

Guntur man bids Rs 2.08 cr for fancy vehicle number!

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AMARAVATI

THE craze for fancy vehicle registration numbers in the Telugu states has once again come to light, with a resident of Guntur setting a new national record by purchasing India's most expensive number plate for whopping Rs 2.08 crore.

Kiran Kolpakula of Guntur won the online auction of the ultra-rare VIP registration number 'DDC 0001' (also known as DDC 001) for Rs 2.08 crore in January. This is the highest amount ever paid for a vehicle registration number in India. The auction was conducted by the newly launched auction house platform of Big Boy Toyz (BBT) in its debut event.

The 'DDC 0001' num-

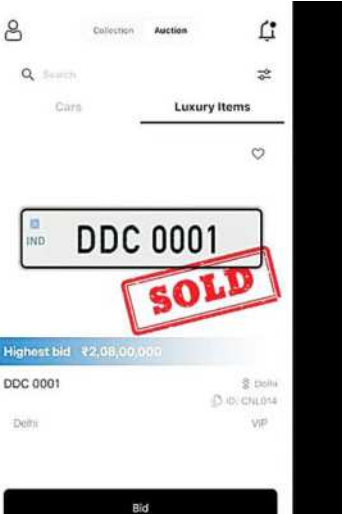
Ultra-rare VIP registration number 'DDC 0001' auctioned on Big Boy Toyz platform



ber plate was previously owned by Big Boy Toyz founder Jatin Ahuja, which added to its exclusivity and market value. The plate

is considered a rare and premium collectible among automobile and luxury asset enthusiasts.

The Rs 2.08-crore sale



has surpassed all previous benchmarks for registration number auctions in the country. In 2025, the 'HR 88 B 8888' plate was auctioned

for Rs 1.17 crore, but the deal was later cancelled due to non-payment. The plate was eventually resold for Rs 26.7 lakh. In comparison, the successful sale of 'DDC 0001' has now become the highest confirmed transaction in this segment.

Experts said the record-breaking sale reflects the rising demand for premium registration numbers as status symbols and collectible assets.

Such numbers are increasingly viewed as a mark of prestige among business owners and automobile enthusiasts.

The latest auction is expected to further boost interest in luxury number plates and organized auction platforms across India.

KTR raps CP Sajjanar for 'playing judge' in phone tapping case

HYDERABAD



BRS working president and former minister KT Rama Rao on Monday strongly objected to City Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar's remarks terming the phone tapping probe as an "illegal phone tapping case", accusing him of overstepping his role as an investigator.

Reacting to the Commissioner's statement after the SIT concluded questioning former Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrababhu Naidu, KTR said Sajjanar appeared to be acting as "both judge and jury". In a post on X, KTR asserted that the legality or illegality of the case can be determined only by courts, not by the head of the investigation. He urged the judiciary to take note of what he called "extremely objectionable statements."

SIT officials questioned KCR for nearly five hours at his Nandinaragar residence here on Sunday. Following this, Sajjanar referred to the

matter as an "illegal phone tapping case", triggering sharp political reactions.

Meanwhile, BRS leaders and cadres staged protests across villages and towns against SIT notices issued to KCR. Thanking party workers, KTR said the mobilisation reminded him of the Telangana movement days and claimed administrative failure was evident in the state.

Addressing the media in Hyderabad, KTR criticised the government over law and order, alleged lapses during Medaram Jathara arrange-

ments, demanded a white paper on Davos investment agreements, and reiterated calls for a CBI and sitting judge probe into the Singareni coal scam. He alleged misuse of SITs to divert public attention and claimed the Congress leaders' narratives in the phone tapping case were "collapsing one by one".

On municipal elections, KTR said BRS campaigns would be conducted locally without large rallies or roadshows and expressed confidence of good results for the party.

Indus water talks stall as India rejects Hague arbitration

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

INDIA has refused to recognise the latest orders of the Court of Arbitration (CoA) in The Hague under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), asserting that it will not participate in proceedings it deems illegitimate.

