

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

14 March, 2025|Friday | Volume No:13| Issue No: 24

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

## Cm Revanth Extends Holi Greetings

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday extended heartfelt greetings to all Telangana people on the occasion of Holi festival. The Chief Minister wished that everyone celebrates the "Festival of Colours" with joy and happiness. "This festival is being celebrated by all communities irrespective of caste and religion which reflects unity in diversity. The People's government is committed to the welfare and development of all communities," he said. The Chief Minister hoped that the Holi festival will bring cheers in every family in the Telangana State. (NSS)



## 4-year-old boy dies after getting stuck in lift

Hyderabad: In a tragic incident, a four-and-a-half-year-old boy died allegedly after getting stuck in the lift at an apartment building in Santoshnagar Colony under Asif Nagar police station limits on Wednesday night. The boy identified as Surrender was staying with his parents and sister in the six-storied apartment, where his father Shyam Bahadur, works as a security guard. The family lives in a small room next to the lift. On Wednesday night, around 10.30 pm, Surrender, while playing, tried to sneak into the lift compartment with collapsible doors and got stuck between the doors. According to the police, initially no one found out about him.

## Conspiracy to Reduce Importance Of Southern States Through Delimitation: Cm Revanth



New Delhi, March 13 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said an action plan is being prepared to thwart the Central Government's conspiracy against the Southern States through the delimitation of Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies. "This is not delimitation of constituencies, but an attempt to reduce the importance of the Southern States. It is a big loss to the southern states due to the delimitation of constituencies," Revanth Reddy said. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Stalin invited Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to attend a meeting to be held in Chennai on March 22 to discuss

the strategy to fight for justice. A DMK delegation led by the State's Municipal Administration Minister K.N. Nehru handed over a letter written by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to Revanth Reddy in Delhi on Thursday. In the letter, Stalin stated that although there are provisions that the delimitation of constituencies should not be carried out until the national census to be conducted after 2026, the Central government has brought this process to the fore even before the census. He said in the letter that an all-party meeting has already been organised on delimitation. Stalin requested Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Odisha and Punjab to agree to join the Joint Action Committee (JAC). He suggested in the letter that a representative from the Telangana Congress party be appointed in the JAC to take up future action. The DMK delegation who met Revanth Reddy included Special Representative AKS Vijayan, DMK Parliamentary party leader Kanimozhi, DMK MPs A. Raja, N.R. Ilango, Kalanithi Veeraswamy and Arun Nehru. Speaking to newsmen after the meeting, the Chief Minister warned that they will not tolerate any attempt to reduce the importance of the southern States. "Southern states have served the country a lot. The BJP does not have much representation from the southern States. The BJP wants to take re-

venge on these states with its defeat in the Southern states," Revanth Reddy said. "We will thwart the conspiracies hatched by the BJP-led central government against the Southern States. The Congress already decided in principle to fight against the Central government. I will attend the Chennai meeting with the permission of the Congress party's high command," he said. The Chief Minister said they had decided to organise an all-party meeting to discuss the delimitation of constituencies in Telangana State as well. He instructed Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and former minister K Jana Reddy to invite leaders of all parties to the all-party meeting. "Union Minister Kishan Reddy, who is also the BJP State president, is also invited. The BJP leader should participate in the meeting and bring the views expressed in the meeting to the attention of the Union Cabinet. Since Union Minister Kishan Reddy hailed from Telangana, he should safeguard the State interests. We will invite the Union Minister and the latter should answer," Revanth Reddy said. The Chief Minister appealed to everyone to work for the protection of the rights of the southern states, regardless of political parties and clarified that a plan of action will be formulated on the steps to be taken to overcome the losses associated with the delimitation of the constituencies in a meeting to be held in Chennai on March 22. (NSS)

## Governor Greets People On Holi Festival



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Governor Jishnu Dev Varma has extended the heartiest greetings and best wishes to the people of Telangana on the auspicious occasion of Holi festival. In a press communique issued by Raj Bhavan here on Thursday, the Governor said that Holi, a kaleidoscope of hues and exuberance, serves as a sacred bond that fortifies the unity amongst all. The colourful social fabric of Telangana celebrates the uniqueness of every culture and our coming together as one, he said. On the auspicious occasion, let us renew our commitment to compassion and understanding, and make our Bharath Matha stronger and more formidable. With reverence and joy, I extend my warmest greetings to the people of Telangana, as we celebrate the joyous spirit of Holi," the Governor said. (NSS)

## Govt Will Try To Run Assembly Sessions For Longer Periods In Future: Bhatti

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has guaranteed that the state government is committed to upholding the dignity of the Assembly through the introduction of reforms. He indicated that the government plans to engage in discussions with all stakeholders and will gradually aim to extend the duration of Assembly sessions in the future. Bhatti Vikramarka speaking in the Assembly on Thursday while answering a question asked by AIMIM MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi, he said The Deputy Chief Minister stated that the BRS party, which was in power for the past ten years, had changed the traditions and rules of the Assembly, effectively weakening them. He pointed out that during the BRS regime; there was no clarity on the number of days the Assembly should convene. The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that the government wants the Assembly to run for all the required days without interruptions. In the past, schedules for summer and winter sessions were decided in advance, he said. Bhatti



Vikramarka assured that they would introduce reforms to restore the Assembly's dignity and would work towards gradually increasing the session duration in the future by consulting with everyone. (NSS)

## Half-Day Schools For Academic Year 2024-25 From March 15

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): All the Regional Joint Directors of School Education and District Educational Officers in the State are informed that half-day schools will be commenced from March 15 onwards till last working day on April 23, 2025 of the academic year 2024-25. The schools Primary, Upper Primary and High Schools under all managements i.e. Govt., Govt-Aided and Private Management shall function from 8 am to 12.30 pm and Mid-Day meals shall be provided at 12.30 pm. The special classes shall continue for preparing Class X students for the SSC Public Examination, March 2025. The schools which have SSC Examination Centres shall function from 1 pm to 5 pm. All the Regional Joint Directors of School Education and District Educational Officers in the State are directed to communicate the orders to the schools functioning under all managements and monitor the implementation. (NSS)

## KCR asks BRS members to apologise to Speaker; insists on smooth functioning of House



GNS News Agency, March 13

Hyderabad: Expressing their readiness to apologise to the Speaker irrespective of anything unparliamentary uttered or not uttered by senior member and former Minister G Jagadish Reddy, BRS members urged Speaker G Prasad Kumar to resume deliberations in the house facilitating discussion on public issues. This was after they took up the issue with Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao, who asked them apologise to the Speaker and allow the session to continue. Speaking at the media point, Vemula Prashant Reddy said the issue, which resulted in a stand-off between the treasury benches and the opposition paving the way for adjournment of the House for over four hours, was taken up with Chandrashekhara Rao who in turn requested them to apologise. "As advised by the BRS chief, we prefer to avoid any confrontation and facilitate the smooth functioning of the house," Prashant Reddy said, insisting that the records of Jagadish Reddy be reviewed in the presence of the Speaker and all the floor leaders to ascertain whether he was at fault. The BRS member criticized the government for adjourning the assembly for four hours without any substantial reason and demanded that the records of Jagadish Reddy's comments be reviewed by an all-party committee. He urged the government not to suppress the voice of the opposition.

He explained that Jagadish Reddy raised concerns about the Congress party's unfulfilled promises made before the elections. He highlighted that the promises of loan waivers for farmers, Rythu Bharosa, Rs.2500 for women, and Rs 4000 for the unemployed were not implemented. Quoting Jagadish Reddy, he emphasized that the "assembly belongs to everyone and that all members should have equal rights". Jagadish Reddy had said that it was not just a Congress assembly, Prashant Reddy said, adding that however, his comments were mistaken for disrespect to the Speaker, leading to a disruption of the proceedings. He said the BRS members had conveyed their decision to the Speaker as well as Legislative Affairs Minister, but they were yet to respond.

## Tamil Nadu CM Stalin Invites Telangana CM Revanth Reddy for Meeting on Delimitation Impact

GNS News Agency, March 13

New Delhi: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has extended an invitation to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to attend a crucial meeting on March 22. The meeting aims to discuss the potential disadvantages Southern states may face due to the delimitation of constituencies.

On behalf of CM Stalin, Tamil Nadu Minister T.K. Nehru led a DMK delegation to personally invite CM Revanth Reddy in New Delhi. The meeting will bring together Chief Ministers and former Chief Ministers from various states to deliberate on the impact of constituency delimitation and its implications for Southern states.

## KTR, Harish Rao question CM Revanth Reddy over delayed salaries to govt employees



GNS News Agency, March 13

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao launched a blistering attack on the Congress government, charging it with destroying Telangana's financial stability and failing to fulfill its promises. He questioned the administration's priorities, stating that while the Congress has funds for its Delhi high command, but not for salaries, pensions, or retirement benefits to employees and also implement its guarantees. In a statement, Rama Rao blamed the Congress for ruining the financial condition of the State with its reckless governance. "Running a State is not just about money distribution, but also creating wealth. Telangana's economy, built over a decade, has been ruined within months by an incompetent leader," he said.

Lashing out at the Chief Minister for admitting his failure to pay salaries to ASHA and Anganwadi workers on time, he called it a grave sin that people of Telangana would not forgive. He said the Chief Minister's claims reflect the Congress government's inefficiency. He condemned Revanth Reddy's remarks blaming employees for financial mismanagement, terming it as an insult to their self-respect. "The irresponsible statements of the Chief Minister against employees, to cover up his incompetence, will not be tolerated," he declared. Former minister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao also dubbed Revanth Reddy as the brand ambassador for lies and falsehoods. He said the Chief Minister was peddling the same lies inside and outside the Assembly. "Isn't it true that 13,000 employees in the TVVP (Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad) of the Health department have not been paid even after 13 days?" he asked. He slammed the Congress government for failing to release salaries to doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, leaving them struggling financially.

He also pointed out that home guards in the police department were also suffering due to salary delays. "You claim that salaries are paid on the first day, but the reality is far from it. How long will families continue to bear this hardship?" he asked. He said the Congress government is prioritising publicity over governance, and demanded immediate salary disbursement to all affected employees, including contract and outsourced workers.

## Cm revanth seeks external affairs ministry's support for 'telangana rising'

New Delhi, March 13 (NSS): Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has appealed to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to extend all kinds of support to the Telangana government in organising programmes and many other initiatives which are being taken up by the State government to upraise Telangana on the top in the next 25 years. The Chief Minister met the External Affairs Minister in Delhi on Thursday. On the occasion, Revanth Reddy briefed Jaishankar about the details of the prestigious international events - Miss World, Global Deep Tech Summit, Bharat Summit, Animation Gaming, VFX, as well as India Joy, which showcases Telangana as the hub of the entertainment industry. These events are being organised in Hyderabad in 2025. Revanth Reddy urged External Affairs Minister to support the State government and promote "Telangana Rising" by organising the international events successfully in the state. He also re-

quested Jaishankar to promote Telangana Rising in India's programs abroad and extend cooperation in diplomatic relations and logistical assistance for the success of the programmes organised in Hyderabad. The External Affairs Minister praised Revanth Reddy that Telangana is among the fast developing states and assured his cooperation in organising such big international events in the fast growing Hyderabad City. Former External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, Nagarkurnool and Bhuvanagiri Lok Sabha Members Dr. Mallu Ravi and CH Kiran Kumar Reddy, and Rajya Sabha member Anil Kumar Yadav were also present. (NSS)



## Speaker Suspends Mla Jagadish Reddy From Assembly



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): In the wake of the violent developments in the Telangana Assembly on Thursday, BRS party leader and former minister Jagadish Reddy was suspended from the House till the end of the ongoing budget session of the Assembly.

Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar has taken a crucial decision to suspend him after taking serious views of his comments. Addressing the Speaker in the House, he said, "You became the Speaker only if we elected you. This House is not your own," he said. Jagadish Reddy's comments had created controversy. The Congress members expressed anger over the remarks and demanded strict action against him. Jagadeesh Reddy's comments created a ruckus in the House. The Congress members condemned his remarks and said Jagadeesh Reddy should be suspended for speaking in a manner that would bring down the dignity of the House". Following this, the assembly security officials were alerted and marshals were deployed heavily. As the argument between the members intensified, the assembly staff speaker had to take immediate steps to maintain discipline. Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar announced the suspension of Jagadish Reddy till the end of the budget session. With the Speaker's decision in the assembly, despite the suspension for some time, the members continued to discuss the next agenda. "For violating the rules and regulations of the House, the remarks are aimed at hurting the dignity of the Assembly. For what he has done, I suspend Jagadish Reddy till the budget session," the Speaker said in a statement. (NSS)

## Prajavani Session Put Off To March 18

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): The Prajavani session originally scheduled for Friday, has been postponed to Tuesday, March 18, 2025, due to the Holi Festival. It is requested to all petitioners to take note of the change and attend Prajavani Program on March 18, 2025 instead of March 14, 2025. (NSS)



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Lifeline for WFI

THE Sports Ministry's decision to revoke the suspension of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has ended a prolonged spell of uncertainty for wrestlers as well as administrators. The move comes amid the hearing of a plea filed by top wrestlers in the Delhi High Court, demanding that the federation's 2023 elections be declared illegal. The WFI has been in the news in recent years mostly for the wrong reasons. The charges of sexual harassment against then federation chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh not only hit its credibility but also demoralised young entrants to the sport. Though Brij Bhushan is no longer at the helm of affairs, he is presumed to be still calling the shots through his aide and successor Sanjay Singh. The ministry, which had suspended the WFI in December 2023 over "lapses in governance and procedural integrity", has said that it is satisfied with the corrective measures that have been taken. However, the government cannot afford to assume that everything will be hunky-dory from now on. Constant monitoring is a must to ensure that the federation's top brass prioritises players' interests over political over-empowerment. The inescapable truth is that politicians have controlled sports federations in the country for decades. The cash-rich cricket board has been headed by the likes of Nationalist Congress Party stalwart Sharad Pawar and BJP MP Anurag Thakur. It is a good sign that the Indian Olympic Association is currently helmed by a distinguished Olympian, PT Usha, but deep-rooted politicisation continues to impede India's ambition of becoming a sporting powerhouse. Administrators ought to serve as facilitators for the players, not as power-drunk predators. The WFI has been given an opportunity to redeem itself. But that alone is not enough to stem the rot. The Brij Bhushan case should be fast-tracked, while the possibility of holding fresh elections needs to be explored.

## Bjp Mla Raja Singh Slams Own Party Leaders



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): BJP MLA Raja Singh today made sensational comments against some party leaders. He released a press statement on the issue by targeting some MPs and MLAs in the party. He alleged that some leaders were holding secret meetings with the Chief Minister of whichever government came to power in Telangana. "When will the BJP Government come to power in Telangana if such meetings are held," he asked. "If Hindus are safe in Telangana, the BJP government should come to power in Telangana. If the BJP government wants to come to power, the old baggage and leaders has to go out of the BJP," he said. The Central authorities have been asked to think about it by Raja Singh. "There are some party leaders, who claim the BJP as their party. There are many people in Telangana, who also call it as their own party," he said. A month ago, Raja Singh had issued a letter saying that if SCs, STs and minorities are given a proper place in the party, they will have a chance to rise above the Congress and the BRS parties. "If the BJP wants to come to power in Telangana in the coming days, many of the leaders who have accumulated power in the BJP State leadership from the beginning should be expelled from the party. He claimed that he knew the details of those who were in touch with the Congress party from the BJP after the Congress came to power in Telangana. Raja Singh said in the letter that he would soon lodge a complaint with the BJP national leadership against them. There has been a lot of discussion in political circles about the letter written by Raja Singh now. (NSS)

## ICICI Pru GIFT Select – a product with Guaranteed Income to manage current market volatility

Hyderabad: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has introduced 'ICICI Pru GIFT Select', a long-term savings product which offers customers guaranteed immediate income providing them with liquidity.

This product offers multiple flexibilities to customers such as choosing when they want the guaranteed income to start, the duration of the guaranteed income and the amount that they can get at the time of maturity. Additionally, the life cover component ensures financial security for the family. One of the unique features of the product is the increasing income option wherein the income increases at a compounding rate of 5% per annum, thereby helping customers to manage inflation. Mr. Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Officer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, said, "We continue to build on our legacy of innovation to meet the evolving needs of our customers with ICICI Pru GIFT Select being the latest addition to our product portfolio. This unique product allows our customers to get the benefit of guaranteed income that they can customise as per their life goals and cash flow requirements.

We recognise that in a dynamic macroeconomic environment, there could be spells of market volatility like the one that we have seen over the last couple of months. In such situations, we have seen customers preferring products that offer guaranteed returns while ensuring wealth preservation. ICICI Pru GIFT Select will enable customers to insulate their financial savings from market fluctuations and achieve their financial goals. The increasing income feature of the product can enable customers to effectively address the fear of inflation. Our commitment to deliver on the promises made to our customers is reflected in our industry-leading claim settlement ratio of 99.3% in 9M-FY2025, with an average claim settlement time (non-investigated) of just 1.2 days."

## India's First Resuscitation Academy At Emri Green Health Services Launched



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): R V Karnan, Commissioner of Health & Family Welfare, announced the launch of India's first Resuscitation Academy at EMRI Green Health Services, Hyderabad. The Resuscitation Academy aims to improve survival rates in Sudden Cardiac Arrests (SCA) in India. 1.2 million Sudden cardiac arrests reported in India. EMRI Green Health Services (EMRI GHS) has established India's first Resuscitation Academy at its national headquarters in Hyderabad. This academy is the first of its kind, dedicated to excellence in resuscitation training, joining other countries of the world where 30 such academies exist. Dr GV Ramana Rao, Director, Emergency Medicine Learning Centre (EMLC) & Research at EMRI set the tone for the inaugural. The 108 emergency ambulance services operated by EMRI till date have attended to over 30 crore emergencies, saving 80 lakh lives and assisting 7.5 lakh deliveries in their ambulances.

R V Karnan, Commissioner of Health & Family Welfare, MD-NHM, CEO Arogyasri Trust, Govt of Telangana was the chief guest and formally announced the launch of the same. During the event, Karnan highlighted that Telangana has a significantly better ambulance availability compared to the national average. While the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recommends a ratio of one Basic Life Support (BLS) and one Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance per 100,000 people, Telangana currently has one ambulance for every 64,500 people. The goal is to further improve this ratio to one ambulance per 50,000 people. He emphasized the critical need for Trauma Care to be delivered within the Golden Hour to improve patient outcomes. With support from the World Bank, Telangana is working to enhance its healthcare infrastructure by setting up 100 trauma care centres, aiming to strengthen emergency medical response capabilities. He also highlighted the significance of training and awareness, particularly in CPR, noting that all police personnel in the state, along with 50,000 civilians, have been trained in life-saving techniques.

## Tenthpin Launches Ai Labs (Tail) In Hyderabad's Life Sciences Hub

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Switzerland-based Tenthpin Management Consultants, a global consulting leader in technology advisory for Life Sciences companies, announced the launch of Tenthpin AI Labs (TAIL) in Hyderabad, establishing a Global Center of Excellence dedicated to AI-driven transformation in Life Sciences. Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary, Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (ITE&C) and Industries & Commerce, formally inaugurated the same on Wednesday. He said the Tenthpin has chosen Hyderabad among many other cities in India for their expansion. The Tenthpin is the biggest facility in the world. Hyderabad is the Life Sciences Hub and Pharma Hub having over 1800 pharma manufacturing units in Hyderabad. Cell-Gene Therapy (CGT), a treatment that modifies cells or genes to treat disease, is the future. It can treat rare and severe diseases like cancer and others. The new Next Gen Lifesciences Policy the government is coming out with will support these and many. The city of Hyderabad has 24 innovation spaces like T-Hub which will support the life science sector. TAIL's mission is to help pharmaceutical, MedTech, biotech, and research organizations distinguish between AI hype and accomplishing real value. By leveraging India's tech talent and Hyderabad's position as a life sciences hub, Tenthpin aims to support companies in accelerating AI adoption across the drug life cycle, from R&D to better patient outcomes. "Tenthpin AI Labs provides an Incubation-like environment for Life Sciences companies to work with our experts to quickly create proof of concepts, before larger deployments

R V Karnan emphasized the need for Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), a portable life-saving device that assess heart rhythm and deliver an electric shock to restore normal heartbeat, especially during sudden cardiac arrest—to be widely accessible, including in public places. He also stressed that all educational institutions should conduct CPR training programs. He also suggested fostering Public-Private Partnerships to enhance emergency care services. Subodh Satyawadi, President of EMRI GHS, and Ann Michelle Doll, Executive Director of the Resuscitation Academy Foundation, USA; Prof. (Dr) Marcus, Director of the Unit for Prehospital Emergency Care, Ministry of Health, Government of Singapore; and Tore Laerdal from the Laerdal Foundation also spoke. A demonstration of bystander CPR and high-performance CPR was conducted. Vital Rao from Nirmal town, a CPR survivor, shared his experience, recalling how the 108 Ambulance Service saved his life, expressing his heartfelt gratitude to the team. The Resuscitation Academy in India (RAI) has been established in partnership with the Global Resuscitation Alliance (GRA). Its primary objective is to enhance cardiac arrest survival rates in India. India has reported approximately 1.2 million cases of sudden cardiac arrest, yet awareness of CPR remains critically low at just 2%. Additionally, instances of bystander CPR are rare. These alarming statistics underscore the urgent need for enhanced resuscitation strategies. In response to this challenge, the Resuscitation Academy was established.

To mark the occasion, the Inaugural Leadership Workshop of the Resuscitation Academy was held at the EMRI GHS Campus. The residential workshop began on Thursday and will conclude on Friday, bringing together over 75 participants. Attendees include practising doctors from institutions like NIMS and Apollo, government health officials, subject matter experts and other key leaders in the field. The workshop is designed to support the implementation of the Global Resuscitation Alliance (GRA) 10 Steps, recognized as the gold standard for enhancing cardiac arrest survival rates worldwide. The RAI believes that the effective implementation of these ten steps will help improve Return of Spontaneous Circulation in cardiac arrest cases in target regions in India from 2% to 10% by 2030. Unit for Prehospital Emergency Care (UPEC), Ministry of Health, Government of Singapore, is the technical partner to the workshop under the aegis of Global Resuscitation Alliance. Some of the international faculty include Prof (Dr) Marcus Ong, Director-UPEC; Ann Michelle Doll, Executive Director of Resuscitation Academy Foundation, USA; Prof (Dr) Robert Neumar, University of Michigan, USA; Prof Freddy Lippert, University of Copenhagen, Denmark; Dr Ivan Chua, Emergency Physician, Singapore General Hospital and others. (NSS)

## Aluru Subhash Babu Receives National Award For Educational Excellence



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Aluru Subhash Babu, a prominent educationist and editor of Udyoga Vijayalu and

## Hyderabad Police impose restrictions on Holi celebrations, BJP MLA slams govt

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Police have imposed certain restrictions in connection with Holi celebrations, prohibiting movement of vehicles in groups and throwing colours on unwilling persons, drawing an angry response from BJP MLA Raja Singh on Thursday. Slamming the police notification, Goshamahala MLA described it as a 'Tughlaq farman' (Tughlaq order). The police in a notification prohibited the movement of two wheelers and other vehicles in groups on streets and public places disturbing peace and order or causing inconvenience or danger to the public. As per notification, throwing colours or coloured water on unwilling persons, places and vehicles or smearing unwilling people with colour on public roads and public places, causing an-

noyance, is also prohibited. The order will be in force from 6 PM on March 13 to 6 AM on March 15. Police issued a separate notification directing closure of wine/toddy shops and bars attached to restaurants (excluding bars in star hotels and registered clubs) from 6 am to 6 pm on March 14. Raja Singh claimed the police issued the notification under the directions of the Congress government. "I want to ask the Chief Minister and the police officials. During the 30 days of Ramzan, how people move on bikes and in groups during nights, is this not visible to the Telangana's ninth Nizam Revanth Reddy and the police officials? How much nuisance happens in Hyderabad during these 30 days?" he said.

