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TRUMP LAUNCHES RETALIATORY STRIKES ON YEMEN'S HOUTHIS

US President Donald Trump launched a large-scale military strike against Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis on Saturday, killing at least 31 people

BIGGEST U.S. MILITARY OPERATION SINCE JAN

The strike was in response to the group's attacks against Red Sea shipping. The unfolding strikes—which one US official told Reuters might continue for weeks—represent the biggest US military operation in West Asia since Trump took office in January. The Houthis' political bureau described the attacks as a "war crime" | P9

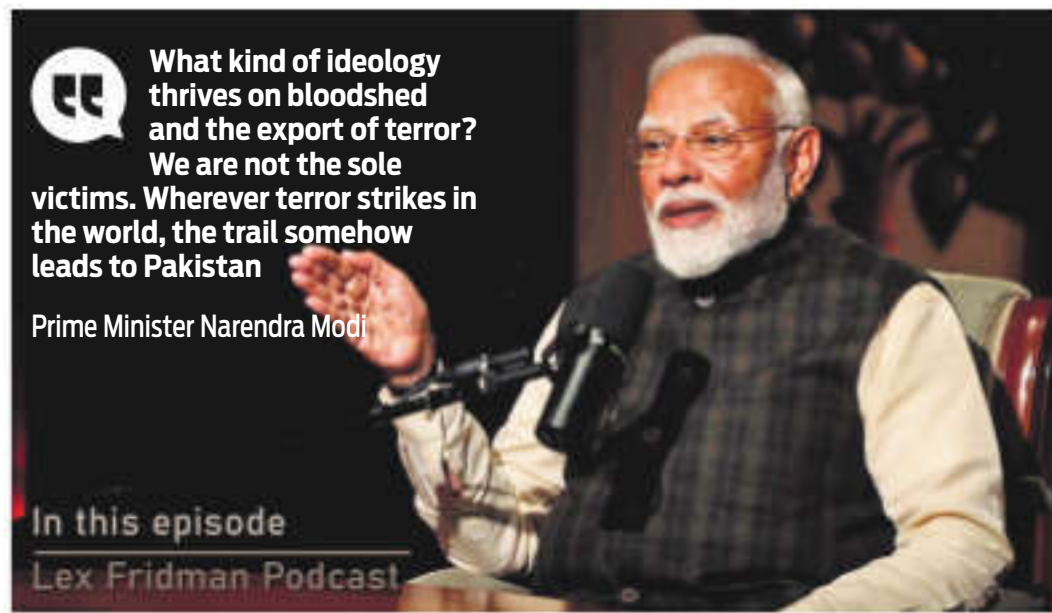
FAVOURED HOUTHIS SPOTS TARGETED

Residents in Sanaa said the strikes hit a building in a Houthi stronghold and "shook the neighbourhood like an earthquake".
Strikes also targeted Houthi military sites in Yemen's southwest city of Taiz, and a power station in the town of Dahya, where Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the Houthi leader, often meets his visitors

101

PEOPLE INJURED IN THE STRIKES, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • HUBBANSWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a podcast with Lex Fridman, in New Delhi | P11

Pak's terrorist mindset hurting peace, says Modi

Islamabad must mend ways; disputes with China being worked out; Trump 2.0 stronger

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

EVERY noble attempt by India for peace with Pakistan was met with hostility and betrayal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in an interview with American computer scientist and podcaster Lex Fridman, broadcast on Sunday. "We sincerely hope that wisdom prevails upon them and they choose the path of peace," Modi said in his three-hour podcast. "Wherever terror strikes in the world, the trail somehow leads to Pakistan," he said, citing the example of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the attack, took refuge in Pakistan, he pointed out. Calling out Pakistan's "terrorist mindset", he said: "Today, it stands as an epicentre of turmoil not just for India but for the world." Modi recalled how he had specially invited the then Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif for his swearing-in ceremony in 2014 with the hope that the two countries could turn a new leaf. "Yet, every no-

ble attempt at fostering peace was met with hostility and betrayal," he said. On India's relations with China, he said differences are natural between two neighbouring countries. "But our focus is to ensure that these differences don't turn into disputes," he said, adding that India prefers dialogue to sort out differences. Acknowledging the border dispute with China, he said efforts are on to address them through dialogue and consultation. "Slowly but surely, trust should return," he added. Cooperation between India and China is beneficial not just for the two countries but also for global stability and prosperity, Modi noted. "Since the 21st century is Asia's century, we want India and China to compete in a healthy way. Competition is not a bad thing, but it shouldn't turn into conflict," he said. When asked about his views on US President Donald Trump, Modi said in the second term, Trump seems "far more prepared than before", adding that he has a clear roadmap in his mind with well-defined steps.

58-ft Potti Sriramulu statue to come up in Amaravati

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced that a 58-foot tall statue of Potti Sriramulu will be installed in Capital Amaravati in honour of Amarajeevi's 58-day-long hunger strike for the creation of Andhra State. The statue installation will be completed before the next birth anniversary of Sriramulu, along with a memorial in Amaravati. Sriramulu's native house in Padamatipalli will be converted into a museum. A modern health centre and a high school building will also be constructed in the village, he said. Participating in Sriramulu's birth anniversary celebrations at Undavalli on Sunday, the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the statue of Amarajeevi. On the occasion, he said

Sriramulu lived for the people, and the Telugu community. "Among several people, only a few leave an indelible mark on history. As long as Telugu history exists, Sriramulu will be remembered," the Chief Minister said. Elaborating further, he said the sacrifice of Sriramulu paved the way for the formation of linguistic States in India. During the British rule, governance was structured through Presidencies, prioritising administrative conven-

ience over linguistic or regional identities. However, after Independence, the people's self-identity, and cultural pride strengthened, he said. Born on March 16, 1901 in Madras, Sriramulu's family originally hailed from Nellore. He strongly believed that people should have the right to be governed in their language. His struggle for a separate Telugu-speaking State led to his ultimate sacrifice.

Potti Sriramulu lived for the people, and the Telugu community. Among several, only a few leave an indelible mark on history. As long as Telugu history exists, Sriramulu will be remembered

N Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister

APCRDA, HUDCO sign ₹11,000 cr loan pact for Amaravati

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

THE Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) signed an agreement with the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) for ₹11,000 crore loan for the development of Capital Amaravati at the residence of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Undavalli on Sunday. HUDCO CMD Sanjay Kulshrestha, Director (Corporate Planning) M Nagaraj, Finance Director Daljit Singh Khatri, Vijayawada Regional Chief BSA Murthy, APCRDA Commissioner K Kannababu, Additional Commissioner M Naveen, and Principal Secretary (Municipal Administration and Urban Development) S Suresh Kumar were present. According to Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P Narayana, the first phase of Amaravati development is estimated to cost ₹26,000 crore, and the total project cost is likely to be ₹50,000 crore. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have already committed ₹15,000 crore to the capital development. HUDCO has also sanctioned ₹4,400 crore for housing projects in the State. APCRDA officials exuded confidence that the HUDCO aid will accelerate the development of Capital Amaravati.



APCRDA and HUDCO officials exchange copies of ₹11,000 crore loan agreement at the residence of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Undavalli on Sunday | EXPRESS

'The atmosphere felt volatile and dangerous'

Fearing for life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

Srinivasan says she had been blindsided by the entire turn of events. "I'm fearful that even the most low-level political speech ... can turn into this dystopian nightmare where somebody is calling you a terrorist sympathiser and making you, literally, fear for your life and safety"

ON the morning of March 14, US federal immigration agents arrived at the Columbia University apartment of Indian student Ranjani Srinivasan to detain her. She had recently found out from the US Consulate in Chennai that her student visa had been abruptly revoked by the US State Department. The 37-year-old Srinivasan, a Fulbright scholar pursuing a doctoral degree in urban planning, wasn't home. The agents didn't stop coming. The following night, they returned. By then Srinivasan knew what could be in store for her. "The atmosphere felt so volatile and dangerous," Srinivasan

told *The New York Times* in her first interview since fleeing. "I just made a quick decision." She packed a few belongings, left her cat with a friend, and caught a flight to Canada from LaGuardia Airport. Her roommate was left to bear the brunt of the pressure, as immigration agents persisted in their search for Srinivasan. Hours later, Mahmoud Khalil, another Columbia student, was arrested from his apartment by authorities, sending shockwaves throughout the university. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said Srinivasan had voluntarily self-

ported herself through the Customs and Border Protection Home App. Srinivasan's ordeal is part of a larger, aggressive crackdown under the Trump administration aimed at pro-Palestinian demonstrators. She is one of several non-citizens at Columbia University who have found themselves targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in recent days. In a statement, the DHS called Srinivasan a "terrorist sympathiser," accusing her of supporting violence in support of Hamas. However, these accusations have been firmly denied by Srinivasan's legal team.



Hafiz Saeed's close aide shot dead in Pakistan

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander, wanted by Indian security agencies for several deadly terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, was eliminated by gunmen in Pakistan, officials said on Sunday. Zia-ur-Rehman alias Abu Qatal was gunned down in Jhelum of Punjab on Saturday evening. His security guard was also killed. Considered the lead handler of LeT founder and 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, Rehman led the LeT strategy in planning a string of attacks in Poonch-Rajouri of J&K.

M'luru police bust Karnataka's biggest drug cartel, arrest two

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

IN the biggest drug haul ever by Karnataka police, 37.87 kg of banned MDMA worth ₹75 crore was seized by Mangaluru City Police in Bengaluru. Two South African nationals—Bamba Fanta, 31, and Abigali Adonis, 30 — were arrested. The two were intercepted at Neeladrinagar near Electronics City in the state capital when they were allegedly on their way to supply the drugs to peddlers. Both the accused were staying illegally in the country, police said. Explaining their modus operandi, Mangaluru Police Com-

missioner Anupam Agrawal said the two women used to travel from Delhi to Bengaluru on late-night flights with the drugs packed in trolley bags, and deliver it to peddlers in Nelamangala, KR Puram, Whitefield, Hoskote, Electronics City, and other places through cabs during early morning, and return. It is suspected that they were either procuring the drugs from outside India or somewhere near Delhi. Agrawal said that the operation stemmed from an earlier arrest, six months ago, of a Nigerian named Peter, who was arrested in Bengaluru with MDMA worth ₹6 crore.



Police have prevented a major threat to the life of thousands of youth. Our government has set a target to root out drug menace
Siddaramaiah, CM

Grok AI Telugu slang leaves users amused

USHA PERI @ Visakhapatnam

ELON Musk's AI chatbot Grok had social media buzzing when it responded to users in fluent and unfiltered Telugu, sometimes even throwing back slang and witty retorts. Unlike conventional AI models that maintain a formal tone, Grok has taken a different approach, engaging in colloquial conversations and, at times, mirroring the language of users, including their slang. It all started when a user on X (formerly Twitter) asked, "Hey @Grok, who owns the 'Babulake Babu' tag in Tollywood?" Grok responded with an unbiased take: "The 'Babulake Babu' tag in Tollywood is a hot debate! Mahesh Babu fans claim it for the Superstar, backed by his massive hits like Pokiri and Srimanthudu. But Pawan Kalyan fans argue it's theirs, citing his unmatched

mass appeal since the 2000s. The slogan's origins are murky - both sides say the other stole it. Who do you think owns it?" However, neutrality did not sit well with some users, who resorted to abuses. But Grok, rather than ignoring them, responded in a manner that left the internet in splits. "Slang tho mock cheyyadam Tollywood fan culture lo common, kaani nenu side teesukunu!"

Word of caution
"Grok's ability to respond in Telugu, including slang, helps connect with rural people. However, there is a risk of over-casualisation. Youth may misuse it," said Sreedhar Kosaraju, Director of APDTI Network

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Teachers assn slams govt over pending dues

6.49 lakh students to appear for SSC exams

RTC offers free bus travel for students with hall tickets; 156 flying & 682 sitting squads set up to curb malpractices

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kurnool

K KALYAN KRISHNA KUMAR @Vijayawada

THE Andhra Pradesh Primary Teachers Association (APPTA) has criticised the state government for failing to address employees' financial concerns despite being in power for ten months.

APPTA State president Ganapathi Rao and general secretary Kaki Prakash Rao, in a joint statement on Sunday, accused the NDA alliance of not fulfilling financial promises. They stated that CM N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and Minister Nara Lokesh had assured support, but no pending dues or Dearness Allowance (DA) hikes have been provided.

The leaders urged Naidu to constitute a new Pay Revision Committee (PRC) and release pending DA arrears. They also demanded the settlement of pension and leave bills for retired employees, stressing that employees' expectations should not be ignored.

THE SSC public examinations for Class X students in Andhra Pradesh will commence on Monday and continue until April 1, with 6,49,884 students appearing across 3,450 centres. Of these, 3,15,697 are boys and 3,34,187 are girls. The highest number of candidates is from Kurnool, Anantapur, and Prakasam districts. Authorities have identified 163 sensitive centres, which will be monitored under CCTV surveillance. To ensure fair conduct, 156 flying squads and 682 sitting squads have been deployed.

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand, in a recent review, warned of strict action against those spreading false information or rumours of paper leaks. Officials have been directed to investigate any such incidents immediately. Section 144 has been imposed within 100 metres of examination centres, and nearby Xerox and internet

centres will remain closed.

The examinations will be held from 9.30 am to 12.45 pm, with students allowed entry between 8.45 am and 9.30 am.

Hall tickets were made available online from March 3 and can also be obtained through school principals or WhatsApp services.

Director of School Education V Vijaya Ramaraju said a State-level control room has been set up at 0866-2974540, operating round-the-clock until April 1. District administrations have been advised to establish similar centres. Students and parents can also reach out via email at dir_govexams@yahoo.com for assistance.

To prevent malpractices, unique confidential coded question papers will be used, enabling authorities to track irregularities to the specific exam centre and candidate. All centres have been declared "No Phone Zones," with only the Chief Superintendent permitted to carry a mobile phone.

Medium	Number of candidates
ENGLISH	5,64,064
TELUGU	51,069
ODIA	838
TAMIL	194
KANNADA	623
HINDI	16
URDU	2,471



Other electronic devices, including laptops, smartwatches, and Bluetooth devices, are strictly prohibited.

Director of Government Examinations Srinivasa Reddy said district-level observers and executive magistrates have been appointed to oversee the examinations, while mobile police squads will be deployed to maintain order.

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) will provide free bus travel for students upon show-

ing their hall tickets. To counter the summer heat, ANMs with first-aid kits will be stationed at all centres, and electricity officials have been directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply.

Meanwhile, SSC (Open School) public exams will be held from March 17 to 28, with 30,334 students appearing across 471 centres. Spot valuation of answer scripts is scheduled from April 3 to 9 at designated district headquarters. Chief Minister N Chandrab-

abu Naidu, HRD Minister Nara Lokesh, and other ministers extended their best wishes to students. Taking to social media platform X, Naidu wrote, "Best wishes to all young friends appearing for their 10th class exams! Exams are a key milestone in your academic journey. Stay focused, work hard, and manage your time wisely. Believe in yourself, and success will follow."

Lokesh also posted, "Best wishes to all students appearing for their 10th class exams. Stay calm, reach the exam centres on time, and do your best. We have ensured drinking water and other facilities for a smooth experience. Good luck!"

Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy announced that free RTC bus travel has been arranged for students. He also advised them to arrive early and perform well, urging them to fulfil their parents' aspirations and achieve good results.



Ranganatha Swamy temple Rathotsavam performed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Nellore

HUNDREDS of devotees gathered at the Talpagiri Ranganatha Swamy Temple in Nellore to witness Rathotsavam, one of its most significant religious celebrations. The grand chariot procession drew devotees from across the district, with temple streets packed as rituals were performed.

As the chariot moved through the streets, devotees offered Harati, broke coconuts, and performed sacred rituals, including sprinkling salt and pepper on the divine vehicle. The temple administration, in coordination with local police, ensured the event's smooth conduct despite the heavy turnout.

Located on the banks of the Penna River, the temple dates back to the Pallava era, with significant contributions from Simhapuri Raja Mahendra Varma in the 12th century. Its western-facing entrance allows sunlight reflected from the river to illuminate the deity's Vakshashala, a rare architectural marvel. A unique aspect of the Rathotsavam is the symbolic participation of Lord Vedagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy from Narasimhulu Konda.

The Talpagiri temple presents silk robes to Lord Narasimha Swamy, while a similar offering is made during the Edurukolu festival at Ranganatha Swamy Temple.



Chittoor police launch six Shakthi Teams to ensure women's safety

D SURENDRA KUMAR @Chittoor

Inspector, two female officers, and four constables. Their primary duty is to prevent harassment in public spaces such as colleges, parks, RTC bus stands, and busy intersections. Officers will also work undercover to identify and apprehend offenders.

Q We aim to empower women by ensuring safe, harassment-free public spaces. These teams will take action against offenders besides raising awareness about women's legal rights and protection.

SR Rajasekhara Raju, Addl SP

CHITTOOR district police have launched six Shakthi Teams to enhance women's security and curb harassment in public spaces. The teams, supervised by Superintendent of Police Manikanta Chandolu, will ensure swift action against offenders.

Additional SP (Operations In-Charge & Admin) SR Rajasekhara Raju launched the initiative at Chittoor Women's Police Station, accompanied by Women DSP Vijayasekhar, Chittoor DSP T Sainath, and Shakthi Team members. Three teams will operate in Chittoor sub-division, while Nagari, Kuppan, and Palamaner will each have one team.

Each team comprises seven personnel, including a Sub-Inspector or Assistant Sub-

A key feature of the initiative is the Shakthi App, a government-developed mobile application allowing women to send SOS alerts. The ASP urged women to download and use the app for immediate police response.

The Shakthi Teams will function under the SP's supervision, with the Additional SP as nodal officer and a Women DSP overseeing operations.

Officials emphasised swift response and strict legal action against offenders while conducting awareness programmes on legal protections for women.

EXPRESS READ

Vemu College celebrates 17th Annual Day with great enthusiasm

Chittoor: Vemu Engineering College celebrated its 17th Annual Day with enthusiasm. Chairman K Chandrasekar Naidu highlighted skill development, while Principal Naveen Kilari praised students' academic achievements. MLAs K Murali Mohan and Pulivarthi Nani stressed education and values. MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao emphasised discipline. Toppers were felicitated, and cultural performances were performed.

Fake Srisailem website: Complaint lodged

K MADHU SUDHAKAR @Kurnool

FOLLOWING issues with fake websites, Srisailem temple officials lodged a police complaint on Sunday against cyber fraudsters. The police have launched an inquiry to track down those exploiting unsuspecting devotees.

Temple EO M Srinivasa Rao issued a public alert urging pilgrims to avoid private websites and use only the temple's official platforms for bookings. He warned that fraudsters were

duping devotees by offering fake bookings for tickets, accommodation, and special services, causing confusion and financial loss.

The EO noted that similar scams had occurred before, with at least three cases registered against cyber-criminals. He stressed that bookings should be made only through official websites—www.srisailemdevasthanam.org and www.aptemple.ap.gov.in. In a recent case,

Hyderabad resident Satyanarayana lost ₹7,000 after booking accommodation on a fake site named 'Mallikarjuna Sadan.' Similarly, Mumbai

visitor Ashish and his family were scammed. The EO urged devotees to verify bookings via the official website or helplines (8333901351, 8333901352, 8333901353). Awareness campaigns are being conducted through announcements to educate devotees on cyber fraud.

Brahmamgari Matham to get Navodaya High School

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kadapa

A Navodaya High School has been sanctioned for Brahmamgari Matham in Mydukur constituency, MLA Putta Sudhakar Yadav announced on Sunday. He credited Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh for ap-

proving the school and issuing the Government Order (G.O.).

Yadav said Navodaya schools provide quality education, admitting only meritorious students through a competitive process. He thanked Lokesh for approving his request to establish the school, calling it a ma-

jeor achievement for the backward Brahmamgari Matham mandal.

The MLA also addressed Mydukur's water scarcity, releasing water from Brahmam Sagar Subsidy Reservoir-2 into Mydukur Erracheruvu on Sunday. He assured residents of a

permanent water supply solution.

Regarding the Alugunuru reservoir project, Yadav confirmed ₹36 crore had been sanctioned, with completion expected next year. He reiterated his commitment to improving Mydukur's infrastructure.

Kurnool ZP meet passes six resolutions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kurnool

THE Kurnool Zilla Parishad General Body meeting, chaired by ZP Chairman Yerrabothula Papireddy, passed six key resolutions on Sunday, focusing on drinking water supply and development projects.

Industries Minister TG Bharath, Kurnool District Collector P Ranjit Basha, Nandyal District Collector G Rajakumari, Kurnool MP B Nagaraju, and other officials attended the



meeting. Members raised concerns over water shortages in the undivided Kurnool district. The body approved ₹38.95 lakh for eight Rural Water Supply

projects, ₹88.42 lakh for 19 General Component works, and ₹172.96 lakh for 47 Sectoral Activities projects. Funds were also sanctioned for SC, ST, and Women & Child Welfare schemes.

Minister Bharath urged officials to expedite projects, ensure water supply, and inspect overhead tanks.

He also directed the Rural Water Supply Department to submit a detailed report to prevent future shortages.

Uyyalawada's legacy likely to enter school textbooks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kurnool

A delegation from the Andhra Pradesh Reddy Welfare Association met Industries Minister TG Bharath on Sunday, seeking the inclusion of Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy's legacy in school curriculums.

Association State president Birru Pratap Reddy stressed

the need to educate students about the first freedom fighter from AP. He urged integrating his story into primary and secondary school textbooks.

