



THE Hans India



Awesome Debut: Diya Pathak's Kathak Arangetram Mesmerises Hyderabad
A graceful celebration of rhythm, devotion, and classical excellence unfolded at Ravindra Bharati as young dancer Diya Pathak marked her Kathak Arangetram.

TG Speaker's order on anti-defection petitions is a tricky constitutional test
It seems like the Anti-Defection Law is a defective law or a totally defective conclusion on the judgment of the Speaker of Telangana, Gaddam Prasad Kumar, on March 11.

SSC public examinations begin smoothly across Tirupati district
The SSC public examinations began smoothly across Tirupati district on Monday. Areas around examination centres witnessed heavy rush as students arrived along with their parents.

State to be developed as East-West cargo corridor
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to develop the state as a major East-West cargo corridor by strengthening cargo handling operations at ports across the state.

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WINDOWS
RAMZAN TIMINGS
IFTAR (Tue) 6.32 PM
SEHAR (Wed) 5.00 AM

OSCAR AWARDS
Jessie Buckley and Michael B. Jordan took home the awards for Best Actress and Best Actor on Sunday night

'One Battle After Another' named Best Picture
NEW DELHI: It was 'One Battle After Another's' night. Paul Thomas Anderson's action-thriller took home six Oscars at the 98th Academy Awards on Sunday, including Best Supporting Actor, Best Directing and Best Picture. The film also won awards for Best Editing and Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as the first-ever Oscar for Best Casting. Upon accepting his award, Anderson — who had previously been nominated for an Oscar around a dozen times — joked, "You make a guy work hard for one of these, I really appreciate it." Sinners also had a big night, bringing home four Oscars, including Best Actor for Michael B. Jordan's role as twins Smoke and Stack.

Political slugfest over transfer of Bengal CS, DGP
NEW DELHI: The Election Commission's move to transfer West Bengal's chief secretary and DGP soon after the announcement of the Assembly poll dates triggered a political slugfest on Monday. While the opposition parties accused the poll panel of acting at the behest of the BJP at the Centre, the saffron party hit back, alleging that the opposition was attempting to malign constitutional institutions. Speaking to reporters inside the Parliament House complex, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged that officers are routinely removed in states where the BJP is not in power. "Whenever elections are held, and if the state government is not run by the party ruling in Delhi, the first thing they do is remove the DGP and the chief secretary."

CM TO OFFICIALS

'TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT LPG BLACK MARKETING'

- CM enquires about LPG supply to Anna Canteen kitchens
- Orders daily monitoring of stocks, bookings and supply

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Monday reviewed the LPG stock, booking and supply situation in the state in the backdrop of the ongoing war-related global uncertainties. The review was conducted from the Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) with representatives of various gas supply companies participating in the meeting. Senior officials informed the Chief Minister that 17,209 metric tonnes of LPG stock is currently available in the state. They said LPG cylinders are being supplied through 1,154 agencies belonging to Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Indian



CM N Chandrababu Naidu reviews the LPG supply in the Secretariat on Monday

Oil Corporation Limited. The Chief Minister sought details on the measures being taken to prevent black marketing of LPG cylinders and instructed officials to ensure that cylinders are not diverted or misused during delivery. He directed authorities to take steps to remove any

public concerns regarding LPG availability and ensure transparency in the supply process. Naidu also enquired about LPG supply to Anna Canteen kitchens, and officials assured him that there are no issues in providing gas for their operations. He emphasised that there should be no confusion or panic among the public regarding LPG supply and asked officials to normalize cylinder delivery timelines as soon as possible. The Chief Minister ordered daily monitoring of LPG stocks, bookings and supply to ensure uninterrupted distribution. He also directed officials to ensure that essential services such as hospitals, schools and temples do not face any disruption due to gas shortages.

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True tribute to Amarajeevi lies in all-round growth of state: Naidu

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has asserted that the National Democratic Alliance government in the state has been balancing development and welfare, while working towards building a healthy, wealthy, and happy society. Referring to the national leadership, Naidu said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been working with the vision of Viksit Bharat and that Andhra Pradesh should strive to become the number one state in the country. The Chief Minister made these remarks after inaugurating a 58-foot bronze



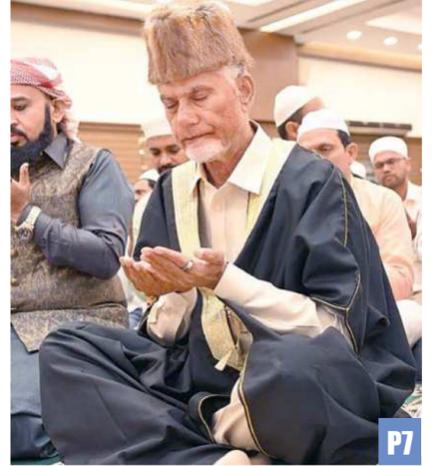
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the inauguration of the statue of Potti Sreeramulu at Shakamuru Park in Amaravati on Monday

statue of Potti Sreeramulu at Shakamuru Park in Amaravati on Monday, marking the freedom fighter's 125th birth anniversary. The statue, named the 'Statue of Sac-

rifices', has been erected to commemorate Sreeramulu's historic 58-day 'fast unto death' for the formation of Andhra State.

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Naidu: Haj House in Amaravati soon



P7

Global energy crisis deepens as Iran keeps hold on Hormuz

Allies snub Trump's call to send warships to keep Hormuz open

BEIRUT: Fears of a global energy crisis rose Monday as the war in the Middle East raged on, with more U.S.-Israeli strikes on the Iranian capital and Israel's bombardment of Lebanon. An Iranian drone strike temporarily shut Dubai's airport, a crucial global travel hub, underscoring the threats to the world economy. Since the United States and Israel attacked Iran more than two weeks ago, Tehran has regularly fired on Israel, American bases in the region, and Gulf Arab countries' energy infrastructure with drones and missiles. It has also effectively stopped shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is transported, dramatically increasing the price of oil and putting pressure on Washington to do something to ease the pain consumers are feeling. Brent crude, the international standard, remained stubbornly over \$100 a barrel on Monday. It was at \$104 in early trading, up nearly 45% since the US and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28. It has spiked as high as about \$120 during the conflict.



US Prez Trump accuses Iran of spreading lies

Blasts media for disinformation, fake news

WASHINGTON

United States President Donald Trump accused Iran of resorting to 'disinformation' and 'fake news' by using AI and blasted 'radical left-wing' media for spreading 'lies' about the Iran war.

Accusing media outlets, including the Wall Street Journal, of 'spreading lies' and using American Airwaves for anti-US propaganda, he said such media outlets should be booked for "Treason."

Trump maintained that Iran is being 'decimated.' He described Iran as "master of media manipulation and public relations," and said that they (Iran) are militarily ineffective and weak but are really good at "feeding" the very appreciative "fake news media" false information.

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INDIA RULES OUT TALKS WITH US ON HORMUZ P7

PNG and CNG supply uninterrupted: Govt

NEW DELHI: The supply of piped natural gas (PNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) remains uninterrupted across India, the government said on Monday, while reaffirming efforts to shift households from LPG to piped gas in areas with existing pipeline infrastructure.

Continued on Page 7

FAILURE TO ANSWER MLAS' QUESTIONS

Karnataka Speaker raps govt

BENGALURU
IN an embarrassment to the Congress government, Karnataka Assembly Speaker, UT Khader, on Monday adjourned the House, sharply criticising it for failing to provide answers to unstarred questions of the MLAs despite repeated warnings from the Chair.



Karnataka Speaker UT Khader

Expressing strong dissatisfaction, Khader said the government had been

warned multiple times to ensure that replies to legislators' questions were prepared in time. "If the government fails to answer questions of MLAs, why should they even come to the Assembly? How is this fair? I have already issued strict orders four times, and this is the fifth time," he said.

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10 KILLED IN CUTTACK ICU FIRE

CUTTACK: Ten patients died, and at least 11 hospital staff members suffered burn injuries after a fire broke out at the trauma care ICU of the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Odisha's Cuttack on Monday morning. The staff were injured while rescuing the patients, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said.

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'DISTORTED PICTURE OF INDIA'

MEA slams US report recommending sanctions on RSS

NEW DELHI
THE Ministry of External Affairs on Monday rejected the annual report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for 2026, which recommended targeted sanctions on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Research and Analysis

(USCIRF). We categorically reject its motivated and biased characterization of India.

For several years now, USCIRF has persisted in presenting a distorted and selective picture of India, relying on questionable sources and ideological narratives rather than objective facts. Such repeated misrepresentations only undermine the credibility of the Commission itself," Jaiswal said.

"Instead of persisting with selective criticism of India, USCIRF would do well to reflect on the disturbing incidents of vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples in the United States, selective targeting of India, and growing intolerance and intimidation of members of the Indian diaspora in the United States, which merit serious attention," he added.

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Wing for violations of religious freedom. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in a statement, said the commission has persisted in presenting a distorted, selective picture of India by relying on questionable sources and ideological narratives rather than objective facts. "We have taken note of the latest report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom

57.78 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened

NEW DELHI
A total of 57.78 crore Jan Dhan accounts with a deposit balance of Rs 2,94,702 crore have been opened (as on February 25) under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. Out of these, 32.21 crore (55.8 per cent) Jan Dhan accounts belong to women, and about 45.17 crore (78.2 per cent) PMJDY accounts have been opened in rural and semi-urban areas, she said in the Lok Sabha. The Finance Minister further stated that under the

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), 26.88 crore cumulative enrolments (as on February 25) have been made to provide life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh for death due to any reason. "Under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), 57.11 crore cumulative enrolments (as on 25.02.2026) have been done to provide a one-year accidental cover of Rs 2 lakh (death or permanent total disability) and Rs 1 lakh (permanent partial disability) respectively," she said. Under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), 8.84 crore

55.8 PC BELONG TO WOMEN, SAYS FM SITHARAMAN



cumulative enrolments have been made to provide a monthly pension to eligible subscribers till February 25 this year. Moreover, under the

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), 57.26 crore loans amounting to Rs 39,48 lakh crore have been sanctioned to provide collateral-free institutional finance to micro/small business units up to Rs 20 lakh for income-generating activities in manufacturing, trading, and services sectors, including activities allied to agriculture (as on February 27). "Under the Stand-Up India Scheme (SUPI), 2.75 lakh cumulative loans amounting to Rs 62,790 crore have been sanctioned to Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe and Women

entrepreneurs for setting up greenfield projects in the sectors such as manufacturing, trading, services and activities allied to agriculture (as on 31.03.2025)," Sitharaman said. The Finance Minister said that a robust financial inclusion platform, namely JAM - Jan Dhan Aadhaar Mobile pipeline for linking of Jan Dhan account with mobile number and Aadhaar -- has been created, which is being extensively leveraged by various Ministries and Departments for the delivery of various welfare benefits like Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), etc.

YSRCP pays tribute to Potti Sriramulu on 125th Jayanti

- Jagan hails Sriramulu as a symbol of Telugu self-respect and sacrifice for Andhra statehood
- Leaders recall his 58-day fast that paved the way for linguistic states in India
- Criticise the coalition govt for allegedly neglecting his legacy, including failure to fund a planned 58-foot statue

HANS NEWS SERVICE GUNTUR

YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday said Potti Sriramulu symbolises the self-respect of Telugu people and that his supreme sacrifice for a separate state for Andhra continues to inspire generations.

YSRCP leaders paid rich tributes to the legendary freedom fighter on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary at the party's central office in Tadepalli. Floral tributes were offered as leaders recalled his historic sacrifice for the crea-



MLC Lella Appi Reddy, former minister Vellampalli Srinivas, Sake Sailajanath, former MLA Malladi Vishnu and others pay tributes to the portrait of Amarajeevi Potti Sriramulu on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary at YSRCP Central office at Tadepalli on Monday

tion of a separate state for Telugu-speaking people. Speaking on the occasion, party leaders said the name of Potti Sriramulu would remain immortal as long as the Telugu community exists.

They remembered his 58-day fast unto death demanding a separate state for Telugu people, which ultimately paved the way for the formation

of linguistic states in India. MLC Lella Appi Reddy said such a selfless sacrifice for a linguistic state was unparalleled in world history. He added that the ideals of Potti Sriramulu are reflected in the leadership and governance approach of Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who, he said, has upheld values of integrity, credibility and commitment towards the state and its people.

Former MLA Malladi Vishnu recalled that inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Potti Sriramulu undertook several fasts in his life, including the historic fast that eventually led to the formation of linguistic states in the country.

Former minister Vellampalli Srinivas said the previous YSRCP government restored the celebration of Andhra Pradesh Formation Day on November 1 and honoured Potti Sriramulu's legacy. He criticised the present coalition government for allegedly neglecting his memory, including failing to allocate funds for the construction of a 58-foot statue while spending heavily on other projects.

Former minister Sake Sailajanath said the life and dedication of Potti Sriramulu should inspire people to work with similar determination for the pride and unity of Telugu society.

3 contract workers attempt suicide at Nandyal govt hospital

- The outsourced workers allegedly consumed phenyl on the hospital premises, creating a tense situation before staff rushed them for emergency treatment
- The workers blamed alleged unfair treatment by the contracting agency after being removed from supervisor posts and reassigned as security guards
- Agency representatives say the changes followed MoU rules requiring a degree qualification for supervisor roles; police have registered a case and begun an investigation



Contract workers who attempted suicide undergoing treatment at Nandyal government hospital on Monday

caused a brief commotion at the hospital premises before staff members intervened and rushed them for immediate medical treatment.

According to hospital sources, the three workers consumed phenyl within the hospital premises. Alert hospital staff quickly noticed their condition and shifted them to the emergency ward, where doctors administered timely treatment.

Medical officials later confirmed that the workers are currently out of danger. The incident created anxiety among other contract workers and visitors, drawing attention to ongoing issues faced by outsourced employees.

The affected workers alleged that the suicide attempt was driven by distress over what they described as unfair treatment by the agency. They claimed that after staging protests earlier demanding payment of salaries as per

the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the management allegedly took retaliatory action.

According to them, despite working at the hospital since 2014 without any complaints, they were removed from their supervisor roles and reassigned as security guards, which they described as humiliating.

However, representatives of the Eagle Hunter agency stated that the changes were made in accordance with the terms of the MoU. They explained that as per revised regulations, a degree qualification is mandatory for the post of supervisor and only candidates meeting the eligibility criteria are being continued in those positions. Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the incident. Meanwhile, the families of the workers have appealed to the authorities to conduct a fair inquiry and ensure justice.

HANS NEWS SERVICE NANDYAL

A tense situation prevailed at the Government General Hospital here on Monday after three contract workers allegedly attempted suicide by consuming phenyl, triggering concern among hospital staff and authorities. The workers, identified as Naganna, Chennaiah and Adi, were employed under the Eagle Hunter agency and were reportedly serving as supervisors at the hospital. The incident

High alert as tiger moves near Annavaram



Drone camera captured the tiger near Mandapam village in Sankhavaram mandal

HANS NEWS SERVICE RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

FOREST officials have intensified efforts to track and capture a tiger that has been moving near Annavaram hill and surrounding villages in Kakinada district, prompting authorities to alert devotees and residents in the area.

On Sunday evening, the tiger was spotted moving near Annavaram hill and close to the Pampa reservoir, raising concern among pilgrims visiting the temple. Following the sighting, temple authorities warned devotees staying in accommodation on the hill not to venture out at night. Staff attending duties on Monday were instructed to reach the hill only through temple buses from the toll gate. As a precautionary measure, devotees were not allowed to use the

footpath route to the hill. Forest officials confirmed that the tiger crossed the Sankhavaram-Kathipudi road and moved through agricultural fields towards Mandapam village.

Earlier, drone cameras deployed by the forest department detected the animal in an open field near the forest stretch between Sankhavaram and Annavaram. Though the tiger's presence was confirmed through VHF tracking equipment and officials attempted to surround the area, the animal unexpectedly changed its route and moved away.

According to officials, the tiger has been creating concern among residents in Kakinada and Polavaram districts for the past 17 days. The animal had earlier caused panic in several villages in East Godavari district for nearly ten days before

it was finally trapped near Kurmapuram. It was later released into the Papikonda forest region by forest authorities, but it appears to have strayed out of the forest area again and returned to nearby habitations. Efforts are under way to capture the tiger and shift it safely back into the forest. The operation is being carried out under the supervision of Divisional Forest Officer N Ramachandra Rao. Nearly 100 personnel, including forest staff, rescue teams and tranquiliser dart specialists, have been deployed for the operation with the help of drone surveillance and VHF tracking systems.

Chief Conservator of Forests Srikanth Nath Reddy is personally monitoring the operation as officials continue their search in the surrounding forest and agricultural areas.

'Statue of Sacrifice' puts Telugu pride on global stage: Lokesh

Minister says the 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu unveiled in Amaravati symbolises the pride and self-respect of Telugu people and takes their legacy to the international stage

HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

MINISTER for education and IT Nara Lokesh said the installation of the 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati has taken the greatness of the Telugu people from the state capital to the international stage. He said the "Statue of Sacrifice" symbolises the pride and self-respect of Andhra Pradesh and stands as a living reminder of Sriramulu unparalleled sacrifice. Lokesh participated in the unveiling ceremony of the 58-foot bronze statue of Amarajeevi Potti Sriramulu in the people's capital Amaravati along with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on the occasion of Sriramulu's 125th birth anniversary. The statue has been erected to commemorate his historic 58-day fast unto death demanding the formation of a separate Andhra State.

Paying tributes at the memorial, Lokesh said he felt proud to say that he is a Telugu citizen of Andhra Pradesh and that this sense of pride was given to the Telugu people by Potti Sriramulu. "He is not just an individual but a symbol of Telugu honour. His sacrifice gave us our state, and his birth anniversary is like a festival for every 'Telugu person'," he said.

Lokesh recalled that during his Yuva Galam padayatra, he had promised members of the Arya Vaishya community that a grand statue of Amarajeevi would be installed in Amaravati. "It gives me immense satisfaction that we were able to fulfil that promise in a short time," he said.

He noted that the foundation for the statue



Minister Nara Lokesh addressing the gathering at the unveiling of Potti Sriramulu's statue in Amaravati on Monday

was laid on September 3, 2025, and the project was completed within 194 days, reflecting the commitment of the coalition government, the memorial trust, officials, workers and donors who contributed to the initiative.

Lokesh described Potti Sriramulu as a tireless freedom fighter and social reformer who fought selflessly for society without seeking power or political positions. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Sriramulu joined the Sabarmati Ashram, participated in the freedom movement, and even went to jail during the Satyagraha struggle. He also led movements for Dalit temple entry in Nellore and fought against untouchability, undertaking several hunger strikes for social justice.

Lokesh explained that Sriramulu began his historic fast on October 19, 1952, at the residence of Bulusu Sambamurthy in Madras and continued it for 58 days, sacrificing his life for the cause of a separate Andhra State. His death stirred the nation and ultimately led to the formation of Andhra State with Kurnool as its capital on October 1, 1953.

He also referred to historian Ramachandra Guha, who wrote that Potti Sriramulu had a profound impact on India's history and geography, as his sacrifice paved the way for the reorganisation of states on linguistic lines.

Four get life imprisonment for gang rape, murder

- The case was investigated by South Zone DSP S Bhavya Kishore, who filed the charge sheet
- Court also imposed a fine of Rs 2,000 on each of the convicts



SP D Narasimha Kishore addressing the media in Rajamahendravaram on Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

THE VIII Additional District Judge Court here has sentenced four accused to life imprisonment for the gang rape and murder of a woman, Routhu Kasturi, from Burilanka village in Kadiyam mandal. District Superintendent of Police D Narasimha Kishore disclosed the details of the case to the media on Monday. According to the police, Kasturi had left her house around 2 pm on October 15, 2024, to work at a nursery owned by Patamsetti Ramudu near the Burilanka bridge. When she did not return home

by evening, her husband tried calling her phone, but it was switched off. Family members and villagers searched the surrounding areas but could not find her. A complaint was lodged at Kadiyam police station on October 16, following which police registered a case of a missing woman under Crime No 314/2024 and began an investigation. On October 17, Kasturi's body was found in a canal near Choppella locks. The body was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Rajamahendravaram for post-mortem examination. During the investigation, police identified four suspects, Devara Yesu (26), Velubudi

Praveen (21), Lokina Jayaprad (19) and Dasari Suresh (22), all residents of Burilanka and nearby areas. They were arrested on October 30, 2024. Police investigation revealed that the accused were consuming alcohol among the nursery plantations around 5.30 pm on October 15. When Kasturi was returning home after completing her work, they allegedly dragged her into the nursery area, sexually assaulted her and later murdered her. The accused then dumped the body in a nearby canal to conceal the crime.

