sharma is chilling and pulling: 15 kilos gone, captaincy anxieties gone this IPL

GNS News Agency, March 30

Few weeks back, before the tense India-England World T20 showdown at Wankhede, Rohit Sharma strolled around the turf like a park-regular on a leisurely morning walk. He greeted teammates, met old friends, shared laughs, dispensed advice and kept answering questions about his weight. Kuldeep Yadav got a half-hug, Suryakumar Yadav a few tips before the toss and bowling coach Morne Morkel some insight about the Mumbai's sea breeze. Later, England coach Brendon McCullum's weighty one-liner had him in splits. "Where's the rest of you?" he asks the beaming star. "All gone!" and when former England captain Eoin Morgan too chimed in on the weight loss, he laughs, "I am chilling". Rohit is in that kind of mood these days.



Probably the fittest he has been in over a decade, he seems at peace with the world around him. The angst of his curtailed Test career, the regret of losing IPL captaincy, those days of intrigue and bitterness seem like events from past life. Rohit is working towards a second wind. One event at a time — IPL now, 50-over World Cup next year. Insiders say that this is the first time Rohit has joined the Mumbai Indians pre-season camp from Day 1. Unlike in the past, when he used to be India's all-format player, he now has time to get into the IPL bubble early and switch on the T20 mode. Being light on his feet is further beautifying his trademark grace game. The proof is a just 15-second reel put out by MI's social media team from a training session.

Few weeks back, before the tense India-England World T20 showdown at Wankhede, Rohit Sharma strolled around the turf like a park-regular on a leisurely morning walk. He greeted teammates, met old friends, shared laughs, dispensed advice and kept answering questions about his weight.

But for the full-beard and naturally-aged face, his shape seems to have shifted to the time when he was in his early 20s. The sharpness of his reflexes, the intuition to judge the length quickly and the seamless transition of weight — the traits that made him stand out as a teenager — are back. The short social-media post captures his precise trigger movement that lesser batsmen would give all their wealth for. That tiny little back and across movement of the right foot, a measured stride up by the left-leg, that nuanced front press — this text book 1-2-3 sequence puts him in the perfect position to deal with the ball that deserves to be dispatched to the leg-side.

comments section has a crowd of "thumbs up".

As the first robin is said to be the harbinger of a spring, in cricket it is the full-batted Sachin Tendulkar straight drive or Virat Kohli's special cover drive. In Rohit's case it's the pull that is gracefully guided from the hips to outside the boundary.

The 15 kgs lost — mostly around the waist — ensures the swift swirl of the torso to punish the short ball. The firm base of the feet gives authority to the shot that is hit from the middle of the bat. This is a net session shoot, there aren't cameras to trace the trajectory of the ball. It doesn't need to. The connection is so good that the ball is sure to land on the upper tiers of Wankhede, where MI play their first game against KKR on Sunday. The short Rohit clip has a hazy frame of a budding MI batting star in the background. He is Naman Dhir, a smart 2024 MI buy at Rs 20 lakh. He proved he was far better than his price tag. Next year, he was retained for Rs 5 crore plus. High return of investment is expected this season, and in the years to come. Dhir follows that Rohit six with open-mouth awe and almost involuntarily shakes his head in disbelief. It is the kind of shot that turns a follower into a fan. "We are all Naman watching this Hitman special aren't we?" — goes the caption. The

The secret of a seemingly effortless serene shot is a tranquil mind. The IPL bowlers need to be warned — Rohit isn't just leaner this season, he is also in a calm and composed frame of mind. The closing of doors, at times, come as a boon. It kills unrealistic ambitions and unwise optimism. It helps to set achievable goals and thus reduces anxieties. These days Rohit isn't at crossroads, those tricky forks that tempt and come with confusing dilemmas have disappeared. The worries of his ever-dicey Test future and captaincy distractions are out of the door. Up ahead is a straight road — IPL the pit stop before the ODI World Cup.