## Manage-Msu Organizing Summit On Revolutionizing Agriculture



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): The National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), in collaboration with Michigan State University (MSU), is organizing the MANAGE-MSU Summit on "Revolutionizing Agriculture through Digital Innovations and Agri-Tech Startups" from March 12 to 14. The summit aims to foster collaboration between the two institutions, facilitating knowledge exchange, case studies, and brainstorming sessions to explore cutting-edge innovations shaping the future of agriculture. Experts from Michigan State University (MSU), including Dr. Karim Maredia, Director, CANR International Programs; Mr. Michael Reinke, Viticulture Specialist, MSU; Ms. Rebecca Henne, State SNAP-Ed Coordinator, MSU; Dr. David Ivan, Director, Community, Food & Environment Institute, MSU; Mr. Eric Anderson, Soybean Educator; Ms. Paola Bacigalupo Sanguesa, Dairy Extension Educator; Dr. Nandkumar; along with Dr. Chandra Sekhar Gupta, Scientific Officer, PRA, Plant Biosecurity Division, NIPHM; Dr. Vidhu Kampurath P, Joint Director, Plant Health Engineering Division, NIPHM; Dr. Sagar Hanuman Singh, IPoS, Director General, MANAGE; Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE; and faculty members, academic associates from MANAGE participating in the summit. On the second day of the Summit, a discussion held on Agri-Tech Startup Ecosystem in India, supporting new farmers and Food Entrepreneurs; Digital Innovations in agriculture. In his keynote address, Dr. Sagar Hanuman Singh, IPoS, Director General, MANAGE, welcomed all the delegates from MSU and provided an overview of the Indian agricultural sector and emphasized the growing adoption of digital tools and innovations by farmers. He highlighted that India's agriculture is dominated by small and marginal farmers, who are increasingly leveraging Farmer Producer organizations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to collectively afford and adopt modern technologies. He expressed his anticipation that the collaboration between MSU and MANAGE would drive meaningful advancements in agriculture and improve farmers livelihoods. He also extended his best wishes for future collaborations. Dr. Karim Maredia, Director, CANR International Programs, MSU, highlighted that MSU has the Knowledge sharing collaboration with MANAGE. Further he underscored MSU's ongoing collaborations with Indian institutions and expressed conviction that the partnership with MANAGE would contribute meaningfully to India's Vision@2047. He further emphasized the need for expanded collaboration between MSU, MANAGE, and National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM), aiming to drive impactful advancements in agricultural research, innovation, and capacity building. (NSS)

## James Dyson Award 2025 is Now Open for Entries; Students Eligible for Prize Money of INR 30 lakhs

Hyderabad: The James Dyson Award, an international student design and engineering competition, opens for submissions today to its 2025 programme in 28 countries and regions. From everyday challenges to the world's most pressing issues, the award calls for current or recent students to submit problem-solving ideas that could make a real difference to people's lives. Since it was established in 2005, the James Dyson Award has supported more than 400 student inventions with £1.1m (Approx 112m) in prize money and a global platform. Those who progress to the final stages and are selected by James Dyson as the global winners will claim a prize of £30,000 (approx. INR 30 lakhs), and a chance to gain international media exposure, providing a springboard to commercialise their inventions. Sir James Dyson, Founder of Dyson, said: "I started the James Dyson Award 20 years ago with the mission to inspire and support the next generation of design engineers. The brilliant ideas we've seen since then prove that young people are passionate about providing solutions to the world's most pressing problems, using design, engineering and technology – in medicine, the environment and much more. I look forward to discovering what inventions will be put forward this year – good luck!" Previous winners include Novocarry, a portable cooling carrier designed to keep insulin and other liquid medications at the desired temperature, was named the National Winner of the James Dyson Award 2024 in India. Invented by Odisha-based Ms. Komal Panda, Novocarry aims to bridge gaps in accessibility and manufacturability, ensuring the device reaches those who need it most. Since receiving recognition from the James Dyson Award, Komal has been refining the design to make it more widely available, with a vision to improve medication storage for people across diverse environments. mOm incubators, a low-cost, inflatable incubator to provide flexibility to caring for newborns in less developed areas. Invented by James Roberts, Product Design & Technology graduate from Loughborough University in the UK, mOm has gone on to support over 10,000 patients, and continues to expand its operations worldwide, including in conflict areas such as Ukraine. SoaPen, a previous runner-up in the US, continues to transform hand hygiene education. Invented by Parsons School of Design graduates Shubham Issar and Amanat Anand, SoaPen is a colourful pen made from soap, to teach young children handwashing in a fun way. After receiving recognition from the James Dyson Award, the team launched SoaPen in the US in 2018, and continues to pursue its mission to make hand hygiene fun and accessible, worldwide.

THE JAMES DYSON AWARD 2025



## PhonePe's Indus Appstore and Xiaomi India sign Pivotal Partnership to Strengthen India's Digital Ecosystem



GNS News Agency, March 13

Hyderabad: Indus Appstore, India's homegrown Android app marketplace, today announced a multi-year alliance with Xiaomi India, a global technology pioneer. This collaboration underscores the shared commitment of Indus Appstore and Xiaomi India to foster a localized digital ecosystem tailored for Indian consumers. By integrating Indus Appstore on all new Xiaomi smartphones in India and replacing GetApps on existing ones, the Indus Appstore aims to foster accessibility, app discovery, and a seamless user experience. Speaking about the partnership, Priya M Narasimhan, Chief Business Officer, Indus Appstore said, "Our partnership with Xiaomi India marks a significant milestone towards our goal of building a horizontal app store for Indian Mobile Users and Developers. By combining Xiaomi India's reach with our localized app discovery platform, we're creating opportunities for developers while delivering a seamless, culturally-relevant experience to users. This

partnership is just the beginning of our vision to transform how India discovers and experiences mobile apps."

Sudhin Mathur, Chief Operating Officer, Xiaomi India, commented on the development, stating, "As India's digital ecosystem continues to grow, the demand for a locally driven app marketplace has never been more critical. At Xiaomi India, we have always championed 'Make for India' innovations, and this partnership with Indus Appstore is a strategic step in that direction. By integrating Indus Appstore with our ecosystem, we aim to offer users a seamless and enriched app discovery experience, while also supporting Indian developers in reaching a wider audience. This partnership reflects both brands' unwavering commitment to fostering a robust and inclusive digital ecosystem in India, empowering users and developers alike."

This partnership will also help build a self-reliant, consumer-first digital infrastructure in the country by integrating a localized, feature-rich app marketplace, that will help drive innovation and accessibility for millions of users across the country. Some of the key product highlights of the latest Indus Appstore version are: Multilingual App Discovery: Users can discover apps in 12 Indian languages, making it convenient for vernacular language speakers to find their preferred apps. Video-First Experience: An innovative video-led app discovery system that provides users with rich, visual previews of apps before downloading. Voice-Enabled Search: Supporting voice commands in 10 Indian languages, eliminating the need for specialized keyboards or complex character input. Comprehensive App Collection: Access to over 5 lakh mobile apps and games across 45 categories, ensuring a diverse selection for all user needs

## Congress Mlc Amer Ali Khan Encourages Muslim Youth To Take Up Entrepreneurship

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Congress MLC Amer Ali Khan today urged Muslim youth to embrace entrepreneurship as a means of economic empowerment. He was speaking after distributing salary cheques to workers of the Ministry of Cheese (MoC), a popular snack cart chain spread across Hyderabad, on Wednesday. The initiative, sponsored by Siasat Hub, aimed to ensure financial stability for employees. MoC, funded by Amer Ali Khan, was launched to create employment opportunities in the city, providing livelihoods through a widespread network of snack carts. The salary distribution event reinforced his commitment to supporting workers and strengthening employment initiatives in Hyderabad.

Expressing concern over the rising unemployment among Muslim youth, Amer Ali Khan highlighted the lack of job opportunities despite a large number of qualified individuals being jobless in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana due to negligence of previous BRS regime. He pointed out that the recent socio-economic and caste census conducted by the present Congress government in Telangana provided crucial data on youth unemployment, including among Muslims. The Congress government, he said, would utilise this data to design effective welfare schemes. Encouraging youth to make the most of government initiatives, Amer Ali Khan urged them to avail themselves of the Rajiv Yuva Vikas Scheme, which was allocated a budget of Rs 6,000 crore to support unemployed



youth in Telangana. Under this scheme, funds will be distributed through the SC, ST, BC, and Minority Finance Corporations, benefiting around five lakh youth, each receiving Rs 3 lakh to start their own businesses.

The scheme will be implemented from March 15, with applications being accepted through the respective finance corporations until April 5. Eligible candidates will be selected thereafter, and approval letters will be handed over by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on June 2, Telangana's Formation Day. Amer Ali Khan assured aspiring entrepreneurs that Siasat Hub would guide them in understanding the scheme's guidelines and application process. He also pledged to facilitate the launch of several business chains like MoC, aiming to further empower Muslim youth through self-employment opportunities. (NSS)

## Police Asks Revellers To Not Disturb Others On Holi



Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): The city police has issued a mass warning to the residents of the city on the occasion of Holi festival on March 14, (Friday). They asked

the revellers to not spray the colours on walkers and ordinary people during the Holi festival. Do not roam the roads as you please," Hyderabad CP CV Anand warned and said the Police Act would be in force on Holi festival day and added that strict action will be taken if anyone acts in a wilful manner.

CP CV Anand said strict action would be taken if colour is sprayed on unknown people. He warned that the Police Act would be in force in Hyderabad on the occasion of the Holi festival. He said Legal action would be taken if colour was sprayed on unknown people walking on the road. He advised not to cause trouble to others by spraying the colours on public roads. He asked the people to not roam in groups on bikes and other vehicles. CP CV Anand said the Police Act would be in force from 6 pm on March 13 to 6 am on March 15. (NSS)

## Seethakka Demands Cancellation Of Jagadish Reddy's Mla Membership

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka has called for the immediate revocation of BRS leader Jagadish Reddy's MLA membership, citing an insult to the Assembly Speaker's position. During her address in the Assembly on Thursday, Seethakka condemned the remarks made by BRS MLA Jagadish Reddy, deeming them highly offensive and a disrespect to the Speaker's role. She emphasised that the Speaker's office embodies a constitutional authority, asserting that it should be regarded as an institution rather than an individual. "We endured numerous disrespectful incidents when the Congress party was in the Opposition. In contrast, the BRS leaders, while in power, made statements belittling marginalised communities. Previously, the female Governor, and now the Tribal Governor, along with the Dalit Speaker, have all faced derogatory remarks from the BRS party," the Minister stated. She pointed out that during the tenure of the BRS



government, numerous new regulations were implemented, which restricted Congress MLAs from even addressing the Assembly from the podium. "It is inappropriate to single out the Speaker, who comes from the Dalit community. We are calling for the revocation of Jagadish Reddy's membership as an MLA," Seethakka said. (NSS)

## Harish Rao Condemns Jagadish Reddy's Suspension

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Former minister and Siddipet MLA Harish Rao has reacted sharply to the suspension of Suryapet BRS MLA Jagadish Reddy. As soon as Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar announced that Jagadish Reddy will be suspended till the completion of this session, Harish Rao raised his voice. He told the Speaker even at the time of execution, an opportunity was being given to the accused to speak for the last time. Harish Rao asked the Sabha as to why they were not given an opportunity to speak in the House. When Harish Rao questioned the Speaker, BJPLP leader Eleti Maheshwar Reddy began his

speech. The Congress members smiled and rejoiced. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Jupally Krishna Rao and a few other MLAs also smiled. Opposing the Speaker's decision, the BRS MLAs walked out of the House. They demanded that they be given an opportunity to speak. Jagadish Reddy, who came out of the House, sat in the chamber of KCR. Assembly Chief Marshal asked Jagadeesh Reddy to leave the chamber as well. The BRS members told the Chief Marshal that he was suspended only from the House. The BRS MLAs questioned whether there was any objection if Reddy was sitting in the chamber of the leader of the Opposition. (NSS)

## Hyderabad Witnesses Its Highest Holi Celebration at SAS Crown



GNS News Agency, March 13

Hyderabad: The vibrant festival of Holi reached astonishing new heights this year as SAS Crown, located in Kokapet and renowned as the tallest tower in South India, hosted the "Sky Blast on the Skyscraper" event. This breathtaking event transformed a routine celebration into a landmark experience, redefined Holi festivities, and showcased SAS Crown as a magnificent architectural marvel at the forefront of the city's skyline.

Standing at 60 floors, the sky-high celebration thrilled attendees with an explosion of colors against breathtaking panoramic views of Hyderabad. Revelers gathered for an unforgettable experience, marking this event as one of the most iconic Holi celebrations in the city's history. The fusion of festive joy and modern luxury at SAS Crown illuminated the spirit of togetherness and cultural richness that Holi embodies. As urban India embraces high-rise celebrations, SAS Crown sets the benchmark for grand and innovative festive experiences. The event has drawn comparisons to global skyscraper festivities, placing Hyderabad alongside renowned cities like New York, Dubai, and Singapore in the realm of luxury events. The successful "Sky Blast on the Skyscraper" highlights how Hyderabad is significantly elevating its festive culture, making indelible marks on the global event stage. In a city that thrives on tradition and innovation, SAS Crown stands tall—both literally and figuratively—as a beacon of festive joy and modern grandeur. As the colors of Holi danced in the air, the legacy of this spectacular celebration will ensure that it resonates in the hearts and minds of the attendees for years to come.

## Massive awareness programs on World Kidney Day by Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology (AINU)

GNS News Agency, March 13

Hyderabad: On World Kidney Day, Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology launched its kidney mobile camp for the villages and district across Telangana reaching out to around 10,000 people. The initiative flagged off by Dr. A Narendra Kumar, Director of Medical Education, Telangana State, Dr. C. Mallikarjuna, Managing Director and Chief Consultant Urologist, Dr. Purna Chandra Reddy, Executive Director & Chief Consultant, Mr. Sandeep Guduru CEO. The health of your kidneys can be determined with just three simple tests, and everyone should undergo them regularly to ensure kidney protection, stated Dr. C. Mallikarjuna, Managing Director and Chief Consultant Urologist at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology (AINU), one of the leading hospitals in the city.

This year's World Kidney Day theme is "Are your kidneys OK? Get tested early, protect your kidney health." "Dr. Mallikarjuna" emphasized that checking blood pressure (BP), urine protein levels, and serum creatinine can help assess kidney health. These low-cost tests can be conducted regularly to monitor kidney function and take preventive measures if necessary. He made these statements while addressing the media ahead of World Kidney Day on



March 13. "In many cases today, people are unaware of kidney problems as they show no symptoms. By the time they notice issues and get tested, their kidneys are often severely damaged, requiring dialysis or even kidney transplantation. That's why waiting for symptoms is not advisable—everyone should get tested regularly. If any of the three test results show abnormalities, further tests can determine the complete kidney condition. If all three tests are normal, your kidneys are in good shape," he explained.

## Electricity Consumption Crucial For People's Development: Chandrababu



Amaravati, March 13 (NSS): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu today said people's development was calculated on the basis of electricity consumption anywhere in the world. The CM was speaking during a short discussion on the power sector in the AP Assembly. Speaking on the occasion, he said over the years, there had been revolutionary changes in the power sector. "In the past, I have directly observed the plight of farmers during power cuts. After seeing the difficulties faced by the farmers, we have decided to give nine hours of free electricity during the day. If you try to implement power reforms, you used to be called a World Bank's wage earner. That's when discoms, regulatory boards and energy auditing have started. Earlier, AP was the first State in the country to confirm that transmission losses were 23 per cent. After bifurcation, AP has been made a power-free State," he said. He also said the Congress party had come to power at that time using the power reforms undertaken during the TDP regime. Naidu said a public sector power generation plant like NTPS was run with 83 per cent PLF and added that it was not possible for most private companies now. "We are of the view that these administrative changes should be recognised by the people. If we look at the last 30 years of governance, the facts will come to light," he said. He alleged that the YSRCP government had taken AP, which

was a power surplus state, to a deficit situation. He claimed that the previous government had imposed a surcharge on industries if they used electricity. He noted that there was a shortage of 22.5 million units of electricity at the time of bifurcation of the State. By 2018, we have made AP a surplus power State. The per capita consumption of electricity in AP has increased by 23 per cent. AP is the first state to generate 7,700 MW of solar and wind power. However, in 2019-24, due to inefficient governance, dark days have come again in the state. The YSRCP has cancelled the PPAs without any thought. The issue of cancellation of the PPAs has become an international issue. Even in places like Davos, there was a discussion on the abolition of PPAs. Due to one person's ego, we had to pay Rs 9,000 crore from the state exchequer to PPAs. Due to the delay in the Polavaram project, the hydro power station was stopped and 960 MW of power was not generated. During the YSRCP regime, electricity charges were hiked nine times and a burden of Rs 32,000 crore was imposed on the people," he said. Naidu said the expenditure should come down considerably as the power sector had increased widely and added that the average cost of purchasing electricity per unit was ₹ 5.16 paise in the last five years. "From April 1, 2025, the purchase cost of the unit will be reduced to Rs 4.80. The power generated will be used for export to neighbouring states. "If the country produces 500 GIGAWatts of green energy, AP alone will produce 160 GW. Under PM Suryagarh, every household will have electricity. Democratization of energy is now a key policy," he said. He also said that prosumer was now a new term and every household should become a producer-consumer. He said that Solar panels with a capacity of 2 kW should be installed on every household and added that AP should become a 100 per cent solar rooftop power generating state. "At least 10,000 houses in each constituency should have a solar roof top. Each household generates 240 units of electricity. At present, the average consumption in the state is around 100 units. The rest of the electricity will be purchased by the discoms and paid for," he said. (NSS)

## Scr Gm Inaugurates CT scan Facility worth Rs 5.42 Crore at Central Railway Hospital

Hyderabad, March 13 (NSS): Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, South Central Railway, inaugurated new facilities at Central Railway Hospital, Lallaguda, Secunderabad on March 13, 2025. Dr. Nirmala Rajaram, Principal Chief Medical Director, SCR; Lokesh Vishnoi, Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad Division; Dr. I. Siva Naga Prasad, Medical Director, Central Hospital, Lallaguda, Principal Heads of the Departments and other senior officials from Headquarters & Division were also present on the occasion. Arun Kumar Jain inaugurated a new CT scan facility at the hospital worth Rs 5.42 crore. Until now, investigations such as CT scan brain, CT chest, CT abdomen were being outsourced. The new CT scan facility will be convenient for all Railway beneficiaries and will also help to reduce the referral expenditure. The General Manager inaugurated a Medicinal plant garden, which has been developed in the hospital premises with 20 varieties of Medicinal plants like Tulsi, Aloe vera, Lemon grass, insulin plant etc. An Ayurvedic doctor is available at the hospital for guidance on the medicinal plants. The General Manager also inaugurated a fast food canteen in the first floor of OPD block which will cater to Railway beneficiaries. Two coffee vending machines have also been installed to serve tea/coffee and snacks. He also inaugurated a four-wheel parking facility in front of the dormitory, Central Hospital for the convenience of Railway per-



sonnel visiting the hospital. Speaking on the occasion, the General Manager appreciated the medical department for upgradation of the facilities for the benefit of employees. He stated that the CT scan facility will be highly beneficial and convenient for Railway personnel, eliminating the problems associated with outsourcing of the tests. It will save time for the patients treatment can be given in time. He also complimented the medical team for the noble initiative of developing medicinal plant garden at the Hospital. (NSS)



## As Rohit Sharma and his boys lift trophy, Puneites go to town, celebrate with gusto

GNS News Agency, March 13

AS Ravindra Jadeja hit the winning runs and India lifted the ICC Champions Trophy, 2025 by defeating New Zealand in Dubai on Sunday, Puneites were not to be left behind when it came to celebrating the occasion along with the entire country, and with gusto. As Pune's skyline was lit up with bursting of crackers, hundreds of citizens in Pune city and Pimpri-Chinchwad came on to the streets, drove through the roads, honked incessantly and raised noisy slogans in favour of the Indian team. Citizens took out impromptu bike rallies as they sped through the city's roads. Political workers were not to be left behind as they distributed sweets.

Major roads in the city including the Fergusson College Road, J M Road, Senapati Bapat Road, Law College Road, Karve Road and M G Road witnessed celebrations, especially from youngsters, some of whom were seen waving the Indian tricolour with joy writ large on their face. Be it the Peth areas of the city, Pune Camp area, Kondhwa, Hadapsar, Kothrud, Swargate, Pashan, Sus, Aundh, Katraj, Vilmanagar, Kalyaninagar, Hinjewadi, Khadki or Pimpri-



Chinchwad, the scenes of jubilation were common here, there and everywhere. On Fergusson College Road, a crowd gathered outside the main gate of Fergusson College while motorists and cars carrying Indian flags passed by. Manju Awalkhanthe, a resident of Rasta Peth, who rushed to join the celebrations on Fergusson College Road, said, "The mood among the citizens was absolutely ecstatic. Every face on the F C Road had a big smile. People were clapping, cheering and backslapping." "champions trophy victory On Fergusson College Road, a crowd gathered outside the main gate of Fergusson College while motorists and cars carrying Indian flags passed by. In other parts of the city, the mood was no different. "We had set up a screen in our residential society. We residents watched the match together. There were a few moments when wickets in quick succession had dampened the mood, but otherwise it was all shouting and dancing in joy," said Neel Mane, a resident of Pashan. Puneites erupted into full-scale celebrations only after Jadeja hit the winning runs. "Till the winning runs were scored, I did not hear any celebrations. It seemed like because of the ups and downs in the game, everyone waited till the final run was scored," said Atul Gokhale, a resident of Pimpri-Chinchwad. Dashrath Gaikwad, father of Indian cricketer Ruturaj Gaikwad said, "I was never in doubt that Indian team will win. This is because we have a very strong batting line. Just imagine we have Ravindra Jadeja batting at number 8. Full credit goes to the entire team for the way they played in the entire tournament." "Former Maharashtra captain Milind Gunjal, a Puneite who was in Dubai, said, "Our spinners bowled extremely well throughout the tournament. They did a good job restricting NZ to 251 after their good start. It was a great team effort as everyone contributed." "As two wickets fell in quick succession, some Puneites became tense and worried about the victory prospects. "It was indeed a sweet victory finally as we managed to overwhelm the set target with ease," said Gopal Tiwari, a Congress leader. Sunil Chacko, a former cricketer, said, "Though tremors are part of India team's games over the year, Rohit Sharma's boys looked quite confident. There was only a slight moment when the batters were bogged down. Otherwise, after every fall of wicket the incoming batters kept the momentum going. K L Rahul and Hardik really turned the tide in favour of India."