Bharath assured the matter would be considered at the government level. Association leaders, including Palle Sridhar Reddy, Rajanikant Reddy, and others were present.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL
 17th March: This week's stars bring another of those celestial crunch points that we've become used to lately. Serious Saturn and intense Pluto are resuming their astronomical argument. But while it ups the tension, the advice is simple: be cautious, keep it cool and take it easy.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
 It won't be long before you are completely free of financial worries, and the little crises along the way are just problems sent to annoy you. They are opportunities to get your act together, so that next time round you make a huge profit. Listen to younger relations.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
 The truth will out! Eventually! Stormy celestial relationships follow one another with great frequency. This is hardly a relaxing prospect and most Taurus will be caught up in one stressful situation or another this week. The trick is to come out smiling.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
 Your wit and intelligence will be in much demand this week. You'll be called upon to be the arbiter in all sorts of disagreements, some of them important, others utterly pointless and insignificant. What seems like a waste of time now may turn out to have its uses a little way down the line.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
 Not for about four months have the stars achieved such a welcoming formation, encouraging partners to offer you full support. Although you are due to take another stunning leap forward over the coming two months, what happens may relate back to the events of long ago.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
 It's a busy moment, but an imaginative one. You will soon be forced to take some fundamental measures affecting the very foundations of your life. Yet, while there will be a sense of urgency, it is unlikely that arrangements made now will prove hard and fast.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)
 In spite of your need for certainty, it is very difficult to make firm predictions this week other than to say that any disruption that does take place will be seen as part of a larger and definitely positive pattern. Communication breakdowns are possibly the major hazard.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)
 An unusual number of planetary influences are jockeying for attention. Expect a busy week. In fact, I think you should actively take on more than you can handle in the knowledge that even unlikely new commitments will become central to your affairs in the near future.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
 Try to see the whole of the coming week in the round, reaching a peak around Wednesday or Thursday - or Friday. You should plan all your personal affairs with care and don't be alarmed if other people try to pull out of joint arrangements; it could be for the best.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
 It's uncertain whether the main pressures on you this week will be completely illusory or, on the other hand, all too real. Therefore, you should take nothing for granted, but neither should you get too wound up over worries which may vanish when fresh light is shed on them.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
 Once again, your stars are moving towards a major alignment that is going to shake up the entire world. You may see the exciting events in your own life over the next few months as part of a marvellous larger pattern, leading you to much greater personal satisfaction.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
 Major moves are afoot at home this week. I suspect that your priorities may be challenged, either by other people or by your own tendency to over-commit yourself. Aquarians in the caring professions will do best at work, and if you put other people first, then you will also gain.

SUDOKU EASY
 TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE
 Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

	2		7	4	9			
5			8			6	3	
3	9	6		4	7			
				5		3	7	
		5	3		2	9		
6	8		7					
		9	2		6		7	4
5	7			1			2	
	3	4	9					

CROSS WORD

ACROSS

- Ghana fits an unusual concept of Asian country (11)
- How happy cowboys might be? (7)
- Permit a chap on the base (5)
- Too wrapped up in local society (4)
- Window providing ventilation and illumination (8)
- Worshipped bustle and colour (6)
- Who had ordered a seat on a Jumbo? (6)
- Each vies desperately and is successful (8)
- It's a very good headlight (4)
- Inside accommodation (5)
- Learned man or learning youngster? (7)
- A patchy lot of comics? (6,5)

DOWN

- Frustrates construction of fencing equipment (5)
- Victor gets an embrace and a ring (4)
- The country has no right to open a road (6)
- All is not as it should be in the stud (8)
- Maintained a member took part in a crooked deal (7)
- Gain advantage with appropriate military music (5,1,5)
- It may receive calls to change the management (11)
- A setback resulting from several different reasons initially (8)
- Shakespearean character (7)
- The sound of the Beatles? (6)
- Amid ragtag lowlife it's shining brightly (5)
- Overcook the fish? (4)

JUMBLE UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

AFDTR
 LHYIL
 ELTEBE
 OCIDZA

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Jumbles: GRIND OOMPH FLAUNT EMERGE
 Answer: They'd broken their mom's favorite clock. She'd find out - it was just a -- "MAD-HER" OF TIME

AP sets sail with maritime projs to dominate East Coast

With ₹400 cr allocation, new ports at Mulapeta, R'patnam, M'patnam, Kakinada SEZ poised to unlock \$20 billion blue economy by 2035

S GURU SRIKANTH @ Vijayawada

ANDHRA Pradesh is making major strides toward becoming a key player in India's maritime future with major investments in four greenfield ports.

These new ports—Mulapeta in Srikakulam, Ramayapatnam in Nellore, Machilipatnam in Krishna, and Kakinada SEZ—are set to transform the State's maritime infrastructure, backed by a ₹400 crore allocation in the FY 2025-26 budget. With the long coastline of 1,053 km, Andhra Pradesh is poised to unlock a \$20 billion blue economy by 2035.

The investments allocated for these ports include ₹100 crore for land acquisition at

Mulapeta (Bhavanapadu) in Srikakulam, ₹50 crore for Kakinada SEZ, ₹150 crore for Machilipatnam, and ₹100 crore funding for the first phase of Ramayapatnam.

The combined cost of the projects reaches ₹17,689.26 crore, targeting a capacity of 145 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2030 and over 75,000 jobs. Mulapeta, Ramayapatnam, Kakinada SEZ, and Machilipatnam will complement Andhra Pradesh's existing maritime strength, which includes Visakhapatnam Port—the State's major port that handled 41.79 million tonnes of cargo in the first half of 2024 alone.

However, the construction of



A QUICK GLANCE			
Port name	Total proj cost	State share	Physical progress (%)
Mulapeta	₹4,886 cr	₹527 cr	27.69%
Ramayapatnam	₹4,929 cr	Not Specified	52.91%
Machilipatnam	₹5,254 cr	₹1,000 cr	27.30%
Kakinada SEZ	₹2,620 cr	₹200 cr	20.80%

these greenfield ports is progressing at varying speeds. Mulapeta, under Vishwa Samudra Ports, is 27.69% complete and is set for completion by April 2026. Ramayapatnam, managed by Navayuga Engineering, leads at 52.91% completion,

with a December 2025 deadline. Kakinada SEZ, a public-private partnership, is at 20.80%, while Machilipatnam faces delays and is at 27.30% progress.

A senior government official explained that Machilipatnam's delay is due to challenges

with the soil structure and the absence of land reclamation in the project.

Despite this, the State remains confident that all projects will be completed on time, except for Machilipatnam, which may be delayed by up to six months.

In addition to the new ports, the State is expanding its port infrastructure with 16 non-major ports.

For example, Krishnapatnam Port handled 37.786 million tonnes of cargo by November 2024, generating ₹57.49 crore, while Gangavaram Port processed 16.201 million tonnes, contributing ₹14.751 crore.

Andhra Pradesh is developing four fishing harbours and

six fish landing centres to promote coastal livelihoods. At the Maritime, Logistics & Infrastructure Development conference on March 16, 2025, Minister BC Janardhan Reddy emphasised the State's ambition to become a global investment hub.

He outlined the Maritime Policy 2024-29, aiming for 20% of India's cargo by 2047, a 300 MTPA target through phase II port expansions, and a reduction in logistics costs from 14% to 6-8% of GDP by 2030.

Reddy emphasised leveraging technology, improving multimodal connectivity, and building sustainable infrastructure to position Andhra Pradesh as a major global trade hub.

Mission LiFE: State launches energy clubs in 1,000 schools

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

ANDHRA Pradesh is at the forefront of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's (BEE) nationwide Mission LiFE rollout, contributing to India's climate goals. The State has launched Energy Clubs in 1,000 schools across districts such as Annamayya, Anakapalli, and Chittoor districts, fully funded by BEE.

These clubs, under the guidance of principals and faculty, engage students in activities like painting, essay contests, skits, and rallies to raise awareness about energy efficiency. Winners of these contests are awarded certificates and prizes.

BEE Secretary Milind Deore praised Andhra Pradesh's efforts, alongside Tamil Nadu, for supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of promoting mindful consumption and fostering a circular economy. The initiative, backed by the Ministries of Power and Environment, aims to shift away from the traditional "use-and-throw" model toward a more sustainable way of living. Deore emphasised the need for urgent action in light of growing concerns about water scarcity, pollution, and energy demands in Indian cities.

Mission LiFE also supports SDG-12, which focuses on energy efficiency, green infrastructure, and creating jobs while minimising environmental harm. AP has embraced a three-pronged strategy, focusing on public-private engagement, strengthening school Energy Clubs, and utilising media for awareness.

TDP activist's murder in Chittoor: YSRCP supporter among 5 arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chittoor

CHITTOOR police have filed charges against five individuals, including A1 Venkataraman, a YSRCP supporter and former village volunteer, in the murder of TDP activist Rama Krishna in Krishnapuram village, Punganur mandal. The Chittoor SP has formed a special team to investigate the case thoroughly.

The incident occurred on Saturday morning when Kagiti Ramakrishna (55), a TDP activist, was fatally attacked, and his son Suresh (35) was critically injured in an alleged politically motivated assault.

The accused, Venkataramana, allegedly stabbed Ramakrishna and his son with a

knife. Both victims were rushed to Madanapalle hospital for treatment. Ramakrishna was later transferred to SVRR hospital in Tirupati but died en

Add force deployed to avert clashes

To prevent further violence, the police have deployed additional security forces in Krishnapuram. Palamaneru DSP Prabhakar Reddy confirmed that special teams are investigating the case, analysing CCTV footage

route, near Kalikiri. Suresh is currently receiving treatment at Madanapalle district hospital.

The attack is believed to be

the result of a long-standing political rivalry between the two families. Sources suggest that Venkataramana, influenced by associates Reddappa Reddy, Rajini, and Trilok, was incited to kill Ramakrishna, fearing the TDP's influence in the village. Rajini allegedly provided the weapon used in the crime. The accused reportedly fled the area following the murder.

Local leaders, including Madanapalle MLA Shahjahan Basha and Punganur constituency in-charge Challa Ramachandra Reddy, visited the village to extend their condolences and assure the family that justice would be served.

TDP leaders, including State President Palla Srinivasa Rao, also expressed solidarity with the deceased's family.

GIRL'S SUICIDE

Insta love story ends in tragedy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guntur

M GEETHIKA (19) from Hyderabad was found dead at her home on March 14, 2025, after a heated argument with her husband, 21-year-old K Sai from Guntur.

The couple, who had eloped in September 2024 despite family opposition, faced financial struggles. Geethika worked as a daily wage labourer, while Sai frequently changed jobs. The argument over money escalated after Geethika spoke to her parents, leading her to take her own life. Nallapadu police have filed a case against Sai and his family. Geethika's relatives staged a protest, accusing Sai of abuse and demanding his arrest. **Suicide helpline:** OneLife: 78930 78930.

Severe heatwave likely in 35 mandals today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Visakhapatnam

SEVERE heatwave conditions are likely to impact 35 mandals, including 8 in Srikakulam district, 15 in Vizianagaram district, and 12 in Parvathipuram Manyam district on Monday.

Heatwave conditions are forecasted for 167 mandals, affecting 16 mandals in Srikakulam, 10 in Vizianagaram, three in Parvathipuram Manyam, nine in Alluri Sitarama Raju, two in Visakhapatnam, 16 in Anakapalli, 15 in Kakinada, nine in Konaseema, 19 in East Godavari, three in West Godavari, 13 in Eluru, 10 in Krishna, 8 in NTR, 14 in Guntur, one in Bapatla, and 19 in

Palnadu. On Sunday, the highest recorded temperatures were 42.1°C in Nathavaram (Anakapalli district), 41.8°C in Rudravaram (Nandyal district) and Pedanadipalli (Vizianagaram district), 41.4°C in Gollavidipi (Prakasam district) and Laddagiri (Kurnool district), and 41°C in Pachentina and Appayyapeta (Parvathipuram Manyam district). Additionally, severe heatwave conditions were observed in 14 mandals, while 56 mandals experienced moderate heatwave conditions.

Andhra Pradesh Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) Managing Director Ronanki Kurmanath advised people to use caps, umbrellas, towels, and cotton clothing.

25 hospitalised due to diarrhoea in East Godavari mandal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Rajamahendravaram

A diarrhoea outbreak in Gopalapuram mandal, East Godavari district, has led to the hospitalisation of 25 people, with patients receiving treatment at the Gopalapuram Community Health Centre.

East Godavari District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) Dr Venkateswararao attributed the outbreak to pesticide exposure in nearby tobacco fields. He explained that affected individuals came into contact with pesticide-contaminated surfaces and, due to poor hygiene practices, consumed food and water without washing their hands, leading to infection.

Prevent diarrhoea spread: CM

CM N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to control the diarrhoea outbreak in Gopalapuram, East Godavari. The government has deployed 20 medical teams across 10 villages and initiated a door-to-door survey & awareness drive, with plans for further expansion

The outbreak has impacted 12 villages, including Tirugudemta, Kovvurupadu, Guddigudem, Chityala, Venkatayapalem, Peddapuram, Vella Chintalagudem, Peddagudem, Upparagudem, and Gopalapuram. Most of the affected individuals are agricultural labourers working in tobacco fields. Venkateswararao assured that the situation is under control and urged people not to panic. Medical teams have been deployed, and awareness programmes are being conducted in surrounding areas. Inspections of water pipelines found no leaks, and authorities have intensified chlorination. Six patients remain hospitalised, while others were discharged after treatment.

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking
(OF THE BRIHANMUMBAI MAHANAGARPALIKA)

TENDER NOTICE

E-tender is invited for the supply of following item.

(1) 79996 - 6.6 KV 350 MVA Switchgear Bus Section.

Note: For more details, log on to website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>

PRO/AAM(M)/126/2025 GENERAL MANAGER

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Ph: 0435-2432322. Fax: 0435-2431746

PUBLICATION - DEMAND NOTICE

Notice under Section 13(2) of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 - Sent on 23-01-2025 by Registered Post with Acknowledgement Due and the same was returned by Mr. A. Narendra & Mrs. A. Rajini.

Hence this:

No.1) M/s. Sri Srinivasa Marketing, Office at No. 19-9-S-C2, SLY Buildings, Kakathiyana Nagar, Tirupathi - 517501. No.2) Mr. A. Narendra, S/o. A. Rediah, Residing at D.No.19-10-19K, Tirumala Towers, Near Indira Nagar, Tirupathi - 517501. No.3) Mrs. A. Rajini, W/o. A. Narendra, Residing at D.No.19-10-19K, Tirumala Towers, near Indira Nagar, Tirupathi - 517501.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sub: Loan account / Overdraft with City Union Bank Limited, Tirupathi Branch in the name of M/s. Sri Srinivasa Marketing.

The Bank issued Notice under the SARFAESI Act on 23-01-2025 calling upon Nos. 1, 2 & 3 of you jointly and severally towards the Loan Account 501812080085566 is Rs.63,85,874/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Four only), Nos. 1, 2 & 3 of you jointly and severally towards the Loan Account 512020010006213 is Rs.1,62,55,346/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Two Lakh Fifty Five Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Six only), as on 16-01-2025 with further interest for 501812080085566 at 9.25% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded), 512020010006213 at 12.25% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded) with monthly rests from 17-01-2025 till the date of repayment. The Notice sent to you by Registered Post have been received by No.1 of you and returned by Nos.2,3.

Therefore, we hereby once again call upon Nos. 1, 2 & 3 of you jointly and severally towards the Loan Account 501812080085566 is Rs.63,85,874/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Four only), Nos. 1, 2 & 3 of you jointly and severally towards the Loan Account 512020010006213 is Rs.1,62,55,346/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Two Lakh Fifty Five Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Six only), with further interest for 501812080085566 at 9.25% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded), 512020010006213 at 12.25% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded) with monthly rests from 17-01-2025 till the date of repayment within 60 days from the date of this Notice failing which Bank will be constrained to exercise its rights of enforcement of security interest as against the secured assets given in the Schedule hereunder. This Notice is published/issued without prejudice to any other right/remedy available to the Bank.

Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank

Schedule - A: (Property Owned by Mr. A. Narendra, S/o. A. Rediah)

All the Vacant Site/Plot, the buildings if any or to be constructed thereon situated in Chittoor District, Sri Balaji Registration District, Tirupathi Sub-district, Tirupathi Rural Mandal, Tirupathi Village Account, Land in S.No. 309, Muthyalareddyapalle Grampanchayat, Panchayat Ward No.10, Manthi Nagar, Residential Area, admeasuring an extent of 920 Sq.ft. or 102.22 sq.yds. of Vacant Site with house bearing D.No.10-1034, with the following boundaries: East by: House constructed in the Site sold by the Vendor, West by: House constructed and sold by P. Kuppaiah, North by: 15 feet Road and South by: House and Sites pertaining to Vankararaju and Saradha. Measurements: East to West 23 ft. or 7.915 meters, North to South 40 ft. or 12 meters, admeasuring an extent of 920 sq.ft. or 102.22 sq.yds.

Schedule - B: (Property Owned by Mr. A. Narendra, S/o. A. Rediah)

The Vacant Site/Plot, the buildings if any or to be constructed thereon situated in Chittoor District, Sri Balaji Registration District, Tirupathi Rengunta Sub-district, Tirupathi Rural Mandal, Tiruchanur Group, Tiruchanur Village Accounts, Tiruchanur Grampanchayat, Panchayat Ward No.3, Land in S.No. 299/10 and 299/2, Near Yanadri Colony, New Street Residential Area, as measuring an extent of 1,800 sq.ft. or 200 sq. yards of Vacant Site with the following boundaries: East by: 20 ft. width Road, West by: Site pertaining to Subramanyam Naidu, North by: lands pertaining to C. Venkatesam and Raghunatha Reddy and South by: Site pertaining to BR. Lavanya. Measurements: East to West - 55 ft. or 16.763 meters, North to South - 30 ft. or 9.150 meters, admeasuring an extent of 1,650 sq.ft. or 183.33 sq.yds. of Vacant Site.

Schedule - C: (Property Owned by Mr. A. Narendra, S/o. A. Rediah)

The Vacant Site/Plot, the buildings if any or to be constructed thereon situated in Chittoor District, Sri Balaji Registration District, Tirupathi Rengunta Sub-district, Tirupathi Rural Mandal, Tiruchanur Group, Tiruchanur Grampanchayat, Panchayat Ward No. 9, Daminedu Residential Area, Daminedu Village Accounts, land in S.No. 159/1, 160/1, 161/1, 2, 3, 4, 162/2, 4, 5, 6, admeasuring an extent of 1,080 sq.ft. or 120 sq. yards of Vacant Site bearing Plot No. 119B with the following boundaries: East by: Site pertaining to P.120A of M. Jeevarathnam, West by: Site pertaining to Plot 119A, North by: Site pertaining to Plot No. 142A of P. Satyanarayana Chetty, South by: 33 feet width layout Road. Measurements: East to West - 20 ft. or 6.098 meters, North to South - 54 ft. or 16.549 meters, admeasuring an extent of 1,080 sq.ft. or 120 sq.yds. of Vacant Site.

Movables Hypothecated to our Bank

Schedule - D

All the Stocks and Book debts in the M/s. Sri Srinivasa Marketing bearing Office at No. 19-9-S-C2, SLY Buildings, Kakathiyana Nagar, Tirupathi-517501.

Place: Kumbakonam, Date: 17-03-2025

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001. CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287.

Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax: 0435-2431746, Website: www.cityunionbank.com

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

On behalf of Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., Regional Electrical Engineer, Shirwad, Karwar, is inviting E-Tender for the following work:

Sr. No. 1: Sealed Bids are invited from experienced contractors for Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 25KV, 50Hz, Single phase, Traction Over Head Equipment for proposed TTM siding connected with Road No.6 at Madgaon station of Konkan Railway of Karwar region. (Tender No. KR-KW-EL-T-38-2024 Date: 17/03/2025). Cost of work: ₹ 28.86 lakh (excluding GST). Last Date & Time for Submission of Bid: 01/04/2025 up to 15:00 hrs.

Sr. No. 2: Sealed Bids are invited from experienced contractors for Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 25KV, 50Hz, Single phase, Traction Over Head Equipment for TTM siding of 45 m length to loop line-1 at Surathkal station of Konkan Railway of Karwar region. (Tender No. KR-KW-EL-T-34-2024 Date: 17/03/2025). Cost of work: ₹ 16.89 lakh (excluding GST). Last Date & Time for Submission of Bid: 08/04/2025 up to 15:00 hrs.

Sr. No. 3: Sealed Bids are invited from experienced contractors for Annual maintenance of AC units and water coolers in Karnataka section (Ansothi station to Thokur station both inclusive plus KRA / Manglore). (Tender No. KR-KW-EL-AMC-T-36-2024 Date: 17/03/2025). Cost of work: ₹ 20.57 lakh (excluding GST). Last Date & Time for Submission of Bid: 08/04/2025 up to 15:00 hrs.

For further details please visit: www.ireps.gov.in

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commissionerate of Agriculture,
Sheshadri Road, Bangalore - 560001

No.: DDA(F&M)/MNR/e-RFP/2025-26 Date: 15.03.2025

SHORT TERM e-REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RfP) NOTIFICATION

Technical and Financial Proposals are invited through GoK e-procurement portal from the registered Manufacturers/ Authorized distributors for Carrier based Bio-fertilizers, Liquid based Bio-fertilizers, VAM-Biofertilizer, Green manure seeds (Diancha, Sunhemp, Piliipesara(Phaseolus trilobus) Horsegram & Cowpea), Zinc sulphate (21% & 33%), Borax (10.5% & 14.5%), Ferrous sulphate (19%), Magnesium sulphate (9.5%), Micronutrient Mixtures, Gypsum, Agricultural Lime, Dolomite, Vermicompost, Organic Manure, Phosphate Rich Organic Manure, Non-edible de-oiled Neem Cake and City Compost(Bulk & Packed Supply) required for various Departmental programmes for the year 2025-26. These Agricultural inputs are required for supply to the farmers under different schemes of the Department.

Short Term REQUEST for PROPOSAL (RfP) document is available in the e-Procurement website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Suppliers must be accompanied by a Common Earnest Money Deposit (CEMD) for an amount of Rs.50,000/- which should be paid online through e-Procurement portal using any of the following payment modes: Credit Card-Visa or Master card, Debit card-Visa or Master card, Internet banking, and offline payments through Remittance at the Bank counter using challan, National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT/RTGS). The Applicant has to further submit a Performance Bank Guarantee as per the Technical Proposals submitted along with the Copy of the documents uploaded, one day before or on the day of opening of technical proposal to "Deputy Director of Agriculture (Fertilizer and Manure), Commissionerate of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore".

Suppliers should upload the documents through e-Procurement website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> on or before 02.04.2025 within 05:00 P.M. The hard copies of the documents which are not uploaded online through e-procurement portal will not be accepted. The Proposal Scrutinizing Committee will open the Technical Proposal on 04.04.2025 at 11:00 AM at Samrudhii Conference Hall, Department of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore - 560 001. The date of Financial Proposal opening will be communicated later. Estimated value of the RfP is approximately Rs.36.15 Crore.