The CoA had directed India to submit operational "pondage logbooks" from the Baglihar and Kishanganga hydroelectric plants as part of the "Second Phase on the Merits" and scheduled hearings on February 2-3. The court noted that India had not filed any counter-memorial or indicated participation. Government sources described the CoA as "so-called illegally constituted" and accused Pakistan of seeking to involve India in "parallel proceedings" outside the neutral expert mechanism.

STT hike to secure savings from speculative bets: CEA

NEW DELHI: Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Monday that the increase in Securities Transaction Tax on derivatives trading announced in the Union Budget 2026-27 is aimed at securing household savings from highly speculative bets rather than generating revenue for the government. "The purpose (of STT hike) is not revenue generation...the purpose is to ensure hard-earned savings are used to maximise wealth in households. The SEBI has pointed out how people lose money through F&O," the CEA told journalists.

The Union Budget 2026-27, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday, proposed raising STT on futures to 0.05 per cent from the present 0.02 per cent and on options premium and exercise of options to be raised to 0.15 per cent from the present rate of 0.1

per cent and 0.125 per cent, respectively.

The stock market crash in the shares of brokerage-related companies after the presentation of the Budget was attributed to the hike in STT.

The tax changes are mechanical in design. The STT applies per transaction, so a higher rate increases the cost of trading for participants who buy and sell frequently, including intraday strategies that rely on turnover. By raising the transaction levy, the government increases the all-in cost of derivatives trades alongside exchange fees and other statutory charges.

Similarly, Revenue Secretary Arvind Shrivastava also said, after the presentation of the budget, that "the volumes in the F&O market are in the realm of heavy speculation when compared to the size of the country's GDP or underlying securities market".

BJP 'mastermind' behind Sunetra's appointment as Dy CM: Saamana

MUMBAI: The Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) on Monday claimed the BJP leadership was the "mastermind" behind NCP leader Sunetra Pawar taking oath as Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister, just days after her husband Ajit Pawar's demise.

An editorial in the Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' also alleged that the BJP leadership and Nationalist Congress Party leaders Sunil Tatkar and Praful Patel do not want the unification of the two NCP factions.

Sunetra Pawar took oath as the state's first woman Deputy CM on Saturday, barely three days after NCP leader Ajit Pawar and four others died in an air crash at Baramati in Pune district, inviting criticism from some quarters over the pace at which the development took place.

TG BJP moves into action mode; to douse rebel fire ahead of polls

Rebel nominations attract suspension from the party for 15 years, warns BJP chief

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HYDERABAD



BJP State President N Ramachander Rao has delivered strong warning directing party cadres to rally behind officially nominated candidates in the upcoming municipal elections.

He said on Monday that only those candidates, who have been allotted the party's B-form, should contest. He urged all other BJP leaders, who filed nominations independently to withdraw their immediately in the interest of party unity and success.

Rao warned that any member choosing to contest as a rebel candidate would face strict disciplinary action. "If anyone

contests independently without withdrawing their nomination, they will be suspended from the party for 15 years, with no chance of rejoining in the future," he declared.

Acknowledging the disap-

pointment of those who did not receive tickets, Rao assured that the party values their contributions. "Those who have worked tirelessly for the growth of the BJP will be duly honored, even if cir-

cumstances prevented them from receiving tickets this time," he said.

He highlighted that candidate selection was based on survey reports, social factors and party-specific considerations, ensuring that only those with strong winning prospects were chosen.

Rao expressed confidence that, just as in past panchayat elections, the BJP would continue its winning streak in municipal polls through the dedication of party workers and the trust of the people. He called on all leaders to withdraw nominations and work collectively in their divisions and wards to secure victory for the party's official candidates.

'Corrupt' KCR can't be father of Telangana: CM

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"How can a person who neglected the people of Telangana and tortured Telangana activists become the father of the state?" he questioned. He also alleged that phone-tapping indeed took place during KCR's regime and said the former chief minister must answer for it.