## Residents point out major discrepancies in sanctioned drawing and actual demolition



GNS News Agency, March 13

Despite several protests and resistance from citizens of Chandigarh against the demolition of a part of the wall of the Rock Garden to create additional parking for the high court, the administration went ahead with the act and the entire wall and entrance were broken on the intervening night of March 8. Volunteers of the group Saving Chandigarh on Sunday stood at the Sukhna Lake to create awareness about the damage to the iconic garden and trees of the forest area when the action was taken. Citizens described this as a callous approach and action of the Chandigarh Administration, paving the way to destroy the green legacy of the city. The group has pointed out that there are major discrepancies in the drawings issued by the Department of Environment, showing the slip of land allowed to be converted from forest to non-forest land and the actual work being done on site. While this drawing shows a small strip of land aligned with the existing wall of the Rock Garden, the work is being done as per a drawing issued in October 2024 by the Chief Architect's office in which the road has been straightened and part of the wall necessitating a larger scale demolition, than originally sanctioned.

According to a senior architect and a member of the group, there is a huge variance between what was approved, and the much larger land now being used for straightening of the road and creation of additional parking. The group has demanded an on-site survey by the Forest Department to ascertain the actual number of trees cut or damaged in the process of widening of road from the Udayan Path to the Rock Garden.

## Youth uses 'fake stamp to claim Rs 60K for medicines under Ayushman Bharat', police investigation on



GNS News Agency, March 13

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) and AMRIT Pharmacy have jointly reported a serious incident involving the misuse of a stolen indent book and counterfeit stamps to divert medications intended for patients enrolled in the Ayushman Bharat cashless scheme. The unauthorised individual was apprehended on February 18, 2025, and subsequently handed over to local police authorities for further investigation. According to sources, in February a young man was caught by the PGIMER security personnel using a fake stamp and claiming Rs 60,000 for medicines under the Ayushman Bharat scheme from the AMRIT Pharmacy. An indent book of the Department of Urology, along with eight counterfeit stamps of various departments of PGIMER, was recovered from him. He told the police that he was working for someone in Saharanpur, who was using the indent book and fake stamp of PGIMER to get medicines worth crores under the Ayushman Bharat Yojna and sell it to medical stores and had access to patient data of the institute. The case is now with the Crime Branch and investigation is on to probe the nexus and the extent of this fraud.

In response to this fraudulent activity, the PGIMER and AMRIT have jointly filed a formal complaint with the relevant law enforcement agencies and have established an internal committee tasked with investigating the matter and providing recommendations to prevent future

occurrences. To safeguard the integrity of the healthcare services, the institute is implementing various measures. Transition to online indenting system: The existing manual indenting system for patients under cashless schemes will be discontinued and replaced with a secure online indenting process. The computer section of the PGIMER, in collaboration with the internal committee, has developed a solution to be integrated into the existing Hospital Information System (HIS 1) and the transition is expected to be completed within one week. Dedicated service area for cashless beneficiaries: A designated area outside the Emergency department has been identified for AMRIT to exclusively serve beneficiaries of cashless schemes, including Ayushman Bharat. Enhanced manpower for improved service: The PGIMER will work with AMRIT to increase staffing levels to ensure that medications and implants processed through the new online system are delivered directly to patients at their bedside.

According to the official spokesperson of PGIMER, the institute is committed to providing quality medical care and is assisting the police authorities in every way in their efforts to find the culprits trying to exploit the institute and tarnish its image. In 2023-24, the PGIMER provided treatment to the 32,000 Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries with a package amount of over Rs 130 crore, ensuring that the most patients in Union Territories received essential medical treatments. In 2004, as many as 5,000 kidney transplants were done, with 100 under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, providing huge relief to patients. In 2023-2024, Rs 21.2 crore was provided to needy patients through government schemes and social initiatives, and its Poor Patient Welfare Fund Rs 3.24 crore was disbursed to support poor patients. The institute operates seven Amrit Pharmacy centres, the highest in any public-sector hospital in India. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY is a health assurance scheme that aims to provide a health cover of Rs 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. The scheme covers up to 3 days of pre-hospitalisation and 15 days of post-hospitalisation expenses.

## In Karnataka, the anatomy of three riot-like situations

GNS News Agency, March 13

After the Delhi Assembly election results were announced, a social media post showing Opposition leaders Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav, and Arvind Kejriwal being scantily clad, with Arabic verses written on their bodies, sparked tensions in Udayagiri, a locality with a significant Muslim population in Mysuru, on the night of February 10. A large crowd gathered in front of Udayagiri police station demanding action against the man who had put up the post. Though the police arrested him, there were rumours that he was being released on bail. A local Maulvi reportedly addressed the crowd with a provocative speech, which allegedly incited violence. The crowd threw stones at the police, injuring 14 personnel.

This is the third riot-like situation that has been created in Karnataka over the last five years. The earlier incidents occurred in D.J. Halli in Bengaluru in August 2020 and Hubballi in April 2022. Each time, the script has been the same. In the earlier cases too, large crowds of Muslims gathered outside police stations to lodge complaints against provocative social media posts against Islam. Even as the police arrested those responsible for the posts, the anger of the mob did not subside and eventually turned against the police. In D.J. Halli, the police opened fire, killing four.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which was in power in the State during the first two disturbances, invoked the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, and handed over the probe to the National Investigation Agency amidst opposition to invoking the UAPA as "unwarranted". In the Udayagiri case, the police have booked rioting cases against vandals. The police in Karnataka seem to be struggling with how multiple elements — extreme communal polarisation, hate speeches, and organised provocative content on social media — feed each other in a vicious cycle online and

## Ludhiana factory collapse: 2 bodies pulled out in overnight operation

GNS News Agency, March 13

Hours after a textile dyeing factory collapsed in phase 8 of the Focal Point area in Ludhiana late on Saturday, at least seven workers were feared to be trapped under the debris. The bodies of two men were pulled out during the overnight rescue operation, police said on Sunday. Five others were rescued and admitted to Fortis Hospital for treatment. The Ludhiana police registered an FIR against four people—the factory owner, supervisor, contractor and a crane operator—for culpable homicide. Deputy Commissioner Jitendra Jorwal said that a magisterial inquiry has been initiated. The accident took place at the Kohli Dyeing Unit, where, according to the police, work was ongoing to repair the building. The structure collapsed while JCB machines were being operated.

Inspector Amandeep Singh Brar, SHO of the Focal Point police station, identified the deceased workers as Jatinder Kumar, 27, a native of Bihar; and Bunty, from Haibowal, Ludhiana. "Prima facie, the incident occurred due to negligence during construction work. We have arrested factory supervisor Teerath Lal, while three other accused also sustained injuries and are admitted to the hospital," said the SHO. The FIR has been registered under section 105 (culpable homicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against factory owner Neeraj Kapoor, supervisor Teerath Lal, contractor Pargat Singh, and crane operator Avtar Singh. "Kapoor was running the factory on land owned by his maternal uncle. Other details will become clear once we investigate further. The priority was to conduct rescue operations and save lives," said the SHO. The FIR states that Kapoor, along with Lal, was overseeing the construction work and had hired contractor Pargat Singh and crane operator Avtar Singh, who began work with the JCB machines. However, as soon as they started, the already dilapidated building collapsed. The accident occurred due to their neg-

ligence, as they allegedly failed to take adequate safety measures for the workers inside.

Three teams from the National Disaster Response Force, along with local police, the fire brigade, the municipal corporation and factory departments, have been working at the site for the last 21 hours, Jorwal said. They have successfully rescued some workers. However, due to the substantial amount of debris, rescue teams are required to remove it carefully using manual equipment to reach the trapped workers. The deputy commissioner further said that, according to the building owner, 29 workers were present in the unit on Saturday. At the time of the collapse, only seven workers were inside. Jorwal said that a magisterial probe, led by the subdivisional magistrate (east), has been ordered into the incident. The government will cover the medical expenses for the injured workers, and adequate compensation will be provided to the families of the deceased, he added. DCP Jaskiranjit Singh Teja said, "Prima facie, some sort of negligence during construction work led to the unfortunate incident. Now that the rescue is over, the focus will be on the probe."



ligence, as they allegedly failed to take adequate safety measures for the workers inside.

Three teams from the National Disaster Response Force, along with local police, the fire brigade, the municipal corporation and factory departments, have been working at the site for the last 21 hours, Jorwal said. They have successfully rescued some workers. However, due to the substantial amount of debris, rescue teams are required to remove it carefully using manual equipment to reach the trapped workers. The deputy commissioner further said that, according to the building owner, 29 workers were present in the unit on Saturday. At the time of the collapse, only seven workers were inside. Jorwal said that a magisterial probe, led by the subdivisional magistrate (east), has been ordered into the incident. The government will cover the medical expenses for the injured workers, and adequate compensation will be provided to the families of the deceased, he added. DCP Jaskiranjit Singh Teja said, "Prima facie, some sort of negligence during construction work led to the unfortunate incident. Now that the rescue is over, the focus will be on the probe."

## Contaminated drinking water supply irks residents of Sunny Enclave, Sector 125 and Mohali village



GNS News Agency, March 13

Jaswinder Singh and other residents show dirty water coming from taps at Sunny Enclave in Sector 125, Kharar, Mohali on Sunday. (Express Photo by Jasbir Malhi) Jaswinder Singh and other residents show dirty water coming from taps at Sunny Enclave in Sector 125, Kharar, Mohali on Sunday. (Express Photo by Jasbir Malhi) Even before summer has fully set in, residents of Sunny Enclave, Sector 125, and Mohali village are facing a crisis due to the supply of contaminated drinking water. The poor water quality has led to complaints of stomach ailments and other health issues among locals. Jaswinder Singh, a resident of house no. 4439, said that the water is not fit for drinking, bathing, or even washing hands. He claimed that more than 100 houses in his locality are affected by this problem. Sachin Ahuja, a resident of house no. 4626, Sector 125, Sunny Enclave, said that despite multiple complaints to the health department, no action has been taken yet. Finally, residents sent water samples for testing at the Regional Water Testing Lab, Phase 2, Mohali.

The March 7 test reports revealed alarming results. According to the chemical testing report, turbidity was recorded at 15.90, whereas the acceptable range is between 1 and 5. Odour was classified as disagreeable. Colour was recorded at 20, exceeding the acceptable range of 5 to 15. The bacteriological testing report raised even greater concerns: Total coliform count was 348 and E.coli count was 141, while it should be 0. These figures confirm that the drinking water supply is in a highly unsafe condition, sparking outrage among residents, who are demanding immediate action from the authorities to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. When contacted, health department officials assured that they are investigating the issue. They suspected a leakage or contamination in the water pipeline and promised to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Due to the mixing of dirty water with the drinking water supply near Shaheed Bhai Taru Singh School on Street Number Two at Mohali village, several residents have suffered from stomach aches and diarrhea. After complaints were filed with the health department, the Senior Medical Officer (SMO) sent teams to collect additional water samples for testing.

## CM meets residents of slum clusters, promises action against drug trade

GNS News Agency, March 11

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday interacted with the residents of slum clusters Bhanwar Singh Camp and Nepali Camp in R K Puram, as part of her meetings with the people of Delhi to seek suggestions for the upcoming Budget to be presented in the Assembly between March 24 and 26.

Following the visit, Gupta directed the local police to take strict action against the drug trade in the area. She also said that she would meet the Delhi Police Commissioner to discuss the matter. Further, she directed the local civic department to immediately look into issues like non-availability of water, cleaning of drains, and road repair. New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj and local MLA Anil Sharma accompanied Gupta to the slum clusters. The women also thanked Gupta for approving the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, a scheme under which women are supposed to get Rs 2,500 per month.

Speaking to mediapersons, the CM said, "Delhi government is communicating with all sections of the Capital to prepare for the draft of the 'Viksit Dilli' Budget. Today, we interacted with women and residents of Bhanwar Singh Camp and Nepali Camp at R K Puram. Our government's priority is to ensure that basic needs of every resident of Delhi are fulfilled and for this, we are going to the smallest areas of the city to seek suggestions." Gupta said that during her visit, she heard the residents' concerns, such as irregular water supply, poor sanitation, and bad roads. Women also complained about the rise in drug addiction in the area and the closure of public toilets. "We have instructed the local police to take immediate action. Also, a meeting will soon be held with the Delhi Police Commissioner to completely stop the drug trade in the Capital," she added.

## Revanth Reddy announces Rs 1 crore to build 'Bhavan' for Maharashtra weavers

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who once criticised former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for offering ex gratia to farmers in other States, has now announced Rs 1 crore for the construction of a Markendeya Bhavan in Solapur in Maharashtra. The Chief Minister was critical of the BRS supremo for announcing Rs 3 lakh as ex gratia to farmers who lost their lives while protesting against the Union government's farm laws in the past. He had raised objections over Telangana funds and taxes being used for Punjab farmers. However, contradicting his own stance, Revanth Reddy on Sunday declared that Rs.1 crore would be sanctioned by the Telangana government for construction of the Markendeya Bhavan in Solapur. Recalling that he was invited to campaign in Solapur during the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the Chief Minister said weavers of Telangana origin there had sought a donation for the construction of the Bhavan.



# US to resume security support to Ukraine as Kyiv says it is ready to accept ceasefire proposal

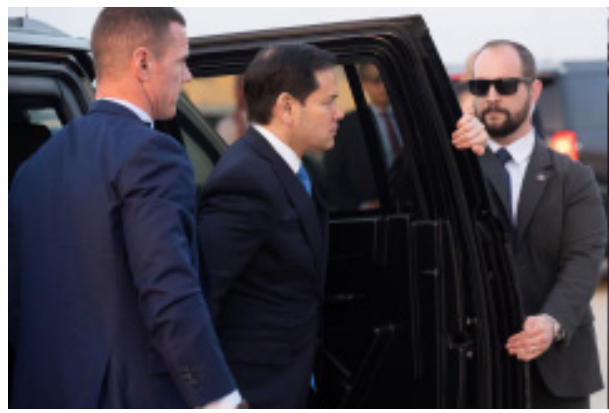
GNS News Agency, March 13

JEDDAH, The United States agreed on Tuesday to resume military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine after Kyiv said it was ready to support Washington's proposal for a 30-day ceasefire with Russia, the countries said in a joint statement. After more than eight hours of talks with Ukrainian officials in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. would now take the offer to Russia, and the ball is in Moscow's court. "Our hope is that the Russians will answer 'yes' as quickly as possible, so we can get to the second phase of this, which is real negotiations," Rubio told reporters, referring to U.S. President Donald Trump. The Kremlin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago, and Russia, which has been making advances, now holds around a fifth of Ukraine's territory, including Crimea, which it annexed in 2014. Rubio said Washington wanted a full agreement with both Russia and Ukraine "as soon as possible." "Every day that goes by, this war continues, people die, people are bombed, people are hurt on both sides of this conflict," he said.

How Moscow would respond was far from certain. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he is open to discussing a peace deal, but he and his diplomats have repeatedly stated they are against a ceasefire and would seek a deal that safeguards Russia's long-term security. Putin told his Security Council on January 20 that there "should not be a short truce, not some kind of respite for regrouping forces and rearmament with the aim of subsequently continuing the conflict, but a long-term peace." He has also ruled out territorial concessions and said Ukraine must withdraw fully from four Ukrainian regions claimed and partly controlled by Russia. "Any agreements - with all the understanding of the need for compromise - on our terms, not on American," an influential Russian lawmaker said on Wednesday. The Russian foreign ministry said after the U.S.-Ukraine talks on Tuesday only that it did not rule out contacts with U.S. representatives. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was in Saudi Arabia but did not participate in the talks, said the ceasefire was a "positive proposal," that covers the frontline in the conflict, not just fighting by air and sea.

WILL RUSSIA AGREE?

The Ukrainian leader said the ceasefire would take effect as soon as Russia agreed. "When the agreements come into force, during these 30 days of 'silence,' we will have time to prepare with our partners at the level of working documents all the aspects for reliable peace and long-term security," Zelenskyy said. Item 1 of 11 US Secretary of



State Marco Rubio steps off his motorcade as he walks to board a military airplane prior to departing from King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as he travels to Canada for a G7 Foreign Ministers meeting. Rubio said the plan would be delivered to the Russians through multiple channels. Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz, was due to meet his Russian counterpart in the coming days and Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff plans to visit Moscow this week to meet Putin. On Tuesday, Trump said he hoped for a swift ceasefire and thought he would talk to Putin this week. "I hope it'll be over the next few days," he told reporters at a White House event to promote his close adviser Elon Musk's Tesla car company. The U.S.-Ukraine agreement was a sharp turnaround from an acrimonious White House meeting on February 28 between the new Republican U.S. president, who has long been a Ukraine aid skeptic, and Zelenskyy.

In Tuesday's joint statement, the two countries said they agreed to conclude as soon as possible a comprehensive agreement for developing Ukraine's critical mineral resources, which had been in the works and was thrown into limbo by that meeting. Following that encounter, the United States cut off intelligence sharing and weapons shipments to Ukraine, underlining Trump's willingness to pressure a U.S. ally as he pivots to a more conciliatory approach to Moscow. Trump said on Tuesday he would invite Zelenskyy back to the White House. Ukrainian officials said late on Tuesday that both U.S. military assistance and intelligence sharing had resumed. A top aide to Zelenskyy said options for security guarantees to Ukraine were discussed with U.S. officials. Security guarantees have been one of Kyiv's key aims, and some European countries have expressed willingness to explore sending troops to Ukraine if

necessary as part of the guarantees. In the joint statement, Ukraine reiterated that European partners should be involved in the peace process. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte will be at the White House on Thursday. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba, who took part in the Jeddah talks, said that afterwards he talked to several European foreign ministers "about the outcomes of the milestone meeting." On Wednesday, Sybiba travels to Poland, Ukraine's neighbour and a NATO member, that has been a steadfast supporter of Kyiv since the start of the war.

"It seems like the Americans and Ukrainians have taken an important step towards peace. And Europe stands ready to help reach a just and lasting peace," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X. Waltz said the initial resumption of military assistance for Ukraine would involve equipment from U.S. stockpiles approved by former U.S. President Joe Biden and stopped by Trump. As the diplomacy plays out, Ukraine's battlefield positions have been under heavy pressure, particularly in Russia's Kursk region where Moscow's forces have launched a push to flush out Kyiv's troops, which had been trying to hold a patch of land as a bargaining chip. Ukraine overnight launched its biggest drone attack on Moscow and the surrounding region yet, showing Kyiv can also land major blows after a steady stream of Russian missile and drone attacks, one of which killed 14 people on Saturday. The Tuesday attack, in which 337 drones were downed over Russia, killed at least three employees of a meat warehouse and caused a short shutdown at Moscow's four airports.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Reporting by Daphne Psalekakis and Pasha Magid; Additional reporting by Anastasia Malenko, Doina Chiacu, Jonathan Landay, Humeira Pamuk, Steve Holland, Lili Bayer, Lidia Kelly and Yulia Dya; Writing by Tom Balmforth and Patricia Zengerle; Editing by Humeira Pamuk, Cynthia Osterman, Sharon Singleton and Michael Perry. Daphne Psalekakis is a foreign policy correspondent based in Washington, D.C., where she covers U.S. sanctions, Africa and the State Department. She has covered the rollout of U.S. sanctions on Russia after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Washington's efforts to enforce its sanctions and the U.S. response to the conflict in Ethiopia, among other issues. She previously covered European Union politics and energy and climate policy for Reuters in Brussels as part of an Overseas Press Club Foundation fellowship in 2019. Daphne holds a Bachelor of Journalism in Print and Digital News and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies.

## Kolkata Metro to run only 124 trains on Holi, none on Orange and Purple line



The first trains will begin at 2.30 pm from all terminal stations: Noapara to Kavi Subhash, Kavi Subhash to Dakshineswar, Dakshineswar to Kavi Subhash, and Noapara to Dakshineswar

GNS News Agency, March 13

The Kolkata Metro Railway has drastically cut down the number of trains running across the Blue Line, Green Line-1, and Green Line-2 on Friday (March 14). No metro trains will be plying on the Orange Line and Purple Line on that day, the authorities announced. The metro railway officials said the Dolyatra festival is the reason behind the reduced services. "Passengers planning to travel on this day are advised to take note of the changes, as services will operate with reduced frequency," officials said. Here is a look at the details: Instead of the usual 262 trains, only 60 (30 up and 30 down) will operate.

The first trains will begin at 2.30 pm from all terminal stations: Noapara to Kavi Subhash, Kavi Subhash to Dakshineswar, Dakshineswar to Kavi Subhash, and Noapara to Dakshineswar. The timing of the last services will remain unchanged. Only 42 trains (21 from Esplanade and 21 from Howrah Maidan) will operate, down from the usual 130. Services will start at 3.00 pm and run every 15 minutes. Only 22 trains (11 from Sealdah and 11 from Salt Lake Sector V) will operate, a large reduction from the usual 106. Services will start at 3 pm and run every 30 minutes, and the last trains will run at 8 pm from Salt Lake Sector V to Sealdah and vice versa. Meanwhile, commercial operations are currently on for the Kavi Subhash (New Garia) to Hemanta Mukhopadhyay (Ruby Crossing) section of the Orange Line, which will connect New Garia (Kavi Subhash station) with the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport through Salt Lake and New Town once fully operational. The Joka-Esplanade stretch falls under the Purple Line.

## Pakistan train hijack: 155 passengers rescued, others still held hostage

ISLAMABAD, GNS News Agency, March 13 Attackers wearing suicide bombs were sitting next to passengers taken hostage after militants took over a train in southwest Pakistan, sources said on Wednesday, complicating rescue efforts a day after the country's first such hijacking.

The separatist militants blew up a railway track and opened fire on the Jaffar Express on Tuesday as it travelled from Quetta, Balochistan's capital city, to Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Pakistani forces have rescued 155 passengers, and the government said a security operation was under way to free dozens still held hostage, without specifying the exact number.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), an ethnic armed group, claimed responsibility for the attack and threatened to start executing hostages unless Baloch political prisoners, activists, and missing persons it said had been abducted by the military were released within 48 hours. BLA said on Tuesday it was holding 214 people hostage, and a security source told Reuters that there were 425 passengers on the train when it was attacked.

The number of militants involved in the attack was not clear. The security sources said on Wednesday that 27 had been killed so far. BLA is the largest of several ethnic armed groups battling Pakistan's government in the mineral-rich province of Balochistan, bordering Afghanistan and Iran. Several of those rescued were brought to Quetta early Wednesday, escorted by security forces, where their relatives were waiting for them. People were attacked ... passengers were injured and some passengers died," said Muhammad Ashraf, who was on the train. Several witnesses interviewed by Geo News said they were asked by security personnel to stay low when there was gunfire. Visuals from the broadcaster showed those rescued meeting and hugging relatives and friends. A woman, who said her son was among the passengers still held hostage, confronted provincial minister Mir Zohoor Uledhi when he visited the freed passengers. "If you cannot protect trains, then you should not run them. Please, bring my son back," she said. Pakistan Railways has suspended all operations from Punjab and Sindh provinces to Balochistan until security agencies confirm the area is safe, local media reported on Wednesday. Uledhi told reporters that the government was working to improve the security situation in the region. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Shahzad is an accomplished media professional, with over two decades of experience. He primarily reports out of Pakistan, Afghanistan regions, with a great interest and an extensive knowledge of Asia. He also reports on politics, economy, finance, business, commodities, Islamist militancy, human rights



## Greenland's independence gradualists win election amid Trump control pledge

GNS News Agency, March 13

NUUK, Greenland, Greenland's pro-business opposition Demokraatit party, which favours a slow approach to independence from Denmark, won Tuesday's parliamentary election that was dominated by U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge to take control of the island. Demokraatit secured 29.9% of the votes with all ballots counted, up from 9.1% in 2021, ahead of the opposition Naleraq party, which favours rapid independence, at 24.5%. Since taking office in January, Donald Trump has vowed to make Greenland - a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark - part of the United States, saying it is vital to U.S. security interests, an idea rejected by most Greenlanders. The vast island, with a population of just 57,000, has been caught up in a geopolitical race for dominance in the Arctic, where melting ice caps are making its resources more accessible and opening new shipping routes. Both Russia and China have intensified military activity in the region. "People want change ... We want more business to finance our welfare," said Jens-Frederik Nielsen, Demokraatit's leader and a former minister of industry and minerals.