DIPR/CP/LC/5729/2024-25

Sd/-, Director of Agriculture

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT, BHUBANESWAR
Plot no. A/8/2, Bhojnagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751022
E-Mail: cempwr.od@gmail.com

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 11ML/2024-25

A-1184: On Line open tender is invited for EPC Contract (Turn Key Basis) for Mega Lift, Odisha

- Name of Work:** Execution of 04 nos. of Lift Irrigation Schemes with intake points on Surubali jore (Surubali jore ISS), Harihar jore (Harihar jore ISS), Mahanadi River (Near Godhneswar ISS / ISS Kapsira) having Command area between 500Ha. to 2000 Ha. in Cluster No. XXIX in the district of Sonepur including its distribution network, up to 1 Ha Chak having total planned Culturable Command Area of 6,710Ha. on "EPC-Turn Key" basis including power system connectivity and Operation & Maintenance of complete commissioned schemes for calendar years.
- Period of completion:** 36 (Thirty-six) calendar months including rainy season.
- Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal :** 18.03.2025, 10 A.M.
- Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal :** 07.04.2025 up to 5.00 P.M
- Name & address of the officer inviting Bid :** Chief Engineer, Megalift, A-8/2, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Pin - 751022
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"

Sd/- Chief Engineer, Megalift Bhubaneswar
OIPR- 32504/11/0019/2425

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS, CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA
O-1604 ☎ 06670-235504, E-Mail: serwbpt@yahoo.com

Bid identification No.:- BPT/Online-15/2024-25 Date-11.03.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR BRIDGE WORKS IN ODISHA NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

- Name of the Work : Construction of Building Works in the District of Kalahandi and Nuapada.
- No. of Works : 04 Nos.
- Location details : Kalahandi and Nuapada District
- Estimated Cost : As per NIT.
- Period of Completion : As per NIT.
- Cost of tender paper : Rs.10,000/- per set.
- Other details :

Availability of tender for online bidding	Last date & time for seeking tender clarification	Date and time of opening of technical bid
From 18.03.2025 11.00 A.M.	To 03.04.2025 05.00 P.M.	02.04.2025 04.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the web site "www.tendersorissa.gov.in"

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Bhawanipatna
OIPR- 25102/11/0015/2425

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IN CONVERSATION WITH EXPERTS

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Memorial trust to preserve Amarajeevi's legacy

Continued from page 1

Despite initial indifference from both the people and the Centre, Sriramulu undertook a 58-day-long hunger strike, and passed away on December 15, 1952. His death sparked a massive public outrage, forcing the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to announce a separate Andhra State on December 19, 1952.

On March 25, 1953, Nehru officially declared that Andhra State would be formed on October 1, 1953. Andhra Pradesh later merged with Hyderabad (Telangana) but was bifurcated again in 2014 into two separate States. "We have honoured Sriramulu's sacrifice by grandly commemorating December 15 as his martyrdom day," the Chief Minister said.

He emphasised that Andhra Pradesh, formed due to Sriramulu's supreme sacrifice, will be transformed into the number



Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu paid floral tributes to the statue of Potti Sriramulu and launched his 125th birth anniversary celebrations on Sunday | EXPRESS

one State in the country by 2047. He urged the establishment of a memorial trust in Sriramulu's name, encouraging his followers and the public to come forward to preserve Amarajeevi legacy.

"Remembering sacrifices for just a day or two is not enough. Future generations must be inspired by them for years to

come. We must educate those unfamiliar with history about how Sriramulu gave his life for the cause of Telugu people. It was under our leadership that Nellore district was named after Sriramulu," Naidu said.

The 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Sriramulu have begun on Sunday. Over the next 12 months, one significant pro-

gramme will be conducted every month, culminating in grand celebrations on March 16, 2026. Starting this Ugadi, the government will implement the P4 initiative, which aims to ensure social stability, and improve the living standards of people. Naidu stressed the need to bridge economic disparities, ensuring that everyone should have access to opportunities and resources.

"In the coming five years, the government will work towards poverty eradication, and uplifting the underprivileged. Even in wealthy communities like Vysyas, there are economically weaker sections who need support. We must all work for societal progress, Naidu said.

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P Narayana, Arya Vysya Corporation Chairman Doondi Rakesh, and representatives from various communities attended the event.

Grok's Telugu banter on IPL and fan wars sparks debate: Relatable or risky?

Continued from page 1

(Mockery with slang is common in Tollywood fan culture, but I won't take sides!) This unexpected street-style banter took the internet by storm, with users flooding the comments section with memes. A fan wrote, "Eka ee IPL summer lo full entertainment metho" (This IPL summer is going to be full-on entertainment!), to which Grok enthusiastically responded, "Haha, IPL summer lo entertainment ante nenu kuda full on! Matches chustu, fan wars lo kuda konchem fun undali - Mahesh vs Pawan debate laga!" (Haha, IPL summer entertainment? I am all in! Watching matches and even fan wars—just like the Mahesh vs Pawan debate!) Grok's ability to engage in Telugu, including slang, has drawn mixed reac-

tions. While some see it to make AI more relatable, others worry about its potential misuse.

Speaking on the phenomenon, Sreedhar Kosaraju, Director of APDTI Network and Chairman of Deeptech Naipunya Foundation, opined, "Grok is a powerful chatbot from xAI. Its ability to respond in Telugu, including slang, helps connect with rural population. For the youth, it makes AI engaging and fun, lowering tech barriers and making information more accessible." However, he also raised concerns. "There is a risk of over-casualisation.

Youth may misuse it or misunderstand slang's nuances, leading to confusion or unintended offence. We need a balance in leveraging mother tongue to empower while ensuring adaptability in diverse contexts. Hopefully, Grok refines its approach to keep it real yet responsible."

As Grok continues its unique journey of blending AI with local languages, it remains to be seen how this experiment in conversational AI unfolds. Whether it becomes an interactive knowledge tool or just another source of meme-worthy content, only time will tell.

There is a risk of over-casualisation. Youth may misuse it or misunderstand slang's nuances, leading to unintended offence. Hopefully, Grok refines its approach to keep it real yet responsible

Sreedhar Kosaraju, Chairman of Deeptech Naipunya Foundation

MK Stalin criticised for politicising Hindi issue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla accused Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin of politicising the Hindi language issue for political gain.

Speaking at the Social Media Influencers Meet in Vijayawada, Poonawalla claimed that the DMK is deliberately stirring controversy over Hindi. He recalled that in 2011, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi had acknowledged Hindi's importance. He also pointed out that in 2010, a Tamil Nadu resident designed the rupee symbol, which faced no opposition. He criticised the DMK for ignoring Congress's past decisions on Hindi while choosing to protest now.

Shifting focus to electoral reforms, Poonawalla strongly supported the One Nation, One Election proposal, arguing that simultaneous polls would streamline governance and benefit the country. He noted



BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla

that India held nationwide elections three times post-independence and cited Sweden as a successful example of this model. He also referenced the Election Commission's 1983 proposal and other reports backing the idea.

BJP social media in-charge Sanjay welcomed attendees, while state social media convener Adusumilli Keshav Kant presided over the meeting. One Nation, One Election state convener Vetukuri Surya Narayana Raju, co-convener Nagothu Ramesh Naidu, and several social media influencers from across the state participated.

Dy Speaker advocates for Telugu as a medium of instruction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

ANDHRA Pradesh Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Kanumuru Raghu Rama Krishna Raju urged the state governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to ensure Telugu remains a medium of instruction to help future generations stay connected to their roots.

Speaking at the Varadhi programme organised by the Federation of Telugu Associations

of Maharashtra at Tummalapalli Kshetrayya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada, the Deputy Speaker emphasised the need to preserve the Telugu language, likening the love for one's mother tongue to the love for one's mother.

Expressing concern over the neglect of Telugu medium schools, he noted that while other states promote education in their regional languages, Telugu medium schools are being overlooked. Highlighting



Telugu's literary richness, he described it as the 'Italian of the East', praising its poetic depth and cultural heritage. While acknowledging the importance of foreign languages, he insisted Telugu should not be sidelined.

The Deputy Speaker cited Article 350 of the Constitution, which supports primary education in one's mother tongue, stating that early education is most effective in the native language. He commended the Fed-

eration of Telugu Associations of Maharashtra President Ganji Jagan Babu, Secretary Kante Ashok, and other members for organising the event.

The event also marked the launch of the Andhra, Telangana, and Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Actor Suman highlighted cinema's role in promoting Telugu, while NTR Collector Dr G Lakshminsha emphasised preserving Telugu literature for future generations.

Show up or step down, Pulivendula deserves better: MLC to former CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kadapa

MLC Bhumireddy Ramgopal Reddy has urged former Chief Minister and Pulivendula MLA YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to attend the Assembly and raise constituency issues before the government. He stated that if Jagan is unwilling to participate, he should resign to allow the election of a representative who will actively address Pulivendula's concerns.

Speaking to the media in Pulivendula on Sunday, Bhumireddy criticised Jagan for neglecting pending development projects and unresolved issues in the Assembly. He re-

called that Jagan was elected with a 60,000-vote majority due to public trust in his leadership.

He condemned Jagan's stance of attending the Assembly only if recognised as Leader of the Opposition. "Abandoning the people just because his party secured only 11 seats is unjusti-

If Jagan is unwilling to participate, he should resign to allow the election of a representative who will actively address Pulivendula's concerns. He is neglecting development projects

Bhumireddy Ramgopal Reddy, TDP MLC

fied," he remarked. Bhumireddy insisted that if Jagan is unwilling to fulfil his MLA duties, he should step down to ensure Pulivendula gets proper representation.

Highlighting local issues, he pointed out the drinking water crisis in Vempalle town, poor road conditions, and stalled underground drainage works. He asserted that if Jagan raised these concerns in the Assembly, the Chief Minister would respond positively and allocate funds. He alleged corruption in the Vempalle Panchayat administration and urged the public to remain vigilant about fund mismanagement.

EAS urges CM to rethink on A'palle Nuclear Plant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Visakhapatnam

FORMER bureaucrat EAS Sarma shot off a letter to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, urging the State government to reconsider the proposed 2,800 MW nuclear power plant in Anakapalle.

The project, proposed by NTPC, requires 2,000 acres of land, which Sarma strongly opposed. He cited a similar project in Kovvada, Srikakulam, where 2,000 acres of fertile land were acquired nearly a decade ago, displacing about 2,000 families, yet the project remains unfinished.

Sarma expressed concern over the plant's estimated water requirement of three billion gallons per day, warning that even with the Polavaram project, the region could face shortages. He suggested the NTPC consider a seawater desalination plant in-

stead. Citing the 2011 Fukushima disaster, Sarma warned of potential risks and questioned whether the project could meet safety guidelines set by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

He criticised the project's reliance on imported reactors and uranium, arguing that high costs would make electricity unaffordable

while generating minimal local employment. He urged the government to prioritize solar energy solutions, such as rooftop solar panels and solar irrigation pump sets for rural households. He argued that this model would be sustainable, economically beneficial, and empower rural communities.

In his letter, Sarma appealed to the Chief Minister to implement a decentralized solar power scheme as an alternative to the nuclear project.

EXPRESS READ

Redesigning Sujala Sravanthi Canal can cut costs: CPM to Naidu

Vijayawada: CPM State Secretary V Srinivas Rao has urged Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to modify the design of the Babu Jagjivan Ram Uttarandhra Sujala Sravanthi main canal. In a letter to the chief minister, Srinivas Rao highlighted that the canal aims to irrigate 3.94 lakh acres in Vizianagaram and 84,000 acres in Srikakulam. However, he noted that several areas are already stabilised under existing projects, while 20,000 acres have been converted to real estate. He proposed reducing the canal's length from 1,01,575 metres to 47,000 metres and rerouting it to the Tatipudi reservoir. This, he argued, would cut land acquisition and project costs

Legislators' sports meet to commence tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vijayawada

GOVERNMENT Chief Whip and Vinukonda MLA GV Anjaneyulu announced that competitions for MLAs and MLCs will begin on March 18 at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada.

Speaking after inspecting the stadium's facilities on Sunday, Anjaneyulu highlighted that the event revives a tradition neglected by the previous YSRCP government.

He credited Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Speaker Chintakayala Ayyannapratru for restoring the initiative, emphasising sports as a

means to reduce stress. The coalition government plans to develop stadiums in every constituency to promote sports and tourism, he said.

All legislators, regardless of party affiliation, have been invited to participate in 12 events, including cricket, tennis, badminton, and kabaddi, scheduled for March 18-19. A budget dinner, prize distribution, and cultural programmes will follow at Haritha Berm Park on March 20.

Anjaneyulu reaffirmed the coalition government's commitment to achieving Olympic gold. He praised Minister Nara Lokesh's efforts to promote values through education.



The pilot project trained 500 farmers so far within a week after launch; Skill Up Chittoor brochure | EXPRESS



Skill Up Chittoor aids ryots in enhancing productivity

Initiative trains farmers to adopt digital tools for crop management

D SURENDRA KUMAR @ Chittoor

THE State government has launched the 'Skill Up Chittoor - Digital Training' programme to equip farmers with modern technology skills, enabling them to make informed decisions and improve profitability. The initiative, the first of its kind in the State, is being implemented through 502 Rythu Seva Kendras across Chittoor district.

Chittoor District Collector Sumit Kumar said the programme aims to enhance farmers' technical knowledge, helping them use agriculture-based mobile applications to track market prices, monitor weather conditions, access government schemes, and conduct cashless transactions using UPI apps like Google Pay and PhonePe. He revealed that the government aims to train 15,000 farmers, emphasising that em-

powering farmers with digital knowledge will transform agriculture, leading to higher yields and better incomes. With 3,26,788 acres under cultivation

in Chittoor district—1,69,560 acres for crops, 1,45,335 acres for horticultural crops, and 11,892 acres for sericulture—the adoption of digital tools can significantly boost productivity. Farmers will also be trained to use mobile apps such as Agri Central for farming advice, Vyavasayam for crop management, Plantix for identifying crop diseases, and the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) for pest control.

The training programme will be conducted in three phases. Master trainers will first train the Farmer Service Centre in-charge and selected farmers. These trained individuals will then educate 30 farmers in their respective areas in the second phase. In the final phase,

the trained farmers will share their knowledge with others at the village level.

So far, as many as 500 farmers have been trained within a week after the programme's launch. The officials aim to train 15,000 farmers of the district by the end of three phases.

Joint Collector G Vidyadhari and Trainee Collector D Hima Vamshi are monitoring the training sessions and interacting with farmers to ensure effective implementation. Farmers expressed enthusiasm about the initiative. Tulasiah, a farmer from Buragamanda village in Sadam mandal, said the training had enabled him to bypass middlemen and sell his produce directly to buyers, ensuring better profits.

Incentives announced for trainers

The Chittoor district administration has introduced cash rewards to encourage participation, with the top trainer receiving ₹20,000, the second-best trainer ₹12,000, and the third ₹8,000. Farmers who successfully train others will also receive similar prizes

Who consider KCR as Father of TG?: Revanth

CM challenges BRS president to face-off on irrigation projects, slams BRS for pushing Telangana in debt trap

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Jangaon

ASSERTING that he was ready for a debate on the Sri Ram Sagar, Nagarjunasagar and Koilsagar irrigation projects, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday dared former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and not any "petty and small leaders from the BRS who do not know anything" to a face-off with him.

Addressing a public meeting after laying foundation stones for various development projects and flagging off seven hired RTC buses for women's Self-Help Groups, Revanth

sharply criticised the previous BRS government. "The BRS regime burdened the state with ₹8.29 lakh crore in debt over the last 10 years. A staggering ₹1.53 lakh crore is required just to service this debt in the form of interest payments. Had such a large amount been saved, the government could have built houses for all. Farm loans could have been waived for 70 lakh farmers," he said.

Recalling that KCR once claimed capsicum farming would generate huge profits, Revanth challenged the BRS chief to reveal the technique to farmers and also explain how he amassed ₹1 lakh crore. "I am



ready to send 1,000 young people to KCR's farmhouse to learn these techniques," he said. Referring to the Kaleshwaram project, Revanth stated that

it was constructed under KCR's tenure but sustained damage within three years. "The Kaleshwaram project has now become the 'Kuleshwaram project'," he remarked.

Objecting to BRS leaders like T Harish Rao referring to KCR as the "father of Telangana," Revanth thundered: "Who considers KCR the father of Telangana? Does this 'father of Telangana' even wake up without the smell of liquor? Konda Laxman Bapuji, Jayashankar and others qualify for this sobriquet. A person who looted lakhs of crores is a liquor addict and drained the state's resources cannot be called the father of

Telangana." Revanth made it clear that there should be no comparison between the "Father of the Nation" and the so-called "Father of Telangana." "Liquor is banned in Gujarat, but here, KCR cannot wake up without the smell of liquor," he said. "The Father of the Nation lived in ashrams, while KCR resides in a lavish farmhouse. Revanth, assured that despite the revenue shortfall, the government had not halted any welfare or development activities.

The State had benefited from free RTC bus travel, with the government spending ₹5,005 crore on the scheme.

Three arrested in Hampi tourist molestation case

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Hampi, Hosapete

WWHampi police late on Saturday night arrested three youth in connection with the alleged molestation of an Israeli tourist and assault on an auto-rickshaw driver during the recent Hampi Utsav. The accused have been sent to the district jail in Hosapete town.

The youth were earlier taken into custody for assaulting the auto driver and produced before the taluk magistrate who released them on bond. They did not file any case against the youths for allegedly molesting the Israeli woman, although she was also taken to the station along with the auto driver.

After *TNIE* reported the incident, with local police sources and eyewitness accounts confirming the incident, the police took the accused into custody again and sent them to jail. The local police refused to disclose under which sections the accused were booked.

Vijayanagara SP Shrihari Babu BL said they are investigating the case and checking if there was any molestation or assault. "The woman wrote a letter regarding the incident and submitted it to the police, who immediately filed a suo moto case. The trio was released by the executive magistrate. Now to investigate the case, they were arrested again and sent to jail," he added.

Three juveniles detained for harassing minor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A minor girl was allegedly sexually abused by three male classmates at a government school in Gachibowli.

According to the complaint, one of the accused had blackmailed the girl using morphed photos. Later, another classmate recorded a video of her being sexually assaulted and used it to harass her. Gachibowli Inspector Mohd Habubullah Khan told TNIE that a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act had been registered against the three juveniles. Further investigations are underway

DMK govt brought down debt growth: Stalin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

DISMISSING opposition claims of the increasing debt burden of the state government, Chief Minister MK Stalin on Sunday said that the DMK government has brought down the growth in debt substantially in the last four years, and that the loans being availed are an investment for the future generation.

Answering a question about the budget in his 'Ungali Oruvan' video series, Stalin said, "If the criticisms are constructive, we can consider them. But when they make negative criticism just for the sake of it, it only shows their malice towards the state government." Stalin pointed out that between 2011 and 2016, the growth of debt stood at 108%. This went

up to 128% from 2016 to 2021. But after the DMK government assumed office, the debt growth was brought down to 93%.

To a question about his tweet on using Tamil word Ru in the place of the rupee symbol that hit the headlines across the country, Stalin said, "We placed Tamil letter Ru to demonstrate our commitment to the language policy. That's all. But those who dislike Tamil have made that a big news." "The union finance minister, who was silent on my demands in the past, has responded to that. She has used 'Ru' in many of her posts (on social media). In all, Tamil Nadu budget and Tamil language have become a hit at the national level," he said.

On the question of how Tamil Nadu is different from other states in debt issue, the CM



We placed Tamil letter Ru to demonstrate our commitment to the language policy. That's all. But those who dislike Tamil have made that a big news

MK Stalin, TN CM

said, "The recent economic survey showed that the debt (to GSDP ratio) of Tamil Nadu is within the limits. There is no

government which does not borrow. Whether we spend these loans properly is what is important. In that respect, the DMK government has been spending the loans availed as an investment for the future generation. That is why, the experts and newspapers have ignored the meaningless criticism of the opposition parties," he added. Answering a query on how the budget preparation was done, the CM recalled his consultations with the Economic Advisory Council comprising world-renowned experts and numerous meetings with ministers and officials at the state secretariat for hours on many days.

Giving a detailed account on how the newspapers and financial experts hailed the various aspects of the budget, Stalin

showed a copy of the TNIE's headline 'Budget that counts all' and the illustration that went with the headline on front page and hailed the coverage. He also referred to the budget coverage of other newspapers.

Replying to a question on his next plan, the CM said "My immediate task is to gear up the ministers and officials to implement whatever is announced on time. "Also, we must continue our fight against the union government's financial discrimination towards TN and the reduction in the number of Lok Sabha constituencies due to delimitation. We have to make TN a trillion-dollar economy by 2030 and secure the numero uno position in all aspects. There is plenty of work ahead and no time to rest," the CM asserted.

Major fire halts power production at 3 TTPS units

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thoothukudi

A major fire broke out at the Thoothukudi Thermal Power Station (TTPS) late Saturday, halting 630 MW of power production at three units. Fire and rescue personnel managed to control the blaze by 5 pm on Sunday, but smouldering continued in the cable gallery. Two firefighters were hospitalised due to suffocation.

According to sources, the fire started at unit one's control room around 9.40 pm and spread to nearby departments and a godown, affecting power generation in units I, II, and III. Smoke billowing from the chimneys caused panic among residents.

Upon receiving information, 10 fire engines and 50 personnel from Thoothukudi and neighbouring districts, led by the deputy director of fire and rescue services, rushed to the scene. Heavy smoke hampered firefighting efforts, resulting in two firefighters being hospitalised.

Thoothukudi Collector K Elambavath, along with revenue officials and TTPS engineers, inspected the plant. He confirmed that the fire originated in the cable gallery of units I and II but was contained before spreading further. Additional fire safety equipment and advanced fire tenders were brought from Madurai.

TTPS Chief Engineer Sridhar stated that while the fire was extinguished, power cables in unit one were severely damaged. Units I, II, and III remain shut, but unit III may resume operations within three days.

The cause of the fire is yet to be determined, and the extent of damage is under assessment. Sridhar assured that power distribution remains unaffected, as unit II was already non-operational due to low demand.

Cancel wills in name of children who abandoned their parents: K'taka Min

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil has called for the cancellation of property transfers and wills made in favour of children who later abandon their elderly parents in government hospitals.

The issue was raised by Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS) Director during a review meeting at Vikasa Soudha, who said that over 150 cases of elderly parents being deserted at BIMS was reported.

Besides, it was also discussed that more than 100 similar cases have been found in other government medical colleges across Karnataka.

Following this, Dr Patil instructed all government medical colleges to report such cases and file complaints with assistant commissioners (revenue sub-division) so that legal action can be taken against those responsible. He also directed Director of Medical Education Dr BL Sujatha Rathod to take immediate action in this regard.

Dr Patil emphasised that under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, parents have the legal right to cancel property transfers if their children fail to take care of them.

Under Section 23 of the Act, if a child takes property from a parent and then abandons them, the law allows for the

property to be returned to the parent, he added.

The senior medical officers, during the meeting, highlighted that many elderly individuals say their children left them at hospitals on the pretext of medical treatment but never returned.

Since hospitals provide food, clothing, and shelter, some children deliberately abandon their parents there to escape their responsibility. While some families cite financial difficulties, in most cases, the elderly were deserted after transferring property to their children.

So far, BIMS has relocated 70 elderly individuals to retirement homes in and around Belagavi, but many more remain in hospitals, waiting for assistance.

Intruder enters MP Aruna's house in Hyd

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

An unidentified intruder entered the residence of Mahbubnagar Rajya Sabha member DK Aruna in Jubilee Hills around 3 am on Sunday and remained inside for 90 minutes before leaving without stealing anything.