The case was investigated by South Zone DSP S Bhavya Kishore, who filed the charge

sheet against the accused under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including Sections 70(1), 103(1), 238 read with 3(5). After hearing the arguments from both sides, the VIII Additional District Judge Court at Rajamahendravaram delivered its verdict on March 16, 2026, sentencing all four accused to life imprisonment.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 2,000 on each of the convicts, with an additional six months of imprisonment in case of default. The SP appreciated the efforts of Assistant Public Prosecutor K Radhakrishna Raju, investigating officer DSP S Bhavya Kishore, Kadiyam SI B Naga Durga Prasad, court constable K Srinivas and other police personnel who assisted in the investigation and ensured the presence of witnesses in court. SP announced rewards also for the officers and staff involved in successfully securing the conviction.

APCRDA wins 'Economic Times GovTech Award 2026'

HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

THE Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (AP CRDA) has received national recognition for its innovative digital planning initiative for the development of the people's capital, Amaravati. The authority's "Amaravati Integrated Digital Urban Planning and Governance Platform" has been selected for the Gold Award at The Economic Times GovTech Awards 2026. The award has been announced by The Economic Times, which informed APCRDA Commissioner K. Kannababu about the honour and congratulated the authority for its achievement.

The digital platform, developed based on the Amaravati Master Plan, integrates advanced technologies such as Amaravati Digital Twin and ICT platforms to support effi-

cient urban planning and governance. The project has been selected for the Gold Award under the "Smart Cities & Urban Tech Leadership" category, recognizing its role in enabling technology-driven city development. The Economic Times GovTech Awards aim to identify and honour innovative technology projects implemented in the government sector across India. The winners were selected by a distinguished jury comprising experts and former senior government officials. The awards will be formally presented at a ceremony scheduled to be held Thursday at the Hyatt Regency in New Delhi.

Officials said the recognition highlights the growing emphasis on digital governance and smart urban planning in Amaravati and strengthens the state's efforts to build a modern, technology-driven capital city.

SHIRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED
 Registered Office: Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai- 600 032. Website: www.shriramfinance.in
 Branch Office: D.No.138/A-2, Second Floor, Theerthakatta Street, Tirupathi, Tirupathi Dist-517501.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

We, M/s. Shiriram Finance Limited (formerly known as "Shriram City Union Finance Limited" amalgamated with Shiriram Transport Finance limited and converted as Shiriram Transport Finance Limited as per the orders of NCLT Bench-II Chennai dated 09.11.2022) and thereafter obtained the approval to rename as Shiriram Finance Ltd (Ministry of Corporate Finance letter dated 30.11.2022), is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 and also registered with RBI to do Non-Banking Finance business having its registered office at Sri Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600032.

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Shiriram Finance Limited (SFL) under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices.

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules, on this **10.03.2026**

Borrower Name and Address
1. Veera Raghava Reddy, A, S/o. A.Panduranga Reddy, D.no:2-168 Thonda wada, Chandragiri, Chittoor Dist - 517505
2. Lavakumar, A, S/o. Veera Raghava Reddy, A, D.no:2-168 Thonda wada, Chandragiri, Chittoor Dist - 517505
3. Lakshmi, A, W/o. Veera Raghava Reddy, A, D.no:2-168 Thondawada, Chandragiri, Chittoor Dist - 517505
4. Tejo Krishna, S/o.D.BhaskarReddy, D.no:2-10, P Sanam Batla, Chittoor, Chittoor Dist - 517505

Amount due as per Demand Notice: Topay Rs.58,13,771/- (Rupees Fifty eight lakh thirteen thousand seven hundred seventy one only) under reference of Loan A/c No:- TRPT271904300020
Date Of Demand Notice: 23.09.2025
Loan Amount : Rs.15,00,000/- (Rupees Fifteen lakh Only)
Possession Taken on: 10.03.2026

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
 Chittoor District, Sri Balaji Registration District-Tirupathi, Chandragiri Sub-District, Chandragiri Mandal, Thondawada Gram Panchayath, No.61 Thondawada Village Accounts, Survey No.625/4 and 625/5, out of an extent of Ac.0.30 cents, Thondawada village, Old D.No.2-168, new D.No.1-411, site measuring East to West on northern side 34 1/2 ft. or 10.522 mts., East to West on southern side 31 ft. or 9.455 mts.; North to South on eastern side 50 ft. or 15.250 mts., North to South on western side 43 1/2 ft. or 13.267 mts., total extent of 1531.06 sq. ft. or 170.11 sq. yards in that East to West 21 ft. or 6.405 mts., and North to South 36 ft. or 10.980 mts., total extent of 756 sq. ft. RCC building along with doors, door frames, windows, with all accessories, with electrical service connection No.616 bounded on: East : Site of Shaik Gulzar Bi, West : Road leading to Sanambatta, North : Main Road, South: Road leading to Thondawada Harijanawada

This notice is also hereby to caution the general public at large that the authorized officer of SFL is in the lawful Symbolic Possession of the immovable property mentioned herein above and the Borrowers or any person shall not after receipt of this notice transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise deal with/ alienate any of the above mentioned secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of SFL.

Place: Tirupathi **Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER,**
Date: 10.03.2026 **Shriram Finance Limited**

Police detain YSRCP activists following protest against TTD Chairman

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

MILD tension gripped parts of Tirupati on Monday after police detained several leaders and activists of YSRCP, who staged a protest demanding the resignation of TTD Chairman BR Naidu.

The protest took place near a private hotel in the city where the TTD Chairman was reportedly staying. YSRCP leaders, including members of the party's women's wing, assembled outside the premises and raised slogans calling for his immediate resignation.

Police personnel, who were already deployed in the area, intervened as the gathering grew and the protest

intensified. To prevent any disturbance to public order, Tiruchanoor police took several protesters into custody and shifted them from the spot. Among those detained were women's wing leaders Geetha Yadav, Sai Kumari, Padmaja and Vijaya Lakshmi, police said.

Earlier, tension briefly escalated when YSRCP leaders and supporters of the NDA engaged in a heated verbal exchange near the hotel. The situation, however, was quickly brought under control after police stepped in and dispersed the groups. Officials said the preventive detentions were carried out to avoid escalation and maintain law and order in the area.

ASI Padmavathi wins top AP Police award

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

ON the occasion of Udi-2026, the State Government awarded ASI R Padmavathi Devi of Alipiri police station with the prestigious AP Police Seva Pathakam, for her meritorious service.

A 1991 batch constable, she has given 35 years of spotless service with no punishments or issues. She joined Alipiri as Head Constable in 2022, focusing on finding missing women, girls, and children. She acts fast on complaints by talking to families, checking social media and digital clues, and gathering leads.

She supports investigators with call records, field checks, and coordination across agencies.

Her language skills and contacts in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Odisha, and northern areas help solve



ASI R Padmavathi Devi

inter-state cases.

She also aids visiting police teams from other States in Tirupati. In 2022, she traced 76 missing people; in 2023, 69; in 2024, 46; and in 2025, 35 reuniting 226 vulnerable individuals, mostly women and children, with families. This prevents crimes and boosts public trust in police.

District SP L Subba Rayudu lauded her work and recommended and nominated her for the award. She has 6 Good Service Entries too.

SSC public examinations begin smoothly across Tirupati district

- Emotional moments seen as parents blessed and encouraged students before exams
- The Collector inspected centres and directed the staff to conduct the exams strictly

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

THE SSC public examinations began smoothly across Tirupati district on Monday. Areas around examination centres witnessed heavy rush as students arrived along with their parents. Emotional scenes were witnessed at several centres, with parents offering blessings, words of encouragement, and last-minute advice to their children before they entered the halls to appear for the important examinations. Some parents waited outside the centres, visibly anxious yet hopeful, praying for their children's



District Collector Dr S Venkateswar inspecting an SSC examination centre in Tirupati on Monday

success as the examinations began.

District Collector Dr S Venkateswar, along with District Educational Officer (DEO) KVN Kumar, visited a few examination centres in the city and reviewed the arrangements. The Collector inspected the conduct of examinations and facilities at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Municipal High School in Sarojini Devi Layout and Sasi English Medium School

in Varadaraja Nagar.

Officials examined the arrangements made at the centres, including medical camps, drinking water, and basic amenities. The Collector said that the Class 10 examinations were being conducted in a peaceful atmosphere across the district. In view of the summer heat, he instructed officials to keep ORS packets and emergency medicines ready to provide immediate medi-

SPECIAL SURVEILLANCE FOR EXAMS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

THE district police arranged tight security for Class 10 public examinations, which commenced on Monday.

District SP L Subba Rayudu stated that strict police arrangements are in place at all examination centres across the district to ensure peaceful conduct of the exams.

Following the SP's orders, police officials are staying alert to conduct exams without any issues.



They have set up special surveillance and strict security measures to prevent unwanted incidents at exam centres. Police are also patrolling nearby areas to maintain peace and security. Students were allowed into the centres after they were thoroughly

checked for mobiles, electronic devices or smartwatches.

The SP instructed officials to control crowds, keep unrelated people away from centres, and monitor shops including xerox, internet, or printing outlets nearby to stay closed during exams.

cal assistance to students if required. The Collector also directed the examination staff to conduct the exams strictly and ensure that there was no scope for malpractice.

DEO Kumar said that for Telugu examination held on Monday, 26,691 students attended out of 27,243 regis-

tered candidates, while 552 were absent. In AP Open School Society SSC examinations, 785 students attended out of 885, with 100 absentees.

He added that nine flying squads inspected 27 examination centres on the first day, while 33 sitting squads performed duties at 33 cen-

tres. The examinations were conducted peacefully without any untoward incidents.

Meanwhile, APSRTC arranged free bus travel for SSC students upon producing their hall tickets. A district-level control room has also been set up to address grievances during the examination period.

Floral tributes paid to Potti Sriramulu

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

DISTRICT officials, leaders of various political parties, representatives of Arya Vaisya Associations paid tributes to Potti Sriramulu on his 125th birth anniversary across the district on Monday.

In Nellore, district Collector Himanshu Shukla along with MLC Beeda Ravichandra, Deputy Mayor Poluboina Roop Kumar Yadav and leaders of Arya Vaisya associations garlanded the statue of Potti Sriramulu at Atmakur bus stand and paid tributes.

Jana Sena Party leaders gar-



Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy along with others paying tributes to Potti Sriramulu in Atmakur town on Monday

landed the statue at Atmakur bus stand in the city.

SP Ajitha Vajendla along with ASPs Soujanya and Deeksha and other police officials have garlanded the portrait of

Potti Sriramulu and paid tributes.

YSRCP district president Kakani Govardhan Reddy and other leaders paid floral tributes to Amarajeevi by garland-

ing his portrait at party office in the city.

Meanwhile, a huge rally headed by Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy was organised in Atmakur town on this occasion. TDP functionaries, locals, Arya Vaisya community people and others participated in the rally, that started at old bus stand and concluded at Hanuman Junction in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Anam said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has unveiled 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravathi on Monday, as a gratitude for the leader.

Power is not permanent in politics: Peddireddy



YSRCP leader Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy addressing the media at Nellore central prison on Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

ALLEGING that the coalition government headed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is resorting to vindictive politics, YSRCP senior leader and former Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy stated power is not permanent in politics.

Along with party MP P Midhun Reddy, MLC Parvathareddy Chandrasekhara Reddy, party district president Kakani Govardhan Reddy and others, Peddireddy condoled Pinnelli brothers, who are undertrial prisoners in Nellore central prison,

on Monday. Later speaking to reporters, Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has pointed out that the government wilfully arrested Pinnelli brothers and confined them in Nellore central prison, though the duo has no role in the murder case. Predicting that his party will emerge to power in 2029 elections, the YSRCP leader has warned Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh that they have to pay in future the penalty for implementing vendetta politics.

Party rural in-charge Anam Vijayakumar Reddy and others were present.

Dak Adalat to be held in Tirupati on March 25

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

TIRUPATI Division of the Department of Posts has announced a special programme to receive public grievances, scheduled to be held on March 25. According to Tirupati Division Senior Superintendent of Post Offices Major Syeda Tanveer, the programme will be conducted at the divisional office on the same day.

Interested participants have been asked to complete the required formalities and submit their details before March 24, clearly mentioning 'Dak Adalat' on the cover.

Postal authorities stated that eligible individuals may take part in the initiative by following the guidelines mentioned in the notification. Further details can be obtained from the Tirupati Division office.

Youth should take inspiration from Potti Sriramulu: MLA

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

ON the 125th birth anniversary of Potti Sriramulu, city MLA Arani Srinivasulu garlanded the leader's statue at Ruia circle here on Monday and paid tributes. Recalling his sacrifices for Telugu people, he said Sriramulu's life was an inspiration to the present generation, who died by taking up hunger strike for separate Telugu-speaking people.

In district SP office, SP L Subba Rayudu along with officials paid floral tributes to the portrait of Amarajeevi. He said the freedom fighter's life should be an inspiration for the present generation and his sacrifices should always be remembered.

At a commemorative meeting in Municipal Corporation, Commissioner N Mourya and officials paid



MLA Arani Srinivasulu, Commissioner N Mourya and others paying tributes to Potti Sriramulu in Tirupati on Monday

tributes to the portrait of Amarajeevi. She said keeping in view the importance of creation of linguistic-based State, Sriramulu took up hunger strike for separate Andhra Pradesh and ultimately sacrificed his life for upholding the self-respect of Telugus.

Meanwhile, Rayalasee-

ma Rangasthala Chairman Gundala Gopinath Reddy and Subrahmanyam Reddy paid tributes to Potti Sriramulu's statue at SVRRG circle and remembered his contribution to the freedom struggle, for promotion of Gandhian principles and also sacrificing his life for carving out Telugu State.

Cordon & search held in Gudur



Police conducting cordon and search in Gudur town on Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

FOLLOWING the directions of SP Ajitha Vajendla, police officials conducted cordon and search operations in Gudur town on Monday, as part of Vajra Prahar to prevent ganja and other narcotics.

Police personnel, headed by Two Town CI J Srinivas, searched as many as 150 houses in Gudur Two Town police station limits and seized five motor cycles and one auto, which do not have proper documents.

They also took one sus-

pect into custody and later released him after giving counselling. SP Ajitha Vajendla urged youth not to consume ganja, which will ruin their lives.

She warned of initiating stringent action against those, who will smuggle ganja and PD Act would be invoked against repeated offenders.

The SP appealed people to inform police on toll free number 1972 or Dial 112, if they notice any such activity. She said Vajra Prahar will be continued till Nellore is made as zero per cent drug free district.

VIRINCHI-2K26 fest begins at SPMVV

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

VIRINCHI-2K26, a national-level techno-cultural fest organised by students of School of Engineering and Technology (SoET), Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (SPMVV), commenced on Monday. The three-day event features a wide range of technical and non-technical activities aimed at promoting innovation, creativity, and teamwork among students.

Addressing the gathering, Vice-Chancellor Prof V Uma described VIRINCHI as a festival that blends tech-



SPMVV V-C Prof V Uma, Registrar Prof R Usha, Director of SoET Prof P Mallikarjuna and others at the inaugural event of VIRINCHI in Tirupati on Monday

nology and art, celebrating creativity, innovation, and talent. She appreciated faculty members for mentoring

students with dedication and encouraged participants to explore emerging fields such as quantum technology. She

stressed that participation, collaboration, and teamwork are more valuable than merely winning competi-

tions, adding that organising such events helps students develop leadership skills.

Registrar Prof R Usha motivated students by stating that dreams inspire thoughts and thoughts lead to action. She encouraged students to showcase their innovations and noted that students' achievements are a matter of pride for the university.

Director of SoET Prof P Mallikarjuna urged students to actively take part in the events to enhance their communication skills, technical knowledge, confidence, and innovative thinking. He remarked that technical events serve as laboratories

of ideas, while cultural programmes reflect the creative spirit of students.

Faculty Convener P Vinthya informed that 581 students have registered for various events of the fest. The programme includes technical competitions, cultural performances, and talent-based activities designed to encourage participation and innovation.

Co-convener Dr V Saraswathi Bai, student convener Md Waseeha, P Keerthi (ECE), H Rajakumari Bai, and P Harshitha, along with faculty members and students from different departments, were present.

Hans India Classifieds

LOSS OF PASSPORT
I, SHAIK MAHABOOB BASHA S/O. SHAIK GUDUBHA R/O.5/3, Darga Street, T. Sakibanda, Chinnamandem Mandal Annamayya Dist. A.P. I have lost my Passport No. E3114096, issued at Hyderabad on 22/08/2002 while travelling from Chinnamandem to Rayachoty and waiting for bus at Chinnamandem Busstand on 23/02/26, if any one found please cont:98854 26713 (TH_44949)

CHANGE OF SURNAME
I, Nallagampalli Papudesi Dharani (Old Name) D/O Nallagampalli Sai Guna Ranjan residing at 20-34, Naidu Buildings, Chittoor Town & District (AP)517001 hereby declare that I have changed my Surname as Nallagampalli Papudesi Dharani (New Name) Henceforth I will be known and called as Nallagampalli Papudesi Dharani. (TH_2033)

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Salomi Madhusudhanrao (Old Name) D/o. Syed Ghouse Basha resident of 24-2-1805, Flat No. 306, A-Block, Pavani Prestige, Magunta Layout, Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore-524003. A.P. I have changed my name/surname as SYED SALOMI (New Name) D/o. Syed Ghouse Basha Hereafter my name is known as SYED SALOMI (New name) D/o. Syed Ghouse Basha (TH_MADAN)

CHANGE OF NAME
I, CHUNDURI V. VENKATA SATYA-NARAYANA, S/o. Narasimharao, R/at D.No.5/476, Ramakrishna Marg, New RIMS Hospital, Putlampalli, Sankarapuram (Post), Kadapa, Y.S.R. District, AP-516002, have changed my name to SWAMI SURADHISHANANDA for all purposes vide affidavit dated 16.03.2026 sworn before the Notary, V. Rajagopal Reddy, Kadapa. (TH_RJP)

LOSS OF PASSPORT
I, DANTHULURI NAGA VARMA, S/O. DANTHULURI NARAYANA RAJU, Resident of D.No.9-638-4-8, Elisetty Nagar, Rly Kodur Town & Mandal, Tirupathi Dist, A.P., Lost of Passport No.P5223787, while I was travelling from my residence to Xerox Shop for Xerox purpose in Bike at RlyKodur. Anyone who finds it can return it. Cell.7207206278 (TH_44949)

CHANGE OF NAME
I, ONTEDDU RAVI, S/o. O Sekhara Reddy, R/at D.No.85/412, Ramakrishna Mission, New RIMS Hospital, Putlampalli, Sankarapuram (Post), Kadapa, Y.S.R. District, AP-516002, have changed my name to SWAMI JAYAGOPALANANDA for all purposes vide the affidavit dated 16.03.2026 sworn before Notary, V. Rajagopal Reddy, Kadapa. (TH_RJP)

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State to be developed as East-West cargo corridor

- CM orders faster cargo operations at Mulapeta, Machilipatnam, and Ramayapatnam ports, targeting hinterland cargo from six neighbouring states
- Machilipatnam and Ramayapatnam ports slated for completion by December; Ramayapatnam to gain prominence with BPCL refinery and dedicated rail link to Kadapa Steel Plant
- Port townships, industrial corridors, and fishing harbour expansions planned to position Andhra Pradesh as a logistics hub on India's east coast amid global shipping disruptions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to develop the state as a major East-West cargo corridor by strengthening cargo handling operations at ports across the state.

During a review meeting held at the Secretariat on ports and fishing harbours, the Chief Minister stressed the need to expedite cargo operations at the newly constructed ports of Mulapeta, Machilipatnam and Ramayapatnam. He instructed officials to take necessary steps to ensure cargo movement

from the hinterland regions of neighbouring states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka through these ports.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that construction of Machilipatnam and Ramayapatnam ports is expected to be completed by December 2026. Naidu said that once the refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited is established, Ramayapatnam will emerge as a major container and bulk cargo port.

The Chief Minister also revealed that the Railway Ministry has approved a dedicat-



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu holds a review on works on ports and fishing harbours with officials at the Secretariat on Monday

ed rail connectivity project from Ramayapatnam to the Kadapa Steel Plant, which will significantly improve cargo transportation.

Naidu suggested developing port townships near the three ports to boost commercial activity and said industrial corridors are also likely to emerge in these regions due to improved infrastructure.