"We don't want independence tomorrow, we want a good foundation," Nielsen told reporters in Nuuk. He will now hold talks with other parties to try and form a governing coalition. The ruling Inuit Ataqatigiit party and its partner Siumut, which also seek a slow path towards independence, won a combined 36% of votes, down from 66.1% in 2021.

"We respect the election outcome," Prime Minister Mute Egede of the Inuit Ataqatigiit said in a Facebook post, adding that he would listen to any proposals in upcoming coalition talks. Greenland is a former Danish colony and has been a territory since 1953. It gained some autonomy in 1979 when its first parliament was formed, but Copenhagen still controls its foreign affairs, defence and monetary policy and provides just under \$1 billion a year to the economy. In 2009, it won the right to declare full independence through a referendum, even though it has not done so out of concern living standards would drop without Denmark's economic support. "I strongly believe that we will very soon start to live a life more based on who we are, based on our culture, based on our own language, and start to make regulations based on us, not based on Denmark," said Qapanuk Olsen, candidate for the main pro-independence party Naleraq.

Inge Olsvig Brandt, a candidate for the ruling Inuit Ataqatigiit party, said: "We don't need the independence right now. We have too many things to work on. I think we have to work with ourselves, our history, and we are going to have a lot of healing work with us before we can take the next step." Voting had been extended by half an hour at some of the 72 polling stations across the Arctic island, where some 40,500 people were eligible to cast their ballot, although the final turnout was not immediately available. Item 1 of 11 Leader of Demokraatit, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, reacts during the election party at cafe Killut in Nuuk, March 12, 2025. Ritzau Scanpix/Mads Claus Rasmussen via Trump's vocal interest has shaken up the status quo, and coupled with the growing pride of the Indigenous people in their Inuit culture, put independence front and centre in the election. In the final debate on Greenland's state broadcaster KNR late on Monday, leaders of the five parties currently in parliament unanimously said they did not trust Trump. "He is trying to influence us. I can understand if citizens feel insecure," said Erik Jensen, leader of government coalition partner Siumut. A January poll suggested a majority of Greenland's inhabitants support independence, but are divided on timing. Early on, the election campaign focused on the anger and frustration aimed at historical wrongdoings by Denmark, according to Julie Rademacher, a consultant and former adviser to Greenland's government.

"But I think the fear of the U.S. imperialist approach has lately become bigger than the anger towards Denmark," said Rademacher. Reuters spoke to more than a dozen Greenlanders in Nuuk, all of whom said they favoured independence, although many expressed concern that a swift transition could damage the economy and eliminate Nordic welfare services like universal healthcare and free schooling. "We don't want to be part of the U.S. for obvious reasons: healthcare and Trump," said Tuuta Lynge-Larsen,

a bank employee and Nuuk resident, adding that this election was especially important. "We don't like the attention, to put it short." The island holds substantial natural resources, including critical minerals such as rare earths used in high-tech industries, ranging from electric vehicles to missile systems. However, Greenland has been slow to extract them due to environmental concerns, severe weather, and China's near-total control of the sector, which has made it difficult for companies elsewhere to make a profit or secure buyers. Trump initially declined to rule out military force to take control of the territory, alarming many Greenlanders, although he later softened his stance, stating he would respect the will of the local people and was "ready to invest billions of dollars" if they joined the U.S.. Egede has stressed the island is not for sale and advocated for a broad coalition government to resist external pressure. In an interview aired on Monday by Danish broadcaster DR, he dismissed Trump's offer as disrespectful, expressing willingness to cooperate with other countries instead. Denmark's prime minister has said Greenland is not for sale, but made it clear that it is up to the local people to decide their future. All six main political parties support independence but differ on how and when it could be achieved. The pro-independence Naleraq party, the leading opposition force, had gained momentum ahead of the election, bolstered by U.S. interest and fresh accusations of Denmark's historic exploitation of Greenland's mineral wealth. The party believes the U.S. attention strengthens Greenland's position in secession talks with Denmark and aims to bring a deal with Copenhagen to a vote before the next election in four years. Reporting by Tom Little and Jacob Gronholt-Pedersen; additional reporting by Louise Rasmussen, Johan Ahlander, Stine Jacobsen and Terje Solsvik; Editing by Sharon Singleton, Alexandra Hudson, Gerry Doyle and Kate Mayberry. Based in Copenhagen, Jacob oversees reporting from Denmark, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

## China wraps it's Congress meet amid rumours over missing Chairman

GNS News Agency, March 13

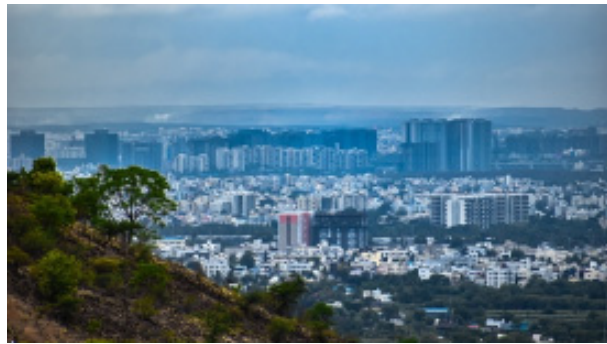
The annual meeting of the Chinese parliament ended with rumours swirling around the absence of its chairman Zhao Leji and concerns over the slowing economy amid U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff war as well as sluggish domestic consumption. Curtains came down on the week-long annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC) on Tuesday (March 11, 2025) as about 3,000 lawmakers much on the expected lines endorsed the government work report, the budget, besides the 2025 plan for national economic and social development. The annual session attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who also heads the Communist Party and the country's military, ended on a note of uncertainty over the absence of Mr. Zhao since Monday. However, it was officially clarified Mr. Zhao, 68, was absent because of "respiratory tract infection".

For the first time in recent history, the chairman of China's top legislative body was absent at the closing of its

parliamentary meeting, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. Ethnic minority delegates stand for a photograph after the closing session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing, China on March 10, 2025. It is also the first time in decades that the NPC closing meeting was not attended by all Politburo Standing Committee members, it said. On Monday (March 10, 2025), Mr. Zhao was also absent from the closing of the annual session of the advisory body of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which also holds its meeting every year along the NPC. Mr. Zhao, chairman of the NPC and former secretary of the powerful anti-corruption body, is ranked third after Mr. Xi and Premier Li Qiang in the hierarchy of the powerful seven-member Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC). However, CPC's power structures declined in stature under Mr. Xi who is in his unprecedented third five-year term following his designation as the core leader of the party, next only to the party founder Mao Zedong.



## Pondy CM announces proposal to hike funds under MLA Local Area Development scheme



GNS News Agency, March 13

Puducherry, Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy, presenting the budget for 2025-26 in the territorial assembly here on Wednesday, proposed to increase the annual allocation under the MLA Local Area Development scheme from 2 crore to 3 crore. The chief minister also stated that the government currently provides 1,000 per month to women heads of BPL families and has proposed increasing this to 2,500 from the 2025-26 fiscal year. Detailing department-wise proposals, he announced that the Survey and Land Records Department would conduct large-scale mapping of Puducherry using drone technology with technical support from the Survey of India.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Survey of India, and upon completion of the digital drone survey, all land parcels will be assigned a unique identification number. Rangasamy said the government has initiated several measures to control pollution, including the phased elimination of single-use plastics in Puducherry, integrating large-scale orange-category industries into a Continuous Online Emission/Effluent Monitoring System, and installing cloth bag vending machines in marketplaces. Rangasamy also announced that the government plans to increase

monthly assistance by 500 for all beneficiaries under the old-age pension scheme operated by the Women and Child Development Department. Students who have lost a parent and are studying in classes 1-5 in government and government-aided schools will receive 2,000, those in classes 6-10 will receive 3,000, and students in classes 11 and 12 will be provided 4,000, he said.

Further, Rangasamy said the Green Mobility Policy will be announced soon to drive the adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles, accelerating Puducherry's shift to eco-friendly transportation. The policy includes subsidies for e-vehicle purchases and a 50 per cent concession on road tax for registered e-vehicles, he added. The Department of Science, Technology, and Environment of the Puducherry government has proposed a ₹1,433 crore project to strengthen coastal resilience and the economy with financial support from the World Bank, he said. The five-year project has been submitted to the Department of Economic Affairs for approval, he added. Rangasamy reaffirmed his government's commitment to affordable higher education. He announced that financial assistance under the Perunthalaivar Kamaraj Financial Assistance Scheme, currently available to students admitted through the Centralised Admission Committee in medical, engineering, and nursing courses, will be extended to all government-quota courses from the next academic year. During the chief minister's address on Health and Family Welfare proposals, Independent MLA P R Siva from Tirunallar, Karaikal, interrupted the session and walked out after raising concerns over healthcare facilities in Karaikal. After Rangasamy concluded his speech, Speaker R Selvam announced that Siva's remarks had been expunged from the records.

Puducherry, Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy, presenting the budget for 2025-26 in the territorial assembly here on Wednesday, proposed to increase the annual allocation under the MLA Local Area Development

scheme from 2 crore to 3 crore. The chief minister also stated that the government currently provides 1,000 per month to women heads of BPL families and has proposed increasing this to 2,500 from the 2025-26 fiscal year. Detailing department-wise proposals, he announced that the Survey and Land Records Department would conduct large-scale mapping of Puducherry using drone technology with technical support from the Survey of India. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Survey of India, and upon completion of the digital drone survey, all land parcels will be assigned a unique identification number. Rangasamy said the government has initiated several measures to control pollution, including the phased elimination of single-use plastics in Puducherry, integrating large-scale orange-category industries into a Continuous Online Emission/Effluent Monitoring System, and installing cloth bag vending machines in marketplaces. Rangasamy also announced that the government plans to increase monthly assistance by 500 for all beneficiaries under the old-age pension scheme operated by the Women and Child Development Department. Students who have lost a parent and are studying in classes 1-5 in government and government-aided schools will receive 2,000, those in classes 6-10 will receive 3,000, and students in classes 11 and 12 will be provided 4,000, he said. Further, Rangasamy said the Green Mobility Policy will be announced soon to drive the adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles, accelerating Puducherry's shift to eco-friendly transportation.

The policy includes subsidies for e-vehicle purchases and a 50 per cent concession on road tax for registered e-vehicles, he added. The Department of Science, Technology, and Environment of the Puducherry government has proposed a 1,433 crore project to strengthen coastal resilience and the economy with financial support from the World Bank, he said. The five-year project has been submitted to the Department of Economic Affairs for approval, he added.

## Law ministry asks Gujarat court to serve Adani in U.S. SEC suit



GNS News Agency, March 13

The Ministry of Law and Justice took action under the Hague convention last month to serve Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani in a U.S. lawsuit, the Union government confirmed to The Hindu. The Department of Legal Affairs (DLA) under the law ministry forwarded a summons notice from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in the SEC v. Adani case to a sessions court in Ahmedabad, asking it to serve Mr. Adani the relevant papers at his Ahmedabad address. "Under consideration is a request for service of summons received from the Central Authority USA, under the Hague Convention for Service of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Matters, 1965," the government said in an internal note provided to The Hindu. "The documents have been checked and found to be in consonance with the Hague Convention. We may, if approved, forward the documents to the District & Sessions Court, Ahmedabad, Gujarat for effecting service upon the respondent." The letter to the sessions court is dated February 25. The Hague convention allows signatory countries to directly request an agency in each other's countries for assistance in serving legal papers on their residence for cases filed abroad.

In conjunction with federal prosecutors in the Eastern District of New York, the SEC sued Mr. Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani, in their capacities as executives of Adani Green Ltd, for allegedly concealing from American investors "the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to Indian government officials to secure their commitment to purchase energy at above-market rates that would benefit Adani green and Azure Power," a solar energy plant operator. The case is ongoing at the US District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The DLA declined to confirm that it had received and forwarded the summons request in an earlier response to a Right to Information application by The Hindu. That application was filed on February 19, and the response was sent on March 3. However, the DLA said in its response, which was sent a week after it had already forwarded the summons to the Gujarat court, that it had not received any such request — but only as of February 21. While the lawsuit led to considerable uncertainty for the Adani Group, the firm is reportedly acting on hope that the new administration in the US under President Donald Trump — which has paused all enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977 — would lead to less movement in the legal matters against Mr. Adani in that country. The Financial Times reported recently that the Adani Group has resumed scouting for business opportunities in the US. It is unclear if the Adani matter was brought up in bilateral discussions between India and the United States. When asked by a reporter during his February trip to Washington, DC if it was, Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded that such "personal matters" are not discussed when world leaders meet.

## Mufti calls for healing touch, not muscular policy in Kashmir after AAC, IM ban

GNS News Agency, March 13

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said the Centre's ban on Awami Action Committee (AAC) and Itihadul Muslimeen (IM) could be an arm-twisting tactic and asserted the people of Kashmir now need a healing touch rather than a "muscular policy". Noting that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was being provided Z-Plus cover by the Centre, she said had he been an anti-national, he would not have been accorded such security. The Centre on Tuesday banned the AAC, headed by Kashmir's influential cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Shia leader Masroor Abbas Ansari-led IM for five years for their alleged anti-national activities, supporting terrorism and fuelling secessionist activities. "Mirwaiz himself is a victim. His father formed this party, he (Mirwaiz's father) was martyred. Similarly, Masroor Ansari's IM, these are socio-political organisations. So, I fail to understand that on one hand, the Centre, understanding the sensitivity of Mirwaiz's security, provided Z-Plus category security to him, but on the other hand, his party is banned. I fail to understand how long will they continue their muscular policy," the PDP chief told reporters here. The former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir said the move seems to be "an arm-twisting tactic". "Either the Centre is black-mailing both of them for something, to do this or that, and if they do not do that, then they take action. I do not know. I do not understand that on the one hand you give Z-Plus security to a person, but on the other hand, you ban his party," she said. Mufti said such things should not happen, and the people of Kashmir now need a healing touch rather than a muscular policy. "You (Centre) have used the muscular policy a lot, and the people now need a healing touch and a softer attitude."

## Boundary dispute in Changlang district to be taken up with Assam soon: Arunachal CM

GNS News Agency, March 13

Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday said that his government will soon take up the boundary dispute in Changlang district with Assam for an amicable settlement. Changlang was not included in the purview of the Namsai Declaration signed between the chief ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in 2022 to bring down the number of disputed border villages from 123 in 11 districts to 86. Responding to a question from Independent MLA Laisam Simai in the assembly, Khandu said that the Regional Committee for Changlang failed to submit its report to the local commission set up by the Supreme Court, leading to the district's exclusion from the resolution process. "According to the local commission's directives, the Namsai Declaration addressed boundary disputes involving 123 villages across 11 districts," Khandu said. He added that disputes have been resolved in five districts, while the remaining six are close to settlement. The chief minister assured the House that the matter concerning Changlang would be addressed separately with the Assam government.

Raising the issue, Simai pointed out that the regional committee for Changlang, formed in June 2022, has been inactive due to Assam's initial opposition, as the 2014 local commission report did not mention any disputed village in the district. He emphasised that Changlang, the state's second-largest district, shares a long border with Assam and cannot be overlooked. Home Minister Mama Natung while responding to concerns of the lawmaker, informed the assembly that Assam objected to Changlang's inclusion in the dispute resolution process, citing its absence from the 123 disputed villages listed in the 2014 local commission report.

"The regional committee for Changlang was not re-constituted, but the state government has requested Assam for an early resolution," Natung said, adding that the issue

## Elsevier launches generative AI tool for researchers



GNS News Agency, March 13

Dutch publishing company, Elsevier, that specialises in medical and scientific content— on Wednesday launched ScienceDirect AI, a generative AI tool for researchers, the company announced, adding that it will enable researchers to instantly extract, summarize, and compare trusted insights from millions of full-text articles and book chapters on ScienceDirect. According to the company, researchers grapple with an ever-growing and overwhelming volume of information and need to quickly get accurate insights they can rely on. "Studies show that they spend 25%-35% of their time sifting through literature. ScienceDirect AI helps address this challenge by drawing on the broadest and deepest content set of millions of peer-reviewed full-text research articles and book chapters to generate instant accurate summaries and highlight key findings, while providing references to support reproducibility and integrity of research," it said. Broadest and deepest verified content set with power of generative AI: ScienceDirect AI surfaces insights from the world's largest corpus of peer-reviewed full-text articles and book chapters.

To ensure reliable insights that can be replicated, ScienceDirect AI provides clear links to sources of information and claims, including exact passages within research articles, offering the option to explore further. It is purposefully built to ensure accuracy and reduce the risk of hallucinations and biases. Users can transparently see how the tool reaches answers. "Over 30,000 researchers and librarians from 70 universities and R&D intensive corporations globally helped test and develop ScienceDirect AI. Building on the feedback received, the tool can save 50% of time spent on literature research and help to enhance their re-

search," read the company statement. ScienceDirect AI includes the following features: Ask ScienceDirect AI — search and summaries of full-text articles and book chapters; reading assistant— chat with a document in ScienceDirect; and compare experiments — experiment summary table. Users can search and get answers from within the full text of 14 million articles and book chapters, using their own words to describe what they need and why. ScienceDirect AI will search across the millions of documents in its index to provide a summary response with references, source snippets for each reference and short related insights summaries, while linking back to the original document. The conversational feature answers questions about the content of a specific full-text article or book chapter and allows researchers to ask further questions of the document. Users can click on references within the summaries to jump to locations in the article where the answer comes from, it also suggests research questions. Comparing and synthesizing literature can be very time consuming. ScienceDirect AI's unique compare experiments tool takes a set of articles and creates a table breaking down each experiment within them..

## Tamil Nadu issues high alert as mumps spread among school children in Coimbatore

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Health Department has issued a high alert as mumps cases continue to rise among children in Coimbatore. Authorities have intensified surveillance and preventive measures after 21 kindergarten (KG) students from a matriculation school in Peelamedu tested positive for the viral infection in the past two days. Following the outbreak, the school administration declared a holiday until March 12 to curb further transmission. Health officials from the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation reported that 13 KG students had initially shown symptoms two days ago. The school management promptly sent them home to prevent the disease from spreading. Health department officials have assured the public that there is no cause for panic. However, individuals experiencing symptoms of measles, mumps, or chickenpox are advised to seek medical attention at the nearest government hospital immediately. Mumps is a highly contagious viral disease

that primarily affects children but can also infect adolescents and adults. It commonly causes swelling of the parotid salivary glands on one or both sides of the face, leading to pain and discomfort. Other symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, difficulty chewing, and fatigue. The virus spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing and remains contagious from just before gland swelling begins to up to five days afterwards. Infected individuals should limit contact with others, rest adequately, and stay hydrated until they recover. While mumps is generally considered a mild, self-limiting illness, it can lead to complications, particularly in unvaccinated children. A study conducted by the Tamil Nadu Directorate of Public Health (DPH) using data from the Integrated Health Information Portal (IHIP) under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) has highlighted a concerning rise in mumps cases across the state.

## Ranya Rao stashed gold in shoes, lied to authorities; metal detector caught her: Report

GNS News Agency, March 13

Kannada actor Ranya Rao, who was arrested at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport in a gold smuggling case, claimed she did not have anything to declare at the green channel, but the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said the metal detector flagged something on her. According to an India Today report, the DRI arrest memo claimed Rao failed to provide proof of purchase or declaration for gold worth ₹12.56 crore recovered from her. A green channel at an airport is a customs lane for the passengers who do not have any dutiable or prohibited goods to declare.

The arrest memo stated that Ranya Rao, who arrived in Bengaluru on an Emirates EK 566 flight from Dubai on March 3 at 6:30 pm, was intercepted by DRI officers at the airport. While attempting to pass through the green channel, the actor denied carrying any dutiable goods, gold or contraband. But a metal detector alerted the DRI officers to the presence of concealed items on her person.

According to rules, if a traveller has dutiable or prohibited goods, he or she must go through the red channel and declare them to the customs officers. The customs will check the items, then calculate any applicable duty (tax), and allow passage only after paying the appropriate duty. "Ranya Rao wrapped gold bars around her waist": DRI arrest memo. The DRI arrest memo stated that Rao had wrapped the gold bars around her waist and calves with bandages and tissues. She hid the additional gold bars and cut pieces in her shoes and front pockets. The recovered gold was confirmed to be 24-karat and weighed 14.2 kg, valued at more than ₹12.56 crore, according to a government-approved valuer who certified the purity and value. The items were seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, the arrest memo read. After her arrest, the DRI officials carried out a search at her residence on Bengaluru's Lavelle Road, where her husband Jatin Hukkeri, was present. The search led to the seizure of cash amounting to 2.67 crore, additional jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and some incriminating documents, according to the arrest memo. The records from the Dubai Customs (dated November 13, 2024, and December 20, 2024) revealed that Ranya Rao had purchased gold in Dubai, declared it for travel to Geneva, but instead diverted her journey to India. She failed to explain the source of the seized cash and jewellery, raising further suspicion about her involvement in a larger smuggling network, the DRI stated.

## Atishi asks Delhi Speaker to conduct session impartially: 'Allotted only 14% speaking time'

GNS News Agency, March 13

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi, in a strongly worded letter to Delhi assembly speaker Vijender Gupta, demanded that the upcoming budget session from March 24 be conducted in a "fair and impartial" manner.

Atishi alleged that the opposition MLAs were given significantly less time to speak than BJP members during previous sessions. "While BJP MLAs were granted ample speaking time, some even speaking uninterrupted for more than 20 minutes, opposition MLAs, including myself, were restricted to just 3-4 minutes each," she said. The AAP leader referred to the discussion on the CAG report and claimed that 18 BJP MLAs spoke for 190 minutes, while five MLAs from the opposition were given a mere 33 minutes. Atishi wrote, "According to the proportion of our seats, the AAP should have received 32% of the speaking time, yet we were allotted only 14%. This imbalance severely undermines the ability of the opposition to effectively participate in legislative debates." The former Delhi chief minister condemned the conduct of previous legislative sessions and cited several incidents of "unfair treatment" to prove her point. She accused Gupta of fostering a "biased environment" in the house that sidelined the voices of her party, the opposition. In her letter, Atishi stated, "In a parliamentary democracy, the Speaker serves as the impartial custodian of legislative debate." She also claimed that opposition MLAs were subjected to punitive measures while expressing dissent, but no action was taken against BJP MLAs who allegedly indulged in similar or worse behaviour. "During the LG's address on 25.02.2025, both opposition and ruling party MLAs raised slogans."