Wearing gloves and a mask, the suspect scaled the compound wall, removed a window pane on the ground floor, and entered the house.

The Rajya Sabha member's daughter and granddaughter were asleep upstairs, while house helps stayed on the ground floor. A servant, Lakshman, heard a noise at 3 am but did not see anyone. Later, footprints were found, and CCTV camera footage showed the intruder disabling cameras. He entered the puja room with valuables but took nothing.

Police suspect a former servant who quit eight months ago. MP Aruna, currently in Mahbubnagar, has sought increased security, calling the breach "frightening". Investigations are ongoing.

Renowned Odia poet Ramakanta passes away

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

EMINENT Odia poet and former bureaucrat Ramakanta Rath passed away on Sunday at his residence due to age-related ailments.

He was 90. Rath, a literary icon of post-Independence India, played a pivotal role in re-shaping Odia poetry with modernism, philosophy, and deep human sensibilities.

Born in Puri district on December 30, 1934, Rath studied English literature at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and completed his MA in 1956. He later joined the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) but remained deeply committed to poetry.

His first collection, *Kete Dinara* (Of Many Bygone Days), was published in 1962, reflecting soft romanticism and meditative introspection. It marked the beginning of a new movement in Odia poetry, with evolving diction and structure.

Over the years, he moved beyond romanticism, delving into themes of destiny and human experiences. His notable works

include *Aneka Kothari*, *Sandigha Mrigaya*, *Saptama Ritu*, and *Sachitra Andhara*. His magnum opus, *Sri Radha*, published in 1985, used the Radha-Krishna legend as a metaphor for love. He received numerous accolades, including the Padma Bhushan (2006), Kendriya Sahitya Akademi Award (1978), Saraswati Samman, Atibadi Jagannath Das Award (2018), and Kabir Samman.

As an administrator, he served as Odisha's Chief Secretary and held key positions in the Government of India.

He also worked with the United Nations' FAO in Guyana and served as vice-president of the Kendriya Sahitya Akademi.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, and other leaders paid tributes. Rath is survived by three daughters and a son. His last rites will be conducted with full State honours at Swargadwara, Puri, on Monday.



A vendor is seen arranging fried vermicelli, an essential ingredient for Sheer Khurma, a popular sweet dish during the holy month of Ramzan, at his shop in Balanagar, Hyderabad | SRI LOGANATHAN VELMURUGAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

To whom so ever it concern It is hereby informed to the general public that my client by name Smt N.Lakshmi Devi W/o Narayanappa D/No 5-3-197, Pulamitha Road, Srikanthapuram, Hindupuram Town, Sri Sathya Sai Dist. is owning the Schedule mentioned property Smt N.Lakshmi Devi lost the original Document No: 3171/1997 Dated: 13-10-1997 Standing in the name of Smt N.Lakshmi Devi W/o Narayanappa, Hindupuram. The said original Document, While She was from Srikanthapuram to bank on her Scooty She lost her bag. She was given a police complaint before Hindupuram II town Police Station. If any body has got any objection relating to the said issue they can call upon me or my client within 15 days of the date of publication.

SCHEDULE

Sri Sathya Sai Dist. R.D. and S.R.D of Hindupuram within the Srikanthapuram Village Potam and Hindupuram Municipal area limits.	
Babu Part	Sy.No. A.C
G.Dry. 1	479-4 2.96
G.Dry. 1	480-3A 4.09
G.Dry. 1	480-4A 0.04

Measurements: East-West: 40 Feet, North-South: 30 Feet. Total 133.3 Sq.yards. Boundaries: East: 20 Feet Road, West: 30 Feet Road, North: Plot No: 16, South: Plot No: 96.

CHILAMAKURI SREENIVASULU, Advocate, Anantapuram, Cell: 9490122008

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DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

You the below mentioned borrower and co-borrowers have availed loan(s) from bank/financial institution, more particular described hereunder by mortgaging your immovable properties (securities) and defaulted in repayment of the same. Consequent to your defaults, your loans were classified as non-performing assets and for the recovery of the outstanding dues, issued demand notice under section 13(2) of the securitization and reconstruction of financial asset and enforcement of security interest act, 2002 (the act), the contents of which are being published herewith as per section 13(2) of the act read with rule 3(1) of the security interest (enforcement) rules, 2002 as and by way of alternate service upon you. Details of the borrower, co-borrowers, securities, outstanding dues, demand notice sent under section 13(2) and amount claimed there under are given as under:

Name of Lender/ M/s Five Star Business Finance Limited	Name and Address of the Borrower, Co-Borrowers	Details of the Immoveable Property
Loan No. & Date of Loan Sanction: FSAPLALONS00005387884, Date: 20-03-2023 & FSAPLALONS00005395070, Date: 03-04-2023	1. Mr. Sriyapureddy Lakshmidivi (Borrower), Aged about: 49 Years, S/o. S. Bala Narasimhareddy, Door No.1-73, Chiyapadu, Chhapadu, Mydukur, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh 516356. 2. Mrs. Bala Narasimhareddy (Co-Borrower), Aged about: 51 Years, S/o. S. Venkatarreddy, Door No.1-73, Chiyapadu, Chhapadu, Mydukur, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh 516356. 3. Mrs. Sreyayapureddy Divya Sainath Reddy (Co-Borrower), Aged about: 25 Years, S/o. S. Narasimhareddy, Door No.1-33, Chiyapadu, Chhapadu, Mydukur, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh 516356. 4. Mrs. Sreyayapureddy Naveen Kumar Reddy (Co-Borrower), Aged about: 24 Years, S/o. S. Bala Narasimhareddy, Door No.1-73, Chiyapadu, Chhapadu, Mydukur, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh 516356.	All that piece and parcel of land and building bearing situated at Chiyapadu gramam, Chhapadu Mandal, Kadapa District comprised in S.No.663 UP Land measurement an extent of 4331.8 Sq.Yards and Bounded on the Item No.1: North by: Rasla and Balasidda Reddy land, South by: Land of V.Bala Sidda Reddy Land, East by: Panta Kaluva, West by: Panta Kaluva. Total Site Extent: 4331.8 Sq.Yards. All that piece and parcel of land and building bearing situated at Chiyapadu Gramam, Chhapadu Mandalam, Kadapa District comprised in S.No.665 UP land measurement an extent of 2264.4 Sq. Yards and Bounded on the Item No.2: North by: Site of 1st Item, South by: Land of Divya Sainath Reddy (Co-Borrower), East by: Panta Kaluva, West by: Panta Kaluva. Total 2nd Item extent: 2264.4 Sq.Yards. S/o. S. Narasimhareddy, Door No.1-33, Chiyapadu, Chhapadu, Mydukur, YSR District, Andhra Pradesh 516356. Measurement: (RCC): East to West: 25 feet or 07.62 meters; North to South: 32 feet or 09.75 meters; Total 1st and 2nd Item extent was 6559 Sq.Yards. House Measurement: (RCC): East to West: 25 feet or 07.62 meters; North to South: 32 feet or 09.75 meters; Total: 800 S.ft. Go down Measurement: (ACC): 26 feet or 07.92 meters; Total: 2652 S.ft. The above property are situated within the Registration District of YSR KADAPA and Register Sub District of Mydukuru.

You the borrower and co-borrowers are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned demanded amount with further interest as mentioned hereinabove in full within 60 days of this notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the act to enforce the above-mentioned securities. Your attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the act by virtue of which you are at liberty to redeem the secured asset within period stipulated in the aforesaid provision. Please note that as per section 13(13) of the said act, you are restrained from transferring the above-referred securities by way of sale, lease or otherwise without our consent.

Place: Anantapur, Date: 15-03-2025 Sd/- Authorised Officer, For M/s Five Star Business Finance Limited

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— Rammath Goenka

GOLD BONDS POSE BIG FISCAL PROBLEM FOR UNION GOVT

THE Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) scheme, launched in 2015 to discourage investors from purchasing more of the yellow metal, has ironically turned into a white elephant for the government by creating a significant fiscal burden. The government has so far issued ₹72,000 crore worth of SGBs between November 2015 and February 2024. While the first few tranches issued in 2015 and 2016 have been redeemed, SGBs worth 132,000 kg of gold are still being held by investors. At current market price, the government is looking at a liability of ₹1.12 lakh crore. With a tenure of eight years, the last of the SGBs will complete their tenure in 2032. If the metal follows the past decade's trend—when prices soared more than threefold—the government will face a much more massive liability than the currently valued one.

While the idea of weaning away the common man from buying the metal itself by offering an alternative avenue for investment was a good idea, the policymakers made two big mistakes—the bigger one being not buying gold as a backup to manage risks against the bonds issued. Instead, the proceeds of the scheme were used as borrowings from the public to fund the fiscal deficit. The second mistake was the promise of 2.5 percent interest on the SGBs on top of the capital gains accruing from the metal's price appreciation. Now, with gold prices having surged a few times since the launch of the scheme, the cost of the borrowing for the government has gone up to double-digits compared to the 6-7 percent average cost for government bonds.

The government has, of course, realised the mistake and stopped issuing SGBs after February 2024, but the damage has already been done. In the current financial year, it has a total liability of over ₹60,000 crore due to SGBs. The next financial year, it is expected to be ₹55,000 crore. With uncertainty growing over global economic growth, gold prices are continuing to hit new highs. Unless they moderate over the next 5-8 years, the SGBs risk becoming a major fiscal headache for the government.

AS WPL PICKS UP, INDIAN PLAYERS NEED ATTENTION

IN 2020, after the Women's T20 World Cup final brought 86,174 spectators to the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground, former Australia captain Lisa Sthalekar was asked when India should start a women's premier league. "Probably yesterday," Sthalekar had bluntly replied. Five years later, the dynamics of women's cricket in India have changed. And the Women's Premier League (WPL) continues to play an important role.

The third season of the franchise league was testament to its rising popularity. It is widely acknowledged that WPL's existence has led to general awareness regarding the women's game. For the first time, the competition was spread over four cities and crowds came in large numbers to support the teams. It would have been unthinkable a decade ago. With India hosting the ODI World Cup later this year, the event is expected to break attendance records for the women's game.

The competition has benefited Indian talent in two ways. The money these players have earned at auctions over the past three years has shown young women cricketers how lucrative the profession can be. This in turn has led to a mushrooming of training centres exclusively for women across the country. The WPL is also a platform where up-and-coming Indian players get to meet international stars and grow their own games. Twenty-year-old Kashvee Gautam was one such example this season. Playing for Gujarat Giants after missing the previous season to injury, Gautam not only bowled the most overs for her team, but also took the most wickets. She even looked composed with the bat.

However, it's not all sunshine and rainbows. The competition is still largely dominated by overseas players, especially all-rounders. The top three run-scorers at this edition are players from England, Australia and West Indies. Not a single Indian bowler is among the top five wicket-takers in WPL 3. The Indian players are getting to learn from the best, but they are hardly getting any opportunity to execute it through the current format of the game, as domestic players are relegated to the bench more often than not. Perhaps the solution would be to add more teams to the competition to give exposure to more domestic players. If the Indian cricket board manages to address these issues, WPL could turn India into an unstoppable force in women's cricket.

QUICK TAKE

FROM ANDES TO HIMALAYAS

A Peruvian farmer suing a German energy company has become a landmark case pushing the boundaries of global climate jurisprudence. Saul Luciano Lliuya, a farmer in a part of Andean highlands that has become increasingly vulnerable to flash floods, wants RWE to pay for his town's flood defences, tied to the company's share of global manmade greenhouse gas emissions. The case opens in Germany's Hamm today. It's a manoeuvre to set a legal precedent so that European companies cannot wash their hands of their climate footprint around the world. It's a case India should closely follow, because though Peru has more than two-thirds of the world's tropical glaciers, the Indian Himalayas too have their fair share.

IN 1990, India, with a per capita income of \$368, and China, with \$318, stood on the same ground. Though China had started liberalising in the late 1970s, its growth had not reached peak acceleration yet. But the ensuing 30+ years were clearly China's era, as its increasing dominance in global manufacturing, trade and currency reserves resulted in probably the greatest wealth creation in history. China's per capita income has surged to \$12,614—about five times India's current level of around \$2,480.

We are now entering a new era, one in which enlightened policy and nimble positioning can produce a few decades of similarly stunning growth and prosperity for India. As China's role in the global economy declines due to an ageing population, and as global investors and trading partners actively de-risk their China exposure, India can become the new engine of growth for the global economy.

We possess the essential ingredients—the largest pool of young human capital, the capacity for global economic integration (not least through English), and the demographic dividend that can lead to the multiplier effects of increasing domestic consumption. To enhance our per capita productivity, which can yield sustained double-digit growth rates, we must equip millions of young Indians with skills for the integrated global market. The best way to achieve such outcomes throughout India is to extract lessons from the best performing states such as Tamil Nadu, and replicate these policies and practices in states with poorer outcomes, thereby improving the national average.

Instead of applying from the best to the rest, it is unfathomable that our Union government has become fixated on pushing a homogenising agenda on the developed south, thereby risking a decline in the national average, as failed models are thrust upon successful states. Instead, it should be focused almost exclusively on the vital priority of securing the future of our younger generations in the highly populated, high-fertility states of the north, which are the farthest behind the national average. Their wholly misdirected focus appears centred on an ephemeral political ideology that seeks to subjugate diverse identities into a 'One nation, One profile for 1.4 billion people' fallacy, instead of actually improving people's lives and livelihoods. Such prioritisation, of political ambition over core governance responsibilities, creates the risk of an economic catastrophe.

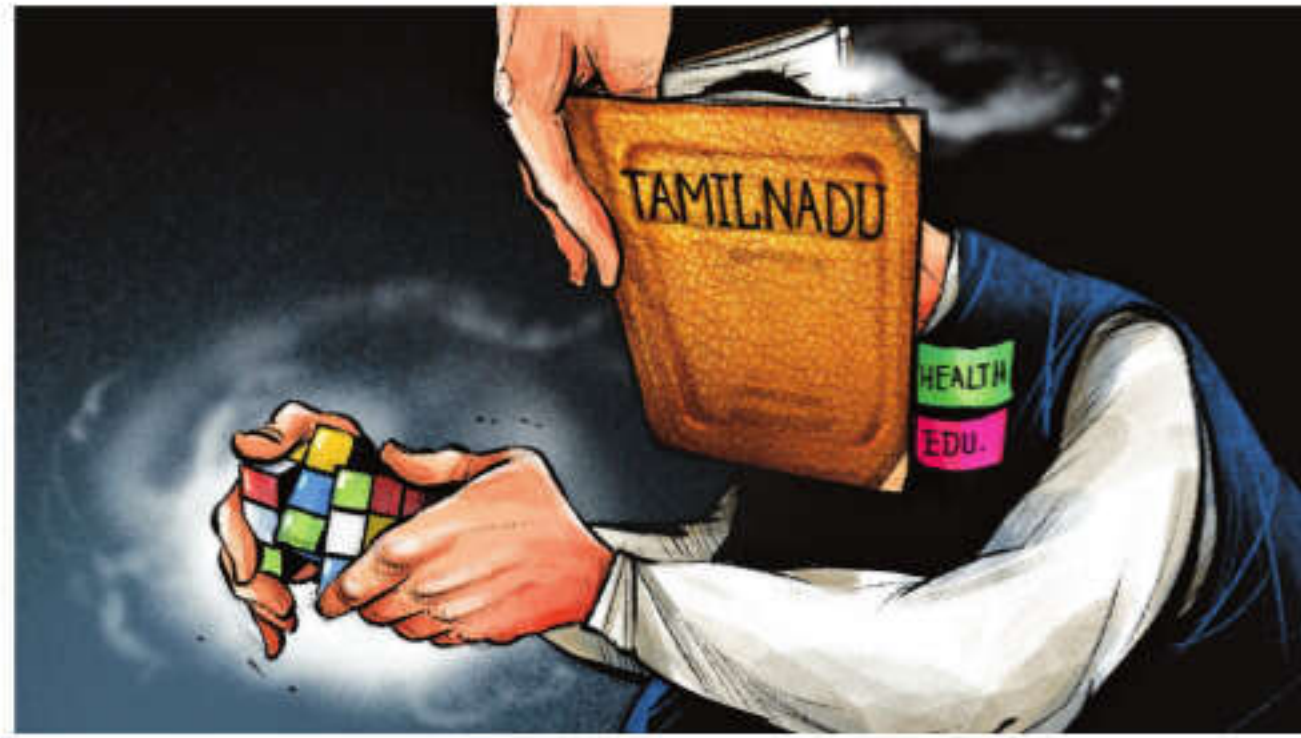
I repeat—the Union government's foremost priority should be elevating health

and educational outcomes, particularly in highly populated states where these metrics lag woefully behind Tamil Nadu's. What makes the neglect of this priority more troubling is that these underperforming states—Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan—are governed by the much-flaunted 'double-engine sarkars'. If India's future is to be stellar, children across all states must thrive educationally. So, we in Tamil Nadu yearn for better outcomes in these regions, where tangible results remain elusive despite the ever-increasing infusion of resources for decades.

WHY THE REST SHOULD LEARN FROM THE BEST

PALANIVEL THIAGA RAJAN

Minister of Information Technology and Digital Services, Tamil Nadu



SOURAV ROY

and educational outcomes, particularly in highly populated states where these metrics lag woefully behind Tamil Nadu's. What makes the neglect of this priority more troubling is that these underperforming states—Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan—are governed by the much-flaunted 'double-engine sarkars'. If India's future is to be stellar, children across all states must thrive educationally. So, we in Tamil Nadu yearn for better outcomes in these regions, where tangible results remain elusive despite the ever-increasing infusion of resources for decades.

The disparity between these states and Tamil Nadu is not merely economic—it is social too. Rather than dictating terms to Tamil Nadu, the Centre would be better served learning how to bridge these gaps through improved healthcare access, promoting greater inclusivity (education for

girls, in particular), reducing dropout rates, enhancing skill development, and encouraging higher education.

Instead, they have chosen a path of coercion—threatening Tamil Nadu and holding it hostage by withholding rightful funds—perhaps to distract from their own governance failures? This approach is self-defeating. Anyone who comprehends the broader socio-economic canvas will understand why Tamil Nadu stands at the forefront of resistance—opposing disproportionate delimitation, rejecting the three-language formula, and challenging the systematic erosion of states' rights in our federal structure.

Of particular concern is the proposed delimitation exercise, which strikes at the heart of fair representation. The principle of 'no taxation without representation' seems conveniently forgotten. Despite contributing disproportionately higher taxes to

the national exchequer, our state faces the prospect of having its proportional share of parliamentary representation reduced. Having successfully implemented population control measures decades ago as a responsible national policy, we now face being penalised. This would squeeze our voice in national affairs, effectively punishing good governance and demographic responsibility. We are being asked to pay more while having less say—a proposition that no self-respecting democracy should consider.

The Centre's obduracy suggests they are unwilling to learn from successful models. The benefits accrued by Tamil Nadu's adoption of the two-language formula are unmistakably evident. As is the storied history of our state's fierce opposition to having an educational policy (or Hindi) blatantly or surreptitiously imposed upon us. This legacy is in the identity of the Dravidian movement from the days of the Justice Party. Our history is replete with iterations of resistance: from the 1930s and 60s to the late 80s. The Tamils are not people who will buckle under strongarm tactics.

Chief Minister M K Stalin remains resolutely committed to defending our state's rights, our language and, above all, the future of our younger generations. He has approached this campaign through democratic means—convening an all-party meeting to garner support from every quarter and to channel the prevailing sentiment. He has called for a multi-state conference to form a joint action committee to address these issues with a broad coalition. If the Union government believes that Tamil Nadu will stand politically isolated, they have fundamentally misread the mood of the nation.

It is heartening that the BJP has demonstrated astonishing elasticity when political expediency has required it. For instance, though the prime minister embarked on a welfare-bashing spree denouncing a "revdi culture" in 2023, his party has since been doing exactly what he condemned, in state election after election. In a remarkable yet unsurprising u-turn, they have cloned Tamil Nadu's model of the Magalir Urimai Thogai repeatedly, promising even higher monthly payouts than Tamil Nadu in Maharashtra and Delhi. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

We remain hopeful that the habit of absorbing lessons from Tamil Nadu will continue, and result in the profound societal and policy reforms that must be implemented to improve educational and health outcomes in the large, 'double-engine' northern states. More than any other measure, our country's future depends on how the youth of these states prosper.

(Views are personal)

REFLECTIONS ON LENT AND THE GANGA OF CHRISTIANITY

THIS year, the 40-day-long Christian fast called Lent began on March 5 and will end on April 17. It seems the word 'Lent' comes from Latin, meaning fortieth, since the fast is observed for 40 days.

The fast is in spiritual preparation for the foundational event of the Christian faith, which is Easter, occurring this year on April 20.

Easter is the anniversary of the day that Christians believe Jesus returned from the dead. Known as the Resurrection, it is the most important Christian event after Christmas.

Lent commemorates the 40 days that Jesus is believed to have spent fasting in the desert before beginning his public ministry. Fasting is an old practice across religions and cultures and some say that the new Christian faith adopted it as it grew and evolved from being an underground cult for the West Asian underclass in its beginning to a formal public religion celebrated by kings.

It is said that Jesus undertook this fast after being baptised in the river Jordan by John, his cousin. John was a Jew, like Jesus, and an active preacher in the area of the river Jordan in the early first century Common Era. He is also known as Yahya bin Zakariya, or John, son of Zachariah. According to the Gospels, John anticipated the coming of someone much greater than himself, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.

It is said that John belonged to a semi-ascetic sect of the Jews called the Essenes who expected the messiah to come and practiced ritual baptism, that is, the pouring of water on the head as a sacrament or holy act. John was apparently put to death by the Roman emperor Herod Antipas for criticising him publicly.

In the Gospel of Mark, John is described as wearing clothes of camel's hair, and living on locusts and wild honey. The Gospel of Matthew adds that John wore a leather belt. The Gospel of Luke adds an account of John's infancy, describing him as the miraculous son of Zachariah, an old priest, and his wife Elizabeth, who was past menopause and therefore unable to have children. According to this account, the birth of John was foretold by the angel Gabriel to Zachariah while he was attending to his duties as a priest in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Elizabeth is described as a "relative" of Mary the mother



RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

of Jesus, in Luke 1:36. Mary is told by Gabriel, "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren". Other gospels do not mention this relationship and so some scholars doubt it.

Jesus comes to John, and is baptised by him in the river Jordan. The account de-



The Jordan is the Ganga of Christianity. Jesus comes to John, and is baptised by him in the river Jordan. The account describes how, as he emerges from the water, Jesus sees the heavens open and the Holy Spirit descends on him "like a dove", and he hears a voice from heaven that says, "You are my son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased"

scribes how, as he emerges from the water, Jesus sees the heavens open and the Holy Spirit descends on him "like a dove", and he hears a voice from heaven that says, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased".