Those in the know say that when Rohit was at the camp, the other MI stalwarts — the Team India players — were on national duty. This was the time the natural leader in the former India captain took over. Satisfied after the hectic sessions, he would spend time with the youngsters in the team. Dhir being one of them. Rohit is helping his franchise, a team that over the years has built a reputation of nursery of India players, continue a tradition. After MI's Tilak Verma, Dhir could be next in the queue outside the Indian dressing room. The 15-second clip tells you everything. A leaner Rohit pulls from the middle of the bat. Behind him, a younger man watches with his mouth open. One career finding its second wind. Another just beginning to believe what's possible.

Indies challenge Bollywood heavyweights



Breakthrough New Actor (Male) and Breakthrough New Actor (Female), respectively. Saiyaara is also nominated in the Best Film, Best Director and Best Lyrics categories apart from bagging six playback singer nominations. Jugnuma With his second directorial outing, Jugnuma, Raam Reddy has not only experimented with a narrative that challenges him as a storyteller but also expands the canvas and scale of his cinema. While box-office performances drive the film industry, cinematic achievements extend beyond that. With his much-acclaimed debut film Thithi (2015), Reddy had established the fact that he is a director to watch-out for. With his second directorial outing, Jugnuma, Reddy has not only experimented with a narrative that challenges him as a storyteller but also expands the canvas and scale of his cinema. His ingenuity is recognised as Jugnuma has secured Best Actor (Male) nomination for Manoj Bajpayee and Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male) for Deepak Dobriyal. The film is also nominated in Best cinematography and Special Effects categories, apart from getting the Best Director nod.

Homebound, which enjoyed global spotlight, is based on a real-life story of friendship between two youths from the marginalised communities in the backdrop of lockdown imposed during the pandemic. Speaking to The Indian Express earlier, Ghaywan (nominated for Best Director award) had said the idea behind Homebound was to go to the homes of those belonging to the "marginalised" section of society and not talk about them in statistics. "I wanted see what they eat, what they feel, what they aspire for, how do they rebuild their life after setbacks and what makes them leave their homes and travel all the way to the cities," says Ghaywan. Homebound has secured Best Actor (Male) nominations for Vishal Jethwa for Ishaan Khatter; and Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female) for Shalini Vatsa among others.

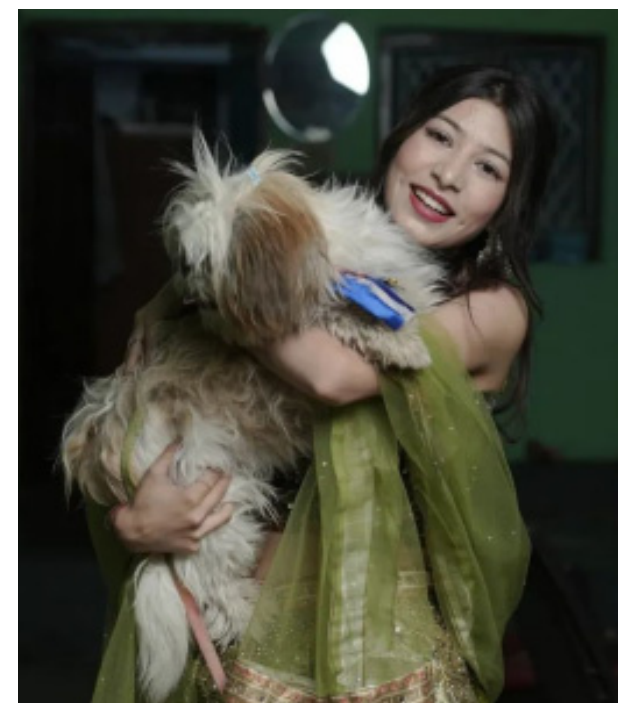
Another movie, based on a real-life story, is Superboys of Malegaon. The Reema Kagti-directorial is inspired by the movie-obsessed enterprising residents of Maharashtra's Malegaon, who led mainly by Nasir Shaikh made low-budget, parodies of Bollywood blockbusters for their local community in the 1990s. The film has got Best Actor (Male) nomination for Adarsh Gourav and Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female) for Manjiri Pupala, among others. When asked about Shaikh and his associate amateur filmmakers seeking the validation of the audience, Kagti (nominated for Best Director Award) had previously mentioned, "You create art for people to experience and you want them to understand what you are trying to say. It is validating when you create something and it goes down well. Nobody creates a movie only for themselves. It is a community experience." That's true for spoofs made on shoe-string budgets as well as big entertainers. Alaka Sahani is a prominent film critic and journalist based in Mumbai. With a career spanning over two decades, she has established herself as one of India's most authoritative voices in cinematic journalism, known for an analytical approach and insights that transcend the standard cycle of celebrity journalism. Expertise & Accolades In 2014, Alaka was honoured with the National Film Award for Best Film Critic. Her Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) citation specifically lauded her for "highlighting facets of cinema beyond glamour and gossip" and for her ability to delve into the contemporary relevance of iconic filmmakers. Her commitment to journalistic integrity was further recognised in 2019 with a Special Mention at the Red Ink Awards for her investigative feature, 'In Search of a Star'. Her article titled 'People Like Us', published in The Indian Express on March 27, 2022, was shortlisted for Red Ink