He further directed officials to accelerate the second phase of fishing harbour construction at Budagatlapa-

lem Fishing Harbour, Pudidamadaka Fishing Harbour and Kothapatnam Fishing Harbour. Highlighting the state's strategic location, the Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh is poised to become a logistics hub on India's east coast, with ports and fishing harbours planned roughly every 50 kilometres along the coastline. He emphasized that the state's ports should emerge as game changers in cargo handling.

Naidu also pointed out that due to the ongoing glob-

al conflicts affecting ports in Dubai and Gulf countries, there is a growing perception that ports on India's east coast are safer. He urged officials to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen Andhra Pradesh's maritime infrastructure and attract greater cargo traffic. The review meeting was attended by Special Chief Secretary for Investments and Infrastructure M. T. Krishna Babu and Maritime Board CEO Abhishek Kumar, among other officials.

AP fixes Rs 2.39 lakh unit cost for PMAY-Gramin 2.0 houses

- Interest subsidy on SHG loans to be reimbursed from 2026-27 to 2028-29
- State housing corporation directed to implement scheme across the state

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE Andhra Pradesh government has fixed the unit cost at Rs.2.39 lakh for construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin 2.0 (PMAY-G 2.0). Housing special chief secretary Ajay Jain issued GO Rt No 20 to this effect on Monday.

According to the government order, the revised unit cost includes convergence funds and Self-Help Group (SHG) loans. The order also provides for reimbursement of interest subsidy on SHG loans by the state government for the financial years from 2026-27 to 2028-29.

Officials said the decision was taken after examining proposals submitted by the managing director of the Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited (APSHCL). The proposal



was prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by the ministry of rural development, Government of India, for the implementation of PMAY-Gramin 2.0. Under the scheme, the Centre provides assistance of Rs 1.2 lakh per house, which includes a central share of Rs.72,000 (60 per cent) and a state share of Rs 48,000 (40 per cent). In addition, beneficiaries will be eligible for an SHG loan of Rs 80,000 at an interest rate of 3 per cent, with the state government reimbursing the interest component.

The funding structure also includes convergence components such as wage support under the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajevika Mis-

sion - Gramin (VB-G-RAM-G) Scheme and the National Rural Livelihood Mission, amounting to Rs 27,000, and Rs 12,000 for sanitation support for construction of Individual Household Toilets (IHHLT) under the Swachh Bharat Mission. With these components, the total unit cost per house has been fixed at Rs 2,39,000.

The government has directed the managing director of APSHCL to take necessary steps for implementation of the scheme across the state. Officials said the revised unit cost would enable beneficiaries to construct better quality houses with additional financial support through convergence schemes and SHG loans.

DRIVER'S MURDER CASE

MLC Anantha Babu's wife appears before SIT

- Lakshmi Durga was questioned by SIT in Kakinada after High Court directive, linked as second accused in 2022 Dalit youth murder
- MLC Anantha Uday Bhaskar, first accused, allegedly staged driver Subrahmanyam's death as a road accident; later released on default bail

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAKINADA

STATE Legislative Council member Anantha Uday Bhaskar's wife Lakshmi Durga, on Monday appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the murder of his former driver.

She appeared before the investigating officer in Kakinada at the direction of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Anantha Uday Bhaskar dropped her at the office of Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), where investigating officer Manish Patil Devraj questioned her.

The High Court had directed her to appear before SIT between March 16 and March 30 from 10 am to 5 pm. The order was passed on her petition seeking cancellation of a non-bailable war-



File picture of Anantha Babu and his wife Lakshmi Durga

rant against her issued by the Special SC/ST Court in Rajamahendravaram. The SIT, in the supplementary charge sheet filed last month, had stated that Lakshmi Durga had a role in the 2022 murder of Dalit youth Veedhi Subrahmanyam. Following this, she was named a second accused in the case and a non-bailable warrant was issued a week ago.

MLC Anantha Uday Bhaskar, also known as Anantha Babu, is the first accused in the case. He is accused of killing his former driver, Subrahmanyam, and later delivering the body to the victim's house. Sub-

rahmanyam (34) was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Kakinada on May 19, 2022. The MLC of the then-ruling YSR Congress Party had personally transported the body to the victim's parents' residence around 2 a.m. in his own car, claiming it was a road accident.

The family, however, suspected foul play and refused to accept the body. The murder had sparked protests by the victim's relatives and Dalit organisations.

Anantha Babu had allegedly pushed the deceased during an argument, resulting in his fall and death. The

legislator allegedly inflicted additional injuries on the body to make it appear as though the death resulted from a road accident.

The MLC was subsequently arrested, and the YSRCP suspended him from the party.

With the investigating officer unable to submit the charge sheet within 90 days, Anantha Babu was released on default bail in December 2022.

After coming to power in June 2024, the TDP-led coalition government decided to re-investigate the case. Indian Police Service (IPS) officer and incumbent Kakinada DSP Manish Devraj Patil was appointed as the investigation officer. In July 2025, the SC/ST Special Court ordered a re-investigation into the case. The MLC had challenged the order in the High Court, but it granted a stay on a lower court's order, which had also directed that a supplementary chargesheet be filed within 90 days.

Last month, the Supreme Court observed that there was a clear "nexus between police and power" in the case and that the police had attempted to help Ananta Uday Bhaskar secure bail.

Following this, the state government suspended four police officers over the lapses in the investigation that led to the release of the MLC.

KANIPAKAM TEMPLE TO GET RS3.4 Cr PUSHKARINI

- The existing temple tank to be shifted forward by 80-90 ft to create open space in front of temple
- Akhilandam to be developed on Tirumala model for coconut breaking and lamp lighting rituals
- Two Kalyana Mandapams and a guest house to be constructed with Rs 25 cr TTD funds

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

THE historic Sri Varasiddhi Vinayaka Swamy temple at Kanipakam is set to witness a major transformation with temple authorities launching a series of development initiatives aimed at improving pilgrim amenities and ensuring the smooth conduct of religious rituals and festivals. The plans form part of a comprehensive master development programme being implemented for the temple town.

A key highlight of the initiative is the construction of a new Pushkarini near the Supatha Mandapam at an estimated cost of Rs 3.40 crore. The existing temple tank located in front of the shrine



A view of the Kanipakam temple

has been creating difficulties during major processions, particularly Vahana Sevams conducted as part of the annual Brahmotsavams, as it restricts the movement of temple chariots and vehicles despite the presence of Mada streets on three sides.

Devaasthanam Chairman V Surendra Babu popularly known as Mani Naidu said permissions for the project had already been secured from the Endowments Department and the temple administration was moving ahead with the execution schedule.

He told The Hans India that, land transfer process from a private hotel owner will be completed in the next 10-15 days after which tenders will be called for. The target is to complete the new

Pushkarini before the Brahmotsavams this year.

Officials stated that the new Pushkarini would be constructed with the same dimensions as the existing one, measuring about 140 feet in length and width and 12 feet in depth. Stones from the present tank will be re-used, preserving traditional elements while introducing improved facilities.

The structure will feature stone pillars sourced from older temple architecture, along with a centrally located stone Neerajana Mandapam housing an idol of Lord Vinayaka. Steps for devotees, barricades, water purification systems and modern lighting arrangements will also be installed.

The redesign will effectively shift the Pushkarini for-

ward by nearly 80 to 90 feet, creating a spacious open area in front of the temple.

According to the Chairman, this change will significantly improve the movement of the Lord's Utsava Murthy idols during festivals and provide better convenience for devotees visiting the shrine in large numbers.

As part of the expansion, the Devasthanam is also planning to establish an Akhilandam in front of the temple on the lines of Tirumala, enabling devotees to break coconuts and light lamps as part of fulfilling their vows. The existing TTD building and a nearby police station will be relocated, and alternative locations have already been identified. Meanwhile, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has sanctioned Rs 25 crore for the overall development of the temple town. With this, two air-conditioned Kalyana Mandapams will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 16 crore, including one dedicated to conducting mass weddings, the Chairman revealed.

A guest house costing around Rs 9 crore will also be built by TTD. These facilities will be maintained by the Kanipakam Devasthanam, and the revenue generated from them will accrue to the temple administration.

TTD announces schedule for June ticket quota

- Arjita Seva tickets will be released online at 10 am today
- Rs 300 Special Entry Darshan tickets will be released on March 24

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUMALA

THE Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will release the quota for various Srivari darshan tickets and accommodation for June 2026 in phases starting March 18.

According to TTD, tickets for Srivari Arjita Sevams - Suprabhatam, Thomala, Archana and Ashtadala Pada Padmaradhana - will be released online at 10 am on March 18. Devotees can register for the electronic dip for these sevams until 10 am on March 20.

Those allotted tickets through the electronic dip must complete payment between March 20 and March 22 before 12 noon to confirm their bookings.

Tickets for other Arjita Sevams such as Kalyanotsavam,

Unjal Seva, Arjita Brahmotsavam, Sahasra Deepalankara Seva and Jyeshthabishekam will be released online at 10 am on March 21.

The quota for Virtual Sevams along with their darshan slots will be made available online at 3 pm on March 21. TTD will release Angapradakshinam tokens online at 10 am on March 23, while the quota for Srivani Trust darshan tickets will be released at 11 am on the same day. The quota of free special darshan tokens for senior citizens, differently-abled persons and devotees suffering from chronic illnesses will be released online at 3 pm on March 23.

Special Entry Darshan tickets will be released online at 10 am on March 24. On the same day, the accommodation quota for Tirumala and Tirupati will be made available online at 3 pm.

TTD has advised devotees to book Srivari Arjita Sevams and darshan tickets only through its official website: <https://ttdevasthanams.ap.gov.in>

SSC exams begin smoothly across state

- Over 6.22 lakh students appear on Day 1; attendance recorded at 98.90%
- Authorities conduct 1,753 inspections to ensure fair conduct of exams

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE Secondary School Certificate (SSC) public examinations began smoothly across the state on Monday, with authorities reporting peaceful conduct of the examinations at all centres.

According to the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), a total of 6,29,109 regular candidates had registered for the examinations. Of them, 6,22,217 students appeared for the first-day examination, while 6,852 candidates were absent. The exams were conducted at 3,415 centres across the state. Officials said the overall attendance on the first day stood at 98.90 per cent, reflecting a high turnout of candidates.

To ensure smooth and transparent conduct of the examinations, the Board of Secondary Education put in place a comprehensive monitoring mechanism.

As part of these arrangements, various authorities conducted 1,753 inspection visits to examination centres across the state. The inspections were carried out by



SSC students attending the public examinations at a centre in Vijayawada on Monday

Photo: Ch Venkata Mastan

district collectors, district-level observers, district educational officers, assistant commissioners of government examinations, district monitoring coordinators, flying squads and other officials.

Director of Government Examinations KV Srinivasulu Reddy said that four invigilators were found negligent in discharging their duties during the examination. Two invigilators in YSR Kadapa district, one in Anantapur district, and another in Palnadu district were reported

for lapses. He said the matter was taken seriously and strict action would be initiated against the concerned invigilators as per the rules governing the conduct of examinations.

He also instructed district educational officers, chief superintendents, departmental officers and invigilators to maintain strict vigilance and adhere to examination protocols to ensure the smooth conduct of the remaining SSC examinations.

APA India launches tele-counselling for Class 10 students during exams

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE Advanced Psychological Services Association launched a free tele-counselling initiative to support Class 10 students appearing for public examinations in the state.

Announcing the initiative, association national working president Krishna Bharat said the organisation has decided to extend psychological support to students facing stress and anxiety during the examination period. As part of the programme, 55 psychologists from across the state have volunteered to provide tele-counselling services.

Krishna Bharat explained that a special poster listing the psychologists, their availability timings and contact numbers district-wise has been prepared and steps are being taken to circulate it widely among students across the state. Students

experiencing examination stress can directly call the listed psychologists and receive counselling support.

He added that the number of psychologists participating in the tele-counselling service will be increased further if required, depending on the demand from students.

The tele-counselling initiative will be coordinated by Krishna Bharat along with Dr Varalakshmi, State president of the AP Committee, and MP Janakiram.

Students or psychologists facing any issues related to tele-counselling can contact the organisers at 9985428261, the association said. Association leaders including honorary president of the AP Committee Dr. Puli Srinivas appealed to Class 10 students across Andhra Pradesh to make use of the free counselling facility to manage stress and approach their examinations with confidence.



Govt honours entrepreneur Bobby Chemmanur

BENGALURU: Dr Bobby Chemmanur, popularly known as "BoChe", was honoured by the Karnataka government at a special ceremony held in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. The recognition was presented by Speaker of the Assembly U.T. Khader Farid in acknowledgement of Chemmanur's achievements and contributions.

Chemmanur recently completed an 812-kilometre run aimed at spreading the message of world peace, a feat that earned him both a Unique World Record and a Guinness World Record. The initiative attracted wide public attention and further strengthened his popularity among followers.

A fourth-generation leader of a business group with a legacy spanning over 163 years, Chemmanur has established himself as a visionary entrepreneur, philanthropist, sportsperson, motivational speaker and entertainer. He also enjoys a significant presence on social media with over 5.1 million followers and supporters.

Chemmanur had earlier made headlines by bringing legendary footballer Diego Maradona to Kerala for the first time as a brand ambassador and close associate.

In another widely recognised humanitarian initiative, Chemmanur helped mobilise ₹34 crore as "blood money" to secure the release of Abdul Rahim, an Indian facing a death sentence in a Saudi Arabian prison. Chemmanur personally contributed ₹1 crore towards the effort.

Bengaluru-Kannur train extended to Kozhikode

MANGALURU: The South Western Railway has extended the daily Bengaluru-Kannur Express service up to Kozhikode in Kerala, offering improved connectivity between Karnataka and the northern parts of Kerala.

A notification issued by the railway headquarters in Hubballi stated that Train No. 16511/16512, which earlier operated between KSR Bengaluru City and Kannur, will now run up to Kozhikode with the approval of the Railway Board.

The extended service came into effect from March 15, with Train No. 16511 departing from Bengaluru City continuing its journey up to Kozhikode. The return service, Train No. 16512, will begin operating from Kozhikode to Bengaluru from March 16.

On the extended route, the train will stop at Thalassery, Vadakara and Qui-landi stations after leaving Kannur. The train is scheduled to reach Kozhikode at about 12.40 pm and depart at 3.30 pm for the return journey.

Railway officials said the timetable between Bengaluru City and Payyannur remains unchanged and the same rake will continue to be used for the service. In addition, a special train will be operated between Yesvantpur and Hosapete to ease passenger congestion during the Ugadi festival.

The Yesvantpur-Hosapete Special Express will depart at 6.15 pm on March 18 and reach Hosapete at 4 am the next day, while the return train will leave Hosapete at 9 am on March 19 and arrive in Yesvantpur at 7.20 pm. The train will have halts at several stations including Tumakuru, Arasikere, Kadur, Chikkajajur, Chitradurga, Rayadurga, Ballari Cantonment and Toranagallu, officials said.

Principals from 220 engineering colleges participate in VTU meet

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

"ENGINEERING colleges must prepare students for the job market by providing practical education," said Dr. S. Vidyashankar, Vice-Chancellor of Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU). Speaking after inaugurating the Principals' Meeting organized on Monday at a private hotel by Visvesvaraya

Technological University (VTU) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), he said, "It is not that there are no job opportunities today. However, students suitable for the job market are not readily available. Colleges must provide students with the necessary skills required to secure employment. As much as possible, emphasis should be placed on practical education."

He further said, "The University will implement several schemes keeping the welfare of students in mind. However, the responsibility of implementing them lies with you. Do not forget that you are the leaders of VTU. Colleges must act as friends to students. Laboratories should be opened to support students' learning. Most of the students who enroll with us come from poor

backgrounds. We must stand as guides to help fulfill their dreams."

Dr. Prashanth Mishra, Head of the IEEE Bengaluru Section, said, "IEEE chapters should be opened at the college level because we emphasize practical education for students. We also provide financial assistance for seminars and workshops. Additionally, we organize workshops for professors to help them achieve

progress in their respective departments. Scholarships are also provided to students. Since there are many such benefits, I request institutions to make the best use of them." VTU Registrar Prof. Prasad Rumpure, member of the VTU Academic Council Chengappa, and Director of the VTU Regional Office Dr. H. R. Sudarshan Reddy, among others, were present at the program.



MLA slams NICE Road management, demands takeover by govt

Somashekhar wants immediate redressal of poor maintenance and safety concerns

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

BJP MLA S T Somashekhar strongly criticised the management of the NICE Road during the ongoing budget session of the Karnataka Assembly, alleging that despite collecting nearly ₹10 crore in toll revenue daily, the company has failed to provide proper road maintenance and infrastructure.

Raising the issue in the Assembly, Somashekhar urged the state government to immediately take over the NICE Road stretch from Hosur Road to Magadi Road, citing poor maintenance and safety concerns. The MLA expressed dissatisfaction that even though an inquiry had been ordered earlier when the issue was raised, no concrete action has been taken regarding the deteriorating condition of several bridges along the corridor. He also highlighted that landowners who had given their land nearly 30-35 years ago for the road project are yet to



receive compensation sites. According to him, the conduct and functioning of the NICE company have been unsatisfactory, prompting him to raise the matter again in the Assembly.

Somashekhar said that despite the company generating substantial toll revenue, road maintenance has been neglected. He noted that several bridges built 25-30 years ago are now in poor condition and not even safe for two-wheelers. In his constituency alone, eight bridges are reportedly in a dangerous state, he added.

The MLA said he had repeatedly submitted representations to the NICE company and officials of the Public

Works Department, but no effective action has been taken. He also recalled that during the tenure of former PWD minister HC Mahadevappa, a House committee was constituted to examine the issue. The committee, which included MLA DK Jayachandra and other members, had conducted inspections and identified several problems. However, Somashekhar alleged that the NICE company has failed to comply with the recommendations of the government and the Assembly.

The MLA further pointed out that around 1,700 acres of land along the road were earmarked for layout development,

a matter that is currently pending before the court. Even after 35 years, the landowners have neither received payment nor seen development of the layout, leaving farmers in distress for decades, he said. Somashekhar also expressed disappointment that no decisive action has been taken against the company during either the previous BJP government or the current Congress government. He insisted that cancelling the 30-year concession agreement and bringing the road under government control would help address the maintenance issues and repair unsafe bridges.

Responding to the concerns, Karnataka Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi said that a letter has already been sent to the NICE company, but the government has not received any response so far. He added that the matter has been discussed in a cabinet sub-committee, and a final decision will be taken once the committee submits its report.

Lack of growth strategy impedes globally popular Mysuru silk industry

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

MYSORE Silk Saree is not just a garment but a symbol of pride for Mysuru and the entire state of Karnataka. Known for its elegance, purity and rich heritage, the saree enjoys enormous demand not only within India but also among buyers abroad. Yet, despite its popularity and economic potential, the industry continues to struggle due to traditional administrative approaches and lack of a progressive growth strategy.

Industry observers say the demand for authentic Mysore silk sarees is so high that influential people in Mysuru often receive calls from customers in other cities and even overseas requesting help in purchasing the premium saree. However, the inability to scale production and modernise the sector has prevented the industry from tapping its full potential. Ironically, while most businesses are embracing digital platforms, the Mysore silk industry has reportedly withdrawn online sales services due to pressure caused by overwhelming demand. Instead of expanding production capacity and improving supply



chains, the system has reverted to conventional sales methods. Experts believe that shortage of raw materials and limited production capacity are the primary reasons behind the decision. The industry currently produces only about 400 sarees per day — far below the actual demand, which runs into thousands. Around 300 to 350 sarees are produced in Mysuru, while another 100 to 120 are manufactured at the factory in Channarayana. Over the past three years, about 3.10 lakh sarees have been produced, of which more than 3.09 lakh were sold, clearly demonstrating the high market demand.

Another challenge is the declining interest among farmers in silk cultivation. Many farmers are moving away from sericulture due to price uncertainty and unstable market conditions. As a result, young people from rural areas are

migrating to cities in search of livelihood, often ending up in low-paying and labour-intensive jobs.

Experts argue that the industry requires a fresh approach. Encouraging startups in areas such as cocoon production, silk thread manufacturing, dyeing and marketing could revitalise the sector. By integrating modern technology and entrepreneurial thinking, Mysore silk could reach international markets more effectively. In addition to sarees, there is also growing potential for other silk-based products such as scarves, bags, suits and home décor items that could appeal to younger generations and global buyers. If supported with better policies, stable prices for farmers and modern management systems, the Mysore silk sector could generate thousands of jobs and contribute significantly to the state economy.