## Damage-control measures launched to save mango crop from further wilting in Chittoor



GNS News Agency, March 13

The Chittoor district administration has stepped up efforts to assist mango farmers as the much-delayed flowering is fast withering, and stunted fruit sets are appearing in orchards spread over 1.7 lakh acres in the district this year. Deputy Director (Horticulture) D. Madhusudhan Reddy said that to prevent any further damage to the mango crop, officials at the mandal level, with the help of experts, would hold a series of awareness camps in villages to sensitize farmers about the urgent need to provide water to the trees

to prevent the withering of flowers.

"By doing so, the flowering and fruit set can be preserved to some extent. This process will also help mangoes at the ripening stage withstand heavy gales in the coming two months," the official said. Mr. Reddy added that another important measure the district administration has launched to protect the crop is the supply of "biodegradable covers" to mango farmers to safeguard the fruit on the trees. "These covers will help the crop sustain extreme heat in the ensuing summer and prevent discoloration and black spots on the fruit. Most importantly, it will keep the fruit safe in case of heavy winds," he said. The official stated that each farmer would be supplied with up to 10,000 covers. "While each cover costs ₹2, we will provide them to farmers at ₹1 each," he said. He also urged farmers to inform field-level horticulture officials if they require technical assistance for their fields. Mr. Reddy noted that, compared to other parts of the undivided Chittoor district, the regions of Punganur, Palamaner, and Kuppam are expected to bring good news to farmers, as the current stage of flowering and fruit set is healthy. "A very positive trend is that the Chittoor region is currently free from any pest or blight, unlike the Guntur and Vijayawada regions, where incidences have been reported," the official said.

## 'Consumes bhaang': Rabri Devi's big charge at Nitish Kumar in Bihar assembly

GNS News Agency, March 13

Intensifying her attack on Nitish Kumar, RJD leader Rabri Devi on Wednesday accused the Bihar chief minister of consuming 'bhaang' before attending the assembly session. She accused her of disrespecting women and demanded his resignation. "Nitish Kumar consumes 'bhaang' and comes to the assembly. He disrespects women, including me... He should see the kind of work we did when we were in power. What the people around him say, he speaks the same. His party members and some BJP leaders are asking him to say such things," she was quoted as saying by news agency ANI. "Nitish Kumar should resign himself... Even before him, my father (Lalu Yadav) became an MP. He could not have become CM without us giving the 'Samarthan Patra'... He should go to an ashram, as he cannot run the government. What is he doing with the future of 14 crore people? Nitish Kumar's condition is not stable," he claimed. Earlier this month, Nitish Kumar triggered a huge row by remarking that he made Lalu Yadav what he became. Reacting to the remark, Tejashwi Yadav



claimed to have saved Kumar's JDU twice. "You (RJD leaders) are from the party in which a husband made his wife the CM. They (RJD) have made you (women MLAs of RJD) the MLA, but have you done any work for women? How much work have we done for women? Do you people (RJD) understand that? You people are in the party which has done nothing for women," Nitish Kumar had said in the assembly.

## As Starlink eyes India, Airtel and Jio hope to augment their broadband play



GNS News Agency, March 13

Satellite internet connectivity, or SAT-G as Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal calls it, may be closer to being a reality in India than perhaps we realise. The SpaceX owned Starlink internet company has signed agreements with Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio. The idea is not just technology sharing, but also leveraging the retail presence of two of India's leading telecom players. The critical detail here is, Starlink is yet to receive the necessary regulatory approvals in the country. That means Starlink, apart from announcing the partnerships with Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, cannot list the products for pre-orders or for sale, cannot direct any active satellite beams within India's geographical boundaries, and also cannot list any possible pricing structure for subscriptions. Airtel and Reliance Jio confirm to HT that Starlink's India pricing is not yet officially available.

Yet, with these partnerships being announced in quick succession, one would expect Starlink must be close to receiving regulatory approvals. "We are looking forward to receiving authorisation from the Government of India to provide more people, organisations and businesses with access to Starlink's high-speed internet services," said Gwynne Shotwell, president and chief operating officer (COO), at SpaceX.

Earlier today, Mittal called on satellite players and telecom companies to work together, combining their strengths. "I have no doubt the satellite and the telecom industry globally will respond to my call to combine their strengths. For the telecom industry, the addition of satellite technology should be no different from bringing new technologies to its customers," he said. "Just like 4G, 5G, and 6G in the future, we will now have one more technology in our mix, i.e. SAT-G. Soon customers will be able to carry their mobiles to the remotest part of the world, with them in the skies and blue oceans," Mittal added. Airtel would hope Starlink complements their broadband product portfolio including 5G NSA or non-standalone network, fiber broadband under Xstream branding, 5G fixed wireless access or FWA called Xstream AirFiber, as well as the upcoming IPTV or internet protocol television services. Jio also has the Jio Fiber and Jio AirFiber broadband products, alongside the 5G SA or standalone mobile networks. How Airtel and Jio envision the Starlink partnership The contours of Airtel's agreement with Starlink will mean leveraging the former's retail footprint in the country — easier access to retail consumers, as well as enterprise customers, communities, schools, as well as medicare facilities, than it otherwise may have been. Airtel says Starlink will be able to leverage their existing ground network infrastructure too, while Starlink will assist in expanding Airtel's broadband and mobile network across telecom circles. "This collaboration enhances our ability to bring world-class high-speed broadband to even the most remote parts of India, ensuring that every individual, business, and community has reliable internet. Starlink will complement and enhance Airtel's suite of products to ensure reliable and affordable broadband for our Indian customers — wherever they live and work," said Gopal Vittal, managing director and vice chairman, Bharti Airtel Ltd., in a statement.

Jio says they will make Starlink's connectivity products and solutions available across their online and offline retail presence, as well as for enterprises and small or medium businesses. Jio also confirms that they'll establish a mechanism to support customer service, installation and activation of Starlink's services for customers.

"Our collaboration with SpaceX to bring Starlink to India strengthens our commitment and marks a transformative step toward seamless broadband connectivity for all. By integrating Starlink into Jio's broadband ecosystem, we are expanding our reach and enhancing the reliability and accessibility of high-speed broadband in this AI-driven era, empowering communities and businesses across the country," said Mathew Oommen, group chief executive officer (CEO), Reliance Jio, in a statement.

"Satellite broadband has the potential to expand connectivity, bridge the digital divide, unlock new economic possibilities, and foster digital inclusion. Over the short to long term, a confluence of technological breakthroughs, affordable service models, and supportive government policies can unlock the transformative potential of satellite broadband for India," Prabhu Ram, head for industry intelligence group at Cyber Media Research (CMR), told earlier.

Wires can only be drawn so far. To the nearest telecom tower for 3G, 4G or 5G mobile networks. Or to indoor spaces, for wired broadband to create a Wi-Fi network for PCs and phones. That physical limitation is represented in the International Telecom Union (ITU) numbers, which indicate approximately 68% of the world's population, that's around 5.5 billion people, are now online in some form. As of 2024, an estimated 2.6 billion people still remain offline. That's a big gap. It isn't easy to deploy last-mile infrastructure, particularly in difficult terrain and more so in lower income countries (terrain, not necessarily a limitation here; return on investment more so). When it comes to investments, less is often more. In this case, internet connectivity beamed from the sky by satellites that are closer to earth, can create a coverage envelope much quicker than on-ground infrastructure.

That is a simple, yet complex premise of satellite broadband, a template used by SpaceX's Starlink, Eutelsat OneWeb that's also backed by Bharti Airtel, HughesNet by Hughes Communications, as well as Amazon's Kuiper which is expected to activate its first satellite constellation this year, and subsequently roll out services in parts of the world. Think of satellite internet as a melding between how you access mobile broadband on your phones wirelessly from a tower, and how you may receive direct to home (DTH) television service from a satellite to your home with a dish antenna. In homes, offices, and static locations, an outdoor unit would receive signals from a satellite overhead which is connected via a networking cable to a Wi-Fi router that sits indoors.

There are different types of satellite that are being used for delivering internet and voice. Starlink uses LEO, or Low Earth Orbit satellites. Starlink's constellation, at this time, consists of 6750 satellites, at a distance of around 550km from earth — by far the biggest constellation of its kind. LEO satellites operate in space at 2,000 km or less, above the earth's surface, are comparatively less costly owing to smaller sizes, but potentially shorter life spans. The satellites use Ku-Band and E-Band antennas beaming signals earthward, which are received by the Starlink antennas installed outdoors in homes or other establishments. These are connected to a router that sits indoors, creating a Wi-Fi network.

"Most satellite internet services come from single geostationary satellites that orbit the planet at 35,786 km. As a result, the round-trip data time between the user and satellite, also known as latency, is high, making it nearly impossible to support streaming, online gaming, video calls or other high data rate activities," they point out in an explainer on their website.

## Tejashwi Yadav accuses Nitish Kumar of making lewd gesture at Rabri Devi: 'Bindi kyon...'



GNS News Agency, March 13

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday accused Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar of making a lewd gesture at former CM Rabri Devi in the assembly.

"I feel pity for Nitish Kumar. He is at such a stage when we pray to God to keep him healthy. Nitish Kumar's remarks in the House indicate that he is not normal. I think he should resign now. In the House, he makes weird gestures. He gestured to Rabri Devi about her putting a bindi on her

forehead. The CM is making gestures asking, "Why are you putting on a bindi?" ANI quoted Tejashwi Yadav as saying. "I want to get that video from the House. Earlier too, he was making remarks on a minister named Sheila Mandal's bindi. He says he made Lalu ji. There is no comparison between them. The chief minister lost consecutive elections. My father became an MP in 1977 itself," the RJD leader said.

"Nitish Kumar should resign himself... Even before him, my father (Lalu Yadav) became an MP. He could not have become CM without us giving the 'Samarthan Patra'... He should go to an ashram, as he cannot run the government. What is he doing with the future of 14 crore people? Nitish Kumar's condition is not stable," he said. On March 7, Nitish Kumar attacked Lalu Prasad Yadav for appointing his wife, Rabri Devi, as CM when he was jailed in 1997 regarding the fodder scam. "You (RJD leaders) are from the party in which a husband made his wife the CM. They (RJD) have made you (women MLAs of RJD) the MLA, but have you done any work for women? How much work have we done for women? Do you people (RJD) understand that? You people are in the party which has done nothing for women," Kumar had said in the Assembly.

## 'Bhagwa is my identity': CM Yogi says Sambhal predates Islam, Hari Vishnu temple was destroyed in 1526

GNS News Agency, March 13

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday stated that Sambhal, mentioned in scriptures over 5,000 years old, predates Islam, and the Hari Vishnu temple was destroyed in 1526. "Sambhal represents a historical truth, and I have always spoken about it openly," said Yogi Adityanath at a media event in Lucknow. He also mentioned that 'Bhagwa' represents his identity, as well as that of Sanatan Dharm, and expressed pride in it, adding that one day, the whole world would embrace it. "Bhagwa is my identity, Sanatan Dharm's identity and I am proud of it. One day, the whole world would wear it," said Yogi.

He said that as a Yogi, he respects all faiths but opposed the forcible occupation of religious sites. He also highlighted that out of 68 pilgrimage sites in Sambhal, only 18 have been identified, and Jalabhishek was performed at a Shiva temple after 56 years. "I am a Yogi, and I respect every sect and religion... But it is not acceptable if someone forcibly occupies a place and destroys someone's faith... There were 68 pilgrimage places in Sambhal, and we have only been able to find 18 so far. In Sambhal, Jalabhishek was performed after 56 years at a Shiva temple," said Yogi Adityanath. Yogi slammed Congress for opposing the Maha



Kumbh, asserting they resist every positive initiative. He highlighted the alleged chaos and corruption during the first Kumbh Mela in 1954, when Congress was in power, which allegedly resulted in over 1,000 deaths. "They oppose every good work. All of them have had opportunities. The first Kumbh Mela of independent India was organised in 1954 when Congress was in power both in the state and at the center. At that time, the scene was marked by corruption, disorder, and anarchy. More than 1,000 deaths occurred, and this happened at every Kumbh Mela thereafter. This is not hidden from anyone," Yogi added.

## 'Juma time cannot be extended': Darbhanga mayor calls for 2-hour Holi break



GNS News Agency, March 13

The Darbhanga Mayor released a new statement ahead of the upcoming Holi on March 14, which coincides with the Friday prayers held during the month of Ramzan. In the statement, Darbhanga Mayor Anjum Ara appealed to the city residents to stop Holi from 12:30 to 2:00; as she said, "Jumma time cannot be extended, so there should be a two-hour break on Holi." The mayor urged that those playing Holi should maintain distance from mosques and places of prayer for two hours.

She further added, "Holi and Ramzan have been celebrated

many times before and have been celebrated peacefully in the district. "The district administration gave the statement after the peace committee meeting. Recently, Sambhal Circle Officer (CO) Anuj Kumar Chaudhary, on March 7, said those uncomfortable with colours should remain indoors as the Hindu festival comes once a year. A peace committee meeting was held on Tuesday at the Sambhal Kotwali police station in view of the upcoming Holi festival on Friday.

Sambhal Circle Officer (CO) Chaudhary said that since Holi comes once a year and there are 52 Jummas (Fridays) in a year, people from the Muslim community have been requested to stay indoors if they cannot accept being coloured. "We have requested to the Muslim community that if they cannot accept being coloured, then they should not come to the place where Holi is being celebrated. There are 52 'Jumma' (Fridays) in a year, but only one day for Holi. Hindus wait for Holi the whole year, just like Muslims wait for Eid... We have given a direct message that when people play Holi, and if they (Muslims) don't want colours to fall on them, then they should stay at home. And if they want to leave their house, they should be big-hearted enough not to object if colour falls on them..." Chaudhary told reporters after the meeting.

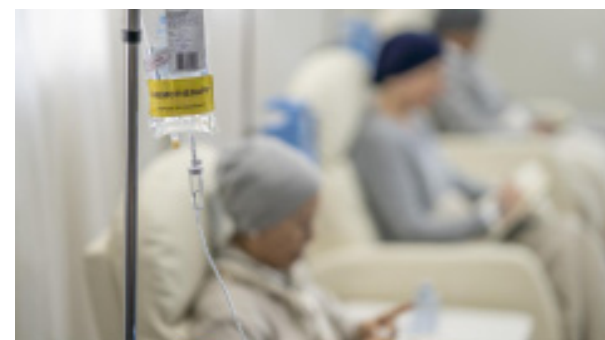
## People living near river drains are at elevated risk of developing cancer: ICMR

GNS News Agency, March 13

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said that a study conducted in 2024 and published in the Indian Academy of Sciences on human health risk assessments revealed that people residing near river drains are highly prone to developing cancer, with hazard quotients observed to be above threshold limits. Lead, iron, and aluminum exceeded permissible limits of the Central Pollution Control Board.

Mr. Jadhav said that with regard to the steps taken for the treatment of cancer, the Central government is committed to improving cancer care and treatment accessibility through the implementation of the Strengthening of Tertiary Care Cancer Facilities Scheme. Under this initiative, 19 State Cancer Institutes (SCIs) and 20 Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCCs) have been approved to provide advanced diagnostic and treatment facilities including the National Cancer Institute in Hajjar, Haryana. The second campus of the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute in Kolkata has also been established to further enhance cancer care services. In addition, cancer treatment facilities have been approved in all 22 new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), which will offer comprehensive diagnostic, medical, and surgical services. The government will ensure that treatment in these hospitals is either free or highly subsidised for the poor and needy, making essential healthcare accessible to all.

As per the written reply cancer treatment is also covered under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (ABPMJAY), which provides up to ₹5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary care. This scheme benefits approximately 55 crore people (12.37 crore families) from the bottom 40% of the population. Recently, the PM-JAY extended health coverage to all senior citizens



aged 70 and above, regardless of income. The scheme includes over 200 packages encompassing more than 500 procedures related to Medical Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, and Palliative Medicine within the National Health Benefit Package (HBP).

To further support cancer treatment, the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) has been launched to establish dedicated outlets known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs). As of February 28, 2025, a total of 15,057 PMBJKs have been opened across the country, providing quality generic medicines at affordable prices. The scheme includes 2,047 types of medicines and 300 surgical devices, with 87 products specifically available for cancer treatment. "Additionally, the Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) initiative, launched by the Health Ministry aims to provide affordable medicines for cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and other health conditions. As of January 31, 2025, there are 222 AMRIT Pharmacies across 29 States and Union Territories, offering over 6,500 drugs, including those for cancer, at discounts of up to 50% off market rates," added the Minister.



## Justice V. Ramaswami, the first judge of Supreme Court to face impeachment proceedings



ports continued and until his name was cleared on this aspect". He announced his decision in a written statement at the Chief Justice's packed court hall, immediately after a Constitution Bench that he presided over to hear the Bhopal gas leak disaster settlement review case rose for the day. The CJI had also informed the court that the judge concerned, on July 18, applied for leave for six weeks in the first instance effective July 23.

Venkataraman disapproves CJI's decision However, Venkataraman, in his memoir, disapproved of the decision of the CJI as the latter exercised, "however rightly on merits, a power which has not been provided for in the Constitution". As the impeachment procedure "is tedious and cumbersome", he had proposed to eminent lawyers and Ministers the idea of ombudsman, which, he said, had found no takers. A day before the Ninth Lok Sabha was dissolved by Venkataraman on March 13, 1991, Speaker Rabi Ray admitted a motion signed by 108 Members of Parliament for impeachment of Justice Ramaswami under Articles 124 (4) and (5) of the Constitution — "dealing with procedure for removal of a judge of a superior court on ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity". He had constituted a committee, headed by the sitting judge of the Supreme Court, Justice P.B. Sawant, with Justice P. D. Desai, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, and Justice O. Chinappa Reddy, former judge of the Supreme Court, as members. A petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of Ray's decision and questioning the continuance of the committee beyond the tenure of the Lok Sabha. However, on October 29, 1991, the court cleared the decks for the probe by the committee into allegations of "financial irregularities" against Justice Ramaswami. A Constitution Bench, by a majority of four (Justices B.C. Ray, M.N. Venkatachaliah, J.S. Verma, and S.C. Agrawal) to one (Justice L.M. Sharma), concluded that under the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, the motion admitted by Ray had not lapsed on the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Justice Sharma held that "the Courts including the Supreme Court do not have any jurisdiction" under the Constitution to go into such a matter in view of the control given to Parliament.

Charges untrue: Kapil Sibal On May 10, 1993, Somnath Chatterjee, who had moved the motion in the Lok Sabha, said it was "not against the entire judiciary but against the behaviour of a judge" that made him unsuitable for the post he occupied. In his more than hour-long speech, Chatterjee said the judge had "made repeated attempts to prevent proper investigation" of the charges and had not cooperated with the three-member committee, lest the truth come out. He faulted the judge for "not utilising deliberately a number of opportunities" given by the committee to present his case. At the beginning of the day's proceedings, Lok Sabha Speaker V. Shivraj Patil rejected a move by R. Prabhu, who represented the Nilgiris, questioning the locus standi of the present House. Mr. Kapil Sibal, appearing on a specially erected bar, dismissed all the 11 allegations of misuse of public funds against his client as "untrue" and contended that he was "not corrupt". He defended Justice Ramaswami, who had, according to counsel, accepted his posting from Chennai to Chandigarh when Punjab was a disturbed area and no judge was prepared to go there. After the defeat of the motion, Justice Ramaswami commented, "God is great," whereas many former judges refused to make any observation. Though calls for his resignation continued, he retired in February 1994. His son, Sanjay Ramaswami, who was elected to the Assembly from Virudhunagar in 1991 on the Congress ticket (Socialist-Sarat Chandra Sinha), an ally of the AIADMK, later joined the Dravidian party. In the 1996 Lok Sabha election, he contested unsuccessfully in Sivakasi. Three years later, Justice Ramaswami was the AIADMK's candidate in the same constituency, but lost to MDMK founder Vaiko, who was supported by the DMK and the BJP.

Justice (retired) V. Ramaswami, who died last week in Chennai at the ripe age of 96, was at the centre of a political and legal storm in the early 1990s. He was the first judge against whom impeachment proceedings were initiated. He would have been the first judge of the Supreme Court to be removed from office, had the Lok Sabha adopted the Opposition-sponsored impeachment motion on May 11, 1993. On the day of voting, 401 members were present. At the time of voting, 196 supported the motion, but 205 abstained, according to a report in The Hindu on May 12, 1993. "Not unexpectedly, the ruling party [the Congress] came in his rescue by abstaining from voting when the Opposition motion of impeachment was put to vote shortly before midnight. The AIADMK and the Muslim League also abstained," the report added.

According to Article 124 (4) of the Constitution, "a judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting has been presented to the President in the same session for such removal on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity." As in the run-up to the impeachment motion, there were dramatic moments during the debate on the motion which went on for 16 hours over two days. Originally, the ruling Congress's stand was that its members would be given the option of exercising their judgment and vote as they deemed fit after hearing both parties. V.C. Shukla, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources in the Narasimha Rao Cabinet, talking of the decision of the executive of the Congress Parliamentary Party [chaired by Rao] on May 9, told reporters that "by not asking the members to vote in a particular manner, we want to uphold the highest tradition". He gave the rationale behind the decision: it would be improper to pre-judge the matter without hearing the two parties — the mover of the impeachment motion (Somnath Chatterjee, leader of the Communist Party of India-Marxist) and counsel for Justice Ramaswami (Kapil Sibal, who later became Union Minister). Later, the Congress informally conveyed to its members to stay away from the voting. The AIADMK, which announced the separation of ties with the Congress only in March 1993, had, however, gone along with the latter in this matter.

The trouble began for Justice Ramaswami months after he was elevated to the Supreme Court in October 1989 from being the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. "The Internal Audit and Accountant-General, scrutinising the expenditure of the High Court, came out with a statement of excess expenditure of a sizeable amount, some of which, in their opinion, was irregular. Petitions against Justice Ramaswami were filed and the Bar strongly agitated against him, insisting that the Chief Justice of India [CJI] should enquire into the matter," R. Venkataraman, who was then President, wrote in his memoir, My Presidential Years. On July 20, 1990, CJI Sabyasachi Mukherjee, in an unprecedented move, advised his colleague "to desist from discharging judicial functions so long as the investigations in regard to certain audit re-

## Housefull boards fade into oblivion as no revival in sight for single screens in 'Broadway of cinema'



Right opposite the complex which houses three single screens in Majestic — Santhosh, Narthaki, and Sapna — a shopping mall is under construction. The mall is set to have a multiplex, perhaps a perfect reflection of the changing times. Once called the 'Broadway of cinema,' the Majestic area in Bengaluru is a pale shadow of its glorious past. Back then, people liked to marvel at the huge complex out of sheer curiosity by standing in front of it. Old-timers recount returning disappointed after not securing tickets to films of their favourite stars. There are also stories of well-known filmmakers and actors catching a Rajkumar or a Puttanna Kanagal film at Santosh or Narthaki. Today, a deathly silence prevails outside the premises of these single screens. Plenty of factors led to Majestic fading away as the hub of films. The ever-growing traffic in the city has remained one of the reasons, felt Venkatesh, a senior exhibitor who owns the Mukunda theatre in Maruthi Seva Nagar. "People also faced parking challenges in the area," he said, adding that these issues led to people looking out for theatres closer to their homes. From 22 theatres (perhaps a world record) at one point, only 7 single screens (Santosh, Narthaki, Sapna, Triveni, Anupama, Bhoomika, and Abhinay) remain in the area. "Majestic had a huge floating population, thanks to the Kempegowda Bus Station. It benefited the theatres as they were the one-stop point for travellers. But with the construction of other big bus terminals, such as Mysore Road Satellite Bus Stop and Shanthi Nagar

Bus Station, the film-watching crowd just bifurcated," Mr. Venkatesh pointed out. M.R. Rajaram, Vice President of Karnataka Film Exhibitors' Federation, said the poor revenue-sharing model triggered the downfall of single screens in the State. "Several theatres would have survived had the producers/distributors agreed to a percentage system over fixed screening charges. Post the pandemic, the old revenue model dented the prospects of single screens," he said. "For instance, Narthaki was paid a fixed weekly amount of ₹3 lakh. So, for four weeks, it would sum up to ₹12 lakh. However, considering the size of the theatre, around ₹3 lakh would be required for its maintenance," he explained. A request from the exhibitors to get a 35% share from the housefull net was dismissed by the distributors/producers. The lucrative property rates have convinced theatre owners to sell their land. After Sagar, which made way for a retail store, and Tribhuvan, which got razed for the construction of a shopping mall, industry insiders say the owners of the Santosh complex might also follow suit. The complex was shut down briefly in 2022 due to a legal hurdle. K.G. Road is no longer the fortress of Kannada cinema, with Telugu films acquiring several shows. During the Sankranti week, Allu Arjun's blockbuster 'Pushpa 2,' 'Sankrathi Vasthunam,' and 'Daku Maharaj,' starring Nandamuri Balakrishna, were screened in three theatres in Majestic. When 'Pushpa 2' hit the screens, three versions of the film (Telugu, Hindi, and Kannada) were screened in Majestic.