In a year dominated by big-ticket spectacles and box-office successes, the Chetak Screen Awards 2026 nominations have thrown up an unexpected contender. Aranya Sahay's Humans in the Loop — a 72-minute indie film about a tribal data labeller working at an Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centre — has emerged as one of the pleasant surprises with seven key nominations. Also, competing alongside mainstream heavyweights are Raam Reddy's Jugnuma; The Fable; Shazia Iqbal's Dhadak 2; RS Prasanna's Sitaare Zameen Par; and Reema Kagti's Superboys of Malegaon that have secured nods in several prominent categories. The awards will take place in Mumbai on April 5.

Even as Dhurandhar remains the frontrunner with 24 nominations, followed by Mohit Suri's romantic musical saga Saiyaara with 17 nods, and Neeraj Ghaywan's moving tale of friendship Homebound with 15, the fact that movies like Humans in the Loop is competing in key category such as Best Actor (Female), Breakthrough New Actor (Female) Best Sound Design, Best Film Writing (Story & Screenplay) and Breakthrough Debut Director, highlights the importance of a platform like Chetak Screen Awards when it comes celebrating talent and cinematic excellence. This fact is reiterated as Gustaakh Ishq, which exudes an old-world charm, bags four nominations and Reddy vies for Best Director trophy for his Jugnuma, which is steeped in magical realism.

Devoid of the high-intensity drama of Dhurandhar or Laxman Ramchandra Utekar's Chhaava, Humans in the Loop follows Nehma, who works at a data centre in a remote area in Jharkhand and learns to tag images to help algorithms distinguish objects after returning to her village with her daughter Dhaanu and toddler son Guntu, following her separation from her husband. Those competing for top honour in the Best Film category especially reflecting the richness and diversity of Indian cinema. Nominated in this category are Dhadak 2, Dhurandhar, Haq, Homebound, Saiyaara, Sitaare Zameen Par, Superboys Of Malegaon and Chhaava — showcasing the range of movies belonging to different genres, subjects and scale that the year 2025 produced. With the success of Saiyaara, Suri gave a fresh lease of life to musical romantic saga — which has been a staple of Indian cinema in the past. The movie introduced newcomers, Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda. After creating a box-office storm and capturing the audience's imagination, both the young actors have been nominated in the

Anurag Dobhal aka UK07 Rider's wife Ritika Chauhan welcomes baby amid ongoing family row: 'Our most precious gift'



Amid the ongoing controversy surrounding Anurag Dobhal and his allegations against his family, his wife Ritika Chauhan has welcomed their baby. Taking to her Instagram Stories, Ritika shared a picture of her newborn's feet along with a heartfelt note. She wrote, "On the divine and auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, God has blessed us with our most precious gift," and revealed the baby's birth date as March 27, 2026. Notably, Ritika did not tag her husband in the post, and Anurag has also not publicly shared the news of the baby's arrival. Reports suggest that the couple has been going through marital issues.