ED conducts raid on Mantri Developers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

OFFICIALS from the Enforcement Directorate conducted raids on the premises of Mantri Developers in Bengaluru on allegations of illegal money laundering. The ED teams carried out searches at the company's office as well as the residence of its founder Sunil Mantri as part of an ongoing investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Founded in 1999, Mantri Developers is a well-known real estate firm headquartered in Bengaluru and operates in cities such as Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune. The

company has undertaken several residential, commercial and retail projects across these cities.

According to sources, more than 10 ED officials arrived from the agency's Delhi office in around six vehicles early in the morning and began searching the company's office located on Vittal Mallya Road as well as other related premises. Officials are currently examining financial documents and records linked to the firm's transactions.

The agency has registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and is reportedly scrutinising financial dealings connected to the company.

GOVT FOCUSED ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the Congress government has been prioritising women's empowerment through its welfare programmes, adding that the party's guarantee schemes have significantly improved the economic and social status of women in the state. Speaking at the executive meeting and training camp organised by the Karnataka Pradesh Mahila Congress in Bengaluru on Sunday, the Chief Minister said women party workers played a crucial role in the Congress party's victory in the recent by-elections in Bagalkote and Davanagere. Siddaramaiah noted that the



Congress governments during 2013-2018 and again from 2023 onwards have consistently focused on empowering women.

Highlighting the impact of the government's key guarantee schemes, he said that under the Shakti Scheme, women in the state have collectively made around 700 crore free bus journeys so far. He also pointed out that the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme is

providing ₹2,000 per month to about 1.26 crore women, which has helped improve their financial independence and social standing. According to him, these initiatives have increased women's purchasing power and boosted their confidence. Quoting B. R. Ambedkar, the Chief Minister said true freedom cannot be realised unless gender discrimination and inequality are eliminated in society.

Call for active participation in campaigns

Emphasising the importance of leadership among women, Siddaramaiah said equal opportunities for all would make achieving equality easier. He noted that the Karnataka Pradesh Mahila

Congress currently has more than one lakh women members and urged the organisation to increase the membership to two lakh in the future.

With upcoming by-elections approaching, the Chief Minister called on women members to actively participate in campaign activities and spread awareness about the government's pro-people schemes. He suggested forming two teams of women party workers to take part in campaigning in Bagalkote and Davanagere.

Siddaramaiah also recalled that the Congress had won the previous by-elections in Channarayana, Shiggaon and Sandur, expressing confidence that the party would emerge victorious in the upcoming contests as well.

Kauvery Hospitals screened 24,264 people across locations including Electronic City, Marathahalli, Hosur, Chikkaballapur, JP Nagar, and HSR Layout

Taking kidney health warning to city's busiest junctions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

ON World Kidney Day, teams from Kauvery Hospitals, Bangalore stood at two of the city's busiest traffic junctions, the Electronic City highway on Hosur Road and the Marathahalli Bridge stretch on the Outer Ring Road, holding awareness placards and handing kidney health screening cards to over 2,000 commuters stopped at red lights.

The message on those cards was direct: Diabetes, high BP, and frequent supplements can silently damage your kidneys. Get checked before symptoms appear. The activation was backed by findings from a large-scale health screening that Kauvery Hospitals conducted across Bangalore and its surrounding areas. Of those screened, more

than 6,600 participants, over 27 percent of the total, were found to have some form of elevated blood pressure. A significant number among them had no prior diagnosis.

In Electronic City alone, 552 of 1,980 participants screened showed elevated blood pressure readings. In Chandapura, Anekal, and Kammasandra, the pattern held. Across the board, the majority of those found to be hypertensive had walked into the camp unaware.

India is home to over 77 million people with diabetes, a large proportion of them undiagnosed, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research. The National Family Health Survey found that only 30 percent of hypertensive men and 38 percent of hypertensive women in India are on treatment.



Diabetes and hypertension together account for the majority of end-stage kidney disease cases in the country. The kidney absorbs the consequences of both conditions without

producing a single symptom until the damage is well advanced. Dr. Rammohan Sripath Bhat, Director of the Institute of Nephrology at Kauvery Hospitals Electronic City, and a nephrologist with

over 15 years of experience trained across institutions in India and the United Kingdom, said: "Together, over time, these things accelerate damage that could have been caught with a simple blood and

The National Family Health Survey found that only 30 per cent of hypertensive men and 38 per cent of hypertensive women in India are on treatment. Diabetes and hypertension together account for the majority of end-stage kidney disease cases in the country

urine test. By the time kidneys make themselves heard, the window for early action has often already closed." Dr. Krishna Kishore C, Director of the Institute of Nephrology at Kauvery Hospitals, a nephrologist with over 15 years of experience and a specialist in kidney transplantation, glomerular diseases, and community nephrology, said: "Kidney disease is preventable in a large number of cases, but prevention requires people to know their numbers before they feel unwell."

Dr. S. Vijayabaskaran, Executive Director of Kauvery Hospitals, said, "Our screening data puts a number to what our doctors observe every day: the burden of undetected, untreated metabolic disease in this city is large, and the kidney is where it quietly arrives. Our commitment is to make world-class kidney care, including transplantation, accessible and affordable for patients across Bangalore and beyond. Today's awareness drive is the front end of that commitment."

TG govt should curb drug menace with iron fist

In a shocking incident, Putta Mahesh Kumar and 'Pilot' Rohith Reddy tested positive for drugs. They are not ordinary men on the street. One of them is a lawmaker in Parliament while the other is a former lawmaker from Telangana. And they are nouveau riche as well. Mahesh Kumar is a member of Lok Sabha from Eluru in Andhra Pradesh. Representing Telugu Desam Party (TDP), he became an MP in 2024, at the young age of 36 years. His father Putta Sudhakar Yadav is a legislator from Mydukur in YSR Kadapa district. Sudhakar Yadav also served as the chairman of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) between April 28, 2018, and June 19, 2019. As an MP, Mahesh Kumar's primary role is to take part in enacting laws that govern the

country. Rohith Reddy, who calls himself 'Pilot' Rohith Reddy, was also a lawmaker in the past, albeit at the state-level. In 2018, he won on a Congress ticket as an MLA from Tandur, now in Vikarabad district, but shifted loyalties to Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) which was in power then. However, he lost elections from the same Assembly segment in 2023 on the BRS ticket.

Today, the two have been found consuming drugs! Does this incident show the callous attitude of these two politicians? Or are they not afraid of law enforcement agencies in Telangana?

Incidentally, the duo was allegedly caught red-handed when a team from Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE), on a tip-off, raided a farm-

house owned by Rohith Reddy in Moinabad area. While a liquor party was underway, one of the accused even opened fire at the police team when it entered the farmhouse. A drug test was conducted on 11 people and five of them, including the MP and the ex-MLA, tested positive. Surprisingly, the MP was given a station bail, a police action which is likely to kick up a row nationally, while Rohith Reddy and others were remanded to judicial custody. This incident clearly indicates how fast drug menace is spreading in and around Hyderabad. Drug usage has reached menacing proportions, primarily due to ever-growing pub culture and widespread growth of farmhouses. It is said that there are over 2,000 farmhouses around Azzinagar in

Moinabad mandal alone. Incidentally, the same Rohith Reddy's farmhouse was the place where a plot to buy four BRS MLAs was uncovered in 2022. That incident also rocked Telangana politics as did the Sunday's drug bust.

Nevertheless, strict vigilance on pubs, farmhouses and colleges will reduce the drug threat significantly. Besides, stringent punishment for both drug peddlers and consumers can be a strong deterrent. Coming back to the latest drug bust, it is good that TDP, which is in power in Andhra Pradesh, acted swiftly, served a notice on Mahesh Kumar seeking his explanation, and decided to keep him away from party activities till he comes clean on the allegations. AP Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu

also condemned the irresponsible behaviour of the young MP, while ordering for an immediate action. But BRS has remained silent on Rohith Reddy! A few months back, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy directed the police to act tough against drug peddlers and consumers. He called for zero-tolerance towards drug usage. He was also instrumental in setting up EAGLE for eliminating the drug menace from the state. The name looks menacing, but EAGLE's action on the ground seems to be lackadaisical. Will this latest sensational drug case spur it into action? Unless the Telangana government acts tough and deals with the narcotics issue with an iron hand, the state will continue to face drug threats day in and day out.

LETTERS

Bring a law on euthanasia

The Hans India reader Datta Prasad Shirodkar has rightly stated that the debate about whether mercy killing is right or wrong, ethical or unethical, is likely to continue in the society (THI March 16). There are many families who have exhausted all medical avenues and resources in the treatment of their ailing family member, whose condition is permanently irreversible. They just pray to God to put an end to the suffering of their loved one quickly. It is time the government takes cognizance of the Supreme Court's landmark verdict and enact a law on euthanasia.

Dinanath Shenolikar, Hyderabad

A touching tribute to Potti Sriramulu

It is a fitting tribute to erect a 58-foot bronze statue of Potti Sriramulu at Shakhmuru in Amaravati as the height of the statue symbolises the number of days he was a fast-unto-death. The statue was unveiled on Friday commemorating his 125th birth anniversary. It is reported that a park is coming up on 6.80 acres of land at an estimated cost of ₹150 crore. His fast-unto-death not only helped create Andhra Pradesh on linguistic lines but also paved the way to forming states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar and Punjab, among others. Though Sriramulu hailed from a humble family, he protested twice before independence for the rights of Dalits and another two times after independence for the same. He sat on a protest for the fifth time for a separate state for Telugu people. His determination and attitude towards public issues made Mahatma Gandhi remark that he would have achieved independence much earlier if he had 10 followers like Sriramulu. The Smrutivanam in his memory will guide future generations.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru (AP)

Naidu backing criminals

Hailed as the youngest MP, Putta Mahesh Kumar Yadav, representing TDP in the Lok Sabha, did the unthinkable by consuming cocaine unmindful of the repercussions, if caught. Forgetting his position, he behaved like any other Gen-Z and is now repenting whereas his party boss Nara Chandrababu Naidu, as is his wont, simply issued a show cause notice to the MP seeking a reply within 48 hours. Naidu knows how best to circumvent laws and hush up any case filed against his party leaders, including himself. It is a shame that 'criminals' are masquerading as political 'leaders' in our country and rulers, leaving the people high and dry. Naidu himself is "involved" in several white-collar crimes. A past master in managing the entire system including the judiciary, he "managed" to get an interim bail for himself on medical grounds in the Skill Development Scam case after 53 days in jail as a remand prisoner.

Govardhana Myneedu, Vijayawada

E-waste recycling and safe disposal

This refers to "GHMC collects 15 tonnes of E-waste during mega drive" (March 16). This highlights the urgent need for continuous action. Establishing e-waste collection bins in every residential complex would ensure regular disposal. The collected material can then be recycled, with residues safely handled by GHMC through certified facilities. E-waste recycling recovers valuable metals, plastics, and glass, while safe disposal prevents toxic substances like lead, mercury, and cadmium from contaminating soil and water. The benefits are manifold—conserving resources, reducing pollution, creating green jobs, and supporting a circular economy. It also minimizes landfill waste and lowers the carbon footprint of new electronics production. The challenges include informal recycling practices that expose workers to hazards, limited infrastructure, weak regulation, and rising volumes of e-waste driven by rapid technological change. Stronger policies, global cooperation and consumer responsibility are essential to make e-waste management sustainable.

Dr O Prasada Rao, Hyderabad

Go for a contingency fund

Propos the editorial "Prudent fiscal situation gives govt headroom to tackle crisis" (March 16). The Rs one lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund is a wise move to cushion global shocks, but a crisis corpus cannot substitute for fixing structural flaws. The recent Rs 19,230 crore additional fertiliser outlay exposes this reality. Subsidising manufacturers rather than farmers encourages waste, leakages, and soil damage from imbalanced urea use. Genuine fiscal prudence demands shifting to direct benefit transfers, promoting sustainable farming, and diversifying import sources. A contingency fund should address genuine emergencies, not mask the absence of long-overdue reforms. Creating new corpus without tackling inefficiencies is not consolidation, it is cosmetic comfort.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

thehansreader@gmail.com

TG Speaker's order on anti-defection petitions is a tricky constitutional test



PROF. MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU

It seems like the Anti-Defection Law is a defective law or a totally defective conclusion on the judgment of the Speaker of Telangana, Gaddam Prasad Kumar, on March 11. This has intensified a debate on whether the Speaker's decision was based on a strictly legal interpretation or influenced by political considerations.

The controversy surrounding the alleged defection of ten Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Telangana has once again placed India's anti-defection law, legislative ethics, and constitutional accountability under intense public scrutiny. What began as a political dispute has now evolved into a significant constitutional question involving the powers of the Speaker, the limits of judicial review, and the integrity of representative democracy. The recent (March 13) directions of the Supreme Court of India in the matter have not decided the merits of the dispute but have highlighted a critical issue: transparency and procedural fairness in the Speaker's adjudication of disqualification petitions. The matter was heard by a two-judge bench, comprising Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice

Augustine George Masih.

During the proceedings, senior advocates appearing for the Speaker's office and the State government submitted that the Speaker had already completed the inquiry and had passed the final orders in all the disqualification petitions.

The controversy arose after ten MLAs, who were elected to the Telangana Legislative Assembly on the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) ticket, were accused of joining the ruling Congress party. Alleging that these MLAs had voluntarily given up their party membership, BRS leaders, including its working president K T Rama Rao (KTR) and Padi Kaushik Reddy, along with BJP MLA Yeleeti Maheshwar Reddy, approached the Supreme Court seeking directions regarding the disqualification petitions.

The petitions challenged the delay and the Speaker's alleged inaction in deciding the disqualification complaints under the anti-defection law.

According to the Speaker's decision, the 10 MLAs had not defected from the BRS, and hence the disqualification petitions were dismissed. However, the petitioners raised a serious objection before the Court: copies of the Speaker's orders and records of the proceedings were not furnished to them.

SC's directions:

Taking note of these concerns, the Supreme Court questioned why the Speaker's office had not supplied the relevant documents to the petitioners, especially when they were parties to the proceedings. The court directed that certified copies of the



When voters elect a candidate based on the platform and ideology of a particular party, they are essentially endorsing that political programme. If the elected representative later switches allegiance, the voters' mandate is arguably compromised. The anti-defection law was meant to protect this mandate

Speaker's orders must be provided within 24 hours, while the depositions, statements, and other documents recorded during the proceedings had to be furnished within four days. At the same time, the court closed the present batch of petitions, observing that since the Speaker had already delivered his decisions, the appropriate remedy available to the petitioners would be to challenge those decisions through judicial review before the High Court. Thus, while the Supreme Court did not examine the correctness of the Speaker's verdict, it ensured that the petitioners would have access to the necessary documents to pursue further legal remedies.

The controversial findings:

The Speaker's ruling that the 10 MLAs had not defected triggered widespread criticism from political opponents and constitutional commentators. Several facts cited in the public domain have raised doubts about this conclusion. For instance, Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender reportedly contested the Lok

Sabha elections from Secunderabad as a Congress candidate. Meanwhile, records on the Election Commission's website list him as a Congress nominee.

Similarly, Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiyam Srihari had been seen participating in Congress meetings and public programmes. His daughter contested the Warangal Lok Sabha seat as a Congress candidate and won. Given these developments, critics argue that it is difficult to reconcile the Speaker's finding that these MLAs continue to remain members of the BRS.

Constitutional Framework

The issue of defections in India is governed by the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, introduced by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment in 1985. Under the Tenth Schedule, a legislator may be disqualified if:

1. They voluntarily give up membership of the political party on whose ticket they were elected;
2. They vote or abstain from voting against the party whip without permission;

3. An independent member joins a political party after being elected;
4. The authority to decide disqualification petitions rests with the Speaker (or Chairman) of the legislature.

Judicial review of the decisions:

The question of whether the Speaker's decisions can be reviewed by courts was settled in the landmark case of Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillu. In that judgment, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the anti-defection law but ruled that the Speaker's decisions are subject to judicial review. The court held that judicial intervention may be justified if the Speaker's decision:

- a. Violates constitutional provisions;
- b. Breaches the principles of natural justice;
- c. Is vitiated by mala fides or perversity.

Thus, the Speaker's decision is not beyond scrutiny. This principle is likely to be central if the Telangana matter reaches the High Court. Another recurring problem in anti-defection cases is the delay in deciding disqualification petitions. In the Telangana case, critics argue that not only was there a delay in deciding the petitions, but there was also a reluctance to provide certified copies of the orders, which further obstructed judicial review.

Natural justice:

At the heart of the controversy lies the issue of natural justice. Two core principles govern fair adjudication: Audi alteram partem, both sides must be heard, and reasoned decisions, the par-

ties must know the basis on which a decision has been made.

Democratic mandate:

Beyond legal technicalities, the issue of defections raises deeper questions about democratic morality. The Supreme Court's latest order does not conclude the controversy. Instead, it marks the beginning of the next phase of legal scrutiny. Once the Speaker's orders and related records are obtained, the petitioners are likely to approach the Telangana High Court seeking judicial review.

The High Court may examine several crucial questions:

1. Whether the MLAs had effectively given up their party membership;
2. Whether the Speaker's inquiry was fair and impartial;
3. Whether the decision is consistent with the constitutional principles governing defections.

Depending on the outcome, the matter could eventually return to the Supreme Court.

The Telangana episode also revives a broader institutional debate: Should the power to decide defection cases remain with the Speaker? Several constitutional scholars have suggested that this responsibility should instead be entrusted to an independent tribunal or the Election Commission of India to ensure impartiality. Until such reforms are undertaken, controversies like the present one are likely to recur.

(The writer is Advisor, School of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad)

The silent thunder: When Vajpayee, the poet-PM, recalibrated the global order

NOMULA SRINIVAS RAO

We have the capacity for a big blast. Ours is not a cry of despair; it is a challenge to the world - Atal Bihari Vajpayee

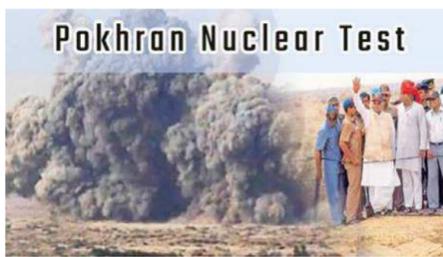
In the blistering, white-hot heat of the Thar Desert on May 11, 1998, the very sands of Pokhran didn't just shift; they shook the foundations of a geopolitical hierarchy that had long sought to keep India in a state of perpetual "strategic restraint." As the ground buckled and the sensors registered a seismic tremor of 5.3 on the Richter scale, a coded message flashed across the high-security corridors of New Delhi: "The Buddha has smiled again."

It was a moment of supreme audacity, orchestrated by a man who was as much a master of silence as he was of the spoken word. Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the poet-statesman, had just led India across the nuclear Rubicon, transforming a "post-colonial entity" into a "formidable power."

Anatomy of a secret: Defying the eye in the sky:

The 1998 Pokhran-II tests, codenamed 'Operation Shakti', were not merely a scientific achievement; they were a masterclass in clandestine leadership and psychological warfare. Vajpayee understood a chilling reality: the world's superpowers—armed with billion-dollar KH-11 "Keyhole" spy satellites—were watching India's every move from the heavens. The CIA had successfully blocked previous attempts by detecting heat signatures and soil movement. To succeed, Vajpayee knew he didn't just need scientists; he needed shadows.

Under his unwavering direction, the mission was shrouded in a "cloak of invisibility." He empowered the duo of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and Dr R Chidambaram to operate with total autonomy, bypassing the traditional, leak-prone bureaucracy. Scientists wore army fatigues to blend in with the local units, worked only during the brief "black



spots" when satellites were positioned elsewhere, and moved heavy equipment under the cover of swirling sandstorms.

Vajpayee's leadership was the steady, invisible hand on the tiller. He took the ultimate gamble with India's economy, knowing that the fallout—draconian economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation—would be immediate. Yet he remained resolute. While the West slept, a poet was preparing a symphony of fire. He chose the nation's long-term dignity over the world's short-term approval, proving that true sovereignty cannot be requested—it must be taken.

The nuclear paradox-Iron fist, a velvet heart:

Vajpayee was a walking paradox, a leader who authorized the creation of world-ending weapons while penning verses about the fragility of a dewdrop. His decision to "go nuclear" was not born of warmongering or a thirst for conquest, but of a deep-seated, civilisational desire for peace through strength. He famously remarked that weapons are not for war, but to ensure that war never happens.