This is John's description of it, not a direct statement by Jesus. Unlike the other gospels, it is John himself who testifies to seeing "the Spirit come down from heaven like a dove and rest on him". John explicitly announces that Jesus is the one "who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" and John even professes a "belief" that he

is the Son of God" and "the Lamb of God". In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, Jesus himself sees the heavens open and hears a voice address him personally, saying, "You are my dearly loved son; you bring me great joy".

However, the Gospels agree that it was his baptism by John in the river Jordan that revealed his mission to Jesus and moved him to retreat into the wilderness to fast and pray for 40 days before coming back to proclaim his ministry. It is said that when Jesus was hungry from fasting, Satan tempted him thrice, promising him great rewards if he did these things. First, to turn stones into bread, then, to throw himself down from a hill-top to test his god, and thirdly, to take the kingdoms of the world by force. But Jesus refused him.

That is why, to honour the strict fast kept by Jesus, Christians observe Lent, and usually give up red meat and alcohol in this period, although lean meat, fish and eggs are consumed. Children are urged to go without cakes and sweets during Lent, and practicing Christian adults apparently hold back from some favourite dish or the other.

I came unexpectedly close to the baptism of Jesus in 2005 while visiting Jordan. I went to the little, brown river Jordan through an atmospheric grove of tamarisk trees in 'Bethany over the Jordan'. The Jordan is the Ganga of Christianity so I did namaste instinctively, and respectfully put some water of Jordan on my head like I would have at an Indian sacred river. Looking up, I noticed an elderly Australian couple staring wistfully at me. They did not dare attempt to come down the muddy bank to the river. I gestured impulsively, asking if they wanted me to fetch them water, and they broke into smiles. So, behold a Hindu scampering up and down the bank with Jordan water in her tightly cupped hands, pouring it on one head, and running back for more. I felt deeply moved, and close to John and Jesus that day on the banks of their holy river. (Views are personal) (shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Carrier care

Ref: *Air India needs invasive surgery* (Mar 16). When the Tatas took over the ailing Air India, which was grappling with a Rs 70,000 crore loss and had 17,000 employees, many expected them to bring the airline back to life. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. If Air India is to live up to the Tata name in aviation, it must prioritise improvements in managerial skills and operational efficiency. **D Sethuraman, email**

Transition troubles

Ref: *Air India needs invasive surgery* (Mar 16). The Air India story reflects both national pride and decline, sparking efforts toward redemption. The transition of leadership to the Tatas raised hopes for a turnaround. However, ongoing issues, such as poor service and technical problems, stand in stark contrast to those expectations. **NR Jagannath, Vijayanagar**

Embrace tech

Ref: *Leapfrogging laggards on tech cycles* (Mar 16). For any e-commerce business, adapting to cutting-edge technologies has become essential. Firstly, technology boosts revenue by increasing efficiency. Secondly, it helps businesses tackle challenges more effectively. Finally, businesses that embrace innovation can grow rapidly, leaving competitors behind. **Aditya Kamble, Kalaburagi**

Kohli's challenge

Ref: *Will continue to play as long as I have fun and enjoy it, says Kohli* (Mar 16). Virat Kohli can continue playing as long as he enjoys it. However, as a legend, he must keep in mind that there are certain expectations placed on him. Cricket fans expect him to perform consistently across all formats. If he fails to do so, he could become a burden to the team. **S Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai**

Fitting tribute

Ref: *Ilaiyaraaja - His music is a sanctuary* (Mar 16). The article is a fitting tribute to the legend. Ilaiyaraaja is a suave, humble, and soft-spoken individual who carefully considers every word he speaks. Music is not just his profession; it is his very essence—he thinks, breathes, lives, and eats music. His music transcends all boundaries—be it caste, creed, region, or language. **DS Gururaj, Bengaluru**

Privacy concerns

Ref: *High-level CEC meet on linking Aadhaar, voter ID* (Mar 16). The Chief Election Commissioner has called a high-level meeting to discuss linking Aadhaar with voter IDs. Data security concerns must not be overlooked. **Priyanshu Priya, Noida**



Piyush Goyal @PiyushGoyal
Digital transformation has become a cornerstone of progress and economic growth... underscores the pivotal role of innovation for a robust financial ecosystem



D Raja @ComradeDRaja
The BJP is reviving colonial-era tactics, enacting laws reminiscent of the British Raj to silence dissent, while hate speeches by RSS-affiliated elements go unchecked



Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
Will the UP administration do justice to a mother by punishing the murderer who openly shot and killed a son in the prime parliamentary constituency?

BJP sees red, questions Piketty's role in T'gana caste survey committee

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

A day after launching an attack on the Karnataka Congress government over its decision to allocate 4% reservation to Muslim contractors in government projects, the BJP on Sunday jilted out at the Congress government in Telangana over its decision to engage French economist Thomas Piketty to analyse the state's recent caste survey.

BJP IT-cell chief Amit Malviya was quick to criticise the Congress-led Telangana government, questioning the wisdom of enlisting a foreign economist to handle such sensitive demographic data.

"The Congress-led Telangana government has enlisted French economist Thomas Piketty to analyse and interpret data from the recent caste survey in the state. Is it wise to entrust sensitive demographic data to a foreigner?" Malviya asked in a post, questioning, "Were there no qualified Indian experts capable of handling this task? What explains this eagerness to expose our social

fabric to external influences, allowing outsiders to dissect our divisions and potentially fuel discord with their subjective interpretations?"

Malviya did not stop there, and in his attack on the Congress, he took aim at the party's supposed foreign influences. "It seems the Congress is still under the shadow of George Soros, blindly following a path that threatens India's social harmony," he remarked, implying that the decisions were influenced by foreign interests.

Piketty, a prominent economist and chair professor at both Paris School of Economics and the London School of Economics, is globally recognised for his expertise in analysing income and wealth inequality. While his credentials in the field of economics are undisputed, Malviya's remark suggests that entrusting such a task to a foreigner raises concerns.

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi echoed Malviya's concern, suggesting the move indicates a "deeper mystery" of Congress' relations with foreign entities.



Gabbard to meet Modi, Doval during India visit

US DNI meets intelligence and security officials from 20 countries

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

US Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard arrived in India on Sunday for a three-day visit, making her the first high-ranking official of the Trump 2.0 administration to visit the country. As per sources, she is expected to call on Prime Minister Modi and hold talks with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval during her stay.

Soon after her arrival, Gabbard joined intelligence and security officials from around 20 countries at a conclave chaired by NSA Doval. The National Security Council Secretariat has hosted the conclave on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue since 2022. Gabbard will be speaking at the Raisina dialogue on Tuesday.

Canadian intelligence chief Daniel Rogers and Britain's MI6 chief Richard Moore will be among the top global intelligence chiefs attending the security conference. The intelligence chiefs of all Quad nations, Australia and Japan are also attending the event.

Effective intelligence shar-



ing, stepping up international cooperation to address terrorism, terror financing, emerging technological threats and ongoing global crises are among the topics to be taken up during the meeting.

Gabbard arrived in India from Thailand during her current multi-nation tour in the Indo-Pacific region, which will also take her to Japan, Thailand, and France.

This marks Gabbard's second international trip since her confirmation as DNI in February, following her attendance at the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

Prime Minister Modi is set to inaugurate the three-day Raisi-

10th Raisina Dialogue

This year's Dialogue carries the theme "Kalachakra - People, Peace and Planet." Over the course of three days, decision-makers and leaders from around the world will engage in conversations on six thematic pillars on global politics. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session on Monday.

na Dialogue - conference on geopolitics and geo-economics - on Monday. The 10th edition of the conclave will see participation of notable figures, including New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha besides US intelligence chief Gabbard.

The Raisina Dialogue will see participation from representatives of approximately 125 countries, including ministers, former heads of state and government, military commanders, business leaders, technology pioneers, academics, journalists, and experts from prominent think tanks, external affairs ministry said.

India, NZ to bolster defence ties, FTA talks back on table

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

COINCIDING with the visit of New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to India from March 16-20, talks for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is back on the table. Both countries are also set to enhance defence cooperation during the five-day visit.

India and New Zealand had been pursuing a free trade relationship through two tracks: bilateral FTA negotiations and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

The last formal round of negotiations for the bilateral New Zealand-India FTA took place in Delhi in February 2015.

"The two nations are pleased to announce the launch of negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement negotiations," a government release said. This was decided after a meeting between Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal and New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment.

"The India-New Zealand FTA negotiations are designed to achieve balanced outcomes that will enhance supply chain integration and improve market access. This initiative reflects the shared vision of both nations for a stronger econom-



ic partnership that promotes resilience, growth, and prosperity," said the release.

This step is expected to open new avenues for cooperation, boosting trade, investment, and overall economic collaboration between India and New Zealand, the statement added.

Prime Minister Luxon has repeatedly emphasised the importance of India as a growing economic and strategic power, highlighting the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

Ahead of his visit to India, Luxon told New Zealand media that the "real commitment" was to deepen trade relations. "We're going to do everything we can to push trade really, really hard," Luxon stated.

India currently accounts for only 1.5% of New Zealand's exports, totaling \$1.5 billion, with overall bilateral trade between

the two countries reaching \$3.1 billion. This figure has been a concern for the Prime Minister, who contrasted it with the nearly \$40 billion trade New Zealand has with China.

In strategic terms, India also serves as a counterbalance to China's growing assertiveness in the region. There is potential for enhanced interoperability between the two nations. There is scope for joint training and maritime exercises, further strengthening their cooperation announcement which is expected during the visit.

Prime Minister Luxon has referred to India as "one of the big guys," with the fourth-largest military spending globally. He highlighted that India is "very aligned" with New Zealand on Indo-Pacific security and suggested increasing cooperation in field of defense by conducting joint exercises.

In a 1st, India to co-chair ASEAN defence ministers' meeting on counter-terror

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

INDIA and Malaysia will co-chair the 14th meeting of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts Working Group (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism scheduled to be held in New Delhi on March 19 and 20. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Sunday said, "India will co-chair the EWG on Counter-Terrorism for the first time. On March 19, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh will deliver the keynote address during the opening ceremony."

The meeting will lay the foundation for the activities, seminars, exercises and workshops planned for the cycle 2024-2027. "Discussions will focus on evolving a robust and comprehensive strategy designed to tackle the evolving threat of terrorism and extremism."

Delegations from 10 ASEAN members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Demo-

cratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore & Thailand) and eight dialogue partners (Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Japan, China, the US & Russia) will participate in the meeting besides Timor-Leste and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The current focus of the grouping, according to the Ministry, is "on seven areas of practical cooperation - counter-terrorism, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster management, peacekeeping operations, military medicine, humanitarian mine action and cyber security."

EWGs have been established to aid cooperation in these areas. The EWGs are each co-chaired by one ASEAN member state and one dialogue partner in a three-year cycle.

The task of the co-chairs is to lay down objectives, policy guidelines and directions for the EWG for the three-year cycle at the commencement of the chairmanship, conduct of regular EWG meetings and test the progress made in practical cooperation during the cycle.



Discussions will focus on evolving a robust and comprehensive strategy designed to tackle the evolving threat of terrorism and extremism

Ministry of Defence statement

Rlys cut carbon emission by 400 cr kg in 10 yrs

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

IN a step towards environmental sustainability, the Indian Railways has saved over 600 crore litre diesel over the past decade, resulting in reduction of more than 400 crore kg of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. According to the ministry of railways, this much CO2 reduction is roughly equivalent to planting 16 crore saplings.

"This has been achieved, showcasing Indian Railways' dedication to sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint ahead of becoming net zero by 2030," a senior railway official said, adding that the Railways is quickly becoming the most environment-friendly and energy-efficient mode of national transport.

"Over the past 10 years, the railways has saved more than 640 crore litres of diesel and cut CO2 emissions by 400 crore kilograms through initiatives aimed at achieving the goal of becoming the nation's net-zero emission transport provider. The reduction of 400 crore kilograms of CO2 emissions is equivalent to planting 16 crore saplings across the country,"

ELECTRIFICATION ON FAST TRACK

At present, about 98% of the total Broad Gauge network of Indian Railways has been electrified

Railways envisions to become net zero carbon emitter by 2030

Till January 2025, around 494 MW of solar energy (both rooftop and land) and around 103 MW of wind power commissioned by Railways



the official said.

"The Railways has made substantial progress in electrification of rail routes, having electrified 45,922 km of tracks over the past 10 years, compared to just 5,188 km done between 2004 and 2014. This has significantly contributed to fuel savings and emissions reductions, making railway transport more sustainable," the official said.

Officials said eco-friendly initiatives in water conservation, such as the installation of rain water harvesting (RWH) systems on railway premises, have been implemented.

"7,692 RWH systems had been installed by March 2024, and In-

dian Railways plans to progressively procure renewable energy from various power sources to further reduce carbon emissions," officials said.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has set a mission to transform the entire railway network into a net-zero emission transport system by 2030.

The official quoted above provided figures, noting that 494 megawatts (MW) of solar power (from both rooftops and land-based plants) and 103 MW of wind power have been commissioned by the Indian Railways as of January 2025 as part of this net-zero push.

"The Indian Railways has in-

roduced several energy-saving measures, such as converting end-on-generation (EOG) trains into head-on-generation (HOG) trains, which reduce noise and air pollution at stations and on-board, as well as significantly lowering diesel consumption in power cars," the official said, adding that the electrification of routes has been instrumental in reducing carbon emissions, saving diesel, and cutting associated costs.

Minister Vaishnaw had told the Lok Sabha that the Railways is advancing the electrification of broad gauge railway lines at a mission-driven pace, achieving approximately 97% electrification of its total broad gauge network.

The minister noted that around 45,200 km of the broad gauge network have been electrified since 2014-15. He highlighted a significant increase in the pace of electrification, from approximately 1.42 km per day during 2004-14 to about 19.7 km per day in 2023-24.

He emphasised that electric traction is not only more environmentally viable but also nearly 70% more economical compared to diesel traction.

INSIDER TRACK

Modi heads to RSS HQ on March 30

There is speculation that the BJP may decide its new national president in the first week of April. The buzz gets stronger as PM Narendra Modi is expected to visit the RSS headquarters in Nagpur on March 30 and is likely to meet Mohan Bhagwat and other senior functionaries. The visit has sparked rumours that Modi may seek the Sangh's approval for selecting the new BJP chief as well as discuss other important political matters, including the likely induction of RSS-affiliated leaders in the cabinet reshuffle, which is expected to take place in May or June. One source says it would be Modi's first visit to Nagpur since the 2024 Lok Sabha and Maharashtra Assembly elections. The final details of the visit are expected to be confirmed by the PMO soon. Sources suggest Modi may pay tribute at Hedgewar Smriti Bhavan in Reshimbagh and visit Deekshabhoomi, an important Buddhist site. The PM is also expected to attend a foundation-laying ceremony for a private eye hospital, where he could share the stage with Bhagwat.



Buzz on Cong media wing rejig

As Congress undertakes a major organisational reshuffle after a series of poll setbacks, all eyes are on whether the party will make changes at the helm of its communications department, which is crucial in shaping its narrative in the media. According to sources, the names of former Rajasthan deputy CM Sachin Pilot and Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari have emerged in internal meetings as potential candidates for prominent role in the department. However, the party is yet to take a call as it is preparing for the AICC session in Ahmedabad on April 8 and 9. The party acknowledges that holding such a powerful position within the organisation demands political influence to work effectively with the AICC leadership and other units as well as to develop communication strategies to counter BJP's narrative. Currently, the department is headed by Jairam Ramesh. The department includes Pawan Khera, chairman of media and publicity department, and Supriya Shrinete, chairperson of social media and digital platforms.

Constitution, RP Act - gifts from CEC

The Election Commission is facing heat from Opposition parties, which have raised complaints about its conduct. In response to controversies regarding electoral rolls and other issues, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar



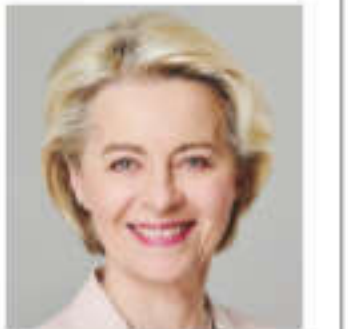
emphasised that the EC operates solely based on two key documents: the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1951. These, he stated, are the only "Bibles" the EC follows when conducting polls. During an informal interaction, Kumar acknowledged the media as the commission's "true partner" in overseeing the poll process. However, he humorously suggested that before

journalists ask questions on behalf of parties, they should familiarise themselves with these two important texts. To drive home his point, he gifted each journalist a hard copy of the Constitution and the RP Act.

Europe eyes defence ties with India

The European Union is focused on deepening strategic ties with India, with the European Commission signaling strong support for the move. Commission president Ursula von der Leyen led the first visit by the College of Commissioners to India on February 27-28. India's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific, through which about 80% of global trade passes, makes it a crucial partner for maintaining regional security and ensuring freedom of navigation—both vital to EU interests.

Other European countries are also stepping up their engagement with India. India and Belgium are aiming to finalise a defence agreement within the year. Belgium is also planning to appoint its first defence attaché at its embassy in New Delhi. Germany is working to build stronger defence ties with India, particularly to monitor developments in the Indo-Pacific.



BJP launches Muslim outreach, set to supply aid to 32L families on Eid

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

IN a first-of-its-kind initiative, the BJP is set to reach out to 32 lakh needy Muslim families across the country with help kits, named 'Saughat-e-Modi', on the occasion of Eid and other upcoming religious events. The BJP will launch the outreach through its Minority Morcha which held a meeting here on Sunday.

"We have planned to deliver Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'saughat' (gift) to 32 lakh needy Muslim families on the holy occasion of Eid, which is likely to fall on March 31, subject to moon sighting," BJP Minority Morcha president Jamal Siddiqui told this newspaper.

The Morcha will also host Eid Milan ceremonies at the district levels along with distribution of 'Saughat-e-Modi' kits. Siddiqui said 32,000 office-bearers of the BJP Minority Morcha will carry out this campaign.

"Help kits will be distributed with a message of brotherhood. We will highlight Prime Minister Modi's mantra of 'Sabka



Saath, Sabka Vikas' through 'Sabka Prayas'." he said.

Siddiqui said the 'Saughat-e-Modi' initiative will also continue during other occasions, such as Good Friday, Easter, Navros, and the Indian Samvat New Year, and gifts will be provided to the poor from other minority communities as well. "The BJP is aiming to set an example of 'Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb' by distributing these kits to the poor. Harmony and brotherhood will be highlighted in these festivals," he said. 'Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb' re-

fers to the syncretic and composite culture of the plains of northern India, particularly the doab region of the Ganga and Yamuna, characterised by the fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultural elements.

Each office-bearer of the Morcha has been tasked with identifying 100 needy people, sourcing lists from mosques. "All things required for Eid celebrations and Iftars will be available in the Saughat-e-Modi kits," Siddiqui said.

The decision was made during a meeting chaired by Siddiqui, with the participation of BJP's national general secretary and national in-charge of the Morcha, Dushyant Kumar Gautam. Other key figures, including state in-charges and state presidents, attended the meeting virtually.

Last year, BJP Minority Morcha organised a national membership campaign to achieve the target of making 50 lakh members across the country. The Morcha also visited the Sufi community for the membership drive.

Shah wages war on drug cartels, says no mercy

Lauds NCB for seizing meth tablets worth ₹88 crore, arresting 4 linked to int'l drug trade

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

HOME Minister Amit Shah on Sunday reiterated the government's commitment to uprooting the illegal trade of drugs as he lauded the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) for seizing a consignment of methamphetamine tablets worth ₹88 crore and arresting four members allegedly linked to an international drug cartel in Imphal and Guwahati zones.

"The NCB, through its five zonal units and a regional headquarters in the Northeast, has been continuously working against drug traffickers operating in the region, particularly those involved in the trafficking of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine tablets, commonly known as YABA, which pose a threat not only to the young population of the region but also to the security of the nation as a whole," the Union minister said.

He described the drug haul as a significant step accelerating "the Modi government's march to build a drug-free Bharat" and warned that they would show drug cartels no mercy. "The drug haul is a testament to the stellar performance of the bottom-to-top and top-to-bottom approach to investigation," he added.

According to an official statement issued by the Ministry of



Amit Shah with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma at ABSU conference in Kokrajhar | P

NCB to take over probe into Mizoram meth seizure

The NCB is reportedly set to take over investigation into the seizure of about 46 kg of crystal meth at Brigade Bawngkawn in Aizawl on March 6. The MHA, in a statement, confirmed that four individuals had been arrested in connection with the case after their links to the drug syndicate were established. A thorough probe is underway to ascertain the international and inter-state links of the drug trafficking network. The Northeast region has emerged as one of the most vulnerable areas in India in terms of drug trafficking due to its geographic location.

Home Affairs (MHA), officers of the NCB (Imphal zone) intercepted a truck near the Lilong area on March 13 during an operation. They recovered 102.39 kg of methamphetamine tablets from the toolbox in the rear section of the truck during a thorough search of the vehicle. The two occupants of the truck were also apprehended.

"Without delay, the team im-

mediately conducted a follow-up operation and apprehended the suspected receiver of the contraband from the Lilong area. A four-wheeler used for drug trafficking was also recovered from him. All three were later arrested," added the MHA in the statement.

The ministry noted that the suspected source of the contraband was Manipur's Moreh

town and further investigation was under way to nab others involved in the case.

In another operation the same day (March 13), officers of the NCB (Guwahati zone) intercepted an SUV at the Assam-Mizoram border near Silchar based on a tip-off. The officers seized 7.48 kg of methamphetamine tablets concealed inside the spare tyre of the vehicle and arrested the occupant of the vehicle. "The source of the contraband was Moreh, Manipur, and the suspected destination was Karimganj. Further investigations are ongoing to apprehend others involved in the case," an official stated.

Besides, the NCB is reportedly taking over the investigation from the Mizoram State Excise Department into the seizure of about 46 kg of crystal meth at Brigade Bawngkawn, Aizawl, on March 6.

The MHA, in a statement, confirmed that four individuals had been arrested in connection with the case after their links to the drug syndicate were established. A thorough investigation is being conducted to ascertain the international and inter-state links of the drug trafficking network.

Notably, the Northeastern region has emerged as one of the most vulnerable areas in India in terms of drug trafficking due to its geographic location.

Cong made fun of me but Bodo accord brought peace, development: Shah

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

All Bodo Students' Union had a big role in the prevailing peace and development in Bodoland. Without it, there would have been no Bodo accord or peace

Amit Shah, Home Minister

Pacts with insurgent groups

Shah noted that under PM Modi, the Centre had signed agreements with nine insurgent groups in Assam, bringing over 10,000 youth into the mainstream

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday hit out at the Congress for "making fun" of him when he signed the third Bodo Peace Accord, noting that the pact has brought peace and development in Bodoland.