## EWS/DG quota in private schools: Admission process, eligibility and challenges



The Delhi Directorate of Education has announced the results for the Economically Weaker Section (E.W.S) and Disadvantaged Group (D.G) category admissions for the upcoming academic session on March 5, following a computerised draw of lots. Out of more than two lakh applications, approximately 44,000 children were selected for admission to Nursery, Kinder Garten, and Class One in private schools under this quota. India's education system is a mix of government, private, and alternative schooling models, but access to quality education remains deeply unequal. To bridge this gap, the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, introduced a landmark provision mandating private schools to reserve 25% of their seats for students from E.W.S and D.G categories. While this policy aims to create a more inclusive education system, its implementation faces several challenges and questions. How does the E.W.S/D.G quota work? Who is eligible? What is the admission mechanism, and what barriers still hinder its success? Here's a breakdown of the E.W.S/D.G quota under RTE and how it functions in practice. The E.W.S quota in India operates under two distinct frameworks and is implemented nationwide but functions in separate domains—while the 10% quota focuses on higher education and employment, the 25% quota targets primary education in private schools. The 25% E.W.S/D.G reservation is a provision under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. This mandates private unaided schools to reserve 25% of their seats for children from E.W.S and D.G, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, orphans, transgenders, and children with disabilities, at the elementary level. The government reimburses schools for providing these children with access to quality education.

What is the EWS/DG quota in schools?

The E.W.S/D.G quota applies to all the states and Union Territories, both urban and rural areas and thus every state has specific guidelines and criteria for determining eligibility, income thresholds, and the reimbursement process for private schools. The scope and impact of the quota vary based on factors such as the availability of private schools and the awareness levels among eligible families. Recently, the income ceiling for E.W.S/D.G eligibility in Delhi was raised from ₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh per annum. This move aims to make the quota more inclusive and accessible to a larger number of families.

Who is eligible for EWS/DG 25% quota?

To apply for the 25% E.W.S/D.G quota in private unaided schools under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, certain criteria must be fulfilled. The family's annual income should be within a limit, determined by the state government. The bracket may vary across states based on local economic conditions. Typically, the limit ranges from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per annum. Parents must provide valid documents as proof of income, such as an income certificate issued by a competent authority like the Tehsildar or District Magistrate. Additionally, documents like ration cards, Aadhaar cards, or voter ID cards may be required to establish the family's residence and identity. The policy includes a provision that the child must reside within a specific radius of the school. This distance limit is also set by state governments and may vary for urban and rural areas. It usually ranges from 1 km to 10 km, depending on the school's location.

What is the admission process?

Online application form through the designated government portal, along with necessary documents such as income certificates, residence proof, birth certificates, and Aadhaar details. After verification, eligible applicants are shortlisted, and admissions are conducted through a lottery system by Directorate of Education (DoE) or the concerned state education department. Once the lottery results

are announced, selected students are allotted schools based on availability and proximity to their residence. Parents then proceed with the admission formalities at the designated school. The government then reimburses the schools for tuition fees based on a pre-determined amount set by the education department. Recently, Delhi has been in the spotlight for its efforts to streamline the E.W.S/D.G admission process, with the use of an online lottery system to enhance efficiency and reduce irregularities. This move aims to make the process more accessible and equitable for eligible families. Maharashtra faced controversy over the EWS 25% quota when the school education department issued a gazette notification exempting private unaided schools from the mandatory admission quota. The notification allowed the schools within one kilometer of a government or government-aided school to bypass the 25% RTE quota. However, the court ruled that this exemption violated children's right to free elementary education under Article 21A of the Constitution. Meanwhile, Kerala has set a minimum annual income of ₹4 lakh for EWS quota applicants, while Delhi recently lowered its eligibility cap from ₹5 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh. Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, provides cost-free education in all state government schools from Classes 1 to 8, ensuring access without financial barriers, while the 25% EWS reservation in private schools continues without major hurdles. Challenges on ground

Elementary level quota: Renu Singh, Country Director of Young Lives India and a former member of the working group on child labor during the drafting of the RTE Act highlighted that reservation for E.W.S students should not be restricted to the elementary level. Without continued financial and academic support beyond primary education, many students are left without structured pathways for further learning. Financial constraints beyond tuition fees: Dr K R Maalathi, an advocate for rural education and founder of Auuro Educational Services, highlighted that government reimbursement for E.W.S students covers only tuition fees, leaving parents responsible for additional expenses such as extracurricular activities, uniforms, bottles, bags, shoes, stationery, and books.

Social integration: Parmindr B Chopra, Principal at Delhi Public School, Nipania, Indore, noted that E.W.S students struggle to integrate with their classmates due to stark differences in upbringing, family systems, and social status. He suggested that a more effective approach to inclusive education would involve transforming government schools into centers of excellence with trained professionals to provide dedicated support to E.W.S students. Language barrier: Limited exposure to English remains a major challenge for E.W.S students in early grades. Without special support, many struggle to keep up with the curriculum, further widening the academic gap between them and their peers. Many hailing from a specific family/religious/caste background are more familiar with their mother tongue.

Help at home: The Head of the Department for Classes 4-6 at DPS, Indore, pointed out that many E.W.S students lack motivation to study, write, or attend school regularly. In several cases, parents are unable to provide academic support at home, either due to a lack of education themselves or financial constraints that prevent them from affording extra tuition. Despite schools maintaining contact with parents and conducting special remedial classes for academically weaker students, disparities in writing and speaking skills create additional academic barriers. Emotional integration and mental health: E.W.S students often grow up with a sense of inferiority and struggle to match the academic pace of their classmates, leading to demoralisation. Dr K R Maalathi highlighted that the lack of awareness from both the government and parents regarding the emotional impact of this divide further exacerbates the issue. Teachers Training: One of the major concerns in private schools is teachers behaving differently with the students not doing well academically - teachers and staff thus need to be trained to especially behave without making them inferior - class-wise and academically. Delayed reimbursement and fixed financial support: Government reimbursement for E.W.S students often does not arrive on time, creating financial uncertainty for both parents and schools. Need for long-term success tracking: Despite more than a decade since the introduction of the E.W.S quota in 2009, it is difficult to evaluate the success of the program or implement necessary improvements to ensure its long-term impact.

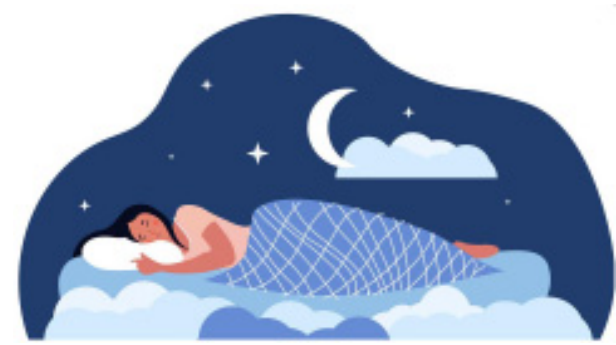
## Don't sleep over it: debunking slumber myths and embracing healthy habits

World Sleep Day is being celebrated this year on March 14, with the theme 'Make Sleep Health a Priority'. This global initiative highlights the significance of sleep as a fundamental pillar of health, encouraging people to adopt healthier sleep habits for improved physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Understanding quality sleep Good sleep varies from person to person and is influenced by factors such as lifestyle, age, and gender. More than just the quantity of sleep, its quality plays a crucial role in our overall health. Sleep progresses through multiple stages, transitioning from lighter phases to deep sleep before entering the critical REM (rapid eye movement) stage, which constitutes 20-25% of the sleep cycle. Disruptions in sleep quality, particularly due to conditions like obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), can have severe consequences. OSA, which involves repeated episodes of airway collapse leading to oxygen deprivation, is associated with increased risks of heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and heart failure. A well-rested night's sleep helps to start the day feeling refreshed and energised. Proper sleep aids in muscle repair, brain function, hormone regulation, and stress reduction. The ideal window to fall asleep is between 10 PM and 11 PM, and maintaining a consistent sleep schedule—even on weekends—helps regulate the body's internal clock. In today's digital age, achieving good sleep can be challenging. Blue light exposure from screens suppresses melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep initiation. To mitigate this, it is recommended to avoid screens at least one or two hours before bedtime. Caffeine consumption after 3-4 PM can also disrupt sleep by delaying onset, reducing deep sleep, and increasing night-time awakenings. Additionally, stress is a major factor affecting both sleep quality and duration.

While sleep gadgets and trends claim to enhance sleep, simple and well-established practices often suffice:

The rise of 'sleepmaxxing', a trend among millennials to optimise sleep, has led to both helpful and questionable practices. While some strategies may improve sleep, others can be misleading or even harmful. One such fad is mouth taping, intended to force nose breathing by sealing the mouth shut. This lacks sufficient scientific backing and poses potential health risks, particularly for individuals with



OSA who rely on mouth breathing. Taping the mouth can mask symptoms, delay diagnosis and cause discomfort, including skin irritation, breathing difficulties, and anxiety. Another popular trend is sleep tracking via smartwatches and fitness devices. While these tools can provide insight into sleep patterns, excessive reliance on them may lead to sleep anxiety. Obsession over tracking metrics can ironically contribute to poorer sleep quality. For individuals suffering from sleep disorders like OSA, evidence-based treatments should be prioritised. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) therapy remains the gold standard for OSA management, delivering constant air pressure to keep the airway open and ensure uninterrupted sleep.

Additionally, lifestyle interventions play a crucial role. Yoga and meditation can be beneficial adjunct therapies, particularly in improving risk factors such as obesity, stress, and a sedentary lifestyle. Oropharyngeal physiotherapy—exercises that strengthen the muscles of the throat—has shown promise in reducing snoring and mitigating OSA symptoms. Ultimately, sleep is a cornerstone of health that should not be compromised upon. Rather than chasing fleeting sleep trends, individuals should focus on scientifically backed sleep hygiene practices and seek medical advice when needed. By making sleep health a priority, we can enhance our well-being, productivity, and overall quality of life.



## Adult immunisation can provide protection from multiple diseases. Why is it not a priority in India?



as yet, says Sheela Chakravarthy, director, internal medicine, Fortis Hospital, Bengaluru. "Doctors are themselves very poorly informed about adult vaccination, as adult immunisation doesn't fall under any particular medical specialisation, making it easy to overlook," says V. Ramasubramanian, infectious diseases specialist, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai.

Various medical communities like the Geriatric Society of India, the Research Society for the study of Diabetes in India, the Indian Society of Nephrology, and the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India have issued adult vaccination guidelines at various time points like the AIP. But there are still fears and miscommunication when it comes to immunisation in adults within the medical community itself, points out Dr. Ramasubramanian. "One reason for the hesitation from the medical community could be legal concerns. For instance, if you give a vaccine and an unavoidable side effects occur, the doctor may be sued. This is more likely in the case of vaccinating healthy adults," he says. Another reason he says, is access: "Right now, vaccines are given only by paediatricians," forcing adults to rely on super-specialty hospitals, which limits availability and affordability. Dr. Sheela points to public reluctance toward adult immunisation as an important factor: most people think it is not important, and this thinking needs to change, she says. She points to the example of typhoid vaccines, "Typhoid vaccines have been available for years, but the general public do not yet know that this is an important vaccine despite its three-year protection."

Anantha Krishnan, internal medicine specialist and diabetologist at Prashanth Hospitals, Chennai, adds that all primary healthcare providers are authorised to provide vaccination services but there should be better access. While private vaccine companies have begun promoting adult vaccines, like the shingles vaccine through celebrity endorsements, the awareness given to the public by private and public healthcare sectors around essential vaccines like flu and pneumonia shots remains low, he says. "The pneumonia vaccine was previously for those above 65 years, now even those over 50 should get it, but that is not happening in our country," he says.

Patients are more likely to listen to their doctors more than they the government, he stresses, as they have an ongoing relationship with them, and so, the onus should be on the medical profession to talk about these vaccines with their adult patients. Educating the public remains key for vaccine promotion according to R. Narasimhan, senior respiratory physician, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. Dr. Narasimhan says that conducting educational sessions at medical conferences can help doctors stay updated on the importance of prioritising the latest available vaccines. Additionally, he also stresses that government hospitals should recognise the importance of adult vaccines by addressing cost-related barriers. "This way, successful strategies from other countries can be adapted in India among the public and doctors", he says. Mass education interventions along with providing clear legal and State-initiated protection to healthcare workers could go a long way, adds Dr. Ramasubramanian.

When was the last time you thought about getting vaccinated as an adult? For most people, the answer is either "never" or "not after the COVID-19 shot and boosters". While childhood immunisation is a well-established practice in India, adult vaccination remains a largely ignored and misunderstood area among both the general public and healthcare providers. But what vaccines to adults need? Where do they go to get them? Are there dedicated centres or clear guidelines for adult immunisation in India? The fact is, adult vaccination exists in a fragmented, almost invisible form in the country. Unlike the systematic campaigns for children, there are no clear pathways for adults. Hospitals may offer vaccines like flu shots or the pneumococcal vaccine, but only if you ask for them. Many doctors, unless specialising in infectious diseases, rarely bring up the topic.

According to The World Health Organisation (WHO), we now have vaccines to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases and immunisation currently prevents 3.5 million to 5 million deaths every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza and measles. However, the WHO's January 2025 immunisation guidelines point out that there is an urgent need for adult vaccination to prevent potential infectious diseases and curb antimicrobial resistance.

The report also highlights key vaccines recommended for adults that include hepatitis B (for high-risk groups), polio (for travellers to endemic areas), tetanus-diphtheria vaccine (booster every 10 years), HPV (for women up to 45 years), pneumococcal vaccine (for older adults and those with chronic illnesses), typhoid (with options for conjugate, polysaccharide, and oral vaccines), seasonal influenza (annual shots for vulnerable groups), cholera, meningococcal, and hepatitis A vaccines. Likewise, The Indian Consensus guideline on adult immunisation released by The Association of Physicians of India (AIP) across specialities emphasises that adult immunisation must be integrated into national health strategies, with better access, combination vaccines, and public awareness campaigns. Crucially, vaccines help combat antibiotic resistance -- a massive public health challenge in India and around the world -- by preventing infections that would otherwise require treatment with antibiotics.

There are vaccine programmes in place but due to several barriers, starting from within the medical community itself, priority to adult vaccinations has not been given

## Are energy drinks pushing up blood sugar in the young? Doctors weigh in

Added sugars in energy drinks are associated with decreased insulin sensitivity and blood sugar spikes in the body. Added sugars in energy drinks are associated with decreased insulin sensitivity and blood sugar spikes in the body. It's exam season and many students are reaching out for an energy drink to improve focus and concentration. Young adults at gyms go for these cans for a quick energy boost. But this habit builds a dependence on excess calories that leads to addictive behaviour and has adverse effects in the long run.

"In fact," says Dr Vikas Bhutani, Director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Hospital, Mohali, "as the consumption of energy drinks has risen among adolescents, young adults and athletes, they are becoming addicted to caffeine, added sugars, other additives, and legal stimulants such as guarana, taurine, and L-carnitine. These increase alertness, attention and energy levels in the short-term but also increase blood pressure, heart rate and breathing in the long term."

Added sugars in energy drinks are associated with decreased insulin sensitivity and blood sugar spikes in the body, says Dr Bhutani. And although energy drinks are popular before and after a workout, a sporting activity, or a high-endurance fitness schedule, the extra amount of sugar contained in the drinks can lead to excess calorie buildup in the body over time. "This leads to weight gain, insulin resistance, when the body cannot use the sugar-regulating hormone efficiently," says Dr Sudhanshu Budakoty, consultant, interventional cardiology, Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula. Besides, artificial sweeteners in the drinks may increase craving for food. "Sweetened drinks may not promote satiety, meaning people may consume more calories overall because they are not feeling full. Children are used to these reward-seeking drinks from childhood. So over the long-term, this leads to weight gain and obesity," says Dr Parag Barwad, additional professor, department of cardiology, PGIMER, Chandigarh.



Why young people should stay away from caffeine addiction. Excessive caffeine consumption can lead to heart rhythm disturbances and put younger people at a higher risk of heart attacks. Several studies have indicated an increase in heart rate and arterial blood pressure after the consumption of energy drinks due to their high caffeine content. "The added sodium and caffeine can lead to potential harm if used in excess," says Dr Budakoty. Dr Bhutani has seen palpitation, irregular heart rate, cardiac arrhythmias, high blood pressure, neurological and behavioural changes and stroke in patients who just live on energy drinks.

Energy drinks also lead to severe dehydration and gastrointestinal upsets. Both caffeine and added sugars change the balance of gut bacteria. "Caffeine can overstimulate the colon, leading to diarrhoea and cramping. Artificial acids can increase stomach acidity, leading to heartburn, bloating, and nausea. High sugar intake can potentially disrupt the gut lining, leading to a leaky gut, which can allow undigested particles to enter the bloodstream, potentially causing digestive problems," says Dr Bhutani. Since high caffeine intake keeps you perked up, the nervous system does not wind down. This may trigger headaches, irritability, anxiety and cause insomnia, he adds.

## Traditional Indian food products have potential to slow down cataract, says Hyderabad-based NIN researchers

Hyderabad: Traditional food products including haldi (turmeric), kaali mirch (black pepper), Dalchini (Cinnamon), Adrak (Ginger) and Menthee (fenugreek), which have been an integral part of the Indian kitchen and cuisine for ages, have the potential to slow down cataract maturation among diabetics, according to scientists from Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN).

The NIN researchers in the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) funded study, while acknowledging the need for further and more exhaustive research on the subject among patients, pointed out that their study supports the continued development of natural food products as therapeutic leads in the treatment and prevention of diabetic cataract. The study titled as 'Mitigation of Lens Opacification by a functional food in a diabetic rodent model', published in the journal Chemo-Biological Interactions (February, 2024), indicated that natural food products exerted multiple actions including antioxidant, which reduce the risk of chronic diseases and anti-inflammatory.

The study indicated that including natural food products in diet displayed AR inhibition effect, which is beneficial

in treatment of prostate cancers and antiglycation, beneficial in preventing cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and neurodegenerative ailments.

As all six ingredients i.e. amla, turmeric (haldi), black pepper (kaali mirch), cinnamon (dalchini), ginger and fenugreek (menthee) are regularly consumed, readily available, and relatively inexpensive, one can conjecture that such a formulation could decrease the economic burden associated with the impacts of diabetic cataracts, the NIN study pointed out.

Compared to other patients, individuals with diabetes are more prone to cataract. Studies have indicated that diabetics are 3 to 4 times more likely to develop cataract. The incidence of progression of cataract among diabetics is higher. It is estimated that up to 20 percent of all cataract surgeries are performed in diabetic patients.

"There have been studies that have reported that compared to non-diabetic patients, cataract surgery in diabetics may lead to relatively rapid progression of diabetic retinopathy and ultimately cause vision loss. Hence, there is a need for a safer intervention strategy to prevent cataracts in people with diabetes," the study added.

## Why dry eyes cases are spiking because of increasing screen time: Doctors suggest ways to prevent them



Persistent redness of the eyes, a burning and scratchy sensation, sensitivity to light, a pressure on the eye and eye fatigue are symptoms of dry eyes syndrome. Persistent redness of the eyes, a burning and scratchy sensation, sensitivity to light, a pressure on the eye and eye fatigue are symptoms of dry eyes syndrome. (Representational image)

Forty-five-year old Shruti didn't know that working long hours on her laptop and staying hooked to mobile devices meant she would have to wash her eyes with lukewarm water at suitable intervals and blink for at least 20 seconds. Her eye strain increased despite eye drops and she was eventually diagnosed with Dry Eye Disease (DED), a condition where your eyes cannot produce enough tears to lubricate them or form a protective film. Persistent redness of the eyes, a burning and scratchy sensation, sensitivity to light, a pressure on the eye and eye fatigue bothered her to such an extent that she landed up at the clinic of Dr Parikshit Gogate, eye surgeon and ophthalmologist at Community Eye Care Foundation, Pune. Now Shruti is on oral eye vitamin supplements and takes care of her ocular hygiene. After she completes a task online, she takes a break, looks upwards to relax the eye muscles, blinks intentionally and drinks some water.

"Shruti is among the many who have dry eye disease because of their over-dependence on visual devices and being cooped up in an air-conditioned environment. They may not even know they have the condition because the symptoms are not as pronounced and often overlap," says

Dr Gogate. Some of these overlapping signs are redness and watery eyes, the second an allergic reaction to dryness. While the eyes may appear watery, these tears lack the necessary components to lubricate the eye surface. This is why a recent multi-centre Italian study says that dry eye disease is still ignored, making treatment difficult. The study further points out that dry eye disease impacted work performance and attendance at social events. What causes dry eyes

The reasons for tear film dysfunction are many, including hormone changes, autoimmune disease, inflamed eyelid glands, allergic eye disease, decreased tear production and fast tear evaporation. A deficiency of essential vitamins like A, B12 and D may cause dry eyes. Dr Gogate adds systemic medicines like drugs against blood pressure, anti-allergic tablets, anxiolytics, hormones, steroids, antidepressants and overuse of eye drops, (their preservatives harm the tear film) can be triggers. Dr Jeevan Ladi, eye surgeon and founder of Dada Eye Laser Institute, Pune, says cases are particularly on the rise among young professionals. "Incomplete blinking of the eyes prevents stimulation of oil glands in the eyelids. As a result, the tear film becomes unstable leading to dry eyes," he says. How to prevent dry eyes

Eliminate direct high airflow or fans, reduce screen time, take frequent screen breaks and use a humidifier in the room you are in. "Checking the mobile for a long time in the dark can lead to fatigue of the small muscles of the eyes, causing headache and irritability," Dr Ladi says. A Mayo Clinic advisory says you must position your computer screen below eye level so that you don't open your eyes as wide. This may help slow the evaporation of your tears between blinks. What about treatment? Dr Ladi says newer lubricants and cyclosporine eye drops are effective. "We can use local lubricant eye drops, topical ocular lubricants, do eyelid hygiene (warm compresses and lid scrubs) and use nutritional supplements," Dr Gogate adds. Both doctors assure that if these do not work, there are preservative-free lubricants, tear duct plugs to retain tears and moisture as well as devices that apply controlled warmth and pressure to the eyelids to unblock tear glands. Besides, there are topical inflammatory eye drops.