He believed that a weak India could never be a truly peaceful India but a vulnerable one. By declaring India a nuclear-weapon state, he wasn't seeking a tool for ag-

gression; he was building a "Minimum Credible Deterrent." His strategic foresight was prophetic. He anticipated the two-front threat from neighbours long before it became a staple of modern defense journals.

The "poet's resolve" was visible even as he faced the wrath of the Clinton administration. He remained unfazed in the face of global condemnation, famously stating in Parliament that India would never use these weapons against non-nuclear states—the No First Use (NFU) policy. This was his hallmark: the heart of a poet who wept for the fallen soldier, but the spine of a warrior who ensured that no mother would ever have to weep because her country was defenseless against nuclear blackmail.

From 1998 to a global power:

Estimates are that India possesses an arsenal of approximately 180 nuclear warheads. Vajpayee transformed India from a "suppliant" state, constantly asking for

permission, into a "deciding" power. He proved that India could withstand global sanctions and emerge stronger, eventually forcing the world to sign the Civil Nuclear Deal and recognize India as a responsible nuclear state.

He led with a smile that carried the weight of a thousand suns and a voice that could silence a storm. He showed that you could be a man of peace while holding the ultimate deterrent, and that a poet's vision is often clearer than a politician's calculation.

As we look back at the 1998 explosions, we remember not just the fire in the sky, but the calm in the heart of the man who ignited it. He was Bharat's true Ratna—a bridge between the ancient wisdom of the Buddha and the modern necessity of the missile.

My poetry is a declaration of war against defeat, not a song of surrender - Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

(The writer is a former OSD to Union Civil Aviation Minister)

Minister assures adequate LPG supply, warns against rumours

- Civil supplies minister Manohar says state is delivering nearly 3 lakh cylinders daily, exceeding bookings
- States strict action is underway against black marketing; 616 cases filed, 2,500 cylinders seized
- OTP verification and digital booking promoted to curb misuse and ease consumer access

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CIVIL supplies minister Nandendla Manohar on Monday assured that there is no shortage of LPG cylinders for domestic consumption in the state and urged people not to panic or believe rumours circulating on social media.

Addressing a press conference at the Secretariat, the minister said the government is taking strict measures to prevent black marketing and artificial shortage of LPG. He warned that strict action would be taken against those involved in illegal sale or diversion of domestic cylinders.

The minister explained that the review meeting on



Civil supplies minister Nandendla Manohar along with officials addressing a press conference at the Secretariat on Monday

LPG supply conducted by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu confirmed that the state has sufficient stock and delivery systems are functioning normally. He said people should avoid standing in queues at gas agencies out of fear and instead use online booking methods such as mobile apps, phone calls, WhatsApp, missed calls and digital payment platforms.

According to the minister, the state normally records about 2.81 lakh LPG bookings per day, while gas companies have been delivering an average of 2.92 lakh cyl-

inders daily in the past five days, with deliveries touching three lakh cylinders on some days.

Manohar said the sudden surge in bookings due to rumours had temporarily affected servers, but supply remains adequate. As per central guidelines, a new booking can be made after 45 days in rural areas and 25 days in urban areas.

To curb misuse and black marketing, the government has made OTP verification mandatory for cylinder delivery. Officials have also been directed to ensure that domestic LPG cylinders are

not diverted for commercial use. He revealed that 616 cases have been registered and about 2,500 LPG cylinders seized in the last five days during enforcement drives. District-level call centres have been set up under the supervision of Joint Collectors to assist consumers.

The minister further assured that schools, hospitals, temples and welfare hostels will receive uninterrupted gas supply, adding that gas companies have also assured the government that there will be no shortage of domestic LPG in the state.

Continuous Annaprasadam launched at Vontimitta temple

- TTD chairman says a German shed is installed to provide comfortable seating for pilgrims to take Annaprasadam
- CM Chandrababu Naidu will take part in Sri Sitarama Kalyanam on April 1

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VONTIMITTA
(YSR KADAPA DISTRICT)

TTD chairman B R Naidu on Monday announced that Annaprasadam will be distributed continuously to devotees visiting Sri Kodandarama Swamy temple in Vontimitta. He inaugurated the Annaprasadam distribution centre set up opposite the temple premises.

Speaking on the occasion, Naidu said the facility was established following the directions issued by the Chief Minister last year to ensure uninterrupted serving of free meals to devotees. A German shed has been installed at the centre to provide comfortable seating for pilgrims while partaking of Annaprasadam.

The chairman said Sri Kodandarama Swamy Brahmotsavams will be conducted for nine days from March 27 to April 5 with elaborate arrangements. Special preparations are being made for Sri Sitarama Kalyanam sched-



TTD chairman B R Naidu serving food to devotees after inaugurating Annaprasadam distribution programme at Vontimitta on Monday

uled on April 1. On behalf of the State Government, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will offer Pattu Vastrams to the deities during the ceremony.

Devotees attending the Sri Sitarama Kalyanam will be provided free Srivari Laddu Prasadam worth Rs 50. Arrangements are also being made to distribute Annaprasadam, drinking water, and buttermilk packets to pilgrims. The district administration and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) are jointly overseeing the arrangements for the annual festivities.

Sri Sitarama Kalyanam will be telecast live worldwide through SVBC. Electrical illumination, LED lighting, and a public address system are being arranged at an estimated cost of Rs 4 crore for the celebrations.

Naidu further said steps are being taken to construct a 108-foot statue of Jambavan-

tha at a cost of Rs 20.17 crore. Under the temple master plan, 100 rooms will also be built at an estimated cost of Rs 37 crore to improve accommodation facilities for devotees. He added that, as per the directions of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, free Annaprasadam will now be served three times a day to devotees at Vontimitta.

Earlier, the TTD chairman visited Sri Kodandarama Swamy Temple and offered prayers. Temple priests and officials welcomed him with traditional honours, and he was presented Theertha Prasadam after darshan.

Later, he inspected the arrangements being made for the Sri Sitarama Kalyanam. District Collector Dr Cherukuri Sridhar, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, SP Shelke Chakraborty, JEO V Veerabrahmam, CVSO KV Murali Krishna and other officials were present.

US PREZ TRUMP ACCUSES IRAN OF SPREADING LIES

Continued from P1

"Now, AI has become another Disinformation weapon that Iran uses, quite well, considering they are being annihilated by the day," he said on his social media platform on Monday. Trump said Iran showed "phony Kamikaze Boats," shooting at various ships at sea, which looks "wonderful, powerful, and vicious." "But these boats don't exist — It's all false information to show how tough they already defeated Military is!"

The five US refuelling planes that were supposedly struck down and badly damaged, according to the "Wall Street Journal's false reporting," and others, are all in service, except for one, which will soon be flying the skies, Trump claimed. "Buildings and Ships that are shown to be on fire are not — It's FAKE NEWS, generated by AI."

Karnataka Speaker raps govt

Continued from P1

Stating that there had been no improvement from the government side, the Speaker questioned how the House could function smoothly if such lapses continued. "If this is the attitude of the government, how are we supposed to run the House in a manner agreeable to all?" he asked. Khader further declared that the proceedings would not continue until the ministers and officials concerned explained the reason for the delay in answering questions. "Until the ministers and officials concerned come to me and explain what the issue is, I will not conduct the House. I am adjourning the House," he said. Earlier, after Question Hour, Home Minister G. Parameshwara informed the House on behalf of the government that out of the 230 questions that were to be answered in written format, the government had responded to 84.

Chandrababu: Haj House in Amaravati soon

Releases Rs 45 crore honorarium dues for imams and muezzins

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu announced here on Monday that the Andhra Pradesh government will construct a new Haj House in Amaravati and immediately release Rs 45 crore in pending honorarium dues for imams and muezzins. He pointed out that the coalition government has implemented several welfare initiatives for Muslims over the past 21 months.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while participating in an iftar hosted by the state government here. He joined the prayers and extended Ramzan greetings to the Muslim community.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the incomplete Haj House in Kadapa would soon be made operational. The government has organised iftars across districts and constituencies during the holy month of

Ramzan. Emphasising the teachings of Prophet Muhammad on charity and compassion, the Chief Minister said the government is committed to supporting the poor and ensuring the socio-economic advancement of Muslims.

Naidu highlighted several welfare measures implemented by the state government. Under NTR Bharosa pensions, about 4.38 lakh Muslims receive financial assistance, with the government spending around Rs 3,511 crore annually. Around 4.5 lakh Muslim students are benefiting from the 'Thaliki Vandanam' scheme, while Rs 264 crore has been released as post-Matric scholarships for 19,215 students. Under the Deepam 2.0 scheme, 6.2 lakh families are receiving LPG support worth Rs 158 crore.

The Chief Minister said Rs 180 crore has already been distributed as honorariums, providing Rs 5,000 for imams and Rs 10,000 for muezzins,

and ordered the immediate release of the remaining Rs 45 crore dues.

Naidu stated that the government respects the sentiments of Muslims and is taking steps to protect Waqf properties. Around 1,500 Waqf properties have been surveyed and the board has been recast, after cancelling earlier orders that created disputes.

The Chief Minister mentioned that Rs 100 crore has been allocated to the Dadekula Muslim Finance Corporation, minority welfare allocations were increased from Rs 5,434 crore to Rs 6,090 crore, and Rs 7 crore was sanctioned to the Urdu Academy.

The event was attended by Minority Welfare Minister NMD Farooq, MP Kesineni Sivanath, MLAs Mohamed Nasseer Ahmed, Bondam Umamaheswara Rao, Gadde Rammohan, and several public representatives and leaders from the Muslim community.

Trump may send troops to capture 'Crown Jewel of Iran'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is reportedly weighing the possibility of seizing Kharg Island-- a scrubby stretch of land in the Gulf that handles almost all of Iran's crude exports-- amid a growing energy crisis due to war in the Middle East.

Trump may order the seizure of Iran's critical oil depot on Kharg Island if tankers remain bottled up in the Persian Gulf amid Tehran's blockade, US officials said. If the US goes ahead with the move, it will put US troops on the ground, which risks triggering Ira-

nian retaliatory strikes against oil facilities and pipelines across Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. But America's main ally in the Middle East, Israel, may not be inclined to put its boot on the ground in Iran just yet, as Israel's ambassador to India, Reu-

ven Azar, has claimed that neither Washington nor Jerusalem intends to invade Iran. He said the focus of US-Israeli actions remains on encouraging change within Iran through pressure from its own people rather than through military occupation.

True tribute to Amarajeevi lies in all-round growth of state: Naidu

Continued from P1

The monument has been installed by the Amarajeevi Potti Sreeramulu Memorial Trust.

The Chief Minister observed that the "real tribute" to Potti Sreeramulu would be the comprehensive development of the state in all sectors. He urged people to constantly remember Sreeramulu's sacrifice and work collectively for the progress of Andhra Pradesh.

Naidu said the statue is the first major sculpture in Amaravati and stands as a lasting symbol of Sreeramulu's sacrifice. The memorial has been built across 6.80 acres in Shakamuru Park, with the first phase of the project completed in a record six months. In the first phase, the massive structure used 26 tonnes of bronze and 42 tonnes of iron framework. In the next phase, a museum, an auditorium and skill devel-

opment centres will be developed as part of the memorial park.

Describing Sreeramulu as a symbol of inspiration, the Chief Minister said the great freedom-fighter belonged to all communities and not just one section of society. Sreeramulu's sacrifice paved the way for the creation of Andhra State and later encouraged the formation of linguistic states across India. Naidu recalled that Sreeramulu fought also for social causes, including Dalits' entry into temples by undertaking a 29-day fast earlier in his life.

Naidu emphasised that Andhra state was achieved through Sreeramulu's sacrifice, just as the state capital has been made possible by the sacrifices of farmers who contributed land for Amaravati's development. The Chief Minister criticised the previous government for attempting to

divide the capital and said Amaravati is now progressing as a "people's capital".

Naidu also announced that the state government would soon issue a Government Order (GO) to recognise various Vaishya groups under the unified identity of Arya Vaishyas, respecting their sentiments. He assured that the coalition government is committed to creating a business-friendly environment for the community.

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrababu Naidu, Ministers Nara Lokesh, Nandendla Manohar and several public representatives attended the unveiling ceremony. The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister also released a postal cover issued by India Post in honour of Potti Sreeramulu and felicitated members of his family during the event.

Global energy crisis deepens as Iran keeps hold on Hormuz

Continued from P1

As morning broke Monday, a drone hit a fuel tank near Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international passenger traffic, causing a large fire. Firefighters contained the blaze and there were no injuries reported, but the airport suspended all flights before resuming them a few hours later. Later, a person was killed in the capital of the United Arab Emirates when an Iranian missile hit a vehicle, the Abu Dhabi media office said. Fire also broke out at an oil facility in Fujairah, one of the UAE's seven emirates, following a drone attack.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, said it intercepted a wave of 35 Iranian drones sent to its eastern region, home to major oil installations. Iran has fired hundreds of missiles and drones toward countries in the region hosting U.S. military assets since the war began. Emirati authorities say most have been intercepted by air defenses, though debris and some drones have fallen in-

side the country. Israel's military said on Monday that Iran launched missiles toward Israel as well.

The conflict is battering the world economy, driving up energy and fertilizer prices; threatening food shortages in poor countries; destabilizing fragile states; and complicating efforts by central banks to drive down prices for consumers. Much of the difficulty stems from the virtual shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump said on Sunday that he wants to police the strait to make it safe for shipping, with his party increasingly concerned that rising prices for American consumers will hurt the Republicans in elections this fall. He did not identify the countries he said he asked to help with those efforts, but he said he won't forget the countries that decline. He has previously appealed to China, France, Japan, South Korea and Britain. "Whether we get support or not, but I can say this, and I said to them: We will remember," Trump said.

'Take steps to prevent LPG black marketing'

Naidu suggested holding consultations with hotel associations to encourage measures that could temporarily reduce LPG consumption if necessary. Officials also informed the

Chief Minister that the Centre is expected to allocate additional LPG supplies to Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka in the coming days.

He further advised offi-

cials to explore alternative options such as pipeline gas and induction stoves as supplementary solutions to ensure energy security and reduce dependence on LPG in the long term.

MEA slams US report recommending sanctions on RSS

Continued from P1

This comes after USCIRF designated India as a "country of particular concern" and asked United States to link arms sales and trade policies to religious freedom.

USCIRF said its report, Systematic Religious Persecution in India, provides an overview of India's social, political, and criminal justice systems as they relate to issues regarding freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). "It also examines the relationship between Hindu nationalist groups like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the implications of this dynamic for FoRB.

Despite offering some constitutional protections for FoRB, India's political system facilitates a climate of discrimination toward religious minority communities," the

report alleged. USCIRF also argued that conditions for religious freedom in India have "continued to deteriorate" and accused the Indian government of "targeting" religious minorities and houses of worship. "Several states undertook efforts to introduce or strengthen anti-conversion laws to include harsher prison sentences. Indian authorities also facilitated widespread detention and illegal expulsion of citizens and religious refugees and tolerated vigilante attacks against religious minority communities," the report said.

Created in 1998 by an act of the United States Congress, the USCIRF "monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) abroad" and makes recommendations to the President of the United States, the United States Department of State, and Congress.

10 killed in Cuttack ICU fire

Continued from P1

The fire broke out around 2:30 am to 3 am, where critically ill patients were being treated. Multiple fire engines rushed to the spot and are engaged in the rescue operations.

Shortly after the incident, the Odisha Chief Minister, along with Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling, visited the hospital and reviewed the situation. They also visited other patients who are receiving treatment at the facility.

"A total of 23 patients have been shifted to other departments. Seven serious patients died while shifting to other ICUs and wards, while another three patients died later.

I have directed the concerned officers for proper treatment of the injured patients," the Chief Minister told the media. Majhi announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh for the families of those people who died.

Iran seeks return of 3 tankers seized by India

IN RETURN FOR HORMUZ SAFE PASSAGE

TEHRAN

IRAN has asked India for the release of three seized tanker ships in return for the safe passage of India-bound tankers through Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing Gulf crisis, sources said on Monday.

The report said that Iran's ambassador to India met Foreign ministry officials on Monday to discuss the issue. However, neither India, nor Iran has not reacted to the report yet.

Indian coastal authorities in February reportedly seized three oil tankers sanctioned by the United States and allegedly linked to Iran. The vessels were intercepted off the Mumbai coast and taken in for investigation over sus-

pected involvement in illicit oil trade activities.

The 'Shadow Fleet' vessels Stellar Ruby, Asphalt Star, and Al Jafzia, which were carrying sanctioned Iranian oil, were seized on February 6.

Iran, meanwhile, has made it clear that Strait of Hormuz cannot be used to launch strikes on Tehran and set conditions on the passage of vessels through it. It said vessel movement through the strait could occur only under special conditions due to what he described as insecurity created by Israel and the United States, adding that Iran's armed forces oversee the passage and would prevent its use for military action against Tehran.

PNG and CNG supply uninterrupted: Govt

Continued from P1

During an inter-ministerial briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary (Marketing and Oil Refinery) at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said fuel stations supplying CNG and households using PNG continue to receive normal supply. Authorities have also initiated enforcement action against hoarding, with raids conducted across several states to monitor storage and distribution. The government said crude oil availability remains adequate, with refineries operating at full capacity and petrol pumps functioning normally without reported shortages.

City gas distributors are also promoting PNG adoption. Indraprastha Gas Lim-

ited has announced an incentive of free gas worth Rs 500 for consumers registering for PNG connections before March 31.

LPG bookings have declined as concerns over domestic gas availability eased. Meanwhile, 22 states and Union Territories have set up control rooms to monitor supply and curb hoarding or black marketing.

The ministry urged consumers to avoid panic bookings and use digital platforms for LPG orders. The government said it continues to prioritise uninterrupted supply to households and key sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions, while closely monitoring the situation amid prevailing geopolitical developments.

India rules out talks with US on Hormuz

NEW DELHI: India on Monday said it has not held bilateral talks with the United States on deploying naval vessels to secure merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

The clarification came after US President Donald Trump urged countries to send warships to keep the strategic waterway open amid tensions with Iran. Speaking to reporters on Sunday, Trump said that his administration has contacted 7 countries for support. India has not held bilateral discussions with the United States on deploying naval vessels to ensure the safe passage of merchant shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, the External Affairs Ministry said on Monday.



Awesome debut: Divya Pathak's kathak arangetram mesmerises Hyderabad

Young dancer Divya Pathak marked a graceful milestone with her Kathak Arangetram, delivering a performance that blended tradition, precision and expressive storytelling. Held at Ravindra Bharati under the guidance of award-winning guru Raghava Raj Bhatt and the aegis of Akruti Kathak Kendra, the debut captivated audiences throughout

A graceful celebration of rhythm, devotion, and classical excellence unfolded at Ravindra Bharati as young dancer Divya Pathak marked her Kathak Arangetram with a performance that held the audience spellbound. Organised under the auspices of Akruti Kathak Kendra, the evening showcased the arrival of a promising artiste deeply rooted in tradition and refined training.

The debut was presented under the mentorship of noted Kathak exponent and Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee Raghava Raj Bhatt, whose guidance was evident in every detail of the recital. Divya opened the evening with Guru Stotram, offering a devotional invocation that set a serene tone. She then moved into an elegant presentation of Teen Tal, the popular 16-beat rhythmic cycle of Hindustani classical music, displaying impressive command over footwork, posture, and laya control. Her expressive depth shone in a lyrical interpretation set to a Meera bhajan, where rhythm and emotion blended seamlessly. One of the most captivating segments portrayed the divine love of Radha and Krishna during Holi, performed in the Dhamar style of Dhrupad. The choreography beautifully combined storytelling with technical finesse, evoking festivity and devotion in equal measure.

A semi-classical Thumri followed, rich in abhinaya and delicate rhythmic variations. Drawing from devotional ragas and reflecting the refined aesthetics of the Lucknow tradition, the piece stood out for its emotional nuance and visual grace. Divya further impressed the audience with Dashavataram, effortlessly transitioning through varied mythological themes and moods with striking clarity and energy. The recital concluded on a vibrant note with a traditional Tarana, bringing the performance to an exhilarating close.

The evening was also marked by blessings and tributes. Renowned Bharatanatyam guru Dr. Rajeshwari Sainath conveyed her blessings and fondly remembered the late Dr. Mangalabhat, honor-

ing his invaluable contributions to Kathak. Appreciation was extended to Guru Bhatt for his thoughtful choreography and dedicated mentorship. Among the distinguished guests, Ashar Faran, Trustee of Lamakaan, wished Divya a bright future and encouraged her continued journey in dance. A touching highlight was Divya's Guru Pooja, a heartfelt gesture of reverence reflecting the spiritual essence of the classical arts.