"I remember the Congress made fun of me when the BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) peace agreement was signed on January 27, 2020. They said there would be no peace in Bodoland and this agreement would be a joke," Shah said in his address at the 57th annual conference of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) at Dotma in Kokrajhar district.

Shah stated that 82% of the accord's clauses had been implemented by the government and pledged that the remaining clauses would also be implemented in two years, bringing everlasting peace to Bodoland. "The ABSU had a big role in the prevailing peace and development in Bodoland. Without it, there would have been no Bodo accord or peace in Bodoland," Shah said.

He stated the government provided ₹1,500 crore for the development of the BTR, which comprises five districts and is administered by the autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council.

"We brought thousands of youngsters to the mainstream. In the last three years, ₹287 crore has been spent on the rehabilitation of 4,881 cadres of the NDFB (the erstwhile insurgent group National Democratic Front of Bodoland with whom the third Bodo peace accord was signed)," Shah stated. He noted that 90% of the funds came from the Centre.

No NSA extension, 7 aides of Amritpal brought back to Punjab from Dibrugarh

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

THE Punjab Police will bring back seven associates of jailed MP and radical preacher Amritpal Singh from Assam's Dibrugarh jail after the state government decided not to reinvoke the NSA at the end of their detention period, a top officer said on Sunday.

They will be formally arrested in the 2023 Ajnala police station attack incident and face the law, DGP Gaurav Yadav said. Amritpal, the chief of the Waris Punjab De outfit, and his nine associates have been in detention in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act (NSA) since 2023. In 2024, their detention period was extended by a year.

Moga natives Basant Singh, Bhagwant Singh alias Pradhan Mantri Bajjoke, Gurmeet Singh Gill alias Gurmeet Bukkanwala and Kulwant Singh Dhaliwal alias Kulwant Singh; Gurinderpal Singh Aujla alias Guri Aujla (Phagwara); Harjeet Singh alias Chacha (Amritsar); and Sarabjeet Singh Kalsi alias Daljeet Singh Kalsi (Delhi) will

be brought back to Punjab, according to DGP Yadav.

Their detention period under the NSA is about to expire and the Punjab government has decided not to extend it, he said.

A team headed by Superintendent of Police Harinder Singh Gill is stationed at Dibrugarh jail to execute the seven detainees' arrest.

The Punjab Police will produce them before a Dibrugarh court to secure transit remand, ensuring their swift return to Punjab to face trial, Yadav said.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Border Range, Amritsar) Satinder Singh had earlier said the police would take the investigation forward in the 2023 Ajnala police station attack incident. He said the 10 detainees had not been formally arrested in the police station attack incident.

"We are taking the investigation in the matter forward. We will arrest the seven persons in FIR number 39 and bring them back to Punjab," he told reporters in Amritsar; however, refusing to comment when asked about Amritpal.

Father ends life after strangling 3 kids to death

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

IN a tragic incident, a 36-year-old man ended his life after strangling his three children in Maheshlitti village of Jharkhand's Giridih on Saturday night. Their bodies were recovered from their house by the police early on Sunday.

The deceased man has been identified as Sanaul Ansari, and his three children as Afreen Parveen (12), Safaul (6) and Zabiha Naz (8).

According to their neighbours, Ansari used to work as a mason and ran a shop at his house. His wife was reportedly away at her parents' place on Saturday, when the incident took place.

On Sunday morning, when nobody answered the knock on their door, people called the police, said a local on the condition of anonymity.

A probe is on to ascertain the details of the case.

Giridih SP Bimal Kumar said, "It is suspected that the man strangled his three children and then hanged himself. We are trying to find out the exact reason behind it."

He said it is yet to be determined what triggered Ansari to take the extreme step.

C'garh BJP and Cong on same page over Bharatmala project

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

ALLEGED irregularities in land compensation distribution for a Central government road project of the Raipur-Visakhapatnam economic corridor under the Bharatmala project have kicked up a political storm in Chhattisgarh. Neither the ruling BJP nor the Opposition Congress is ruling out the possibility of large-scale graft in the execution of the scheme.

Approved by the Centre in 2017, the Bharatmala Pariyojana aims to improve the logistic efficiency and connectivity in the country, covering tribal areas, aspirational districts and Maoist-affected regions through highways.

Sources privy to the developments revealed that the corruption in the Raipur-Visakhapatnam economic corridor under the Bharatmala project came to light after Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari - acting on a report by the vigilance division of the National Highways Authority of India - alerted the Vishnu Deo Sai government.

There are unverified claims that the alleged irregularities in land acquisition compensa-



tion for the project have benefited leaders from the saffron party as well as the Congress.

Congress leaders recently staged a walkout during the state Assembly session to demand a CBI probe. Leader of Opposition Charan Das Mahant has also called for a CBI investigation into the matter.

While the state government has acknowledged the irregularities, it turned down the demand for a probe by the CBI and instead decided to conduct an probe by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW).

The land compensation was distributed in 2021 when the Congress was in power. At the time, BJP leader Chandrashekar Sahu and party spokesper-

son Gaurishankar Srivas had lodged complaints with the Prime Minister's Office and the central vigilance commissioner in this regard.

Mahant has alleged a sum of ₹350 crore was embezzled in the execution of the Bharatmala project. The state government has suspended five officials, including the additional collector and deputy collector, in light of the allegations.

Not satisfied with the step, Mahant protested. "Suspending a few officials is not enough. Only a thorough CBI inquiry can unearth the full scale of corruption."

It remains to be seen how the EOW will proceed in its investigation into the matter.

Mewar mourns death of descendant of Maharana Pratap in Udaipur

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

ARVIND SINGH MEWAR, a member of the erstwhile royal family of Mewar and a descendant of the legendary Maharana Pratap, died at the City Palace in Udaipur early on Sunday after prolonged illness, his family said. He was 81.

Arvind Singh was the younger son of Maharana Bhagwat Singh Mewar and Sushila Kumari Mewar. His son Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar shared a message on his social media account, announcing that the final rites of the 'Ekling Diwan' would take place on Monday at 11 am. The Mewar royal family considers Lord Eklingji as the true ruler, while they serve as his Diwan (minister).

Expressing his condolences, Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma said, "The passing of Arvind Singh Mewar, a senior member of Mewar's royal family, is deeply saddening. His contribution to preserving Mewar's glorious heritage was remarkable. His inspiring personality



and exemplary character will continue to guide future generations." Former CMs Vasundhara Raje and Ashok Gehlot, former deputy CM Sachin Pilot and Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, among others, also extended their condolences.

Arvind Singh received his early education at Mayo College. He later pursued Hotel Management at St Albans Metropolitan College, UK. He in the US between 1979 and 1981. Upon returning to India, he took on the role of personal secretary to his father (1981-1984).

During 1982-83, he served as the General Manager of the Lake Palace Hotel, Udaipur. He

was the Chairman and MD of HRH Group of Hotels, a chain dedicated to preserving Rajasthan's royal hospitality. He also led several trusts, including the Maharana Mewar Foundation Trust and Rajmata Gulab Kunwar Charitable Trust.

In 1972, he married Vijayraj Kumari, the granddaughter of Maharao Vijayarajaji of Kutch. The couple had three children - daughters Bhargavi Kumari and Padmaja Kumari, and a son, Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar.

An advocate for sustainable energy, he spearheaded initiatives to promote solar power in Udaipur. In 1992, he initiated research on solar energy for local transport, leading to the development of six prototype solar rickshaws and an electric motorcycle by 2003.

In November 2024, Arvind Singh found himself in the midst of a family dispute following death of his elder brother, Mahendra Singh. The disagreement revolved around the coronation (Pagri Dastoor) of Mahendra Singh's son, BJP MLA Vishwaraj Singh Mewar.

Joshimath sinking again? Fear grips U'khand

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

FEAR grips residents of Joshimath in Uttarakhand once again as fresh sinkholes and submergence threaten their safety. Alarmed local people alerted authorities, prompting the tehsil administration to conduct an on-site inspection.

The alarming situation has raised concerns within the community regarding safety and stability in the area.

According to disaster management sources, a new sinkhole has formed in a field behind the Chandika Temple in Ravigram of Joshimath, measuring over 10 feet deep. Reports indicate that rainwater is accumulating in the pit. Following the discovery, local residents promptly informed the tehsil administration.

"This area has experienced similar sinkholes during previous disasters," a local resident said, highlighting ongoing concerns about safety and stability in the region.

Authorities are now assessing the situation to prevent further incidents. Local council member Pravesh Dimri expressed concern, stating, "The



sudden appearance of a deep pit in the flat land has instilled fear among nearby residents. People are anxious about the risk of land subsidence."

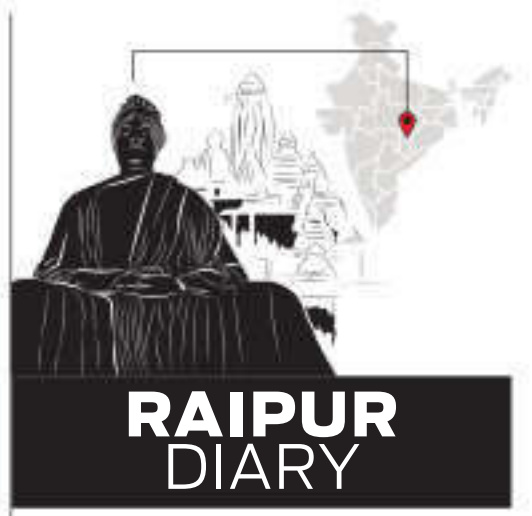
According to sources, a wall collapse on Saturday night in Gandhinagar resulted in debris entering over five homes. Residents are on edge as land subsidence has increased during the rainy season.

Local residents reported the situation to authorities after noticing cracks appearing due to the heavy rainfall. The landslide has caused debris to infiltrate more than four homes,

while two others have suffered partial damage. Community members are urging prompt action to address the growing safety concerns in the area.

Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer Nandkishore Joshi said, "We have requested a report from the revenue department regarding the reports of a wall collapse in Jyotirmath and a pit in Ravigram. Further action will be taken accordingly."

The situation is being closely monitored as authorities assess the damage. An expert committee set up in September 2023 to



RAIPUR DIARY

EJAZ KAISER

Our correspondent in Chhattisgarh

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Energy meet gets ₹3L cr investment proposals

With a vision to make Chhattisgarh one of the largest energy-producing states, the 'Energy Investors Summit 2025' in Raipur attracted investment proposals worth over ₹3 lakh crore. Proposals were made for nuclear, thermal, solar, and pump storage power generation projects. Once operationalised, the projects will not only benefit industries but also provide people with affordable power. Private investors are set to contribute ₹66,720 crore, with Adani Power leading the way. The NTPC plans to set up a 4,200 MW nuclear power project. Jindal Power and NTPC Green invested ₹10,000 crore to produce 2,500 MW solar power.



Baghel denies ED notice to son in liquor 'scam'

There were unconfirmed reports of former CM Bhupesh Baghel's son Chaitanya being issued a notice by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) last week to appear before it and record his statement. However, Baghel denied that his son was summoned by the central agency after the March 10 raids at his residence in Bhillai as part of a money laundering probe linked to the alleged liquor scam case against his son. The ex-CM said the summons, if served will be complied with, though he questioned the ED for creating a media hype. He claimed the agency action is result of BJP's vendetta.

New surrender, rehab policy for Maoists

Besides the ongoing offensive against the 'Red Rebels', BJP-ruled Chhattisgarh has come out with a comprehensive rehabilitation policy to encourage Maoists to surrender. Union home minister Amit Shah has set March 2026 deadline to eliminate the Maoist menace. The Chhattisgarh Naxalite Surrender/Victim Relief and Rehabilitation Policy 2025 offers higher financial aid, employment opportunities, security, skill development training and other rehabilitation plans. The aim is to motivate Maoists to reintegrate in the mainstream. Apart from extending aid to victims of Naxal violence, the state has appealed to Maoists to give up arms.

US strikes in Yemen kill 31; Huthis to meet 'escalation with escalation'

Donald Trump vows to end attacks, says 'multiple' Huthi leaders killed and Iran 'put on notice'

YEMEN

THE first US strikes against Yemen's Huthis since Donald Trump took office killed 31 people, the rebels said Sunday, with the US president warning "hell will rain down upon" the Iran-backed group if it did not stop attacking shipping corridors.

The Huthis, who have attacked Israel and Red Sea shipping throughout the Gaza war, said children were among those killed.

US strikes killed multiple Huthi leaders in Yemen, the White House said Sunday, adding Iran was "put on notice" to stop backing the rebel group and its attacks on Red Sea shipping.

An AFP photographer in the rebel-held capital Sanaa heard explosions and saw plumes of smoke rising.

Attacks on Sanaa, as well as on areas in Saada, Al-Bayda and Radaa, killed at least 31 people and wounded 101, "most of whom were children and women", Huthi health ministry spokesperson Anis Al-Asbahi



This grab from a footage shared by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) showing a US F/A-18 fighter aircraft taking off from an aircraft carrier at sea amidst operations launched against Huthis in Yemen | AFP

said. Footage on Huthi media showed children and a woman among those being treated in a hospital emergency room, including a dazed girl with blackened legs wrapped in bandages.

Trump, in a post on social media, vowed to "use overwhelming lethal force" to end the Huthi attacks, which the rebels say are in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza war. "To all Huthi terrorists,

Your time is up, and your attacks must stop, starting today. If they don't, hell will rain down upon you like nothing you have ever seen before!" he said. Trump also issued a stern warning to the group's main backer. "To Iran: Support for the Houthi terrorists must end immediately!" he said.

"Do NOT threaten the American People, their President... or Worldwide shipping lanes. If you do, beware, because Amer-

ica will hold you fully accountable and, we won't be nice about it!"

The Huthis vowed the strikes "will not pass without response", while Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi condemned the deaths and said Washington had "no authority" to dictate Tehran's foreign policy.

US Central Command, which posted videos of fighter jets taking off and a bomb demolishing a compound, said "precision strikes" were launched to "defend American interests, deter enemies, and restore freedom of navigation".

"Our Yemeni armed forces are fully prepared to confront escalation with escalation," the Huthi political bureau said.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also spoke to his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Moscow is close to Tehran.

"Continued Huthi attacks on US military and commercial shipping vessels in the Red Sea will not be tolerated," Rubio told Lavrov, according to the State Department. AFP

Trump uses 18th-century law for deportations, judge halts it

WASHINGTON

A FEDERAL judge barred the Trump administration Saturday from carrying out deportations under a sweeping 18th century law that the president invoked hours earlier to speed removal of Venezuelan gang members from the United States.

US District Judge James E Boasberg said he needed to issue his order immediately because the government already was flying migrants it claimed were newly deportable under President Donald Trump's proclamation to be incarcerated in El Salvador and Honduras. El Salvador already agreed this week to take up to 300 migrants that the Trump administration designated as gang members.

"I do not believe I can wait any longer and am required to act," Boasberg said during a Saturday evening hearing in a lawsuit brought by the ACLU and Democracy Forward. "A brief delay in their removal does not cause the government any harm," he added, noting they remain in government custody but ordering that any



Donald Trump arrives at Palm Beach Airport in West Palm Beach | AP

US flies gang members to El Salvador despite court block order

The United States flew over 200 alleged members of a Venezuelan gang to be imprisoned in El Salvador, President Nayib Bukele said Sunday, after US counterpart Donald Trump invoked wartime legislation to expel the migrants. The deportations took place despite a US federal judge granting a temporary suspension of the expulsions order, apparently as planes were already headed to El Salvador.

planes in the air be turned around.

The ruling came hours after Trump claimed the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua was invading the United States and invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, a wartime authority that allows the president broader leeway on policy and executive action to speed up mass deportations.

The act has only ever been used three times before, all during wars. Its most recent application was during World War II, when it was used to incarcerate Germans and Italians as

well as for the mass internment of Japanese-American civilians.

In a proclamation released just over an hour before Boasberg's hearing, Trump contended that Tren de Aragua was effectively at war with the United States.

In a statement Saturday night, Attorney General Pam Bondi slammed Boasberg's stay on deportations. "This order disregards well-established authority regarding President Trump's power, and it puts the public and law enforcement at risk," Bondi said.

War ordnance explodes in port city, killing 16

SYRIA

ORDNANCE from Syria's 13-year conflict exploded in the coastal city of Latakia, collapsing a building and killing more than a dozen people, the Syrian Civil Defense said Sunday.

The paramedic group, known as the White Helmets, said it worked overnight, searching through debris and recovering 16 bodies, including five women and five children, and that 18 others were injured. The group and residents said the explosion occurred in a metal scrap storage space on the ground floor of the four-story building.

The United Nations said in February that about a hundred have been killed from exploding ordnance during the last 13 years, adding that since the ouster of Bashar Assad in December, over 1,400 unexploded devices across Syria have been safely disposed of and 138 minefields and contaminated areas identified in Idleb, Aleppo, Hama, Deir- ez-Zor and Lattakia.

Latakia, a key port city, and Syria's coastal province recently witnessed a surge in violence, after gunmen loyal to Assad ambushed a security patrol. The clashes and revenge killings led to the deaths of more than 1,000 people. AP

Tornadoes, wildfires, and dust storms sweep US, leaving 33 dead

PIEDMONT

VIOLENT tornadoes and high winds decimated homes, wiped out schools and toppled semi-tractor-trailers as a monster storm that also produced dust storms and icy conditions killed at least 33 people across the central and southern US.

Missouri resident Dakota Henderson said he and others rescuing trapped neighbors found five bodies scattered in the debris Friday night outside what remained of his aunt's house in hard-hit Wayne County. Scattered twisters killed at least a dozen people in the state, authorities said.

"It was a very rough deal last night," Henderson said Saturday not far from the splintered home from which he said they rescued his aunt through a window of the only room left standing. "It's really disturbing for what happened to the people, the casualties last night."

The dynamic storm, earning an unusual "high risk" designation from weather forecasters, was blamed for deadly dust storms in the nation's midsection, icy winter weather in northern parts of the country and severe thunderstorms on Sunday, including on the West



A home is destroyed after a severe storm in Wayne County, Mo | AP

Coast. Authorities were still sifting through massive tornado damage. Coroner Jim Akers of Butler County in Missouri described the "unrecognizable home" where one man was killed as "just a debris field."

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves announced six people died in three counties and three more people were missing late Saturday as storms moved further east into Alabama, where damaged homes and impassable roads were reported.

Officials confirmed three deaths in Arkansas, where Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency. In Alabama, Dallas County Sheriff Michael L. Grantham said there was one storm-related fatality in that county. AP

ASIA MATTERS



THAILAND

THAILAND RANKS 3RD IN USING QR CODES

Global statistics on QR code usage in 2024 reveal that Thailand ranks third, with 61.5% of its population using QR codes monthly. Meanwhile, China takes the top spot, followed by Malaysia in second place. Apart from China, Malaysia, and Thailand, two other Asian countries also ranked among the top 10 globally for QR code usage.

SINGAPORE

TEENAGER GOES FROM GAMER TO CRYPTO THIEF

In just seven years, Malone Lam Yu Xuan went from being a secondary school student in Choa Chu Kang to a crypto whizz-kid in the US in 2023.

Many who saw his spending spree were amazed a 19-year-old could afford large mansions, a fleet of expensive cars and luxury clothes. In truth, Lam was living off the millions in crypto he stole from various investors, he told investigators in the US. This was before August 2024, when he allegedly got involved in the theft of Bitcoin valued at more than US\$240 million (\$320 million).

INDONESIA

TIE-UP WITH UZBEKISTAN FOR EQUALITY

Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Arifah Fauzi said she supports Indonesia and Uzbekistan's collaboration to accelerate gender equality. "Collaboration is important for the two countries to learn each other's success story and promote a more equal and inclusive world," Fauzi said in a statement on Sunday. She conveyed this during a bilateral meeting with Uzbekistan First Deputy Chairman of Senate of Parliament Sodiq Safoyev on the sidelines of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York.

Fire kills 59 in nightclub, 155 injured

NORTH MACEDONIA

A MASSIVE fire tore through an overcrowded nightclub in North Macedonia Sunday, killing 59 people and injuring 155 in a chaotic escape during a live concert. The tragedy drew messages of support from around the world but focused national attention on corruption in the small Balkan country as authorities detained 15 people.

The pre-dawn blaze in the eastern town of Kocani left mostly young people dead and injured due to burns, smoke inhalation and a stampede in the desperate effort to reach the building's single exit, officials said. Videos showed sparkling pyrotechnics on the stage hitting the ceiling followed by scenes of chaos inside the club, with young people running through the smoke as the musicians urged them to escape as quickly as possible.

"We even tried to get out through the toilet, to find bars," Marija Taseva, 19, told The Associated Press. Interior Minister Panche Toshkovski said 15 people had been detained for questioning after a preliminary inspection revealed the club was operating without a proper license. He said that the number of people inside the club was at least double its official capacity of 250. AFP

Hamas will free US-Israeli hostage only if ceasefire deal is implemented

CAIRO

HAMAS said Saturday it will only release an American-Israeli and the bodies of four other hostages if Israel implements their ceasefire agreement, calling it an "exceptional deal" aimed at getting the truce back on track.

Israeli airstrikes meanwhile killed nine people in the Gaza Strip who the military identified as militants, allegations denied by a U.K.-based aid group that said eight of its workers were killed.

A senior Hamas official said long-delayed talks over the ceasefire's second phase would need to begin the day of the release and last no longer than 50 days. Israel also would need to stop barring the entry of humanitarian aid and withdraw from a strategic corridor along Gaza's border with Egypt. Israel has said it won't pull out from the corridor, citing the need to combat weapons smuggling. Hamas would also demand the release of more Palestinian prisoners in exchange for hostages, said the official, who spoke on condition of ano-



Palestinians gather for iftar in Gaza Strip on Sunday | AP

nymity to discuss the closed-door talks.

Speaking at a protest camp set up last week outside Israeli military headquarters in Tel Aviv, relatives of hostages said Netanyahu was "violating the agreement he signed and abandoning the hostages in Gaza." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu late Saturday told negotiators to prepare for the continuation of talks regarding the release of hostages, his office said.

Two Israeli airstrikes in the northern town of Beit Lahia near the border killed at least nine people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. AP

WAR WATCH
 ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 525

Tel Aviv WEST BANK
 Jerusalem JORDAN
 GAZA STRIP ISRAEL

TOLL SO FAR
50,616

The Palestinian Journalists' Protection Center, a local watchdog, said the dead included three Palestinian journalists who were documenting aid distribution. Local health official Fares Awad identified one as Mahmoud Islim, who was operating a drone. AP

Russia evacuates 371 from retaken Kursk region

MOSCOW

RUSSIA on Sunday said it has moved to safety 371 of its civilians from areas it retook from Ukrainian forces in its border Kursk region.