## Kerala teen dies after water fasting, following online weight loss tips: What this diet fad does to the body



As an 18-year-old girl from Thalassery, Kerala, died after prolonged water fasting and following online advisories on weight loss, serious questions have arisen about body image consciousness impacting teen health. This case is also an example of how blindly following irresponsible weight loss advice has catastrophic consequences. The teenager, who abstained from proper food for nearly six months and survived on hot water to lose weight, was admitted to the ICU of Thalassery Co-operative Hospital 12 days before her death. Dr Nagesh Manohar Prabhu, a consultant physician at the hospital, said the girl weighed only 24 kg and suffered from dangerously low blood sugar levels, sodium and blood pressure. Her body had become too weak to respond to treatment, even with ventilator support.

"Teens today are increasingly unhappy with the way they look and resort to extreme diet and exercise routines on their own. What they forget is that this is also the time for their growth and development and balanced nutrition is one of the key pillars at this stage. Teens think food intake is the one thing they can control for their weight. The Kerala girl clearly had an electrolyte imbalance which can lead to a sudden cardiac arrest and organ damage," says Mukta Vasishta, consultant dietician, Sir Ganga Ram City Hospital, Delhi. The girl may have not understood that her extreme dieting had led to severe anorexia, which means she was throwing up even the little food she did eat or was fed. Vasishta dispels some myths.

Water fasting is an online myth which advocates consuming water without any food. Users think this helps in

autophagy, when cells recycle and renew themselves, and thus regain their health. Fact is no scientific literature has evidence of this routine, which anyway cannot be continued beyond a day or two, as accelerating weight loss. Some studies have even had participants drink mineral water to avoid mineral imbalance during the fasting period but even that didn't show any tangible results. Besides, all such trials were conducted under medical supervision to ensure the health of participants weren't affected. However, lack of scientific evidence hasn't stopped water fasting from becoming an alternative medicine fad and since it is an easy routine to follow, many fall for it rather than attempting exercise, diet and lifestyle correction.

What are the consequences of water fasting?

There are major deficiencies of both macro and micro nutrients. You may run low on electrolytes like sodium and potassium, a deficiency of which disrupts nerve signals for key body functions. This can lead to irregular heartbeats, muscle weakness, confusion, seizures and cardiac arrest. If you drink too much water, your blood pressure may drop suddenly. You could develop water intoxication or hyponatremia when the water and salt lost through sweating is replaced by plain water instead of minerals that come from diet. Brain functioning gets affected and your organs begin to shut down.

How to handle teens with anorexia?

First is restoring the diet with medical guidance. Extreme calorie-restricted diets for an extended period results in a refeeding syndrome. Even normal meals seem like a calorie overload and there can be rapid metabolic changes that may lead to health complications like diarrhoea, vomiting and organ malfunction. That's because the body wants to return to metabolism associated with food intake but there are not enough micronutrients to do so. So we have to reintroduce the patient to food very slowly, beginning with smaller calorie counts, then going up to 800 calories and moving upwards gradually. Most importantly, teens with body image issues and online additions need to be counselled by psychiatrists. Parents should be vigilant and talk about their social image concerns and choose a holistic health plan that works for their children.

## Price of key diabetes drug to drop sharply: How will this impact your medical bill, help you manage blood sugar better?

Affordability and access can bring down monthly drug bills of people with diabetes. Affordability and access can bring down monthly drug bills of people with diabetes. The price of a commonly prescribed diabetes medicine, Empagliflozin, is set to plummet after it came off patent on Monday, with several Indian manufacturers such as Mankind Pharma and Dr Reddy's set to launch generic versions. These are likely to become available at 20 per cent to 30 per cent of current prices. Affordability and access can bring down monthly drug bills of people with diabetes. Empagliflozin is the second in the class of medicines called SGLT-2 inhibitors to come off patent in India, the first being Dapagliflozin whose patent expired in 2020.

What are SGLT-2 inhibitors and how often are they prescribed?

When the glucose in the bloodstream passes through the kidneys, it can either be reabsorbed or excreted in the urine. Sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT-2) is a protein that helps the kidneys reabsorb the glucose. But this class of medicine, called SGLT-2 inhibitors, blocks this process and brings down blood glucose levels by helping the body remove excess amounts through the urine. These medicines have become extremely important for the treatment of diabetes, becoming even the first line of therapy for many, especially those with kidney-related complications.

"While they were initially prescribed for patients with kidney disease because of their mechanism of action, over the last couple of years, they have become an important part of the treatment protocol for all diabetics. Eight in ten of the newly-diagnosed diabetics in my clinic are prescribed an SGLT-2 inhibitor drug," said Dr Ambrish Mithal, chairperson of endocrinology and diabetes at Max Healthcare.

What are the benefits of using the drug?

Empagliflozin has been shown to significantly reduce the progression of kidney disease and heart failure. In addition, this drug addresses a key challenge that many diabetics face. "It reduces episodes of hypoglycemia — a very dangerous condition where the blood glucose levels drop below the normal range," said Dr Mithal. He added that it also helps patients lose some weight, which is another risk factor for several lifestyle diseases, including kidney disease and heart attacks.

What will be the impact of the drug going off patent?

The biggest advantage of the drug going off patent is that the prices will plummet. The patented medicine, sold as Jardiance, can cost up to Rs 71 per tablet. This is likely to come down to as little as Rs 10-11 per tablet. The medicine is then likely to become more widely available with a higher uptake by patients. Before patent expiry, only four brands of Dapagliflozin were available.



## Derivative portfolio discrepancies: IndusInd Bank takes 2.35% potential hit on net worth



IndusInd Bank on Monday disclosed that an internal review of its derivative portfolio has revealed a potential 2.35 per cent adverse impact on its net worth. This will have an approximate impact of Rs 2,100 crore on the bank, the management said in an analyst call. The review was conducted in response to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) directives issued in September 2023, pertaining to the investment portfolio of lenders and the accounting treatment of 'Other Asset and Other Liability' accounts of the derivative portfolio. Internal derivative trades were not in compliance with rules enforced by the Reserve Bank from April 2024.

## Donald Trump's steel and aluminium tariffs take effect, sparking global trade fears

Donald Trump to impose Tariffs: President Donald Trump's decision to impose sweeping tariffs on steel and aluminium imports officially took effect on Wednesday, raising duties on all such imports to 25 per cent, up from the 10 per cent previously imposed on aluminium. This latest move is part of Trump's ongoing efforts to reshape global trade and bolster domestic manufacturing. However, the escalation is likely to have far-reaching implications for global trade dynamics, particularly for countries like India, whose steel sector is already grappling with rising imports and fears of a market glut.

Trump has removed all exemptions from the tariffs he enacted in 2018, increasing the tariff on aluminium from 10% as part of a broader initiative to disrupt and transform global trade. He has also implemented separate tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China, with plans to impose similar taxes on imports from the European Union, Brazil, and South Korea, effective April 2. Trump, addressing CEOs at the Business Roundtable on Tuesday, maintained that the tariffs would encourage foreign companies to invest in US manufacturing, bringing factory jobs back to American soil. "The higher it goes, the more likely it is they're going to build," Trump stated, reiterating his belief that the tariffs would lead to a resurgence of U.S. industrial capacity. Reacting to the move, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the tariffs were "entirely unjustified" and "against the spirit" of the nations' "enduring friendship". Australia was exempt from similar tariffs implemented during Trump's first term. "This is not a friendly act," said Albanese.

US stock markets have been hit hard, with the S&P 500 declining 8 per cent over the past month as fears of a trade-driven economic slowdown grow. Economists, meanwhile, have voiced concerns that while the tariffs may provide a short-term boost to US steel and aluminium producers, the increased costs could be detrimental to the wider manufacturing sector, which relies heavily on these metals. "The higher it goes, the more likely it is they're going to build," Trump told the group. "The biggest win is if they move into our country and produce jobs. That's a bigger win than the tariffs themselves, but the tariffs are going to be throwing off a lot of money to this country." He also threatened to put tariffs of 50% on steel and aluminum from Canada, but he chose to stay with the 25% rate after the province of Ontario suspended plans to put a surcharge on electricity sold to Michigan, Minnesota and New York. Reacting to Trump's tariff threat, investors sold shares of steel manufacturers in Asian markets including India. Steel Authority of India (SAIL) shares on BSE slipped 4.67 per cent lower, shares slipped 3.11 per cent lower, JSW Steel slipped 2.20 per cent and Jindal Steel And Power Ltd

## What is behind the rise of quick commerce? | Explained

The story so far: Quick commerce's initial utility was presented to under-lockdown customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the youngest avenue of digital shopping, having outlived its initial utility, stayed on to alter how people shop — particularly in urban India.

How does quick commerce function?

As a subclass of e-commerce, quick commerce (Q-commerce) entails rapid delivery, typically in 10 to 20 minutes, of products to the customer's doorstep. This is facilitated by an elaborate network of dark stores and/or distribution centres. Dark stores refer to warehouses used by the platforms solely to fulfil online orders, with no in-person shopping. The idea is to be in close proximity to the consumer to facilitate faster deliveries. Additionally, unlike a traditional retail store or modern retail (super or hyper markets), quick commerce based around a mobile app benefits from customer data to create a feedback loop. This helps them provide a customised shopping experience in addition to planning their inventory and responding better to the demand of a product (and categories). An example could be estimating when to stock up a certain product that has a seasonal demand or an abrupt demographic influence, among others.

What's in it for brands?

According to a paper by the Centre for Transportation and Logistics of IIM Ahmedabad, quick commerce is beneficial to retailers owing to the prospect of enhanced brand awareness among consumers citing their proliferation. Angshuman Bhattacharya, Partner and National Leader for Consumer Product and Retail Sector at EY-Parthenon, observed that the availability of low-cost employable manpower, of a certain age and economic profile, has been among the crucial factors for the uptick and efficiency of quick commerce in India. The other aspect is about abundant choice. Scale also enables supply side advantages to quick commerce platforms. "If an individual company has to distribute a frozen or chilled product, they could be required to place a freezer in a Kirana store which is very expensive," he noted.

How have we been shopping of late?

According to a survey by consultancy firm NeilsenIQ,

"The bank noted some discrepancies in these account balances," the bank said in an exchange filing. "The bank's detailed internal review has estimated an adverse impact of approximately 2.35 per cent of bank's net worth as of December 2024," it said. The bank has also appointed a reputed external agency to independently review and validate the internal findings. "A final report of the external agency is awaited and basis which the Bank will appropriately consider any resultant impact in its financial statements," it said. The bank said its profitability and capital adequacy remains healthy to absorb this one-time impact. "We can confirm that there will be no internal trades in our book... we have not entered into any internal trades," Deputy CEO Arun Khurana said on a conference call. The internal trades that were there prior to that period, which were existing before April 1, have been unwound and all according mark-to-market taken, he said. The bank's shares fell 3.60 per cent to Rs 900.60 on the BSE on Monday. Meanwhile, IndusInd Bank received the Reserve Bank of India's approval on March 7 to reappoint Sumant Kathpalia as its chief executive officer and managing director. However, the central bank has only approved Kathpalia's tenure extension for one year, from March 24, 2025, to March 23, 2026. In September last year, IndusInd Bank's board of directors had recommended a three-year term for its MD & CEO.



declined 0.72 per cent. The Ministry of Steel in India had last year asked the Union Ministry of Commerce to impose a 25 per cent duty on steel products, citing a 80 per cent surge in steel imports from China to 1.61 million tonnes between January-July 2024.

The European Union said it will also impose counter tariffs on 26 billion euros (\$28.33 billion) worth of US goods from next month in response to US tariffs on steel and aluminium, the European Commission said in a statement on Wednesday. Official data showed that India's exports of primary steel to the US in 2024 was \$450 million. The US imported only \$2.83 million worth of steel pipes, tubes, and related products from India last year. Exports of aluminium and related products to the US in 2024 reached \$820 million. Amid already rising steel imports in the country, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has already begun a safeguard duty investigation on December 19 as major steel manufacturers under the Indian Steel Association (ISA) argued that there has been a sudden and sharp increase in volume of imports ever since US President Donald Trump imposed 25 per cent duty on steel in his first term. In its letter to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Indian Steel Association (ISA) said that beginning with the imposition of a 25 per cent duty under Section 232 by the US under its Trade Expansion Act, 1962, several countries have introduced multiple trade remedy measures against steel product imports. "The evidence indicates that 129 trade remedy measures were imposed by various countries against steel products between 2019 and 2023," ISA said. Reuters reported that the largest sources of US steel imports are Canada, Brazil, and Mexico, followed by South Korea and Vietnam, according to government data and the American Iron and Steel Institute. By a large margin, hydropower-rich Canada is the largest supplier of primary aluminium metal to the US, accounting for 79 per cent of total imports in the first 11 months of 2024.



41% of urban consumers prefer modern trade, general trade 25%, e-commerce 22% and quick commerce 12%. Further, according to another consultancy firm Deloitte, large FMCG brands reported a two-fold increase in share of quick commerce within their total e-commerce sales. This represented about 35% of their online sales. A separate Deloitte consumer survey (2024) also observed consumers' preference for quick commerce over traditional e-commerce for purchasing food and beverages. It held this was because these were often "impulse purchases or immediate needs". In contrast, the survey illustrated, e-commerce was preferred for home, beauty and personal care products which are generally more planned purchases. Modern trade however retained a consistent higher preference across all categories of products for consumers' liking for the availability of large pack sizes for monthly groceries, better prices and discounts. The other determining aspect relates to the minimum cart value for availing free deliveries. According to Mr. Bhattacharya, so long as the convenience fee is not excessive, customers would not mind. "Retail shops usually close around 8 p.m. Now, should a customer require something at 10 p.m., quick commerce is the only option. Else, there lies an unaddressed demand," he said. The EY-Parthenon partner explained that that platforms' path towards profitability would be led by the right mix of merchandise and brands, premiumisation and own labels rather than penalising low-cart sizes. "Driving efficiency in terms of manpower and vehicle productivity would be another crucial factor," he held.

## Is rising consumer credit cause for concern?



The release of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) 2024 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has called attention to the question of household finances and consumption loans. The stock of household debt has shown a gradual increase, rising from 36.6% of GDP in June 2021 to 41% in March 2024. According to the FSR, it has risen to 42.9% in June 2024. Even though household debt in India is lesser than most emerging market economies, the rise in household debt-to-GDP ratio is of concern. Debt is largely taken to build up holdings of assets. However, the stock of household assets has fallen from 110.4% of GDP in June 2021 to 108.3% by March 2024. A reduction in assets and an increase in debt indicates that a greater proportion of borrowing is being used for consumption. Even though the RBI highlights the shift towards healthy and prime borrowers in the economy, the fact that there is a significant amount of borrowing being done for the purpose of consumption is a cause for concern, which might indicate macroeconomic weakness of the economy.

Healthy borrowing and borrowers?

Even though household debt has increased significantly, the RBI highlights several points pointing towards the health of the Indian economy. For one, the RBI presents data to indicate that rising borrowing is being driven by an increase in the number of borrowers rather than rising indebtedness. Secondly, the proportion of sub-prime borrowers has been reducing, with almost two-thirds of debt belonging to prime borrowers and those with above prime credit quality. Rising per-capita debt amounts is witnessed only for super-prime borrowers, indicating that only highly-rated borrowers are undertaking larger levels of debt, mainly using it for asset creation.

Borrowing by individual consumers has been an important source of credit growth since the pandemic. The RBI did introduce measures to curb this growth, leading to a slowdown in credit growth since September 2023. The slowdown has seen a shift towards healthier borrowers, with sub-prime borrowing seeing a relative reduction. This can be seen as a net positive outcome, indicating healthy credit growth focused on asset creation by worthy borrowers, and an increase in borrowing without an increase in average indebtedness. On increasing consumption

However, there are some worries. The share of loans taken for consumption purposes has increased over time. Households are taking on credit largely for consumption purposes and not to accumulate assets such as houses or vehicles, or to invest in education. The increase in borrowings by prime and super-prime borrowers hide the fact that much of borrowing for consumption purposes is being done by households with lower levels of income. While 64% of loans taken on by super-prime borrowers are for asset creation, nearly half of the loans taken on by sub-prime bor-

rowers are for consumption purposes. Households earning less than five lakh have largely taken on unsecured loans, such as credit card debt, for consumption purposes while richer households largely take on debt for purposes of purchasing housing. Amongst forms of debt, personal and credit card debt have shown a gradual increase in delinquencies in September 2024 relative to September 2023, indicating greater stress for lower-income households. The RBI outlines the dangers emanating from financial stress for lower-income households. Around half of all borrowers with credit card debt or personal loans also have housing or vehicle loans. A default in any category leads to all loans of the same borrower being classified as non-performing loans for the lending institution. Thus, if a borrower defaults on credit card debt or a personal loan, the housing loan will also be classified as a non-performing asset. Rising stresses in unsecured loans can spell weaknesses for higher-value loans as well. The RBI is keen to assert that the loan make-up is gradually shifting towards more prime borrowers, with sub-prime borrowers reducing. This may be the case, but the overhang of consumer debt implies that macroeconomic problems might arise.

The impact of debt on the multiplier The rise in borrowing for consumption specifically among households with lower levels of income is something that requires due attention. What factors have driven this increase? Has it come about because households have faced greater income insecurity since the pandemic, and are hence borrowing through the medium of credit cards and unsecured loans to tide over income and consumption shortfalls? Or is it because financial innovations have allowed for households to undertake larger borrowings on the back of financial instruments like credit cards? The former indicates a weak macroeconomy, while the latter carries with it uncomfortable questions, such as the role of financial innovation in leading to the development of fragility and stress by exposing lower-income households to greater debt, pushing them towards financial marginalisation.

Regardless of the factors leading to an increase in this category of loans, the fact that the share of consumption loans has been rising is not a healthy outcome, as it indicates a relative reduction in the number of assets being created even as households become more indebted. Increasing household debt — especially for poorer households — implies a reduction in the power of the income multiplier. The multiplier, which indicates how much output increases for a given increase in investment, is greater for lower-income households, since a greater proportion of their incomes is translated into consumption of goods. Richer households will have a smaller multiplier, since most of their immediate needs are met, and a greater proportion of their income goes into savings. However, if lower-income households are saddled with debt, some proportion of their income will go into servicing their debt, leading to lesser spending and hence a lower multiplier. An economy with greater levels of household debt, especially from poorer households, might show lower growth for the same amount of investment. In this case, it remains to be seen how much impact macroeconomic policy moves such as the reduction in income-tax rates would have, if households are largely indebted. There might be certain indications that the borrowing structure is healthy and shifting towards super-prime borrowers, but policy will have to remain awake to the possible sources of fragility engendered by the increase in consumption loans and the proliferation of unsecured forms of consumer credit.

## Why IndusInd Bank CEO expects to book profit after stock falls 27% in a day

IndusInd Bank bled on the bourses on Tuesday, with its stock logging its biggest-ever decline, falling more than 27 per cent in a single day. This stock reaction followed the Mumbai-headquartered lender's disclosure on Monday that an accounting miss could wipe about Rs 2,100 crore from its net worth. The issue was spread over multiple years and related to transactions in the derivatives segment. But the bank's Chief Executive Officer said he expects the private lender to clock a profit in the March quarter — and the entire FY25 — despite the hit.

What's the issue at IndusInd Bank In 2023, the RBI directed some changes regarding the investment portfolio of banks which kicked in from April 1, 2024. Earlier, banks' asset liability management and treasury desks could do internal swaps, where one cash flow can be exchanged for another. If such a deal is terminated ahead of schedule, the profit gets accounted for, not the losses. But IndusInd Bank underestimated the hedging costs related to such forex transactions over the past five-seven years. An internal review by the bank brought this to light. The hit to the net worth from the accounting gap is likely to be 2.35 per cent of the bank's net worth, or about Rs 2,100 crore.

Is this the only worry for IndusInd Bank?

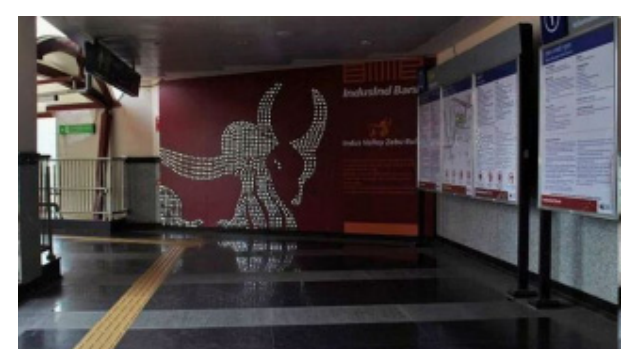
Tuesday's stock decline came after a nearly 6 per cent intraday fall on Monday after the bank's current CEO, Sumant Kathpalia, received only a 1-year extension from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as opposed to the 3 years recommended by the bank's board. Weak earnings in the quarter have added to the lender's woes. Its net profit fell 39 per cent year-on-year in the third quarter and the non-performing assets on its books rose.

How did the market react?

The stock ended the day at its lowest level since November 2020 on Tuesday and IndusInd Bank's market capitalisation cracked by \$2.18 billion. The Bank Nifty was also down 0.75 per cent, with the Nifty 50 index was up just 0.17 per cent.

What is IndusInd Bank doing?

The bank has roped in an external agency to indepen-



dently review and validate the internal findings. "A final report of the external agency is awaited and basis which the bank will appropriately consider any resultant impact on its financial statements," IndusInd Bank said. The bank expects the impact only in the quarter ended March 2025. After that it should be "business as usual" for the bank, Reuters quoted CEO Sumant Kathpalia as saying. Promoter to the rescue IndusInd Bank is backed by the Hinduja group. Ashok Hinduja on Tuesday sought to assuage liquidity concerns saying he was ready to infuse funds, if required. "Shareholders shouldn't panic. These are normal routine problems," he told the media. But CEO still expects to clock profit Kathpalia, on the other hand, said IndusInd Bank will report a profit in the January-March quarter and the full financial year 2025 (FY25). During the analyst call, IndusInd Bank CEO Kathpalia said that the lender's profitability and capital adequacy are healthy enough to absorb this one-time impact and they would like to take the hit through its profit and loss account. "The issue was identified by the bank... The bank has enough reserves and capital to manage this," he added.

Analysts, though, are worried and said the revelations have set alarm bells ringing about internal controls at the private bank. Analysts at Macquarie said in a note that the issue "raises questions on internal processes", while Jefferies said "it clearly reflects weak internal controls", Reuters reported.