The baby's arrival comes amid serious allegations made by Anurag—popularly known as UK07 Rider—against his family. He had accused his parents and brother of mental harassment and even attempting to harm him. The controversy intensified after Anurag met with an accident on the Meerut-Delhi highway during an Instagram Live session. At the time, Ritika stood by him, but the two have reportedly been living separately since he moved to a friend's farmhouse for recovery. Earlier, Anurag's manager had also confirmed to SCREEN that Ritika was not staying with him during this period. During her pregnancy, Ritika had addressed the situation through a series of Instagram Stories, calling the allegations against her in-laws "baseless." She wrote, "What hurts the most is realising that the reality is very different from what is being shown or believed. Just

because I'm not an influencer or don't want to express myself online doesn't mean my story doesn't exist or doesn't matter." She further expressed her desire to keep the family united, adding, "As a woman, all I have ever wanted is for my home to stay united. No girl ever wishes to see her family go through something like this. I have always tried my best to fulfill my responsibilities as a wife with sincerity and respect. Now, I carry an even greater responsibility—my unborn child. This little life does not deserve to be surrounded by stress and pain, yet it is affecting us deeply."

Ritika also hinted that she would soon share her side of the story, saying she had initially avoided speaking publicly but felt compelled to respond after the allegations surfaced. "I don't want to carry assumptions or negativity just to feed online noise. It's not just affecting me; it's affecting my family too. I have a life beyond all this, a beautiful one, where I'm holding onto the most precious experience—my baby. And I refuse to let any negativity surround something so pure and untouched. I'm choosing peace, for myself and for my family," she wrote. Meanwhile, Anurag continues to update fans about his health on social media. In his most recent post, shared three days ago, he revealed that his right leg is completely numb and that he is unable to move it. He also showed stitches near his kidney, stating that the injury has affected his leg. "I have no idea how I will recover from this," he said. Despite his recent accusations against his family, Anurag's social media feed previously featured several moments with them, including a post where he took his mother out for shopping, captioned: "Every boy has this dream."

Vijay Sethupathi releases first look of Love Oh Love

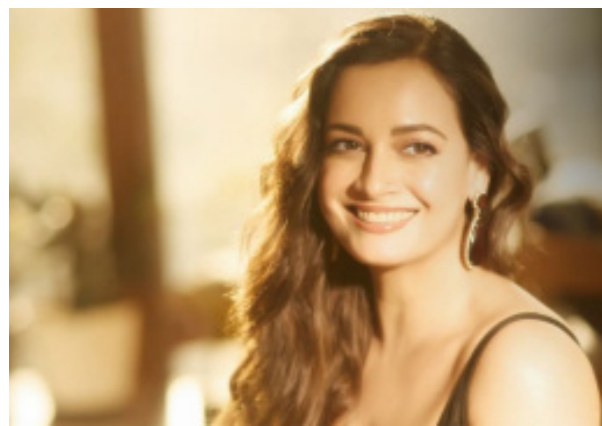
Chennai: Leading south star Vijay Sethupathi on Wednesday released the first look poster of the much-awaited romantic entertainer 'Love Oh Love', featuring actors Pavish Narayan and Naga Durga in the lead.

Sources close to the unit said that the film's core team met actor Vijay Sethupathi on the sets of his upcoming project 'Pocket Navel', which is being directed by Thyagarajan Kumararaja.

The actor, who launched the first look poster there, also chose to extend his warm wishes to the entire cast and crew on the occasion.