The recital was elevated by an accomplished live orchestra led by Fateh Singh Ganga on pakhawaj. Vocal support came from Madhu Prasad, with instrumental accompaniment by Uday Kumar, Lavanya Ambade,

Puneet Sisodia, Raghav Sai, and Harika. Presentation by Amit Kumar, lighting by Basava Raju, and stage design by Madhav Raj Bhatt added visual richness. The sabha was smoothly coordinated by Parag Pathak.

With poise, devotion, and artistic maturity, Divya Pathak's debut announced the rise of a Kathak dancer to watch.



Parenting

Raising emotionally brave kids

WHY LETTING CHILDREN FACE SMALL FAILURES BUILDS LIFELONG RESILIENCE

DR DEEPTI T NAIR

The present world which emphasizes achievement brings about protection for children against disappointment and frustration and failure. The protective measures which parents use to protect their children arise from their love for their children yet these measures create an unintended result which weakens the emotional strength of the children. Children develop emotional bravery through real-life experiences which include facing their first small failures. The process of brain development requires failure as an essential factor which also supports emotional development. Children learn to persevere through difficult challenges when their brains adapt to difficult situations which they cannot immediately solve. The process enhances neural connections which are essential for solving problems and managing emotions and maintaining determination.

Children learn to recognize discomfort as a temporary condition which they can handle. They develop a mindset which psychologists refer to as growth mindset because they believe that effort leads to skill development. Students who develop this mindset achieve academic success throughout their educational journey which extends into their professional life and mental health. The term emotionally brave describes children who experience fear and embarrassment and calmly perform the tasks and maintain their courage.

Children develop emotional strength through learning that these feelings represent



standard reactions which people experience. Children experience sadness and frustration and self-doubt when they lose a game or face school challenges or forget performance lines or fail to join a team. The moments which people experience teach them how to manage their emotions. The child recognizes that challenging emotions will emerge reach their highest point and then disappear. Building emotional endurance enables people to face their future life challenges which include academic pressure and workplace stress and relationship difficulties.

The emotional weakness develops through excessive protection from parental care. The presence of adults who solve problems and handle disputes and shield children from failure hinders their development of coping mechanisms. The unknown experience of failure makes them develop intense fear of failure. Children with this condition avoid new experiences and they show quick abandonments of tasks and they need to receive approval from others. The condition develops into anxiety issues and low self-esteem and an inability to handle rejection and criticism in both teenage years and adult life. Minor



In a world that prizes constant achievement, many children are shielded from failure in the name of love—often at the cost of their emotional resilience. Experts say that small setbacks are essential for building confidence, problem-solving ability and lifelong mental strength

ing of failure through their actions. The goal is not to create harsh or stressful situations but to create situations that match the natural development needs of children. The adult response matters more than the actual failure when children experience their first unsuccessful attempts. Children need calm reassurance and empathy together with encouragement to attempt again because these elements help them develop constructive ways to handle their situations. Resilience gets strengthened through statements which recognize persistence and courage because those statements direct focus towards effort instead of final results.

Children need to develop their ability to solve problems through independent thinking because this skill holds equal value with their need to solve problems through independent thinking. The process of solving problems without assistance helps individuals build their confidence when they face challenges with friends or work on tough tasks or ac-

quire new abilities. The ability to handle difficulties enhances emotional security for children because they understand their own capacity to deal with problems.

Children who display emotional courage develop into adults who possess strong mental abilities and adaptable nature and self-assuredness. The methods enable them to take safe risks and try out fresh possibilities while using their previous failures to guide them toward success. The practice of avoiding all failures leads people to develop fear-based behaviors which result in emotional weakness.

People develop resilience through their challenges instead of their comfortable experiences. The process of developing resilience requires people to go through various life situations which include their temporary periods of rest and their self-evaluation time.

(The writer is a Senior Consultant - Pediatrics and Neonatology, Rainbow Children's Hospital, Sarjapur Road)



Shilpa Shetty reveals her ultimate 'secret to staying calm' before work

amaForTheWin."

In the video, the 'Baazigar' actress can be seen practicing pranayama as she gears up for a professional stint.

Dressed in a shimmering gold halter-neck outfit with delicate embellishments, the actress is seen sitting outdoors and calmly performing the breathing exercise.

Talking about Shilpa Shetty, the actress has long been known as a yoga enthusiast and has constantly advocated the benefits of the generations-old practice of yoga along with healthy and clean eating.

The actress has often been seen em-

phasising the importance of balance in lifestyle and fitness.

In many of her earlier interviews, she has shared that throughout the week she follows a strict and disciplined diet, while Sundays are reserved for sheer indulgence.

Apart from her film work, Shilpa is also popular for her "Sunday binge" posts on social media, where she offers fans a glimpse into her cheat-day rituals.

On the professional front, Shilpa Shetty made her Bollywood debut with the 1993 thriller 'Baazigar' opposite Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, which

went on to become a major success.

Over the years, she has appeared in several popular films like 'Tu Khiladi Main Anari', 'Dhadkan' and many more.

Shilpa's younger sister, Shamita Shetty, is also an actor who made her debut with 'Mohabbatein'.

Apart from films, Shilpa has also built a strong presence on television as a reality show judge, appearing on popular shows such as 'Super Dancer' and 'India's Got Talent'.

On the personal front, she is married to businessman Raj Kundra and the couple is blessed with two children.

Soha says her mother's house is the 'only home where she's still someone's baby girl'

Actress Soha Ali Khan, on Sunday, shared a heartwarming glimpse of her beautiful time with her mother, veteran actor Sharmila Tagore.

Sharing a picture alongside her mother, Soha mentioned that it is the only home where she's still somebody's baby girl, highlighting the warmth of her maternal house.

Taking to her social media account, Soha posted a carousel featuring her pictures along with Sharmila Tagore and her daughter Inaaya Naumi Kemmu.

She captioned the post as, "The only home where I'm still someone's baby girl."

In the pictures, Soha can be seen dressed elegantly in a red saree paired with traditional jhumkas and a small bindi.

She is seen standing beside her mother Sharmila Tagore, with both of them smiling warmly at the camera.

Another picture in the carousel shows her daughter Inaaya hugging her grandmother Sharmila Tagore.

Adding a nostalgic touch to the post, Soha used her mother's timeless song 'Taarif Karoon Kya Uski' as the background track, originally sung by legendary playback singer Mohammed Rafi.

The song was a part of Sharmila Tagore's debut movie 'Kashmir Ki Kali', where she starred opposite legendary actor Shammi Kapoor.

For the uninitiated, Soha



Ali Khan comes from the illustrious Pataudi family and is the daughter of Sharmila Tagore and late cricket legend Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi.

She is also the sister of actor Saif Ali Khan and the sister-in-law of actor Kareena Kapoor Khan.

On the professional front, Soha made her

Bollywood debut with the film 'Dil Maange More' and later appeared in films like 'Rang De Basanti', 'Tum Mile' and many more.

Apart from acting, Soha also turned an author and podcaster host. She is married to actor Kunal Kemmu and the couple are parents to their daughter Inaaya Naumi Kemmu.

CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Concocted (4-2)
 - Marsh (3)
 - Memory alone (4)
 - Atop or over (4)
 - Wash bowls (6)
 - Absolute freedom from living micro-organisms (9)
 - Greek god of love (4)
 - Lopsided (3)
 - Couches (5)
 - Pertaining to the pope (5)
 - Drowsy state produced by bhang etc. (3)
 - Harry Potter's best friend (2)
 - Length or breadth, should we say? (5)
 - Reel (5)
 - A corded cloth (3)
 - Big Apple law enforcers (4)
 - Puzzled (9)
 - Secured (6)
 - House rodents (4)
 - Elder sister, in India (4)
 - Diddle and Derek (3)
 - Pieces of rocks used as roofing material (6)

DOWN

- Lynched by a crowd (6)
- ___ towards : inclined to? (8)
- Vessels for ashes (4)
- After 1945 (4-3)
- Transport across river etc (5)
- Invalid (4)
- Mail carrier (7)
- Conversational stopgaps (3)
- Easily influenced (4)
- Elvis ___ Presley? (4)
- Multilingual (8)
- Caused by motion (7)
- Adds on (7)
- The divisions, male and female (3)
- Gymwear name (6)
- Rips apart (5)
- Plebeian (4)
- Irish parliament (4)



Solution to March 16

SUDOKU



Solution to March 16

IN BRIEF



Two zebra foals born at Bannerghatta Biological Park

BENGALURU: Bannerghatta Biological Park has welcomed two new additions to its zebra family with the birth of two female foals in January this year. They have been released into the enclosures only on Monday for Public viewing.

According to zoo authorities, zebra Kokila, aged two-and-a-half years, delivered a foal on January 17, while another zebra, Kaveri, aged 12 years, gave birth to a foal on January 28. Both the newborn foals are females and have been sired by a male zebra named Bharath.

Officials said the foals are currently housed along with the other zebras and are under constant monitoring by the park's veterinary team and animal keepers to ensure their well-being. With the birth of the two foals, the total number of zebras at the zoo has increased to 10.

Zoo authorities said zebras usually have a gestation period of about 12 to 13 months. The newborn foals initially have brown stripes, which gradually turn black as they grow. Visitors to the park can catch a glimpse of the newborn zebras during their visit to the zoo, officials added.

Vaibhav Narang is CEO, VIBGYOR Group of Schools

BENGALURU: VIBGYOR Group of Schools, India's leading K-12 education network, appoints Vaibhav Narang as its Chief Executive Officer. The appointment underscores the group's continued focus on strengthening leadership as it advances its mission of delivering holistic, future-ready education across India.

With over 17 years of experience, Vaibhav Narang brings deep expertise across banking, fundraising, strategy, and infrastructure. Over the past five years, he has played a key role in shaping the strategic and financial direction of the Ampersand Group, leading strategy and fundraising initiatives across its education and services portfolio. Prior to this, he held senior leadership roles within the Ampersand Group as Senior Vice President and Head - Treasury, Strategy and Chairman's Office.

Indians' global travel plans revealed

BENGALURU: Klook has released its Spring Readiness Index, offering a snapshot of how Indian travellers are planning for the spring travel season across Japan and South Korea.

The Spring Readiness Index is based on insights from 900 travellers across nine Asia markets, Japan remains the top spring destination, with 78% of respondents naming it as their preferred choice, followed by South Korea at 52%.

For Indian travellers, the main draw during the March-April travel window is seasonal attractions, reinforcing a broader shift toward experience-led travel shaped by natural spectacles, cultural moments, and limited-time opportunities.

This is reinforced by Search interest on Klook's platform for spring-related terms such as "cherry blossom" and "sakura" rose 57% from December 2025 to February 2026, highlighting strong momentum for seasonal travel.

LPG tanker overturns near Katapady, traffic disrupted on NH-66

HANS NEWS SERVICE
UDUPI

AN LPG tanker overturned near Katapady on National Highway-66 in Udupi district on Monday morning, creating panic among commuters and residents in the vicinity. The tanker, which was

transporting liquefied petroleum gas from Mangaluru towards Udupi, reportedly lost control while negotiating a stretch of road where highway work is underway. The vehicle toppled on its side, raising concerns about a potential gas leak. Fire and emergency services

personnel rushed to the spot immediately after the incident. As a precautionary measure, water was sprayed on the tanker and safety checks were carried out to ensure that there was no leakage.

The accident led to a temporary disruption of vehicular movement on the

highway. Police diverted traffic and warned motorists to avoid the area until the situation was stabilised. Officials later confirmed that no injuries were reported. Arrangements were being made to transfer the gas from the tanker before it could be safely removed from the spot.



Sudha Murty urges Centre to establish AIIMS in Raichur

Expresses concern over lack of institute in north Karnataka

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

SUDHA Murty, Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha, expressed disappointment in Parliament over the absence of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Karnataka and strongly urged the Union Government to establish one in the backward district of Raichur.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the ongoing Parliament session in New Delhi, Murty pointed out that several states across the country have been allotted AIIMS institutions, but Karnataka is yet to receive even one such premier medical institute. She said the state deserves better healthcare infrastructure considering its population and growing medical needs.

Murty specifically appealed to the Centre to consider Raichur district for the new AIIMS facility. She clarified that she was not requesting the institute to be set up in developed cities like Bengaluru or Hubballi, but rather in Raichur, which needs it the most due to its backward status and lack of advanced healthcare facilities. She noted that Raichur



is among the most backward districts identified by NITI Aayog. Murty recalled that while southern Karnataka witnessed significant development during the rule of the Wodeyar dynasty, large parts of northern Karnataka remained neglected for decades. Establishing an AIIMS in Raichur would help correct this historical imbalance, she said.

Highlighting the healthcare challenges faced by residents, Murty stated that the district lacks well-equipped hospitals. As a result, patients are forced to travel long distances to cities like Hyderabad or Bengaluru for treatment. This situation causes immense financial strain on poor families who already struggle to afford healthcare.

She also pointed out that the district's literacy levels remain relatively low. Ac-

ording to available data, female literacy in Raichur is around 48 percent, while male literacy is about 60 percent. Establishing a premier medical institution like AIIMS could significantly improve education and employment opportunities in the region.

Murty further explained that such a major healthcare project would not only provide advanced medical treatment to people in northern Karnataka but also create thousands of jobs and encourage students to pursue medical education locally.

She concluded by urging the Union Government to consider the long-term benefits of establishing AIIMS in Raichur, stating that the move would greatly strengthen healthcare access and regional development in Karnataka.

Chinnaswamy Stadium gets nod for hosting IPL 2026 matches

BENGALURU: The Karnataka government on Monday gave formal approval to the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to host the 2026 Indian Premier League matches at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, ending months of uncertainty following the stampede after the team's maiden title win.

The 19th edition of the world's biggest T20 league begins on March 28 with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru set to face Sunrisers Hyderabad in their first match here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in the tournament opener, as per the schedule. The formal approval comes after a meeting chaired by Karnataka home minister Parameashwar with the Expert Committee, which was constituted by the state government, and representatives from the KSCA, RCB and their event management firm DNA.

"During the meeting, the Expert Committee presented its report outlining the preparedness and compliance meas-

ures undertaken at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium," KSCA's official spokesperson Vinay Mruthyunjaya informed in a statement. "Based on the recommendations of the Expert Committee and after reviewing the arrangements in detail, the Hon'ble Home Minister has formally accorded approval for the conduct of the upcoming IPL matches at the iconic M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru." "The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) places on record its sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble Home Minister, Dr. G. Parameashwar, for his leadership, guidance and support in facilitating this approval," he added. Apart from the opening fixture of the upcoming season, the M Chinnaswamy Stadium is also slated to host the RCB Unboxing event as well as the tournament's opening ceremony. RCB had earlier announced that it would play five of their seven home matches in Bengaluru, while two will be played at Raipur's Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium.

The KSCA also expressed its gratitude towards the members of the Expert Committee.

"Our special thanks are also due to Shri Sreemant Kumar Singh, Member Secretary of the Expert Committee and Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru, for his proactive coordination and for ensuring that all safety, security and operational aspects were comprehensively evaluated," the release said.

"KSCA further expresses its sincere appreciation to all the distinguished members of the Expert Committee and the officials associated with the Expert Committee and its sub-committees, whose careful assessment and constructive recommendations have been instrumental in enabling this important decision."

At least 11 people were killed and more than 30 injured in a stampede near the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on June 4, 2025 during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory celebrations, raising serious concerns over crowd management.

BJP likely to field new face Vinay Kumar for Davanagere South bypoll

HANS NEWS SERVICE
DAVANAGERE

THE Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is reportedly considering a new candidate for the upcoming by-election to the Davanagere South Assembly Constituency. Party sources indicate that the leadership may field young leader G.B. Vinay Kumar in an attempt to overcome factionalism within the local unit and strengthen its chances in the crucial bypoll. The by-election was necessitated following the demise of senior Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa, who had represented the constituency. The BJP is determined to win the seat this time and is carefully weighing its options amid internal differences between local leaders.

Factional politics has reportedly intensified within the Davanagere BJP unit since the last Lok Sabha election. Former MP G.M. Siddeshwar and former



MLA S.A. Ravindranath are said to be backing different aspirants for the party ticket. Sources said the Siddeshwar faction has been lobbying strongly for party ticket to his close associate Yashwanth Rao Jadhav. However, the Ravindranath camp has reportedly opposed the proposal, leading to a stalemate within the party's local leadership.

Initially, the BJP high command was said to be considering giving the ticket to B.G. Ajay Kumar, who had contested the previous election but lost. However, lack of support from certain factions has made the party

leadership reconsider its options. Amid these developments, the name of G.B. Vinay Kumar has emerged as a strong contender. Party insiders say his name has been discussed at the national level, and the leadership is evaluating his candidature as a strategy to bring a fresh face into the contest and avoid internal factional disputes.

Vinay Kumar had contested the last Lok Sabha election as an independent candidate after reportedly being denied a ticket by the Indian National Congress. Despite contesting independently, he managed to

secure nearly 40,000 votes, demonstrating his local influence.

Political observers believe that Vinay Kumar's candidature could help the BJP attract young voters in the constituency. He is known as a young leader and runs an IAS training academy, which has helped him build connections among students and youth.

Another factor that may work in his favour is the party's social engineering strategy. While the BJP is likely to field Veeranna Charantimath, a Lingayat leader, in the Bagalkot by-election, the party may opt for a candidate from the Kuruba community in Davanagere South to balance caste equations.

If the BJP finally decides to field Vinay Kumar, it could signal the high command's determination to end factional politics in the district and project a new leadership face ahead of the by-election.

Film producer's grandson sets triple record in Rubik's Cube challenge

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

FOURTEEN-year-old Shivateja Y, grandson of noted Kannada film producer Rockline Venkatesh, has created a remarkable achievement by setting a triple record in solving Megaminx Rubik's Cubes, earning recognition from the India Book of Records, Asia Book of Records and International Book of Records. To celebrate the rare achievement, a press conference was held at Conrad Bengaluru. Members of the family, including Shivateja's father Yatheesh Venkatesh, were present at the event and expressed pride over the young achiever's success. Speaking at the event, Rockline Venkatesh said their family is usually associated with film-related events, but this occasion was special as it celebrated an achievement outside the film industry. He said it was a matter of immense pride that the younger generation in their family had accomplished something unique. Rockline also observed that many children today spend most of their time on television and mobile phones, but achievements like this show how youngsters can use their time to develop



extraordinary skills.

Shivateja's father Yatheesh Venkatesh said parents must first identify the talents of their children and support them accordingly. He added that Shivateja's mother was the first to recognise his interest and talent in solving Rubik's cubes, while he ensured that his son received the encouragement and facilities needed to pursue the skill.

Shivateja's mother said that this was the first time anyone in their family had achieved recognition in the Rubik's cube field. She added that Shivateja had been practicing continuously for the past three years and had mastered the complex stages of solving the cube before setting the record.

Record-breaking performance

Shivateja, a student from Bengaluru, created the record by solving multiple mixed Megaminx Rubik's Cubes. At the age of 14 years and 9 months, he successfully solved 21 Megaminx cubes in 1 hour, 27 minutes, 12 seconds and 30 milliseconds, securing the record in multiple record books.

Interestingly, Shivateja is also the grandson of Karnataka MLA Munirathna. His achievement has drawn attention across the state and the country, bringing pride to his family and highlighting the growing interest of young Indians in mind sports and puzzle solving.

112: Centralised ambulance management system to be in place for effective service

BENGALURU: The government is set to implement a centralised ambulance management system under the unified emergency helpline number '112; Medical Education & Skill Development Minister Sharanprakash Patil announced in the Legislative Council on Monday.

The minister said the new system is expected to be fully operational within three months, with technical integration currently in progress. He said the government would directly take over the centralised management of all state ambulances under the '112' platform to ensure faster and more effective emergency healthcare delivery. Patil said this in response to a question raised by MLC T N Javarayi Gowda during the question hour.

Further stating that recruitment of supporting staff for ambulance services would also be undertaken shortly, he assured the House that Karnataka's ambulance fleet meets the standards prescribed by the Central Government and that there is no shortage of ambulances in the state. Noting that 1,715 ambulances are currently operational across the state, including 715 operated under the Arogya Kavacha programme and 1,000 managed directly by the state government, the minister said 262 additional ambulances will be procured to further strengthen emergency response capacity.