Revanth Reddy further questioned KCR on how his family accumulated many farmhouses and businesses worth thousands of crores. A person who accumulated wealth through corrupt means can't be father of Telangana, he alleged. "BRS leaders committed several mistakes. How can anyone say they will commit crimes and yet not be questioned? In a democracy, inquiry is mandatory when one chooses an illegal path," he said.

Highlighting the sacrifices of genuine Telangana activists, Revanth Reddy cited Prof. M Kodandaram, who united activists and led the

movement. "Was he not a Telangana protagonist? Was it not during your rule that his doors were broken and he was arrested? Did you remember Telangana protagonists then?" he asked, adding that police notices and questioning could not be equated with oppression.

The Chief Minister also referred to activists like Ravi Narayana Reddy, who, he said, lost everything for the cause of Telangana. "Those who accumulated positions and assets worth thousands of crores cannot claim to be activists," he remarked.

Criticising the BRS leadership for blaming the people for their electoral defeat, Revanth Reddy said democracy does not permit such arrogance.

"If people reject you, you must introspect. Had you accepted your mistakes gracefully, at least some dignity would have been preserved. Saying that the people made a mistake by defeating BRS

reflects a dangerous mindset," he said.

Quoting Dr BR Ambedkar, the Chief Minister said that in a democracy, those who choose the wrong path must face investigation. He pointed out that leaders like former Jharkhand chief minister Shibu Soren had faced police inquiries in the past and asserted that no one was above the law.

"We are not divine beings. The era of medieval emperors who equated their suffering with that of the kingdom is over. In a democracy, those who commit mistakes must face investigation," he said.

Revanth Reddy also said that the SIT had served notices in the phone-tapping case as wrongdoing had taken place. "How can anyone demand that the SIT conduct an inquiry by visiting wherever KCR stays? Everyone is equal before the law and must answer for the mistakes committed," the Chief Minister asserted.

Iran Prez orders resumption of nuclear talks with US

TEHRAN

IRANIAN President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday ordered the start of nuclear talks with the United States, according to reports. "Iran and the United States will hold talks on the nuclear file," the reports said, without specifying the date.

The move signals a de-escalation after Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a stern warning on Sunday to the US, stating that if the latter starts a war, it will turn into a regional war.

However, Trump had, even after Khamenei's strong remarks, reiterated his hope that the US and Iran could strike a deal. While responding to questions related to Iran's Supreme Leader's remarks, the US President said that he was hopeful both the

nations will make a deal. "Hopefully, we'll make a deal. If we don't make a deal, then we'll find out whether he was right," Trump said while talking to reporters.

Even though Iran and the United States have been at odds for quite some time, the recent escalation in tensions between the two nations was triggered by the anti-government protests in Iran during which, thousands of people reportedly died during crackdown on demonstrators, which prompted the US President to intervene and warn Iran against taking action against protesters.

The protests, which started on December 28, 2025, over the declining economic condition of the country soon turned into an agitation against the current Iranian regime. However, Iran

described the protests as "riots" stoked by the United States and Israel.

On Sunday, Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said that he believes the US President was "wise enough to make the correct decision", even though he was concerned about "miscalculations".

Aragchi said that the Islamic nation does not have trust in the United States as a negotiating partner anymore while some nations in the middle east were trying to mediate and rebuild that trust.

"So I see the possibility of another talk if the US negotiation team follows what President Trump said: to come to a fair and equitable deal to ensure that there is no nuclear weapons," he told CNN in an interview.

Air India grounds flight after fuel switch moves from 'run' to 'cutoff'

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Following the incident, a Boeing spokesperson confirmed they are in touch with Air India and are "supporting their review of this matter".

Air India said it has informed the civil aviation regulator DGCA about the matter concerning the fuel switch. "At Air India, safety of our passengers and crew remains top priority," the spokesperson said.