Produced by Zinema Media and Entertainment's Dinesh Raj along with Creative Entertainers & Distributors' G Dhananjeyan, 'Love Oh Love' has been written and directed by Magesh Rajendran.

'There's a trend to enjoy, celebrate jingoism': Dia Mirza responds to comparisons between Dhurandhar, Anubhav Sinha's IC 814 series



India is currently gripped by Dhurandhar fever. The sequel to Aditya Dhar's December release has already crossed the Rs 1,000 crore mark within just nine days and continues its unstoppable run at the box office, with multiple shows selling out across the country. Amid the frenzy, several Bollywood actors, including Amir Khan and Boman Irani, have said they are yet to watch the film. However, actor Dia Mirza has taken a more vocal stance, commenting, "There is a trend to enjoy and celebrate jingoism." In a recent interview on The Namrata Zakaria Show, Dia spoke about how she and her team behind IC 814 faced criticism for their show based on the Kandahar hijack. The interview called Dhurandhar a "chest thumping film," and said that IC 814 was not the same, and was "called out" for that. Dia said, "The show was called out for humanising all the characters, including the terrorists. I guess it is because we are celebrating jingoism too much now. We adore it. There is a trend to enjoy and celebrate jingoism, which our show is

not. I don't regret it. It has such a balanced view and gives people the opportunity to see each side the way it was."

At a time when many in the industry have refrained from commenting on the film, Dia emphasised the importance of speaking up. "I think it is very important to be vocal as artistes. I am a big Shabana Azmi bhakt, and I follow her message that if art is not utilised to improve the lives of others, then what is the point of art. So yes, I am political, and I have a stand. And yes, I will convey that through the choices I make in the stories I tell."

She also acknowledged the cost of holding such views. "It is not easy. We are trolled regularly. Beyond that, there is all kinds of intimidation because if you are not towing the line and not in agreement with what larger forces expect, then it is not easy." When Dhurandhar released on December 5, several Bollywood celebrities took to X to praise the film. Hrithik Roshan, for instance, appreciated its scale despite differing with its politics. However, he and many others have remained silent following the release of Dhurandhar 2 on March 19. Meanwhile, much of the recent praise has come from the South Indian film industry, with actors like Allu Arjun, Jr NTR and Mahesh Babu lauding the film and its cast. Filmmakers Ram Gopal Varma and SS Rajamouli have also praised the project. At the same time, actors Prakash Raj and Divya Spandana have criticised the film, calling it "propaganda" and "jingoistic." The franchise has crossed Rs 2400 crore mark worldwide, surpassing the lifetime collection of Pushpa series and Dangal. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and reflect editorial commentary on current cinema trends and industry perspectives. This content is for informational purposes and includes reporting on unverified social media discussions and public box office claims.

Ryan Gosling-starrer earns Rs 6.17 crore amid Dhurandhar 2 craze, already minted Rs 1,599 cr worldwide



Ryan Gosling's Project Hail Mary is currently creating a rampage at the box office worldwide. However, the film's performance in India has been majorly affected due to the limited shows the Hollywood sci-fi flick has received amid the dominance Ranveer Singh-led Dhurandhar: The Revenge has created in theatres. As per trade tracker Sacnilk, the Ryan Gosling-starrer minted Rs 2.90 crore in India on Friday, and earned Rs 2.25 crore on Thursday in previews, taking its net domestic collection to Rs 5.15 crore

Project Hail Mary box office performance in IndiaThe

film began its box office journey in India on Thursday, earning Rs 2.25 crore with only 1,324 shows and an occupancy of over 48%. The film saw only a slight increase in collections on Friday as it collected Rs 2.90 crore, but the number of shows increased to 1,598 and it recorded an occupancy of 39.7%. The film's English version minted the majority of the revenue in India despite also releasing in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. From the Rs 2.90 crore, the English version alone minted Rs 2.65 crore.