Govt facing shortage of land even to provide for burial grounds: Minister

BENGALURU

REVENUE Minister Krishna Byre Gowda told the Legislative Assembly on Monday that the government faces a land shortage, even for burial grounds and is forced to purchase land for this purpose in some cases.

Minority communities are angry with the government for not providing sufficient space for cemeteries, he said, as he highlighted difficulties faced in allocating land for schools and playgrounds. The minister was replying to a question by Aurd BJP MLA Prabhu Chavan during Question Hour.

"Over the last 10 years,

all governments have tried to ensure that all villages have burial grounds based on their needs. Even the High Court has pursued this. Still, we have not been able to provide space in some places," Gowda said. He said that after providing all available land to farmers and for various other purposes, the government is now left with no land for burial grounds. "For burial grounds, the government had to purchase land at a cost of Rs 58 crore in the last three years. By giving lands for various purposes, we have now reached a situation where we must purchase land for burials," he added.



Having given away lands for various purposes, the administration has to go around with a "begging

bowl", asking for land, the minister further said. Among Hindus, some bury and some burn the

dead. In areas surrounding Bengaluru, those who used to bury have started to burn the dead because

there is no space for burial. "But, in the two minority communities (Muslims and Christians) there is no opportunity to burn the dead bodies. We have to give them land. They are now angry with us for not providing land. Nobody understands when we say there's no land. How long can we provide?" he said.

Gowda, however, asserted that the department would work towards reserving space for public amenities like schools and burial grounds. "In villages, we must provide youngsters with playgrounds, parks, and schools," he added.

Earlier, intervening, Leader of the Opposition

R Ashoka said that after giving away lands for various purposes all these years, the government has today reached a position where it has to "beg".

Stating that people are not ready to give even one acre for schools and hospitals, let alone burial grounds, he said that when he was revenue minister during the BJP government, he had asked district deputy commissioners to reserve space for schools, anganwadis and burial grounds before granting lands. "This is important keeping the next generation and the next 25-30 years in mind," he said.

If your name is Jasprit Bumrah, the pressure comes automatically. He is that kind of bowler. He creates an impact in every game, guarantees you a wicket, and restricts the opposition. That responsibility brings a lot of pressure because his four overs are the most precious thing for MI - Aakash Chopra

India has depth to field several T20 teams: SKY

'Batting a mix of instinct and reaction and team effort behind 80 per cent win rate'

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S T20 World Cup-winning captain Suryakumar Yadav believes the country's talent pool in the shortest format has grown so vast that it could comfortably field two or even three international-quality teams at the same time, underlining the depth created by a thriving domestic structure and franchise ecosystem.

The flamboyant batter, who has overseen a period of remarkable consistency since taking over the leadership after the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, credited the steady pipeline of players emerging from domestic competitions and the Indian Premier League for strengthening India's dominance in T20 cricket.

Since Suryakumar took over the captaincy in 2024 -- right after Rohit Sharma stepped down following the World Cup victory in Barbados -- the Indian team has won 42 of the 52 matches played, reflecting team's domi-



nance in a fickle format.

In a podcast interview with PTI Videos on Sunday, Suryakumar called the current group "the best T20 team India has produced", adding that India's depth in T20 cricket is now too evident to be downplayed.

"If you talk about talent, I feel you can find talent regularly. There is IPL cricket, franchise cricket, then there is domestic cricket. You can see how many players come every year. So you can make as many teams as you want in T20 when I am talking about T20," Suryakumar said.

"So I feel talent is unlimited. If you can make two-three

playing XIs, our base is so strong, of the Indian team. So this is not a modest and diplomatic reply. But now it is so strong, so there is no shame in telling the truth," he said.

Suryakumar credited the team's success coming into the World Cup to a collective approach in the dressing room, saying a shared vision among players and support staff helped produce an impressive 80 per cent win rate in a notoriously unpredictable format.

Even with that success rate, the World Cup was not going to be a cake-walk because as Suryakumar noted, "we played bilateral matches one way, and in ICC tournament something

else happened."

For this reason, he needed to motivate the team to maintain the winning streak in the Feb 7 to March 8 tournament.

"I don't pay too much attention to statistics but I hate losing any game. If everyone in the dressing room moves in the same direction, only then can you achieve such a percentage," he said.

Known for his 360-degree strokeplay, Suryakumar described batting in T20 cricket as largely a reactive sport, with preparation accounting for only part of the process. "I feel batting is about 70-75 per cent reaction. The remaining 25 per cent is instinct, what you decide to do in the moment. Once you enter the ground, you are almost in autopilot mode. You try to bat with rhythm and according to the situation," he said.

He also traced the origins of his unconventional range of shots to childhood rubber-ball games in Mumbai, where uneven boundary sizes forced him to improvise.

Indian women's team to feature in FIH Hockey Nation Cup

LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND): The Indian women's team will feature in the FIH Hockey Nations Cup to be held in Auckland, New Zealand from June 15 to 21.

The Hockey Nations Cup was launched in 2021 to offer a top-level competition to the best-ranked teams not participating in the Hockey Pro League, and give the winning team an option to be promoted in it the following season. The Indian women's hockey team was relegated from the Pro League 2024-25 after finishing at the bottom of the nine-team standings.

Apart from India, hosts New Zealand, USA, Japan, Korea, Chile, Scotland and France, who were promoted via the Hockey Nations Cup 2, will take part in the event.

The men's event will be held in Cape Town and will involve South Africa, New Zealand, France, Korea, Japan, Wales, Malaysia, along with Scotland, who were promoted via the Hockey Nations Cup 2, as well as Ireland, who were relegated from the 2024-25 season of the Hockey Pro League.

ORLEANS MASTERS SUPER 300

Ayush, Tanvi to lead Indian challenge; Injured Prannoy pulls out

ORLEANS (FRANCE): Youngsters Ayush Shetty and Tanvi Sharma will lead India's challenge at the USD 250,000 Orleans Masters Super 300 badminton tournament beginning here on Tuesday after senior shuttler HS Prannoy pulled out due to a shoulder injury.

Prannoy, who was originally slated to face top seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in the opening round, was forced to withdraw after experiencing shoulder pain during the Swiss Open in Basel last week. While the cause of his discomfort was unclear initially, the Indian had decided to pull out of his match against Japan's Koki Watanabe to avoid aggravating the injury.

"The shoulder pain developed after travelling to the Swiss Open. We didn't know the reason then, so I decided to withdraw and fly back," Prannoy told PTI. "After a scan it showed a slight tear. It is a minor thing and hopefully I should be okay soon," added the seasoned pro, who is targeting a return at the Asian Championships to be held from April 7 to 12 in Ningbo, China.

All eyes will be on eighth seed world No. 25 Ayush Shetty, who won the US Open Super 300 last year, as he opens his campaign against Lee Chia Hao of Chinese Taipei.

Former world No. 1 and currently ranked 30th, Kidambi Srikanth will face Denmark's Magnus Johannesen.

Tharun Mannepilli, fresh from a quarterfinal finish at last week's Swiss Open, takes on



Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei in his opening game. World No. 42 Kiran George will face third seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

In women's singles, Tanvi Sharma, the silver medalist at last year's BWF Junior World Championships, will take on Thailand's Supanida Katethong, while Malvika Bansod will continue her quest for glory after returning to action from a major injury when she faces Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei.

Rakshit Sree Santhosh Ramraj will meet Japan's Manami Suizu, while Anmol Kharb will be up against Turkey's Neslihan Arin.

In women's doubles, Devika Sihag and Isharani Baruah will take on a pair coming through the qualifiers. The men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and M R Arjun will face the Chinese Taipei duo of Lai Po Yu and Tsai Fu Cheng.

In women's doubles, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam will be up against the fourth-seeded Japanese pair of Rui Hirokami and Sayaka Hobara.

Bumrah creates an impact in every game: Aakash Chopra

NEW DELHI

FORMER India opener Aakash Chopra says pace ace Jasprit Bumrah is guaranteed to deliver in every match for the Mumbai Indians (MI) in IPL 2026, but warned that the five-time Indian Premier League (IPL) champions face a complex puzzle to solve to fit their array of overseas talent into their playing eleven.

Bumrah picked 18 wickets in 12 games at an average of 17.56 and an economy rate of 6.68 in IPL 2025. MI will kick-

start their campaign at home against three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on March 29 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The side had reached Qualifier 2 in IPL 2025 before losing to eventual runners-up Punjab Kings.

"If your name is Jasprit Bumrah, the pressure comes automatically. He is that kind of bowler. He creates an impact in every game, guarantees you a wicket, and restricts the opposition. That responsibility brings a lot of pressure because his four overs are the

most precious thing for MI. Bowl one over in the powerplay, keep one for the middle phase, and two at the death.

"That is Bumrah -- that pressure is not going anywhere. Whether Boult bowls well or Deepak Chahar is fully fit, Bumrah's pressure stays with him. But if Boult is fit, MI will want to continue with him. Fit, available, in form. They will want the new ball to move around a little with Boult and Deepak Chahar. "Shardul Thakur is a capable replacement for Cha-



har, but it does not necessarily mean that he plays ahead of him. A fit Deepak Chahar, a fit Trent Boult, Bumrah, and Hardik Pandya will be MI's four starting pacers. Corbin Bosch is waiting in the wings. He is a very good all-rounder. But again, you cannot play all overseas players," said Chopra on JioStar.

NATIONAL TENPIN BOWLING C'SHIPS

Kishan, Preemal crowned champions

BENGALURU: Former national champion Kishan R of Karnataka clinched his second national title in the men's division at the ARC 34th National Tenpin Bowling Championships, which concluded at Amoeba, Church Street, Bengaluru, on Monday.

In the women's division, Preemal J. of Karnataka captured her maiden national title, ending a 15-year wait for Karnataka in this division.

In the Championship Match played based on cumulative pinfall of two games, top-seeded Kishan produced a composed performance to gain a lead of 17 pins in Game 1 (208-191). He extended his lead in the 2nd game, scoring a high game of 244 to Aakash's 238, seal-



ing the Title with an overall margin of 23 pins (452-429).

In the Championship Match, fourth-seeded Preemal J. took an early lead of 20 pins in the first game with 188 against top-seeded Sabina Athica (Tamil Nadu) (168). Despite a close second game, Preemal maintained her composure

to secure victory, claiming her maiden National Title by a margin of 24 pins (332-308).

Special prizes: Most Promising Player: Anirudhan Sanjeevi (TN) and Suchita S. Kumar (KER)

The largest number of scores above 225 in the Men's division: Kishan R. (KAR) (11)

The largest number of scores above 200 in the Women's division: Sabeena Athica (TN) (4)

Highest block of 6 games in Men's division: Kishan R (KAR) (1369 pins)

Highest block of 6 games in Women's division: Sabeena Athica (TN) (1122 pins).

BJP MP's remarks on namaz draw flak from Oppn

ALIGARH (UP)

THE remarks of a BJP MP that he does not know what Eid or Ramzan is while opposing namaz in this Uttar Pradesh district have gone viral on social media, drawing criticism from opposition politicians, even as community leaders have

appealed for calm.

When reporters asked BJP MP Satish Gautam on Sunday about a local AIMIM leader's demand for permission to hold Eid prayers at the exhibition grounds here, he said he is not interested in such festivals and does not even know their names. "I do not

know what Eid or Ramzan is. I am least interested in them," Gautam said.

He also accused Muslims of "illegally occupying huge tracts of land during the Samajwadi Party's rule" in Uttar Pradesh and questioned the need for additional space for prayers. "There is no need to give

them the ground. They have the Eidgah for prayers," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said.

He further said that Muslims are among the major beneficiaries of the present BJP-led government's welfare schemes. "They are getting more than their due share, so what else

do they want from us now?" he asked.

Reacting to the MP's remarks, former Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union president Salman Imtiaz said Gautam is known for frequently making "senseless and provocative statements" and that both Hindus and Muslims

ignore such comments in the interest of peace.

Imtiaz, now associated with the Congress and a former contestant for the Aligarh City Assembly seat, alleged that Gautam's remarks were intended at diverting attention from internal disputes within the city unit of the BJP.



Man kills 2 in-laws during Panchayat; wife critical

BAREILLY (UP)

A man on Monday allegedly stabbed his mother-in-law and brother-in-law to death and seriously injured his wife during a panchayat in Rahrura Chaudhary village in Bareilly district, police said.

The accused, identified as Afsar Khan, fled after the attack and police teams have been deployed to trace him, Bareilly Additional SP Manush Pareek said.

"Raids are being conducted at several locations and the accused will be arrested soon," he added.

According to the police, the victims have been identified as 19-year-old Adil and his 45-year-old mother Asma, while the accused's wife Saima sustained serious stab injuries and is undergoing treatment in a hospital where her condition is stated to be critical. Family members said Afsar Khan had a violent temperament and frequently quarrelled with his wife over minor issues, forc-



ing her to repeatedly return to her parental home. Saima had reportedly refused to go back with him due to his aggressive behaviour.

They said the accused had earlier been arrested in 2022 for allegedly killing his maternal uncle in the Bithri Chainpur police station area and had recently returned to the village after securing bail from a court.

The police said Saima had submitted a written complaint at Izzatnagar police station on Sunday alleging that her husband was threatening to kill her and her family members. On Monday, villagers convened a panchayat to resolve the dispute when the accused allegedly attacked the family members with a knife before fleeing, the police said.

'Embezzlement' of Rs 11.4-cr scholarship funds

CBI registers FIR against govt officials in 5 states

NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case into the alleged siphoning of more than Rs 11.4 crore from scholarship funds intended for students with disabilities by "non-existent" institutes and students, officials said Monday.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed an FIR against unidentified public servants and nodal officers in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir for allegedly embezzling funds from the Umbrella Scholarship Scheme, launched in 2018 after six scholarship schemes including the Post-matric Scholarship for Students with



Disabilities were merged, the agency said.

Scholarships under this scheme were available to students of classes 11 and 12, as well as in post-matriculation diploma and certificate courses. Bachelor's degree and diploma and master's degree and diploma from any university recognised by UGC/AICTE were also funded under

these scholarships.

"The objective and allowances of the scheme for the post-metric scholarship, including the details of maintenance allowance, disability allowance, reimbursement of compulsory non-refundable fees and book allowance, are referred to in the scheme book (scholarship scheme for students with disabilities)," the

CBI said.

The central agency had launched a preliminary enquiry last year on a complaint from the secretary of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, alleging that Rs 11.41 crore in scholarships had been paid to 926 students related to 28 institutes, which were either fake or showed serious malpractices during an inspection by the ministry.

During the enquiry, it surfaced that many of these institutions were non-existent or were closed while still claiming funds from the National Scholarship Portal, according to the FIR.

Hoax cyanide gas email threat alarms Bhopal office

BHOPAL

AN email threatening to "blow up" the premises of a Madhya Pradesh government office here using cyanide gas cylinders on Monday prompted precautionary evacuation, officials said.

The threat turned out to be a hoax after police personnel searched the office of the Weights and Measures Department in the MP Nagar area.

"While checking mails, I came across a message at 10:20 AM stating that 16 cylinders filled with cyanide gas had been placed inside the department office and would go off around 1 pm," office superintendent Shyam Solanki told PTI.

He contacted his seniors, and the police were informed. Bomb disposal squad personnel and police teams with sniffer dogs rushed to the spot and searched the premises, he said, adding that the office



was evacuated as a precaution.

Solanki said the police did not find any cylinders or explosives in the office. Officials said similar threatening emails had earlier targeted People's University and AIIMS in Bhopal, but those alerts also proved false.

Bhopal City Zone 2 Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vivek Singh stated that the investigation is underway to identify the sender of the email. He suspected that a gang was behind such emails nationwide, using fake names. Department officers and workers' leader Umashankar Tiwari said staffers resumed work at 1:10 PM.



Venugopal urges LS Speaker to revoke 8 MPs' suspension

NEW DELHI: Congress leader K C Venugopal urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday to revoke the suspension of eight opposition members, saying they were suspended "unfairly".

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Venugopal said Parliament has seen countless protests but suspending MPs is a "disturbing new trend" that cannot be allowed to continue.

Birla said a decision of the Lok Sabha cannot be discussed on the floor of the House and disallowed Venugopal to speak further. Later, in a post on X, the Congress leader said he had raised concern over the "unfair suspension of 8 Opposition MPs for this Session". "Rose in the Lok Sabha to raise concern over the unfair suspension of 8 Opposition MPs for this

Session. Parliament has seen countless protests but the suspension of MPs is a disturbing new trend, which cannot be allowed to continue. This suspension should be revoked immediately," he said. The eight opposition members were suspended during the first part of the Budget Session for "unruly" behaviour. They were suspended for the entire session.

Workers have been using small gas-enabled burners for cooking. Now, due to LPG cylinder shortage, some factory canteens have shut down, forcing workers to return to their native places. Currently, the situation is not like the COVID pandemic, but it could escalate if the issue is not resolved

-Vinnie Mehta, DG, ACMA

BIZ BRIEFS

Levi's rolls out new campaign

The Levi Strauss & Co., has unveiled its 2026 global campaign, 'Behind Every Original', to India, starring Global Brand Ambassador Alia Bhatt. Hiren Gor, MD, Levi Strauss & Co, said: "For over 150 years, Levi's has been worn by those who move culture forward, and Behind Every Original reinforces our commitment to staying at the center of that momentum. Alia Bhatt represents a new generation of originals — confident, self-defined and unapologetically authentic."

Cooling technology event in Mumbai

Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and CEPT University convened industry leaders at a summit in Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai. The event titled: 'Can Today's Air Conditioners Keep Up with a Hotter, More Humid World? Delivering Affordable, Efficient Comfort for the Global South.' Sanjay Sudhakaran, MD, Bosch Home Comfort India Ltd, said: "As the heat waves intensify and climate patterns shift, India stands on the brink of a cooling revolution."

Price hike by Tata Motors

Tata Motors announced a price increase of up to 1.5 per cent across its commercial vehicle range, effective April 1. The price increase is being undertaken to partially offset the impact of rising commodity prices and other input costs. The increase will vary depending on the model and variant. According to the company: "With over eight decades of leadership in commercial mobility, Tata Motors is known for its innovation, reliability, and performance."

PhysicsWallah's expansion plans

Education company PhysicsWallah (PW) has expanded its presence in Andhra Pradesh with the inauguration of its first tech-enabled PW Vidyapeeth centre in Vijayawada, located on MG Road. Ankit Gupta, CEO, Vidyapeeth Offline, PW, said: "At PW, we try to find out avenues of making students' learning experience better. We believe that students should not have to travel to other cities to access quality education, as this can be both emotionally and financially stressful."

Kai India's new product

KAI India, a name in personal grooming products, offer CAN Face Razor for Women, a product for facial hair removal for Women. Keijiro Takasago, MD, KAI India, said: "We designed the CAN Face Razor to be simple and dependable — something a woman can use quickly, even on busy mornings. It removes the finest hair with care and makes skin feel smooth. Kai products make everyday grooming easier, and that's what we set out to do."

Markets rebound over 1% on bargain buying after 3-days fall

The equity market staged a late-session rebound, supported by value buying in domestically oriented sectors such as auto, banking, and FMCG

Domestic Support

- BSE-Sensex rose 938.93pts or (+1.26%) to 75,502.85
- NSE-Nifty climbed 257.70pts or (+1.11%) to 23,408.80
- FII offloaded Rs10,716.64-cr; DIIs bought Rs 9,977.42 cr on Fri



UltraTech Cement surged 4.22 per cent. Trent, HDFC Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Eternal, Bajaj Finance, ITC, Tata Steel and State Bank of India were among the biggest gainers. Bharat Electronics, Sun Pharma, Power Grid and Bharti Airtel were among the major laggards.

MUMBAI: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded by over 1 per cent on Monday after facing a massive drubbing in the past three trading days, driven by value-buying in blue-chip banking counters.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 938.93 points or 1.26 per cent to settle at 75,502.85. During the day, it hit a high of 75,805.27 and a low of 73,949.76. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 257.70 points or 1.11 per cent to end at 23,408.80.