After an Air India Dreamliner

crashed in Ahmedabad in June 2025, killing 260 people, the Tata-owned airline had checked the fuel control switches on all Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet. The airline had reported it found no issues. In July 2025, a preliminary report from investigators who looked into the Ahmedabad Dreamliner crash showed that seconds after take-off, the plane's engine fuel control switches were switched off briefly, starving them of fuel.

Epstein files reveal hidden ties

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The documents show Musk exchanging a handful of emails with Epstein over the years about potential travel or social events. One email even mentions a part of Epstein's private island. Last year, Musk claimed he never visited Epstein's island and even posted on social media that the serial sex offender tried to get him to go to his infamous place, but he refused.

The files, though, suggest that in November 2012, Musk seemed curious about the island, sending Epstein an email asking, "What day/night will

be the wildest party on your island?" After the documents came out, Musk clarified on social media that he only had a few emails with Epstein and has repeatedly denied visiting his island, or flying on his private plane, nicknamed the "Lolita Express".

He also said that some of the emails could be misinterpreted and used by people trying to damage his reputation. "I was well aware that some email correspondence with him could be misinterpreted and used by detractors to smear my name," he added

Massive showdown over ex-Army Chief's memoir

Continued from P1

"Naravane ji has written about the Prime Minister and Rajnath Singh ji clearly in his book, which has appeared in an article, and I am quoting from that article. They are scared because if it comes out, the reality of Narendra Modi ji and Rajnath Singh ji will be revealed. What happened to the 56-inch chest when China was before us and advancing?" Gandhi said. Congress and its leaders also shared on social media

excerpts from an article in a magazine that quoted Naravane's unpublished book.

Earlier, as Gandhi Motion to speak on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, he said he would first like to respond to the charges made by the previous speaker, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, against the Congress on nationalism and began quoting from what he said was the "memoir" of Naravane talking about the India-China conflict of 2020.

Parl begins debate on President's Address

NEW DELHI: The Rajya Sabha has taken up discussion on the motion of thanks on the President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament. A total of 16 hours has been allotted for the discussion. Moving the motion, Nominated Member C Sadanandan Master said, President Murmu in her address has articulated a clear and confident vision of India's journeys towards Viksit Bharat. He said, from day

one, the NDA government has been very clear about social justice and poverty eradication. The MP said, Viksit Bharat can be built only with the basic strategy Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas. He said, Government was able to bring 25 crore people out of poverty in the last decade.

Seconding the motion, Dr Medha Vishram Kulkarni of BJP said, the President's address highlights India's continued progress.

HMDA rakes in Rs 1,000 cr from high-rise permits

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The unlimited floor space index (FSI) offered by the government is said to be the main reason for the developers opting for skyscrapers which invariably put immense pressure on infrastructure, power and natural resources like water.

The tallest building in the city and also in the southern part of India would be coming at Osman Nagar it will have 70 floors. Officials said that the project is coming up in an area of about seven acres and would have three towers with over 870 units. Similarly, another tall-building for which permission was

given in 2025 is a 63-floor building on a 2.17-acre land in Kokapet. According to the official, in recent times, the HMDA has given permission for high-rise buildings with about 60 floors and over 206 meters in height. Among the top ten building permissions given recently, there is a 59-floor building coming up at Kokapet with a height of 206.75 meters, a 50-floor building with a height of 158.4 meters at Tellapur, a 39-floor building with 119.7 meters height and another 37-floor building at an height of 134.35 meters, both at Kollur, and a 35-floor building with a height of 108.06 meters at Bachupally.

ICC mulls suspending Pakistan as T20 WC 'India boycott' row deepens

Continued from P1

"The ICC hopes that the PCB will consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which it is itself a member and beneficiary of," the global body said in a statement.

Pakistan on Sunday announced a boycott of its high-profile men's T20 World Cup group league match against India. "The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan grants approval to the Pakistan Cricket Team to participate in the ICC World T20 2026, however, the Pakistan Cricket Team shall not take the field in the match scheduled on February 15 against India," the government posted on social media. "While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan," the ICC further stated.