The Ryan Gosling film occupied only a handful of slots in India out of the country's 34 IMAX theatres. However, fans quickly noticed this and expressed their disappointment on social media. Following the backlash, exhibitors expanded the film's IMAX presence, and on Friday, IMAX tickets were available for more than 60 shows across the country. However, the number of shows the film received in the country still remained very low. In comparison to Dhurandhar 2, the Ranveer Singh-starrer had 19,493 shows on Thursday, while Project Hail Mary had only 1,324. On Friday, Ranveer's film had 18,456 shows, whereas the latter had just 1,598 shows.

Project Hail Mary worldwide box office collection In India, while Project Hail Mary faced Dhurandhar 2 as major competition, the film is minting money across the world. The film, which released on March 20 globally, has earned \$168.5 million in worldwide collections, which is roughly Rs 1,598.78 crore. The film's performance at the box office is driven by strong word-of-mouth.

Karan Johar reviews Dhurandhar 2: Director calls it Ranveer Singh's 'career best', says debate on 'hyper alpha energy, patriotism will continue'

After sharing how he hadn't been able to watch Ranveer Singh's gigantic hit Dhurandhar 2 in theatres, Karan Johar recently took to social media to share his review of the film after finally watching the Aditya Dhar directorial — and he didn't hold back in showering praise on it. The director-producer began his review by admitting the debate around the film's "hyper alpha energy and deep rooted patriotism", but went on to laud Aditya Dhar for his direction. He also admitted that the filmmaker has created a new mainstream benchmark for others. He wrote, "The discussions on Testosterone, hyper alpha energy and deep rooted patriotism will continue as it must... BUT #DHURANDHAR2 is so much more than that ... the heart wrenching back story of Jaskirat... the heartbreaking sacrifices made for our motherland.... The humanisation and layered back story even of the antagonist... the impeccable craft... the soundscape and the all round cinematic prowess proves the brilliance and directorial command of ADITYA DHAR ... what an absolutely astounding and outstanding filmmaker he is... he not only raises the mainstream bar but also creates a new one... yeh naya director hai!!!!" Box office records todke ghusega bhi aur har record maarega bhiiii!"

Karan called Dhurandhar 2 Ranveer's career-best performance. He wrote, "Aur aur aur @ranveersingh tu kya hai yaar!????? Your career BEST work and every tear of yours, every quiet stare, each time you walk with undeniable swag you prove you are one of the greats!!! You are and will always be an artist of huge calibre for the ages.... True DHURANDHAR MOVIE STAR!!!! ...I went back to the days I watched pure solid Hindi cinema in single screens in the 70s... and came out satiated and dreamt of being a part of this business... today I am a part of the fraternity and Dhurandhar reminded me of how proud and grateful I am to be here today... @adityadhafilms @officialjostudios." Meanwhile, Gaurav Gera, who plays a pivotal role in Dhurandhar, commented on Karan's post with heart emojis. The director responded to the same and lauded



Gaurav's talent. He wrote, "You are fantastic in the film!!!! Badhai ho!!!!"

During the first week of the film's release, Karan had expressed his FOMO about not being able to watch it due to his shooting schedule. He had taken to Instagram Stories and written, "I am filming in a location that has no access to a cinema and am suffering from FOMO — Dhurandhar FOMO. I can't wait to watch it. It's so heartening to see the united love for an Indian film." Dhurandhar 2 has been receiving praise from all quarters. However, fans have pointed out that it is major stars from the South film industry who have openly lauded the film—including Rajinikanth, Jr NTR, Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, SS Rajamouli and Nagarjuna Akkineni—while many big names in Bollywood have refrained from commenting on it. In Hindi cinema, apart from Karan, Alia Bhatt has praised the film, while Ram Gopal Varma has turned out to be one of the biggest supporters of Aditya Dhar's film. Rakesh Roshan, Ameesha Patel and Shilpa Shetty have also lauded the film.