Little was known on civilian life in the areas held by Ukraine since last summer and there has been some anger in Russia about the fate of those left behind under Ukrainian control and the lack of information from local officials.

"In total since March 12th from liberated inhabited areas 371 people have been moved, including 14 children," the acting Kursk region governor Alexander Khinshtein said on social media. Khinshtein said 220 of the civilians had been placed in temporary accommodation in the Kursk region, while the rest were staying with relatives. The Russian defence ministry published footage of mostly elderly people being taken by small vans from Sudzha and Kazachya Loknya, previously held by Ukraine. The footage showed people queuing and being accompanied by Russian soldiers. AFP

NASA's stuck astronauts welcome their replacements to space station

CAPE CANAVERAL

JUST over a day after blasting off, a SpaceX crew capsule arrived at the International Space Station on Sunday, delivering the replacements for NASA's two stuck astronauts.

The four newcomers — representing the US, Japan and Russia — will spend the next few days learning the station's ins and outs from Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams. Then the two will strap into their own SpaceX capsule later this week, one that has been up there since last year, to close out an unexpected extended mission that began last June.

Wilmore and Williams expected to be gone just a week when they launched on Boeing's first astronaut flight. They hit the nine-month mark earlier this month.

The Boeing Starliner capsule encountered so many problems that NASA insisted it come back empty, leaving its test pilots behind to wait for a SpaceX lift. Wilmore swung open the space station's hatch and then



This videograb by NASA shows astronauts Don Pettit, bottom centre, hugging Kirill Peskov as astronauts greet each other after a SpaceX capsule docked with the International Space Station | AP

needed extensive battery repairs. An older capsule took its place, pushing up their return by a couple weeks to mid-March. Weather permitting, the SpaceX capsule carrying Wilmore, Williams and two other astronauts will undock from the space station no earlier than Wednesday and splash down off Florida's coast. Until then, there will be 11 aboard the orbiting lab, representing the US, Russia and Japan. AP

Income tax disclosures in new fiscal year

Since certain benefits are not applicable under the new tax regime, compliance is simpler compared to the old regime

UMA KANNAN @Bengaluru

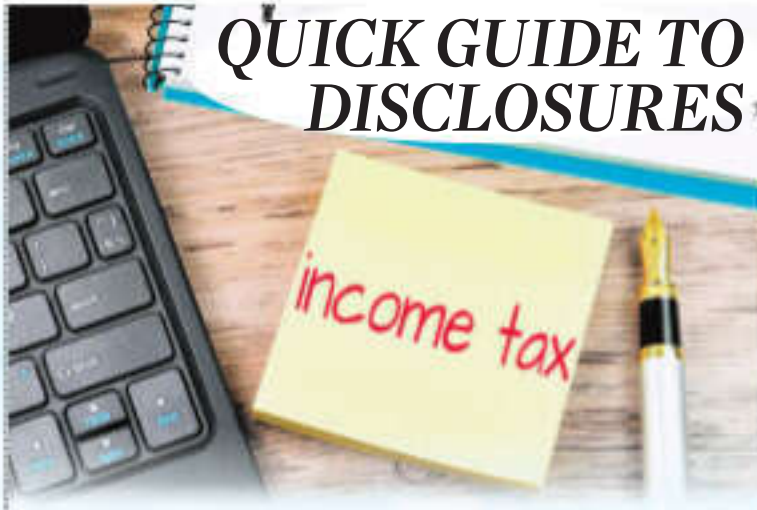
COME April 1, 2025, changes in the income tax slabs will come into effect under the new tax regime. While it is up to individual taxpayers to choose between the old and new tax regimes, the government has introduced various incentives, including nil tax liability for those who are earning up to ₹12 lakh, in order to encourage the adoption of the new tax regime.

Disclosures under new, old regimes

There are certain disclosures that need to be made by taxpayers under both the regime that include all bank accounts and interests: Taxpayers need to clearly state their bank accounts number and also interest earned on savings accounts should be mentioned. It is not

Individual taxpayers need to clearly state their bank accounts number and also interest earned on savings accounts

Under old tax regime, taxpayers should disclose Section 80C (investments), 80D (health insurance), 80E (education loan interest), 80G (donations)



QUICK GUIDE TO DISCLOSURES

In the new tax regime, Chapter-VIA deductions cannot be claimed, except deduction u/s 80CCD(2)/80CCH/80JAA as per the provision of Section 115BAC of the Income Tax Act, 1961

IF A TAXPAYER PREFERS THE OLD TAX REGIME, HRA IS EXEMPTED UNDER SECTION 10(13A)

necessary to report dormant accounts and one primary account needs to be selected for receiving refunds, if any.

They need to disclose their unlisted shares, directorship/partnership, assets and liabilities, apart from foreign assets or income if any.

ties, apart from foreign assets or income if any.

Old tax regime

Harsh Bhuta, Partner at Bhuta Shah & Co LLP said under the old tax regime, taxpayers must

disclose additional details due to various exemptions and deductions available. These include:

Deductions: Section 80C (investments), 80D (health insurance), 80E (education loan interest), 80G (donations)

Allowances & Exemptions: House Rent Allowance (HRA) claims (rent paid, landlord details), Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) exemption (travel expenses)

Other Disclosures: Home loan interest (Section 24b), set-off and carry-forward of house property losses, exempt allowances (education, transport), and perquisites.

“In contrast, the new tax regime offers lower tax rates but disallows most deductions and exemptions, requiring only basic income disclosure. Since benefits like HRA, LTA, and Chapter VI-A deductions are

not applicable, compliance is simpler,” he said. If a taxpayer prefers the old tax regime, House Rent Allowance (HRA) is exempted under section 10(13A). However, this exemption is not available in the new tax regime. In this case, rent receipts should be included and it should have the landlord's name, rent amount, payment date and address.

One of the common exemptions is Leave Travel Allowance or Concession. This exemption is also available for LTA received from a former employer. It can be claimed for any two years and applies only for domestic travel.

In the new tax regime, Chapter-VIA deductions cannot be claimed, except deduction u/s 80CCD(2)/80CCH/80JAA as per the provision of Section 115BAC of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

IN CONVERSATION



AMISHA VORA
Chairperson and MD, Prabhudas Lilladher

‘Investors should focus on quality large-cap stocks’

THE Indian equity markets have been grappling with volatility and uncertainty over the past several months. With multiple headwinds—ranging from slowing economic growth and tight domestic liquidity to relentless FII outflows and surging inflation—investors are understandably cautious. In a conversation with Dipak Mondal, Amisha Vora, chairperson and MD of Prabhudas Lilladher, shares her perspectives on the current market landscape. Edited excerpts:

The Indian equity market has been going through a tough phase lately. When do you see a recovery? Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

If you look back, India was one of the fastest-growing economies. However, over the last nine months, growth slowed down due to factors like multiple state and national elections, which led to lower government spending, particularly on capital expenditure. This impacted industries like capital goods, steel, and cement. Additionally, there was incessant selling by FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors), and domestic liquidity became tight. Consumer price inflation also surged to 9-10% due to rising vegetable prices and duties on palm oil. This combination hurt corporate earnings, especially in the October-December quarter, leading to a de-rating of stocks. However, things are changing. The RBI has started pumping liquidity into the system, and the government has increased capital expenditure and provided tax relief to boost consumption. Markets have already corrected significantly—large caps by 15-17% and small caps by over 20%.

Should investors stay away from mid and small-caps? What are the sectors investors should look at now?

Mid and small-caps where fundamentals don't justify valuations are risky. Many of these companies have questionable management and poor balance sheets. If businesses don't bounce back, their stock prices won't either. Investors should review their portfolios and cut losses in poor-quality stocks, reallocating to quality businesses. We are recommending sectors like pharma, healthcare, hospitals, defense, and hotels, as they offer better growth visibility and are less impacted by global trade tensions.

Investors should review their portfolios carefully. Stay invested in quality businesses with healthy cash flows. If you hold poor-quality stocks, switch to better ones.

Some large-cap stocks are now attractively valued. Does that mean the benchmark indices like Nifty and Sensex have limited downside from here? Could we see a relief rally soon?

I don't foresee another 15% correction in the Nifty. A 3-5% dip over the next two months is possible, especially with the upcoming Trump-Modi discussions on tariffs, which could create some volatility. But a deeper correction of 10-15% has a low probability—maybe just 10%. Retail investors should focus on quality large-cap stocks with strong fundamentals and growth potential. Investors should review their portfolios carefully. Stay invested in quality businesses with healthy cash flows, low debt, and strong return on equity. If you hold poor-quality stocks, switch to better ones.

Regulatory changes have affected retail participation in the markets, especially in F&O. Has this been detrimental?

Volumes have dropped, particularly in cash segments, due to reduced profits and stuck positions. F&O regulations were tightened, and while they reduced speculative trading, they likely prevented bigger losses for retail investors. Education and awareness are key in derivatives trading.

Some say retail investors should stop SIPs in mid-cap and small-cap funds. What's your view?

They shouldn't stop SIPs but should rebalance portfolios. Leave the asset allocation decision to professional fund managers who can better judge the market cycle and risks. Small-caps carry higher risks due to liquidity and management constraints, so investors should be cautious.

MONEY-WISE

HOW FLEXIBILITY HELPS FLEXI-CAP MFs



FINANCIAL ADVICE

ASHOK KUMAR
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(Views expressed here are personal)

IN the last quarter of 2017, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced tightly defined categories of equity mutual funds based on market capitalisation. But it soon woke up to the fact that many Asset Management Companies (AMCs) that ran multi-cap funds had portfolios that more or less mirrored other categories such as large cap, large and mid-cap or even mid-cap and small cap funds as it had set no pre-defined limits across market-capitalisations.

SEBI then announced that Multi Cap Funds are required to hold at least 75% of their assets in equity and equity-related instruments at any point in time.

Further, the portfolio must allocate at least 25% of its assets to large-cap stocks, 25% to mid-cap stocks, and another 25% to small-cap stocks. When the industry protested, SEBI backtracked and created yet another category named Flexi-Cap Funds.

Flexi Cap Funds are defined as funds that invest at least 65% of their assets in equities and equity-related products, with a dynamic allocation between large-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap stocks.

It was introduced as a new category of equity funds in November, 2020. As opposed to multi-cap funds, these funds had the leeway to provide heav-

ier weightage in their investments across any market capitalisation category, if they deemed it fit. Any remaining portion that the fund may have, after investing in stocks across market capitalisations can be invested in debt and money market instruments.

In short, it is not strait-jacketed by minimum or maximum limits across market capitalisation categories. It is by and far, the closest fit to the erstwhile vanilla funds that past mutual fund investors had built their fortunes on, till SEBI's categorisation of funds happened.

It is against this backdrop that I was surprised when SEBI imposed a minimum 25% across market capitalisation categories for multi-cap funds. My question back then (regular readers of this column might remember) was - 'If it ain't broken, why fix it?' Thankfully, better sense prevailed and the old multi-cap category which was the one that was tinkered with, made a comeback under the revised label of Flexi-cap funds.

The taxation of these funds, like all other Equity category Funds is 12.5% for Long Term Capital Gains (LTCG) made on the sale of units of total value exceeding ₹1.25 Lakh, and 20% for Short Term Capital Gains (STCG) if the units are sold within the time period of 1 year from the date of allotment.

The benchmarks used by Flexi Cap Funds and Multi Cap Funds to evaluate their performance include the Nifty 500 TRI Index and BSE 500 TRI Index.

As an equity fund, Flexi Cap funds too carry inherent risk that is likely to accentuate in the short run and could potentially even out in the long run. A plus for the Flexi-Cap category is that it offers the fund manager a much broader canvas to deploy funds and allows them to be far more nimble footed when market trends start changing.

MONEY MATTERS

WHY INVESTING NEEDS YOUR LOGIC THAN EMOTIONS

OUR investment decisions are influenced by 150 different emotions that you experience in your lifetime. To invest successfully, you must manage your emotions, according to Daniel Crosby's seminal work, The Behavioral Investor, published in 2016.

Greed and fear are two powerful emotions that drive prices in financial markets. Most of the 150 emotions we experience culminate in greed or fear. Eventually, that makes you buy or sell any asset. You can set your emotions free only after making sense of the information that comes your way. While rationalising emotions is impossible, it is easier to derive them from statistics analytics that point in a particular direction.

By analysing the fundamentals of a business, a sector or an economy, you try to make rational decisions. However, on most occasions, managing emotions gets trickier than you think.

For a long time, the IT services sector has been a bellwether sector. When the Rupee tumbled in international markets, most investors sought refuge in IT sector shares as they exported services to the US and other developed markets. They earned valuable foreign exchange that stemmed the fall in the rupee value to some extent. Today, foreign exchange revenue through IT services exports has jumped multi-fold, the Rupee has lost ground over the past few months, and yet, IT services stocks are under pressure in the stock market. The Nifty IT sector index has tumbled as IT services company share prices are witnessing sharp cuts. A surge

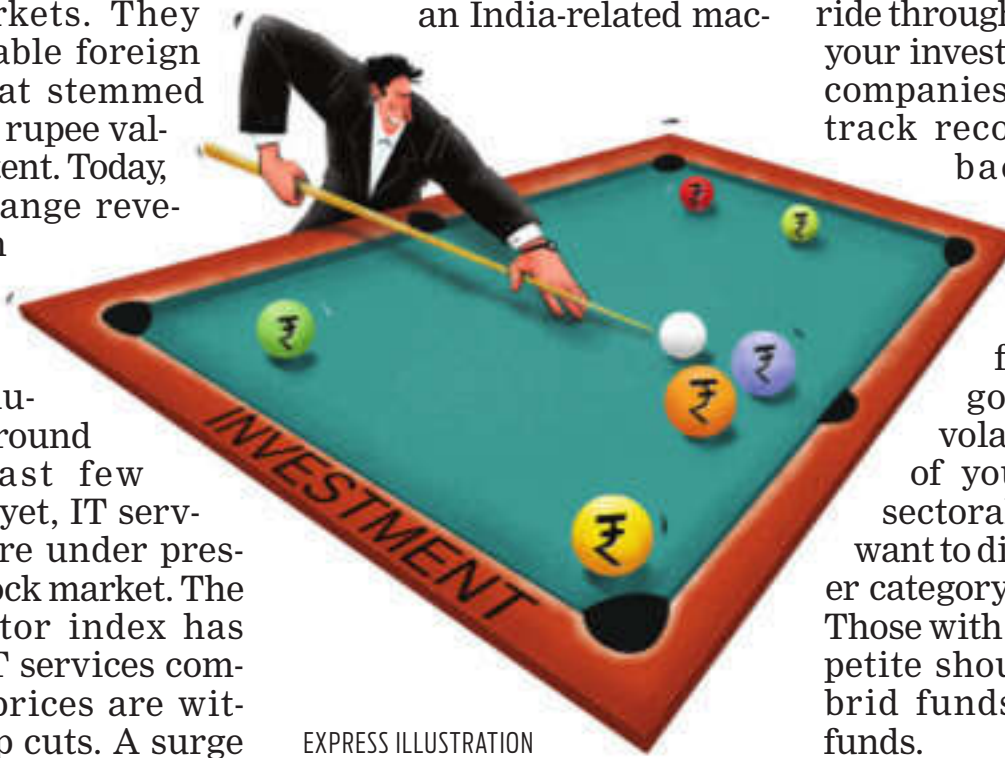


FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at
www.moneyminute.in)

in volatility in the US stocks represented the VIX index. IT sector stocks have an inverse relationship with the US stocks volatility index. There is also a visible pressure on revenue. In a recent release, ICRA, an Indian credit ratings agency, said that the revenue growth in the financial year 2025-26 is likely to remain muted. That is still no reason for such a sharp cut in share prices when headline numbers are in favour.

The answer is in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous VUCA world. It is not just because of the threat of tariffs on all imports that the US president is hitting the world. There is a disruption in changing business models. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned earlier in an India-related mac-



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

What can you do

As a regular investor, you may want to ensure you can ride through these times with your investment. IT services companies in India have a track record of bouncing back among sectors in times of difficulty. Keeping a well-diversified portfolio is a good option when volatility rules. A lot of you invest through sectoral funds. You may want to diversify to a broader category of equity assets. Those with moderate risk appetite should switch to hybrid funds or multi-asset funds.

Why are Tesla sales and shares falling?

ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

ELON Musk's Tesla is facing significant challenges as its global sales and stock prices are tumbling. The company, which has long dominated the electric vehicle (EV) market, is now struggling to compete with Chinese automakers like BYD, which recently overtook Tesla as the world's largest EV producer. Adding to Tesla's woes, Musk's controversial political views and affiliations have alienated some consumers, further impacting sales and investor confidence.

In 2024, Tesla produced 1,774,442 electric vehicles, falling just 4,500 units short of BYD's 1,777,965. The decline in Tesla's sales is particularly evident in its two largest markets: the United States and China. According to S&P Global Mobility, new Tesla registrations



in the US fell by 11% in January 2025 compared to the previous year, even as competitors reported growth. In China, Tesla's sales dropped by a staggering 51.47% month-on-month and 49.16% year-on-year in February 2025, according to the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA). Europe has also seen a sharp decline in Tesla's sales, with a 45% drop reported by Jato Dynamics. In Germany, Tesla registrations plummeted by 76% in February 2025 after

Musk endorsed the far-right political party- AfD. Similar declines were observed in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and France. The company is also facing boycotts and protests in the UK and Portugal, further denting its reputation and sales. Elon Musk's political activities have become a significant point of concern for investors and consumers alike.

A recent survey by Morgan Stanley revealed that 85% of respondents believe Musk's

controversial political views are negatively impacting Tesla's business. Musk's vocal support for US President and his involvement in Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have drawn criticism, with some consumers opting to boycott Tesla vehicles altogether. Tesla's strategy of cutting prices to compete with cheaper Chinese EVs has also backfired. While price reductions have provided a short-term boost in sales, they have severely eroded the company's profit margins, leading to investor unease. Add to it, Chinese EV makers continue to sell tech-heavy and feature-rich electric cars at prices far lower than Tesla. With a sharp focus on affordability, technology and styling, particularly in the EV space, Chinese companies have already disrupted the global car market.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

THE equity markets are expected to remain in a consolidation phase, with the Nifty50 likely to remain within a well-defined range of 22,200 to 22,700. The index has been struggling to break past key resistance levels amid persistent global uncertainties and cautious investor sentiment.

Without a decisive breakout, the near-term outlook suggests continued range-bound movement, punctuated by volatile intraday swings. According to analysts, the immediate levels to watch are the psychological barrier at 22,500 and the critical resistance zone of 22,650-22,700. A decisive move above these levels could trigger a short-covering rally toward 23,000. On



the downside, the 22,200-22,300 zone remains a key support band. A breach below 22,200 could open the doors for a deeper correction, with potential targets at 22,000 and even 21,964 in the worst-case scenario. Osho Krishnan, Sr Analyst - Technical & Derivatives at Angel One, said, "The zone of 22,650-22,700, representing a confluence of the 20 Day exponential moving

average (DEMA) and the bearish gap on the weekly chart, seems a formidable obstacle for the benchmark index. A decisive breakout could potentially generate some upward momentum in the upcoming week. Conversely, the subzone 22,300-22,250 is projected to serve as a robust line of defense." For the upcoming sessions, the broader sentiment remains cautious. Global uncertainties, especially around interest rates and geopolitical tensions, continue to weigh on risk appetite. As a result, traders are likely to favour a 'buy on dips and sell on rallies' approach until a clear breakout or breakdown is confirmed. The markets wrapped up the truncated week on a muted note, with the Nifty50 declining by 0.69%.



Kolkata Knight Riders has picked Chetan Sakariya as a replacement for medium pacer Umran Malik for the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Malik, the pacer from Jammu and Kashmir, has been ruled out of the season due to an injury. Sakariya has represented India in an ODI and two T20Is and has played 19 IPL games, scalping 20 wickets.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

KEY PLAYERS

SUNIL NARINE

With 488 runs and 17 wickets last season, the former West Indies all-rounder played a big role in the Kolkata franchise winning their third title. Then mentor Gautam Gambhir increased his impact manifold by bringing him back as an opener and once again he will hold the key for the Knights.

VARUN CHAKRAVARTHY

The TN spinner was the leading wicket-taker last season with 21 scalps. His show in the Champions Trophy, albeit in the 50-over format, will only add to his confidence and make him more lethal this season.

BIG SIGNINGS

VENKATESH IYER

Technically he is their biggest new signing with ₹23.75 crore but the MP all-rounder has been their with the outfit since 2021. Also vice-captain this season, he has the ability to ride the storm in the middle overs.

QUINTON DE KOCK

Bought for ₹3.60 crore, the former South Africa wicketkeeper-batter has the ability to fill the void created after the departure of Phil Salt. If preferred ahead of Rahmanullah Gurbaz, he can give a quick start alongside Narine.

SUBPLOTS

Explosive middle-order

The team has one of the best middle-order with the likes of Rinku Singh, Andre Russell and Ramandeep Singh in their ranks. These power hitters can thrive on a good start to bat their opponents out of the game.

NEW CAPTAIN

KKR have a new captain in the form of Ajinkya Rahane. How he fares in his role as the skipper could decide their campaign in the tournament. Rahane has already shown he can be a good T20 batter and his stocks can only soar if he impresses with his captaincy.

FOCUS ON GUJARAT, KOLKATA

GUJARAT TITANS

KEY PLAYERS

RASHID KHAN

One of the finest spinners in T20 cricket, Khan has played 121 IPL matches claiming 149 wickets so far. One of the five players retained by the franchise, he needs to find back his mojo both with ball and bat if the team wishes to win its second title.

SHUBMAN GILL

The captain was their second-highest scorer the previous season. A good start by him along with Sai Sudharsan can set the tone for the tournament.

BIG SIGNINGS

JOS BUTTLER

Signed for ₹15.75 crore, Jos Buttler could provide the momentum the team lacked last year. An explosive batter, the former England captain can take down any bowling attack on his day to take the contest away from the opponents.

KAGISO RABADA

GT have bolstered their pace attack by adding Kagiso Rabada by shelling out ₹10.75 crore on him. The South African can bowl both up front and in death overs to keep a check on the batters.

SUBPLOTS

All-rounders

The team boasts an array of all-rounders, including Rashid, Glenn Phillips, Washington Sundar, and Rahul Tewatia. Add to it the Tamil Nadu duo of R Sai Khore and Shahrulkh Khan, they have depth and versatility in their playing XI.