From the 30 Sensex firms,

could provide further support," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. "The BSE MidCap Select index dipped 0.36 per cent and Smallcap Select index edged lower by 0.25 per cent. Among sectoral indices, BSE Top 10 Banks surged 1.61 per cent, followed by Private Banks index (1.38 per cent), Financial Services (1.32 per cent), Auto (1.23 per cent), Bankex (1.08 per cent) and FMCG (0.94 per cent). BSE oil & gas index dropped 2.29 per cent, hospitals (1.64 per cent), realty (1.51 per cent), energy (1.36 per cent) and healthcare (1.13 per cent). "Markets started the week on a volatile note and gained

over a per cent, snapping their recent losing streak, supported by bargain buying. The rebound largely reflects participants taking advantage of lower levels to accumulate select large-cap stocks after the sharp decline. "However, the overall mood remained cautious amid persistent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and elevated crude oil prices, which continue to raise concerns over inflation and India's import bill. In addition, continued foreign institutional investor outflows and currency volatility are keeping risk appetite in check," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 10,716.64 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth Rs 9,977.42 crore. On Friday, the Sensex settled at 74,563.92, down 1,470.50 points or 1.93 per cent. The Nifty tanked 488.05 points or 2.06 per cent to end at 23,151.10.

Exports dip marginally in Feb

Trade deficit narrows to \$27 bn | Imports surge even as global tensions disrupt trade routes

Trade Insights

- Exports (Feb 2026): \$36.61 bn
- Imports (Feb 2026): \$63.71 bn
- Trade Deficit: \$27.1 bn
- Exports (Apr-Feb FY26): \$402.93 bn (+1.84%)

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S merchandise exports dipped marginally in February while the trade deficit narrowed sequentially as imports moderated compared with the previous month, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday.

Exports in February

stood at \$36.61 billion, registering a slight 0.81 per cent decline year-on-year. Imports, however, rose sharply by 24.11 per cent to \$63.71 billion, pushing the trade deficit to \$27.1 billion during the month.

On a month-on-month basis, the deficit narrowed from \$34.68 billion in January, as imports fell from \$71.24 billion while exports were almost unchanged.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said exports have remained resilient despite global challenges, though shipments may see a downward trend in March due to logistical disruptions arising from tensions in West Asia.

For the April-February period of FY26, India's merchandise exports grew 1.84 per cent to \$402.93 billion, compared with \$395.66 bil-

lion in the same period last year. Imports during the period increased 8.53 per cent to \$713.53 billion.

The data comes amid escalating tensions in West Asia following military action by the US and Israel against Iran on February 28. The crisis has disrupted key trade routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 20 per cent of global oil and gas shipments pass.

Officials said India has strengthened its resilience to global energy shocks through diversification of imports across about 40 supplier countries and by building strategic petroleum reserves. Government officials added that India is also in contact with Iran to ensure safe passage for merchant ships through the region.



LG HVAC system showcased at ACREX

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

LG Electronics India Limited (LGE India) has participated at ACREX ISHRAE India 2026 - South Asia's largest exhibition for HVAC and Intelligent Business Solutions. The company presented its most comprehensive product portfolio at the exhibition, spanning residential, commercial, and industrial applications, highlighting innovations that deliver intelligent, reliable, and energy-efficient climate solutions for India. LG Electronics showcased its advanced VRF, Chillers & Cassette range ACs best suited for diverse Indian climate & consumers requirements. Commenting on the company's participation in ACREX, Hong Ju Jeon - Managing Director & Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, LG Electronics India Limited said, "LG Electronics has been part of India's journey for nearly three decades, and has during this period built unparalleled expertise in addressing the country's infrastructure requirements, while meeting performance standards that developers, consultants, and facility managers demand."

HCLTech ties up with Google Cloud for Agentic AI adoption

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

HCLTech, a technology company, has announced the expansion of its strategic collaboration with Google Cloud to help accelerate enterprise adoption of Agentic AI. HCLTech will use Gemini Enterprise and Gemini models to build custom AI agents for global clients, while strengthening collaboration and security through Google Workspace, supporting their scalable, AI-driven transformation. As enterprises scale AI, the company's Gemini-enabled offerings embed AI into systems, workflows and decision-making to unlock new market opportunities, introduce innovative capabilities and boost operational efficiency. Many of the agents the company has developed are already available on the Google Cloud Marketplace. This expanded collaboration formalises a structured program to accelerate clients' GenAI and Agentic AI adoption, cultivate Google Cloud



champions across HCLTech and support over 2,000 GenAI-led customer engagements.

The company's key areas include: Building unique offerings with Data and AI at its core, the AI Force platform integrates with Google's Gemini family of models and Gemini Code Assist to transform software development and IT operations. Additional offerings include Unified Migrations, including Oracle, SAP and VMware transformation to Google Cloud and Security transformation.

The company is growing its Center of Excellence to expand industry-specific agentic solutions. Advancing Agentic AI solutions, building on offerings such as Insight for manufacturing and Netsight for telecommunications.

Sebi mulls light-touch penalty structure for IAs

The regulator aims to promote compliance while ensuring transparency and fairness

NEW DELHI: With an aim to strengthen the investment advisory ecosystem, markets regulator Sebi is working on a raft of measures, including a standardised light-touch penalty structure, a digital regulatory guidance platform, and a common advertisement code, its chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said. Speaking at an event organised by the Association of Registered Investment Advisers (ARIA), Pandey said the investment advisory ecosystem in India is currently at an important stage of transition.

At present, there are around 1,000 registered investment advisers (IAs) in the country -- about 470 individuals and 530 non-individual entities. He said the regulator is working on a standardised light-touch penalty structure aimed at encouraging compliance



while ensuring transparency and fairness. "A standardised light-touch penalty structure for IAs is being worked out. This should promote compliance while ensuring transparency and fairness," he said.

The regulator is also developing a digital platform -- SEBI SETU -- to provide simple, end-to-end regulatory guidance for investment advisers, covering the entire lifecycle from registration to ongoing compliance, he added.

In addition, the regulator is preparing a common advertisement code for all intermediaries to reduce

operational challenges and improve consistency in communication. Among other initiatives, a working group has been constituted to review the existing regulatory framework for Mutual Fund Distributors (MFDs) and examine overlaps, if any, between MFDs and investment advisers.

Pandey said a simplified certification module is also being developed by National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) for individuals associated with investment advice who are engaged in sales and other non-core functions. However, he expressed concern over the declining number of registered investment advisers despite a rapidly expanding investor base.

"It is a matter of concern that the number of registered investment advisers has declined since 2021.

Vedanta eyes ₹2,575-cr via NCDs

NEW DELHI: Vedanta Ltd said its committee of directors has approved raising up to Rs 2,575 crore through issuance of debentures. The fundraising is part of Vedanta's efforts to diversify funding sources and strengthen its balance sheet as it continues to refinance debt and reduce borrowing costs. The committee has approved the allotment of 2,57,500 unsecured, redeemable, rated, listed, non-convertible debentures of face value of Rs 1,00,000 each, aggregating to Rs 2,575 crore on a private placement basis, a BSE filing said. Vedanta has seen strong investor interest in recent debt issuances. In October 2025, its \$500 million bond issue was oversubscribed three times, while an NCD offering in June last year saw nearly 60 per cent oversubscription. The company has been gradually deleveraging its balance sheet. Vedanta Resources Ltd, the parent of Vedanta Ltd, has reduced net debt to about \$4.8 billion as of December 2025 from about \$8.9 billion in March 2022.

Inflation: Rising crude prices push WPI to 11-month high of 2.13% in Feb

It is likely to pick up pace if oil price rise persists, and spills over to other goods

Global Jitters

- Inflation in food articles was 2.19%
- Vegetables, inflation eased to 4.73%
- Pulses, potato and egg, meat and fish saw an uptick



NEW DELHI: Wholesale price inflation rose to a 11-month high of 2.13 per cent in February, driven by an uptick in prices of food and non-food articles, even though vegetable prices eased on a month-on-month basis, government data showed on Monday.

This is the fourth straight month of rise in Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation. It was 1.81 per cent in January and 2.45 per cent in February last year.

Economists said the WPI inflation is likely to pick up pace further if the oil price

rise persists, and spills over to other goods (fertilisers, aluminium) given it tracks international prices more closely relative to the CPI basket.

According to WPI data, inflation in food articles was 2.19 per cent in February, as against 1.55 per cent in the previous month. Although in vegetables, inflation eased to 4.73 per cent in February against 6.78 per cent in Janu-

ary, pulses, potato and egg, meat and fish saw an uptick in inflation in February.

"Positive rate of inflation in February 2026 is primarily due to an increase in prices of other manufacturing, manufacture of basic metals, non-food articles, food articles and textiles, etc.," the industry ministry said in a statement. Negative inflation, or deflation, in the fuel and power basket narrowed

to 3.78 per cent in February, vis-a-vis 4.01 per cent in January. Global oil prices averaged \$68/bbl in February from \$63/bbl in January.

Barclays in a research note said the passthrough of the rise in crude oil prices from the Middle East conflict will reflect more in WPI inflation vs retail CPI inflation, as retail fuel prices are unchanged in the latter.

"With a sharp jump in crude oil prices crossing \$100/bbl as of 16 March, the corresponding WPI will likely reflect this in the March print," Barclays said.

India Ratings and Research the rising crude oil prices since the US-Iran war will have a strong impact on wholesale inflation from March 2026, till the supply side issues are resolved.

The average price of Indian crude basket March 2026 (up to March 12) touched a 44-month high of \$101.25/bbl.

Nifty likely to reach 35,000 in 3 yrs: Report

In last 4 years Indian markets delivered about 12.7% CAGR; If the index maintains its current valuation multiple of about 20.9x earnings, it could translate into around 12.8-14% CAGR

NEW DELHI: India's benchmark index Nifty 50 is likely to touch 34,000-35,000 levels over the next three years due to earnings growth, stronger consumption and banking credit expansion, a report claimed on Monday.

From these factors and continued investment in infrastructure and manufacturing, Nifty earnings per share may rise to Rs 1,281 in FY27, Rs 1,463 in FY28 and Rs 1,650-1,700 by FY29, the report from investment platform smallcase said. Mid-caps led market returns, outperforming large caps during the past four years when global markets experienced shocks from multiple geopolitical conflicts, the report said.

Indian markets delivered about 12.7 per cent CAGR demonstrated notable resilience, with most geopolitical shocks triggering short-term corrections of



around 2-8 per cent, followed by swift recoveries within weeks, during times of conflict in last 4 years.

This performance has been supported by the strength of the domestic economy, improving corporate earnings, and rising retail participation in the stock market, the firm said. Assuming the index maintains its current valuation multiple of about 20.9x earnings, the trend could translate into approximately 12.8-14 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR), the report added.

The firm highlighted mid-caps delivered CAGRs of about 18.4 per cent dur-

ing this period versus 13.4 per cent for small caps and 9.8 per cent for large caps. Defence and aerospace companies have emerged as key beneficiaries of heightened geopolitical tensions, supported by rising global defence spending and stronger domestic procurement initiatives, it said.

Oil and gas producers have also historically performed well during geopolitical crises due to supply disruptions and rising crude oil prices. Commodity-linked sectors such as metals and mining have similarly witnessed phases of outperformance during periods of supply constraints and commodity price rallies, it added. Meanwhile, manufacturing and capital goods companies are gaining prominence as global supply chains undergo structural shifts, the firm suggested.



Raashii Khanna promises vintage Pawan Kalyan magic

The excitement around 'Ustaad Bhagat Singh' has been steadily building ever since the project brought together Power Star Pawan Kalyan and director Harish Shankar, the blockbuster duo behind 'Gabbar Singh'. Mounted on a grand scale by Mythri Movie Makers, the film promises a festive theatrical experience when it releases on March 19 for Ugadi. With the teaser, trailer, and songs already striking a chord, expectations are soaring — and leading lady Raashii Khanna is feeling the buzz.

Calling this phase of her career "incredibly hectic but exciting," Raashii reveals that joining the film was an instant decision driven purely by admiration. "The moment I heard it was Pawan Kalyan Garu's film, I said yes immediately — even before listening to the story. Since my first film, I've heard so much about his stardom and the phenomenon people call 'Pawanism.' I always wished to work with him at least once. With this film, that dream finally came true."

In the film, Raashii plays Shloka, a contemporary young woman written with depth and presence. She describes the role as both stylish and substantial. "Every character in the story has importance, and Shloka has a strong arc with solid characterization. There's good emotional range in the role." She adds with a smile, "I also have a proper

mass song in the film. I love dancing, so shooting that number was pure fun for me."

Working alongside Pawan Kalyan left a lasting impression on the actress, not just professionally but personally. "He is an incredibly simple person. You'll almost always see him reading books. There's an innocence about him that's very rare and difficult to explain," she says. Their first conversation remains memorable. "On day one, he asked me if I always wanted to become an actress. I told him I had once dreamed of becoming an IAS officer. He speaks very little, but every word carries weight."

What moved her most was his perspective on life beyond cinema. "He encouraged me to think about public service and contributing to society. He genuinely cares about people. I learned a lot about humanity from him." Witnessing his fan following up close was overwhelming. "When I looked at the crowd during the film event, it felt like people were worshipping him like a god."

Raashii is equally appreciative of director Harish Shankar's filmmaking intensity. "He's extremely sharp and understands the pulse of the mass audience perfectly. What amazed me most was his speed — a schedule that usually takes 120 days was completed in just 40. He worked tirelessly, often sacrificing sleep." She recalls how his creativity

flowed even on set. "He would write punch dialogues on the spot. His patience and dedication to cinema taught me so much."

Despite sharing screen space with another leading lady, Raashii says the narrative gives each character room to shine. "We don't have scenes together, so there was never a concern. Each role has its own space, and mine comes with good variations."

Managing schedules around the star's commitments required flexibility and stamina. "I was told in advance that dates could be unpredictable, and I was prepared. There were days we worked 24-hour shifts without knowing whether it was day or night."

She also credits the producers for fostering a creative environment. "They put their heart and soul into films, never compromise on scale, and give directors complete freedom. The working atmosphere is wonderful."

For audiences, Raashii promises a wholesome entertainer. "Like 'Gabbar Singh', this film is packed with entertainment. It's a complete family film everyone can enjoy together in theatres. Releasing during Ugadi makes it even more special. Most importantly, you'll get to see vintage Pawan Kalyan Garu on screen."



Kiran Abbavaram unveils Thimmarajupalli TV's 'Ooru Song'

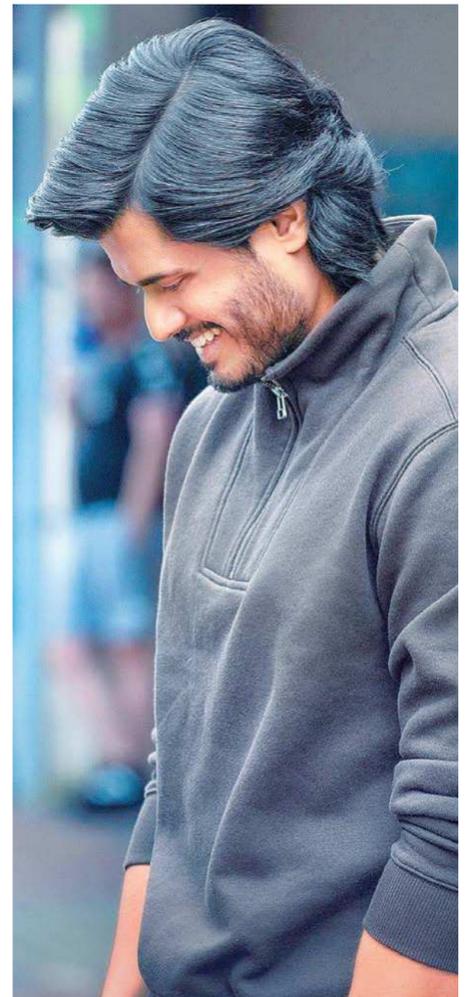
Hero Kiran Abbavaram's KA Productions, in association with Sumaira Studios, is backing the film 'Thimmarajupalli TV', encouraging fresh talent in the industry. Teja Velpucharla is serving as the co-producer. The film introduces Sai Tej and Veda Jalandharr as the lead actors, while V. Murniraju makes his directorial debut with 'Thimmarajupalli TV'.

Set against a rural backdrop, the film is being made as a period drama and is gearing up for a grand theatrical release soon. Today, the makers unveiled



the "Ooru Song" from 'Thimmarajupalli TV'. The track has been beautifully composed by Vamsikant

Rekhana, with lyrics penned by Sanare and vocals rendered by Mamatha Ramesh. The song vividly captures the festive spirit of a village preparing for the Shivaratri fair. The song portrays the charm of rural life — from the sound of cuckoos perched on tree branches and the lush greenery at dawn to the colourful rangolis adorning homes and the fragrant breeze carrying the scent of flowers. The lyrics also reflect the excitement among people of all ages as the village gears up to celebrate the Shivaratri festival and the vibrant fair that accompanies it.



Suriya shines in 'Vishwanath & Sons' emotional teaser

The teaser of 'Vishwanath & Sons', starring Suriya, has been unveiled, offering a glimpse into the world of Sanjay Vishwanath. Directed by Venky Atluri and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi, the film promises an emotional and engaging cinematic experience.

The teaser introduces Sanjay Vishwanath, an international pistol shooter who continues to chase his dreams even in his 40s. Suriya appears in a layered role, portraying both fatherly warmth and emotional depth. His stylish screen presence and the impactful dialogues penned by Venky Atluri bring back shades reminiscent of his iconic performances.

Adding freshness to the narrative is Mamitha Baiju, who brings vibrant and charming energy to the film. The teaser hints at an unconventional love story featuring a noticeable age gap. With Venky Atluri's storytelling sensibilities, the film is expected to handle this aspect with depth and

emotional maturity.

The teaser also highlights the film's strong technical craftsmanship. G. V. Prakash Kumar delivers a classy and powerful background score that elevates the visuals. Cinematographer Nimish Ravi captures the film in rich and visually striking frames, while editing is handled by Navin Nooli. Production design by Banglan further enhances the film's immersive world.

Touted as a large-scale family drama with strong emotional undercurrents, 'Vishwanath & Sons' brings together a compelling ensemble cast and a top-tier technical team. Director Venky Atluri, who is riding high on the success of 'Lucky Baskhar' and 'Vaathi', aims to deliver another memorable entertainer.

Produced under the banners of Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srikara Studios, the film has successfully wrapped up shooting and is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release this July.



Sudigali Sudheer's 'G.O.A.T' cleared for March 26 release

The upcoming Telugu film 'G.O.A.T' (Greatest Of All Times), starring popular comedian-turned-hero Sudigali Sudheer, has successfully completed its censor formalities and is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on March 26.

The film features Divya Bharathi as the female lead and is directed by Vedavyas. It is being produced by Chandrasekhar Reddy Mogulla under the banners of Mahateja Creations and Jaishnav Productions. The film is currently undergoing post-production work.

According to the makers, the content released so far has received a positive response from audiences, and the trailer will be unveiled soon. The film has now completed the censor process and has been awarded a U/A certificate by the censor board.

Speaking about the film, the producer said it is being made on a grand scale without compromising on quality. He added that the film will be technically strong and is expected to become a milestone in Sudigali Sudheer's career. "Every frame of the film has

come out beautifully. Along with being a complete commercial entertainer, the movie also carries a meaningful message that will make today's youth think," he said, expressing confidence that it will entertain audiences across all sections.

Apart from Sudigali Sudheer and Divya Bharathi, the film also features Sarvadaman Banerjee, Nithin Prasanna, Brahmaji, Prithvi Raj, Aadukalam Naren, Rajendran, Anand Ramraj, Chammak Chandra, Pammi Sai, and Naveen Neni in important roles.

The film's music is composed by Leon James, with the background score by Mani Sharma. Cinematography is handled by Rasool Ellore, while editing is done by Vijay Muktavarapu. Rajeev Nair serves as the production designer. Samaira Reddy N is the co-producer, and Prasoon Mandava is the creative producer.

With its blend of commercial elements and a socially relevant message, 'G.O.A.T' is expected to entertain audiences when it hits theatres worldwide on March 26.

Anand Deverakonda's 'Epic' birthday promo impresses fans

An impressive birthday promo from young hero Anand Deverakonda's upcoming film 'Epic' has been drawing significant attention. The film is directed by Aditya Haasan and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas. Srikara Studios presents the film, while Venkat Upputuri and VMR are serving as co-producers. On the occasion of Anand Deverakonda's birthday today, the makers released a special promo from 'Epic'.

The promo shows the hero celebrating his birthday in

London with friends, while his parents call from India to wish him. A touching moment highlights the father subtly conveying his heartfelt wishes to his son.

The promo carries a unique emotional tone, enhanced by the use of the iconic Amrutham title song as the background score.

After the cult blockbuster Baby, Anand Deverakonda and Vaishnavi Chaitanya are reuniting for this film. The recently released song "Sancharame.." from 'Epic' has also received a positive response. With this exciting combination, the film is generating strong curiosity among audiences.