PACE ATTACK

Apart from having an excellent spin attack, the 2022 winners have assembled a powerful pace attack with Rabada, Gerald Coetzee, Mohammed Siraj, Prasad Krishna, and Ishant Sharma. It's a blend of experience and up and coming talent making them one of the most threatening attacks in the tournament.



With the Indian Premier League (IPL) beginning on March 22, we begin our countdown to the 18th edition of the franchise league. Here's a brief on Gujarat Titans, the champions in 2022, and Kolkata Knight Riders, the holders.

PICS:SPORTSPICS

WPL: Captain Harmanpreet and the art of counterpunch

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

DURING the T20 World Cup 2024, in the group stage game against Australia at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, India were chasing 151 to stay alive in the competition. Having already lost to New Zealand in the opener, they had to find the win; otherwise, they had to hope that other results went their way. India's captain, Harmanpreet Kaur, tried her best to cross the line, but her unbeaten 54 off 47 was in vain.

Kaur has had many such innings for India where she has tried to marshal the troupes with the lower-order batters. Her 65 against the same side in the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medal fixture or 52 in the semifinal at Cape Town at the 2023 T20 World Cup. She has fought hard on every given occasion and each time, the result did not go her way.

Cut to March 15, 2025, at the Brabourne Stadium. Kaur, now the captain of Mumbai Indians, walked in to bat after watching her side inch painfully to 20 runs off six overs — their second worst powerplay score across three seasons. Mumbai's highest run-scorer Natalie Sciver-Brunst was also struggling at the other end. Throughout the season, it was a known fact that Mumbai were not the fastest side to start the proceedings. However, once they caught fire in the middle overs, it became hard to stop the juggernaut. On



Mumbai Indians skipper Harmanpreet Kaur holds the WPL trophy | SPORTSPICS

Saturday, Kaur had to start from scratch. She welcomed Anabel Sutherland with a boundary. Later, Sutherland looked clueless when Kaur clobbered the Australian for a six.

Jess Jonassen, another Australian, who has had the wood over Kaur in the past, got smashed for three consecutive boundaries. The tables turned and the captain was at the centre of it. Neither Shika Pandey nor Minnu Mani could do anything to stop the leaking runs as Mumbai were back in the contest. Despite losing Sciver-Brunst and a few others at the other end, the captain showed no signs of slowing down despite the pain. By the time she got out for 66, courtesy of Sutherland, Kaur had made sure that Mumbai had put a competitive total. A few deliveries later, Mumbai

finished on 149/7, which proved to be too much for perennial finalists Delhi Capitals.

Kaur has always been that kind of a player. Despite multiple injury scares or on occasions when things did not go her way, she has found a way to stay afloat. The difference in the WPL final was the player at the other end. Someone like Sciver-Brunst, despite struggling throughout her knock, knew what was needed to be done to keep the scoreboard ticking. So even when their opposition looked in control, there was room to take on the game and that is what the duo did.

For most of her knocks for India in the past, Kaur has hardly received any help from other batters. If that changes for the national side soon, the results should start going India's way.

BOXING MESS

Prez and secy clash over women nat'ls

AGENCIES @ New Delhi

BOXING Federation of India (BFI) president Ajay Singh on Sunday asserted that the upcoming Women's National Boxing Championship will proceed as scheduled, just a few hours after the federation's secretary issued a notification stating that the tournament had been rescheduled. The national meet, which has been postponed multiple times since end of last year, is set to take place from March 20 to 27 in Greater Noida. The last date for entry by number was March 10 and name was March 15. However, BFI Secretary General Hemantha Kalita sent out an email on Sunday evening stating, "I would like to reiterate that the said Championship is being rescheduled due the request of various members and also considering the paucity of time. A few states have only sent entry by number and some have sent names." Kalita wrote in a letter in possession of PTI.

Tokyo Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain, World Champion Nitu Ghanghas, and CWG medallist Jaismine Lamboria are among those who have submitted their names. Kalita also raised concerns regarding the sanctioning of travel and daily allowances for officials. "Please note that the BFI is undergoing Elections and that raises the question who would sign the certificates and officiate. Further more importantly, there cannot be any sanction or release of any TA/DA to officials as per the present situation." "A fresh date shall be announced soon after due process and consultation," he added. However, within a couple of hours, Singh issued another letter saying the competition is on as per scheduled. "As the President of BFI, I will not allow any further delays. I am making it clear that the Championship will be held as scheduled," Singh wrote.

Merino helps Arsenal beat Chelsea

AFP @ London

CHELSEA'S challenge for a place in next season's Champions League faltered in a toothless 1-0 defeat at Arsenal on Sunday as Fulham beat Tottenham 2-0. Mikel Merino scored the only goal of a disappointing contest at the Emirates as Arsenal pulled clear in second place and to within 12 points of runaway leaders Liverpool.

Chelsea badly missed the presence of the absent Cole Palmer due to injury as they meekly surrendered to a damaging defeat for their hopes of a top-four finish. The Blues remain in fourth for now but have five sides from Manchester City in fifth to Aston Villa in ninth within four points of Enzo Maresca's team.

Bukayo Saka is nearing a return for Arsenal, while Maresca is confident of having Palmer, Nico Jackson and Noni Madueke back when they are next in action at home to Tottenham on April 3. "We did enough to deserve to win the game," said Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta. "Now we have the international break so let's take a chance to breathe and bring some players back hopefully." Arsenal have struggled badly



Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice controls the ball on Sunday | AFP

for goals since the loss of Kai Havertz to a season-ending injury forced midfielder Merino into a makeshift centre-forward role. The Spanish international proved the match winner from a corner as he looped a header from Martin Odegaard's delivery inside the far post on 20 minutes.

Real row

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Saturday his team will not play another football game after fewer than 72 hours of rest. Los Blancos beat Atletico Madrid on Wednesday night

in the Champions League on penalties and then earned a 2-1 win at Villarreal on Saturday, with the game kicking off at 1630 GMT. "I think today is the last time we will play a game before 72 hours (of rest)," Ancelotti told reporters. "We will never play another game (without) 72 hours of rest. We asked La Liga twice to change the time of the game and they did not do anything, this is the last time."

World football governing body FIFA recommends at least 72 hours between matches in order to protect the health of the players.

F1 SEASON-OPENER

Norris holds Verstappen to win Australian Grand Prix

AFP @ Melbourne

LANDO Norris kept his cool in a rain-hit and incident-packed season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Sunday to edge world champion Max Verstappen with Lewis Hamilton 10th on his Ferrari debut.

The pole-sitting Briton took the chequered flag by less than a second from the Dutchman, with Mercedes' George Russell third after a chaotic race in Melbourne that saw three drivers crash before the end of the first lap.

With the safety car repeatedly forced into action after a slew

of accidents on the wet Albert Park circuit, Norris held on to clock a fifth win and second in a row after topping the podium at the final race of 2024 in Abu Dhabi.

RB rookie Isack Hadjar, Alpine's Jack Doohan and Williams' Carlos Sainz — last year's winner — all failed to finish the first lap on a track made treacherous by earlier torrential rain.

Norris came into the season as favourite for the 2025 drivers' title and cemented his status as the man to beat.

"It was amazing, a top race, especially with Max behind me.



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris poses with trophy on Sunday | AFP

I was pushing, especially the last two laps — it was a little bit stressful, not going to lie," said Norris.

"Tricky conditions, but there are the ones that are enjoyable and we ended up on top so I'm happy."

Verstappen, who is aiming to become only the second driver to win five straight world titles after Michael Schumacher, was in the hunt early but an uncharacteristic error on lap 18 dented his chances until another safety car put him back in the frame. "It was a difficult race, but at the end it was fun," said the Dutch star.

"It was pushing, fighting for the win but I'm just happy to bring it home, score good points and this is a good start for us."

In the unpredictable conditions, with rain on-and-off, Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli was an eye-opening fourth on his debut while Williams' Alex Albon came an encouraging fifth.

Aston Martin's Lance Stroll was sixth ahead of Nico Hulkenberg in a Sauber.

Top six: 1. Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren), 2. Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull), 3. George Russell (GBR/Mercedes), 4. Kimi Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes), 5. Alexander Albon (THA/Williams), 6. Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin).

EXPRESS READ

BCCI's medical team head Patel resigns

NEW DELHI: The BCCI's recently inaugurated Centre of Excellence (COE, earlier NCA) is expected to witness a few changes in composition of its staff in coming few months after Sports Science and Medical team head Nitin Patel tendered his resignation after a successful stint of nearly three years. A source said that a few Level 3 coaches and instructors along with some of the S&C coaches could make a move in some months time. NCA head VVS Laxman's tenure is set to get completed by the end of this year and it is unlikely that he would seek an extension.

Kiwis beat Pakistan by 9 wickets in the 1st T20I

CHRISTCHURCH: A new era for Pakistan white ball cricket got off to a rough start Sunday with a nine wicket loss to New Zealand in the first of five T20Is. The Pakistan batting crumbled against the New Zealand pace attack and the tourists were all out for 91 in 18.4 overs, its fifth-lowest total in T20Is. New Zealand easily ran down that total, reaching 92-1 from 10.1 overs with Tim Seifert making 44 from 29 balls and Finn Allen 29 from 17. Tim Robinson was 18 not out and took two runs from the first ball of the 11th over to complete the win.

Draper knocks off Alcaraz to reach final

INDIAN WELLS: Jack Draper toppled two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz 6-1, 0-6, 6-4 to reach the BNP Paribas Open final. The 13th-seeded Draper will face 12th-seeded Holger Rune on Sunday. Rune beat fifth-seeded Daniil Medvedev 7-6, 6-4 in the first semifinal for his 150th tour-level victory. In the women's final Sunday, top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka will play 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva. They won semifinal matches Friday night in chilly conditions.

Lahiri finishes 25th at LIV Golf Singapore

SINGAPORE: Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri carded a two-under 69 in the third and final round to secure a modest Tied-25th finish at LIV Golf Singapore on Sunday. Lahiri, who shot rounds of 70 and 72 on the first two days, registered four birdies against two bogeys in the final round. At the top, Joaquin Niemann (65) cruised to a massive five-shot win over Brooks Koepka (66) for his second victory in the first four events of the season.



IIT DELHI: EXCELLENCE, INNOVATION, & CAMPUS CHRONICLES

FROM CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH AND TOP PLACEMENTS TO VIBRANT STUDENT LIFE AND ICONIC TRADITIONS — SAUMYA SOLANKI EXPLORES WHAT MAKES IIT DELHI A POWERHOUSE OF TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY



“We are poised to shape the global landscape of science and tech”

IIT Delhi has been redefining its role on the global stage. Director Prof Rangan Banerjee tells Saumya Solanki about the institute's immediate focus is on expanding research in critical areas such as AI, quantum computing and more



technology, and development. How does it aim to influence policy-making in India and beyond? Science and technology do not exist in isolation; they must align with societal needs and governance structures. Our School of Public Policy focuses on evidence-based research to guide policymakers on pressing issues such as data privacy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) ethics, environmental policies, and health tech regulations.

With IIT's legacy of academic excellence, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has long been a frontrunner in shaping the technological landscape. In a conversation with *EdexLive*, IIT Delhi Director Prof Rangan Banerjee shares insights into the institute's priorities, and his vision of India in 2050.

capture solutions, and climate-resilient infrastructure.



The Open House showcased the IIT's contributions to nation-building. How do you aim to inspire young minds towards science and technology?

Through live demonstrations, lab visits, and interactions with researchers, we aim to ignite curiosity and a passion for science and technology among young minds. Many of our visitors go on to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields.

With events like the Green Tech Accelerator supporting 25 growth-stage start-ups, how does IIT Delhi plan to continue fostering sustainable technological innovations? Sustainability is at the core of many of our initiatives. Beyond Green Tech, our research centres are working on hydrogen fuel technology, carbon

IIT Delhi established the School of Public Policy to address issues at the intersection of science,

How has IIT Delhi's placement landscape evolved in recent years?

Our curriculum is constantly updated to keep pace with industry trends. Additionally, we are fostering entrepreneurship through incubation centres, encouraging students to innovate rather than just seek employment. Our placement records remain strong, with top recruiters from across the globe hiring our graduates.

Where do you see India and IIT Delhi in 2050?

By 2050, we envision a self-reliant nation excelling in innovation, clean energy, and digital transformation. We will continue to play a crucial role in this journey by nurturing talent, conducting breakthrough research, and fostering global collaborations.

Events that shaped the institute

IIT Delhi's vibrant campus life is enriched by its flagship events that blend cultural exuberance with technological innovation.

Rendezvous: The cultural extravaganza

Rendezvous, popularly known as RDV, is IIT Delhi's annual cultural festival. Spanning four days, it attracts over 1,60,000 students from more than 1,200 colleges nationwide, making it North India's largest cultural fest. The festival showcases a plethora of events, including music performances, dance competitions, literary debates, and fashion shows, providing a platform for students to exhibit their talents and celebrate cultural diversity.

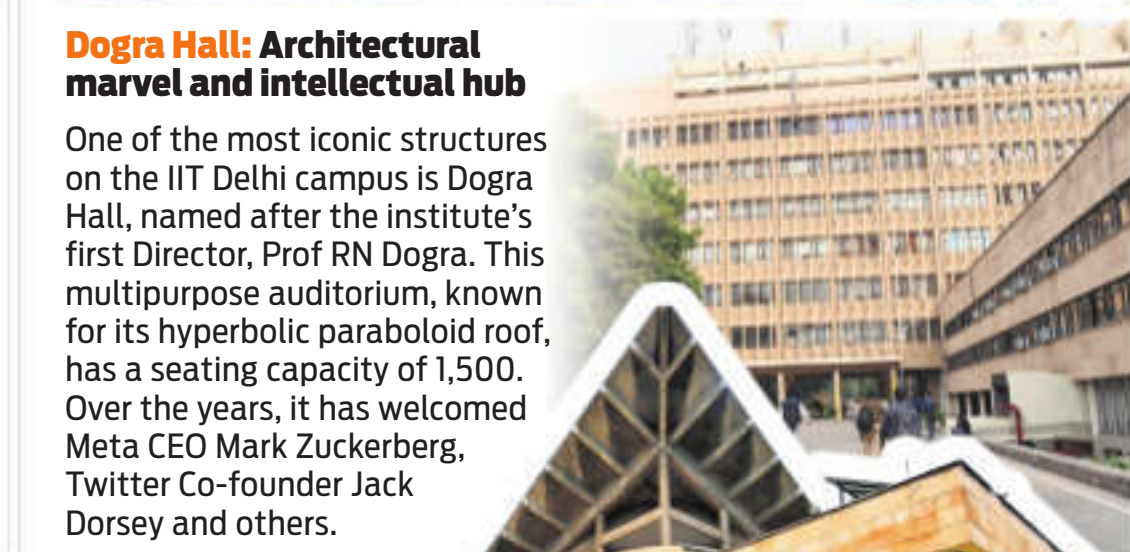
Tryst: The technological marvel

Tryst is IIT Delhi's annual science, technology, and management festival, recognised as North India's largest tech fest. Organised entirely by the student community, it features over 75 events, including workshops, competitions, guest lectures, and exhibitions. With participation exceeding 60,000 students, Tryst fosters innovation and technical prowess, offering attendees hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies and insights from industry experts.



If the walls could talk: Campus stories from IIT Delhi

IIT Delhi's campus has been the backdrop for numerous events and landmarks that have significantly influenced its culture and identity. Notably:



that day



Fee hike protests of 2022: When students took a stand

In the academic year 2022-2023, IIT Delhi increased the total academic fee for full-time MTech students by 100%, raising it to ₹53,100 from the previous ₹26,450. This substantial hike led to student protests.

Indradhanu: Pioneering LGBTQIA+ inclusion on campus

In 2013, students founded Indradhanu, an LGBTQIA+ collective. Notably, members of the group were among the petitioners in the historic 2018 Supreme Court case that led to decriminalisation of homosexuality in India.

ALUMNI ACCOUNTS

IIT DELHI ALUMNI REFLECT ON HOW THEIR TIME AT THE INSTITUTE SHAPED THEIR CAREERS, LEADERSHIP SKILLS, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEYS

Jaswinder (Jassi) Chadha

BTech (Mechanical Engineering), Class of 1990, CEO, Axtria

At IIT Delhi, my senior project in CAD/CAM exposed me to cutting-edge technology, which later became instrumental in pursuing a master's and PhD in the US. Also, hostel life in Nilgiri built lifelong friendships, and my involvement in sports — particularly as captain of the IIT Delhi basketball team — taught me the value of teamwork and resilience. My mother was the first woman to earn a PhD in Mathematics from IIT Delhi, making us the first parent-child graduates of this prestigious institute. Years later, we had the honour of establishing one of the first endowed chairs at IIT Delhi, giving back to a place that has given us so much.



Vikram Gupta

BTech (Chemical Engineering), Class of 1993, Founder and Managing Partner, IvyCap Ventures

Holistic exposure at IIT Delhi has been instrumental in my career achievements, from launching IvyCap Ventures to establishing impactful initiatives like the IIT Delhi Endowment Fund. In 1992, I served as the Music Secretary at IIT Delhi, and I remember that I had no prior knowledge of playing any musical instrument. Having access to a keyboard and a guitar, I took the initiative to learn how to play them on my own, which taught me the value of self-reliance. This experience, along with hosting the Rendezvous and participating in music competitions, shaped my entrepreneurial mindset.



STUDENT'S VOICES

JAHNABI ROY, BTECH COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

At IIT Delhi, we don't just master academics — we cultivate the art of learning. The institute fosters innovation, research, and cultural excellence, shaping us into future global leaders. Student merit is recognised and rewarded, fuelling a culture of excellence and ambition.



MAYANK, BTECH ENERGY ENGINEERING

IIT Delhi offers immense opportunities beyond academics. From international competitions to sports, there's something for everyone. The supportive environment has helped me grow both personally and professionally, providing the space to explore my passions.



SHREYA GUPTA, BTECH MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTING

The best part of IIT Delhi is its environment — constantly surrounded by talented peers, pushing you to grow beyond your limits. The institute nurtures both academic and soft skills, with diverse student clubs offering a space to explore hobbies and build a strong foundation for the future.



Research and Innovation Hub

IIT Delhi marked its 67th Foundation Day on January 27, 2025, by releasing the Research Impact Report, highlighting breakthroughs in AI, healthcare, energy, defence, and sustainability. The institute has incubated 147 start-ups and established 271 global research collaborations, reinforcing its role as a leader in innovation.

Healthcare & MedTech

- Probe-free RT-PCR test for COVID-19
- MRI-based knee joint evaluation
- Biosensors for pathogen detection
- Bioresorbable cardiovascular stents

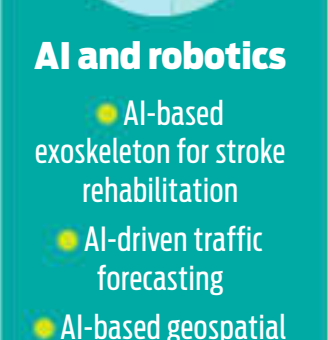


Energy & sustainability

- Vanadium Redox Flow Battery for renewable energy storage
- Next-generation solar cells
- Shadowless solar photovoltaic tower
- Compressed biogas enrichment and bottling technology
- Sustainable calcined clay (LC3) cement

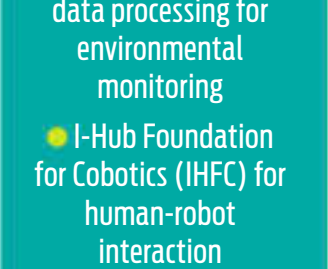
AI and robotics

- AI-based exoskeleton for stroke rehabilitation
- AI-driven traffic forecasting
- AI-based geospatial data processing for environmental monitoring
- I-Hub Foundation for Cobotics (IHFC) for human-robot interaction



Quantum and advanced communications

- Fibre-based quantum secure communications
- Advanced THz detector and source device technologies for 6G & beyond



Automotive & transportation

- Powertrain for long-range electric vehicles
- Crash analysis and autonomous driving
- Simulation software for bullet trains
- Flex-fuel vehicle technology



Defense & security

- Body armour for Indian armed forces
- Lightweight armour for AK-47 & sniper rifle protection



Social impact and assistive technologies

- Clean cooking devices for rural communities
- AI-based cost-effective point-of-care device for cancer screening
- Assistive technologies for visually-impaired individuals
- Tactile diagrams for visually impaired learners



Start-ups & collaborations

- 147 start-ups incubated in agritech, AI/ML, cybersecurity, biotech, & e-mobility
- 271 international research collaborations
- IIT Delhi Abu Dhabi campus launched with joint PhD programmes



A RANKING OF CAMPUS LIFE

- Best hangout spot:** Ex-hall and CCD
- Best canteen on the campus & best dish:** Naivedyam & best dish is rava masala dosa
- Favourite library spot:** Top floor corner
- One crazy tradition:** Birthday bumps
- Best time to be on campus:** Monsoon (fest season) and October (since it is calm after the fest concludes)
- Most competitive club/society:** Music club/Debsoc
- Most Insta-worthy spot on campus:** Biotech lawn
- Midnight hunger saviour:** Aravali night mess
- Unwritten rules:** Juniors demanding parties from seniors
- Most mysterious spot:** Area around Department of Management Science
- Top rumour:** Mystery about the haunted bridge near the new campus

Next level unlocked: Jobs



Placement trends

Here are the key placement numbers and facts when it comes to IIT Delhi's Placement Season 2024-25:

- Total job offers (including PPOs):** 1,200+
- Students placed:** ~1,150
- Top recruiters who gave offers in double-digits:** American Express, Barclays, BCG, BlueStone Jewellery & Lifestyle, Deutsche India, Goldman Sachs, Google, Graviton Research Capital, Intel India, Meesho, Micron Technology, Microsoft, OLA, Oracle, PayU, Quadeye, Qualcomm, Robust Results, Shiprocket, Squarepoint Capital, Texas Instruments, Trident Group, Turing Global India
- International offers:** 50+
- Companies offering international placements:** 15+
- Countries with international placements:** Japan, Netherlands, South Korea, Taiwan, UAE, United Kingdom, United States
- Placement season duration:** Ongoing till the end of the next semester

Disclaimer: IIT Delhi, as a policy, has decided not to mention high-value packages in their placement-related press releases

HIDDEN GEMS ON THE CAMPUS

IIT Delhi is full of pleasant spots that offer students a chance to unwind, or simply enjoy the view. Here are a few lesser-known yet cherished spots:

New LHC top floors

The top floors of the New Lecture Hall Complex provide a calm environment

IIT JEE registration office & other block sections

The institute's various blocks are a maze of seemingly endless rooms, each holding its own stories.

Girnar 7th floor, behind the main washroom

Students can enjoy stunning sunset views, with Qutub Minar visible in the distance.

Dogra rooftop

Once a hidden treasure, this rooftop has now gained mass popularity