## Jio signs deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX to offer Starlink internet services in India

Starlink and Jio logos. The deal between the two companies is contingent upon SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in India Starlink and Jio logos. The deal between the two companies is contingent upon SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in India. Jio-Starlink Internet Service: Jio Platforms Wednesday said it has signed a deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX to bring Starlink's internet services to India, a day after close rival Bharti Airtel announced a similar deal. Similar to Airtel, this deal is contingent upon SpaceX receiving its own authorisations to sell Starlink in India. Jio Platforms is a

subsidiary of Reliance Industries. Jio and SpaceX, so far, had been on the opposite side of the debate on how spectrum for satellite communication should be assigned to companies — with Jio calling for an auction, but SpaceX insisting on the administrative route. The government has decided to go with administrative allocation. SpaceX has applied for a security clearance with the Indian government, but it is understood that its application is undergoing review at the Home Ministry. The agreement, Jio said, enables it and SpaceX to explore how Starlink can extend Jio's offerings.



## After injury playing club cricket in Bengaluru, Rahul Dravid joins Rajasthan Royals camp in Jaipur



GNS News Agency, March 13

Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid suffered a leg injury recently while playing club cricket in Bengaluru. (Rajasthan Royals)Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid suffered a leg injury recently while playing club cricket in Bengaluru. Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid will head into his second stint with the club while carrying a leg injury he suffered from a recent club cricket match in Bengaluru.

The Royals on Tuesday confirmed that Dravid will join the team's preparatory camp in Jaipur, only a week after suffering the injury on his left leg during a club match alongside his younger son, Anvay, in Bengaluru. In a photo shared on social media, Dravid is seen wearing a cast on his left leg. Featuring in his second match in two weeks in the KSCA Group III league tournament in Bengaluru, Rahul put on a valiant fight for his Vijaya Cricket Club in a bid to secure the team a promotion. However, the former India captain's efforts were in vain as his side suffered a five-wicket defeat in the semi-final against Jayanagar Cricketers.

With his side slipping to 12 for three, the 52-year-old Rahul stepped into bat with his son before suffering a leg discomfort two balls into his innings. Despite the pain, the ever gritty Dravid senior put on a 66-ball 43-run stand with Anvay. The former India head coach, however, opted to retire hurt on 29 after reportedly suffering a calf muscle strain. Dravid will be returning to the Royals dugout for the first time in 10 years. Dravid was the captain of the Royals in IPL 2012 and 2013 and then was the team director and mentor for them in the 2014 and 2015 seasons. He was appointed the coach of the Indian senior men's team in 2021 and ended his tenure with the T20 World Cup triumph in June 2024. Meanwhile, Rajasthan are scheduled to open their campaign against SunRisers Hyderabad in Hyderabad on March 23 and will play their first game at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on April 13.

## Sanju Samson shares his bond with Jos Buttler: He was my vice-captain and played...I would change the rule of releasing players



GNS News Agency, March 13

Jos Buttler has been one of the premium players for Rajasthan Royals in the last few years. However, the rules of Indian Premier League retention are such that the Royals had to make a difficult choice for Buttler to go away from the franchise. Royals captain Sanju Samson would go as far as to say if it was up to him he would change the rule of releasing the players.

"When I became captain, he was my vice-captain and played a huge role in helping me lead the team. Letting him go has been one of the most challenging things for me. Even during the England series, I told him over dinner that I was still not over it. If I could change one thing in the IPL, I would change the rule of releasing players. While it has its positives, on a personal level, you lose connections and relationships built over years. It has been hard for me, the entire franchise, the owners, the coaches, and everyone associated with RR. Jos was family to us," Samson said speaking on Star Sports. "IPL gives you the opportunity to lead a team and play at the highest level, but it also allows you to build close friendships. Jos Buttler is one of my closest friends. We played together for seven years, forming a long batting partnership. We knew each other so well and always kept in touch."

## Ricky Ponting on Rohit Sharma's decision to continue playing: Unfinished business from 2023 World Cup may be on his mind

GNS News Agency, March 13

Rohit Sharma quashed reports of his ODI retirement after winning the Champions Trophy in Dubai. (AP)Rohit Sharma quashed reports of his ODI retirement after winning the Champions Trophy in Dubai. Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting said that a sense of unfinished business may have played a role in Rohit Sharma's decision to continue playing international cricket, quashing the rumours of his retirement. Ponting said losing the final of the 2023 World Cup could have kept the fire burning within Rohit to give the 50-over title one last shot. India, under Rohit's captaincy, sailed through to the final of the 2023 edition before falling to Australia in the decider. The 2027 World Cup will be held in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. "I think probably the fact that they lost the last one and he was captain, that might be the thing that's playing on the back of his mind," Ponting was quoted as saying by The ICC Review. "Just have one

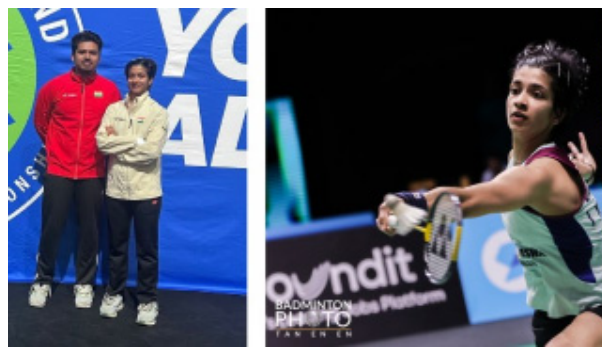
## How with long rallies and tall tosses, Malvika Bansod ousted World No 12 Yeo Jia Min

GNS News Agency, March 13

Malvika Bansod politely declined the offer of having legendary coach Irwansyah sit for her All England opening match against Singaporean Yeo Jia Min. The Indonesian perfectly understood, as Malvika and her regular coach for the last two years at Thane's Shrikant Vad Academy, Vignesh Devlekar, had a plan to take down the World No 12.

The 23-year-old from Nagpur had lost to Jia Min previously and was coming off a first-round loss from Orleans. But pushing herself beyond limits of exhaustion, with both players utterly knackered by the end, Malvika recorded a stunning 21-13, 10-21, 21-17 victory to advance to the second round. Things were tricky at 11-9 in the decider, but Malvika did well to conserve energy, and mix her usually well-executed high tosses and lifts with attacking openings on cross shots as Jia Min tired out, fading off at the baseline.

Vignesh had won five national ranking titles in 2019 in doubles, and played Maldives Open, the only international trip he could afford on his parents' salaries that year — mother a BMC



teacher, and father a clerk in a PSU. "The lockdown ended my playing dreams and I had no funds anyway. But when coaching Malvika, I lean on my weaknesses — I never had a big attack or great physical strength. I was good at finding solutions," Devlekar says. The long rallies and tall tosses that would strain Jia Min, the coach and athlete had analysed thoroughly.

In addition, Malvika dumped long serves in the large Birmingham hall for high serves — again pressuring Jia Min's neck — and injected pace into her first stroke. The Indian was prepared for the long rallies, but had no intention of defending endlessly. She created openings, pouncing on the short lengths. Malvika has compiled nearly a dozen thick diaries where she jots down details of fitness workouts she observes when at tournaments and national camps. "She must be the

only player at this level (World No 28) who designs own fitness. We are desperately looking for an experienced trainer but we don't have the funds for it yet. So, she plans it herself," Vignesh notes.

Malvika, a cerebral player, has spent last few months devising two strokes from the same position, guided by Vad and Vignesh, tweaking angles with wrist work, because a giant smash isn't suddenly going to materialise. "We work within our limitations, but we are looking to get her stronger if we get a trainer," he adds. The engineering graduate who had beaten Olympic bronze medalist Gregoria Tunjung at China, has immersed herself even deeper into badminton, and shut out all noise that questions if she has a future when 23 already. "Qualifying for LA Olympics is the plan. We are working towards it," Vignesh says, adding they

hit it off, geeking out on the sport because he was in constant analysing/plotting mode as coach. A BWF Level 1 certified coach, he's pursuing his MBA alongside, but the natural aptitude for coaching and the bond he struck with Malvika has brought good results. One of the biggest tweaks is her preference for round the head strokes that are fetching winners the backhand didn't. Three sessions a day barely leave her with any time for anything else, and she's closed out all social media and communication to focus on badminton.

At times, her worried mother, a self-trained sports science professional and nutritionist offers her a piece of chocolate to de-stress, but Malvika's rigorous self control has seen her issue a rule that nobody in the family will eat chocolates or binge on chips for 7-8 months now. She is known to steal a glance at Pani puri and bhel, two things she loves plenty, but not venture close to them, from fear of catching a sore throat. All evenings see her work on fitness by herself. "She's working hard like crazy. We don't have funds for beyond the coach. Hopefully if we get results and few Top 10 wins, they will consider funding her," Vignesh says.

## Can the pawn-lover Aravindh Chithambaram turn into a valuable king of chess?

GNS News Agency, March 13

In a sport like chess, where teenage prodigies emerge every week, spare a thought for Aravindh Chithambaram. The 25-year-old is experiencing the first real gust of tail wind in his career at a time when other grandmasters his age are probably searching for their second wind. Over the course of an exhilarating few months, the Chennai-based player has been victorious in two strong events: winning the Chennai Grandmasters event late last year and the Prague Masters title last week. If the field in Chennai was loaded with players like Levon Aronian, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Arjun Erigaisi, the Prague event had players like Praggnanandhaa, Wei Yi, Anish Giri and Vincent Keymer.

Those who know him well, will tell you just how talented Aravindh has always been. His long-time coach, RB Ramesh, loves to talk about how back in 2013, when Aravindh was just 14 years old, he had predicted big things in a conversation with the legendary Susan Polgar. So big, that even Polgar sounded hesitant. Ramesh had tried to tell her that the 14-year-old was good enough to become a grandmaster in six months flat even though he was yet to complete a single International Master norm.

It was on the basis of this conviction from Ramesh that Aravindh's mother had uprooted the family from Madurai to Chennai. Aravindh had delivered on that faith by getting all three GM norms in a span of five months. He had done something rare in the sport as well: he'd become a GM without becoming an IM. His one-time roommate, Srinath Narayanan, is also among Aravindh's admirers. Srinath shared at length in an interview with The Indian Express about how Aravindh would walk into games at the Asian U20 tournament in Uzbekistan with barely any overnight prep and still take down exceptionally strong players. But Aravindh's career trajectory presents a reality check for budding chess superstars: sheer talent will only take you so far. Aravindh's career was beset by a lack of discipline and self-confidence issues, both of which he has conquered.

For Aravindh, emerging victorious — and staying undefeated — at Prague happened after he overcame immense pressure building up in his own mind. He gave a measure of just how much stress he was experiencing at the Czech Republic event when asked by the organisers how he would celebrate the victory at Prague. "I'll just sleep well tonight. I'm extremely tired. After I got the lead in the tournament, for the past two days I could not sleep at all! This has never happened to me before, I don't know what kind of pressure I was feeling at the end." Regardless of what was happening inside his head, the brand of chess he was playing on the board was causing heads to turn. After the event ended, grandmaster Pravin Thipsay remarked that Aravindh's victory over first runner-up Anish Giri at Prague reminded him of the legendary Savielly Tartakower. "Tartakower had the ability and skills to spring surprises from harmless looking positions. Aravindh's game can be



termed as the most brilliant game of 2025 so far," Thipsay wrote in his analysis. Chess is an unrelentingly cruel sport. In most other sporting pursuits, athletes enter their peak around 25. In chess, we have players turning grandmasters before they become a teenager and some becoming world champions before they exit their teens. This dizzying pace can leave those who cannot keep up disoriented. Vidit Gujrathi, for example, had confessed to this newspaper that he had a phase where he thought his career was over after seeing the instant success players like Gukesh and Prag were getting. For Indian chess, it was quite fitting that Aravindh's success came on the same day that 18-year-old Pranav Venkatesh emerged as the World Junior Champion. For the past few years, while the world of chess has been watching the meteoric rise of India's prodigious trio — Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi — those who read the tea leaves well in the sport have also been bracing for the next wave of players from India to break through. "I've seen a lot of people on the internet say things about how other countries (besides India) are going to have top players emerging soon, while India has only these three players right now (Gukesh, Prag, and Arjun). But for me, the thing that's really quite different is that when you look at the second level, below the top three, a lot of very strong players — like Raunak Sadhwani, Nihal Sarin, Aravindh and then there's a lot of these kids like M Pranesh, who are in the 2650-2680 rating range. I expect at least one or two of them to break through," Hikaru Nakamura had predicted in an interview with The Indian Express in October last year during the Global Chess League. It's fitting that Aravindh identifies so much with the pawns — those little guys who can only inch forward slowly — that his Twitter handle identifies him as the 'pawnof64squares'. Not just because his career seems to have edged ahead slowly, but also because the pawns are the pieces that have the most potential on the battlefield of 64 squares. When they reach the end of the board at a tortoise-esque pace, they have too much scope for character development: they can promote into one of the more valued pieces like a rook or a queen. That's where Aravindh's career is at the moment, at the end of the board. For those who have admired him and bet on him for years, the hope is he promotes into an all-conquering queen of the battlefield.

## 'ICC stands for Indian Cricket Board': Andy Roberts slams Rohit Sharma's team for no travel during Champions Trophy



GNS News Agency, March 13

West Indies pace legend Sir Andy Roberts slammed India's considerable advantage at playing at one venue in Dubai during their march to the Champions Trophy title and labelled the International Cricket Council as a representative of the Indian cricket board, BCCI. "Something's got to give... India can't get everything. The ICC [International Cricket Council] must say no to India at times. India even had an advantage at last year's T20 World Cup, where they knew in advance where their semi-final would be played [in Guyana]. At the Champions Trophy, India did not have to travel at all. How can a team not travel during a tournament," Roberts was quoted as saying by Mid-Day. Roberts highlighted the lack of fairness in the eight-team tournament where others teams were forced to travel from Pakistan to face India in the United Arab Emirates.

"It is not fair, it's not cricket. There has to be a level playing field. I know a lot of money comes from India, but cricket ought not to be a one-country sport. It now looks like a one-nation competition and the playing field is not level. To me, the ICC stands for the Indian Cricket Board. India dictates everything. If tomorrow, India says, 'listen there should be no no-balls and wides,' take my word, the ICC will find a way to satisfy India," Roberts lamented. The two-time World Cup winner's comments came shortly after his former teammate Vivian Richards echoed similar sentiments against the ICC.

"I don't want to get into the political side of things. But I believe the people who are responsible, in terms of the governing and the ruling of the game in itself which is the ICC... they're the ones who I think got the problem. I would like them to come up with an answer, why? If they are the governing body of cricket, why is that happening at present? I honestly believe one of the things that can bring all of us together, fans and everyone, even enemies together, [is] sports," said the legendary Richards recently during the International Masters League in India.

## 'That is a risk': Manchester United CEO says new 100,000-seat stadium near Old Trafford may impact squad spending



GNS News Agency, March 13

Manchester United CEO Omar Berrada said there was a risk the club's investment in a new two billion pound (\$2.58 billion) stadium could impact spending on the squad and affect competitiveness for the next five years.

United sit 14th in the Premier League after finishing eighth last season and face a critical balancing act between infrastructure upgrades and on-field ambitions. "That is a risk. Clearly it's something we want to avoid," Berrada told reporters on Tuesday at the unveiling of conceptual images of the new stadium. "We don't want to inhibit our ability to invest in the team, for us to continue being competitive while we are building a new stadium."

Berrada said that the club would make every effort to remain competitive over the period required to build their 100,000-seat stadium that will be the biggest in Britain, next to the existing Old Trafford. "There are various ways around that; one of the things we are looking at is to shorten the construction timelines so we can have a new stadium within five years, that's our ambition."

## 'He was hitting sixes out of the ground': Sanju Samson says 13-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi is ready for IPL

Sanju Samson hailed Vaibhav Suryavanshi's power-hitting skills ahead of the IPL 2025 season. (RR/BCCI)Sanju Samson hailed Vaibhav Suryavanshi's power-hitting skills ahead of the IPL 2025 season. (RR/BCCI)Hailing Vaibhav Suryavanshi's bit-hitting abilities, Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson the 13-year-old prodigy 'looks ready to contribute' in the upcoming Indian Premier League season, starting March 22.

The Royals begin their campaign against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 23. Speaking at the SuperStar series on JioHotstar, Samson was asked what advice he would give Suryavanshi, the youngest player ever to play in the IPL. Royals signed Suryavanshi for Rs 1.1 crore. Samson said: "The boys of today don't lack confidence at all. They are very brave and understand the current situation of Indian cricket and the brand of cricket that needs to be played. For me, rather than giving advice, I prefer observing first — how a youngster wants to play his cricket, what he likes, and what kind of support he needs from me."



those questions to bed once and for all and say, 'no, I'm still playing well enough. I love playing in this team. I love leading this team.' And I think, the fact that he said that, to me, it means that he must have that goal in mind of playing in the next (50-over) World Cup (in 2027)."



# Rekhachithram: How a Rs 9 crore film, AI Mammooty succeeded where big-budget 'spectacles' GOAT and Indian 2 fell short

After a blockbuster run at the box office, grossing over Rs 75 crore worldwide, director Jofin T Chacko's Rekhachithram has finally started streaming on SonyLIV, once again becoming the talk of the town. While those who missed the film in theatres are now busy catching the alternate-history (althist) mystery thriller, it has also earned a large group of repeat viewers who are discovering new Easter eggs, deepening their appreciation for the movie's nuances, hidden details and brilliance. Set against the backdrop of the production of director Bharathan's Mammooty-starrer Kathodu Kathoram (1985), the althist film revolves around a fictional crime — the sudden disappearance of a junior artiste from the movie's set. While Rekha (Anaswara Rajan) arrived there with high hopes of securing a role in the Bharathan directorial, believing it could lead to more opportunities and eventually a chance to star opposite Mammooty, her aspirations are tragically cut short on the very first night itself when she is murdered by some people and secretly buried. With no trace of her before or after that night, her colleagues assume she simply eloped — a notion reinforced by the fact that no one ever came searching for her: no relatives, no friends, no one. Thus, her death remains a secret for decades until, 39 years later, one of the guilt-ridden perpetrators confesses, revealing the involvement of others and the location of her buried body. Shockingly, however, even he doesn't know her identity despite being an accomplice in her murder. Shortly after, he takes his own life, leaving the police with an unidentified corpse that had been lying buried for decades and just the names of the accused persons.

Despite having no clear starting point to uncover the woman's identity, CI Vivek Gopinath (Asif Ali) commences the investigation at a dead end, hopeful that persistent efforts would eventually help him connect the dots. The rest of the film follows his probe as he pieces together the puzzle, ultimately reconstructing a Rekhachithram — a portmanteau of Rekha and chithram (meaning "picture"), referring

to a sketch or facial composite — that sheds light on both her life and death. While Rekhachithram earned widespread praise for its writing — brilliantly utilising speculative fiction's subgenre of alternate history — along with its direction, performances and more, the most lauded aspect was its masterful use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create a younger version of Malayalam megastar Mammooty. This not only lent authenticity to the scenes taking place in Kathodu Kathoram's set but also anchored the film and Rekha's character in an emotion (Mammooty) deeply resonant with the Malayali populace. Even as speculations swirled about how director Jofin and his team managed to pull off this exceptional feat — especially at a time when even big-budget Indian 'spectacle' films are getting trolled for their shoddy visual effects — Team Rekhachithram kept their secret under wraps until recently. Was it actually Mammooty himself who played the role, with the makers later applying de-aging technology, much like how legendary filmmaker Martin Scorsese digitally de-aged actors Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci in The Irishman (2019)? The question seemed reasonable, especially since Mammooty had lent his voice to a dialogue in Rekhachithram's climax. However, there were no credible reports to support this theory. While Rekhachithram earned widespread praise, the most lauded aspect was its masterful use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create a younger version of Malayalam megastar Mammooty. Twinkle Surya as Mammooty in Rekhachithram. Anaswara Rajan is also seen. Finally, following the movie's OTT premiere, Jofin revealed that the younger version of Mammooty was created using a stand-in actor, Twinkle Surya, who meticulously replicated the Malayalam icon's movements and his face was later digitally replaced with that of a younger Mammooty, creating an immersive cinematic experience for the audience.

Mentioning that there were no additional preparations or fittings made for AI, Twinkle, in a conversation with Cue Studio, revealed that the team concerned was always

present during the shoot of his scenes, offering precise instructions, including on facial positioning. "I was told not to turn my face to either side under any circumstances. I was also instructed to keep my lips sealed and avoid showing my teeth. While raising my hand (to wave at fans as Mammooty), it had to stay clear of my face to prevent any distortion in the final image," he explained. Since AI was used exclusively for face replacement, Twinkle had to physically transform himself to match Mammooty's younger physique. He also dedicated time to perfecting the veteran actor's mannerisms and body language, which he mastered by studying his archival interviews.

While artiste trainer Arun Sankaran Pavumba, who specialises in body language and other traits from retro cinema, coached Twinkle to perfect Mammooty's mannerisms, Andrew Jacob D'Cruz of Mindstein Studios led the AI-driven de-aging process. Mindstein Studios is known for its VFX work in films such as Minnal Murali, 2018: Everyone is a Hero, Ajayante Randam Moshanam, Neelavelicham, Kurup and Kumbalangi Nights. Andrew has twice won the Kerala State Film Award for Best Visual Effects, for 2018 and Minnal Murali. "Recreating a specific look of Mammooty from a particular movie was challenging. Since the lighting styles and other visual elements of Kathodu Kathoram differed from those used in contemporary cinema, we didn't achieve the desired output at first. It took us four to five months to recreate Mammooty's face properly," Andrew told The Cue. "Since AI-generated results vary with each attempt, we had to create four different versions of his face for every shot," Andrew added, noting that discussions about VFX had begun as early as Rekhachithram's pre-production stage. Rekhachithram also serves as a lesson for many Indian filmmakers who squander producers' money in the name of spectacle. A younger version of Malayalam megastar Mammooty created using AI. (Credit: Instagram/@megastar\_updates) Rekhachithram is not just another feather in Malayalam cinema's cap,



thanks to its experimental narrative and impressive execution — all accomplished within a modest reported budget of Rs 9 crore. It also serves as a lesson for many Indian filmmakers who squander producers' money in the name of 'spectacle', relying on massive set pieces, excessive VFX or an overload of junior artistes, often without proper planning or execution. At a time when several actors have fallen victim to shockingly realistic deepfake videos created by random perpetrators, a few recent films drew attention for their poorly executed VFX, despite having enormous budgets. Venkat Prabhu's The Greatest of All Time (GOAT, 2024) was one such movie.

## Karan Johar posts cryptic message about 'outsiders': 'I am so happy to be entitled to my own thoughts'

Days after Nadaaniyan released on Netflix, producer of the film Karan Johar took to Instagram and posted a picture in a hotel room with a rather confusing caption. The director wrote "Living on a plane.. what a privilege to be an outsider from the plane and an insider to the warmth of my hotel room. I am so happy to be entitled to my own thoughts and cut off from WHYFI." The producer's latest film, Nadaaniyan, did not receive a fairy-tale reception from the fans or critics. While the movie was trending in 29 countries and bagged the No. 1 spot in the Top 10 on Netflix India, the views are definitely not making up for the reviews. The Ibrahim Ali Khan and Khushi Kapoor starrer currently sits at a rating of 17% on Rotten Tomatoes and 4.6/10 on IMDb.

Audiences and critics have both pointed out the apparent lack of depth in the narrative and how both the lead actors failed to make an impact with their performances. Everyone involved with the film seems to be in damage control mode, with Ibrahim posting a cropped picture of the film's IMDb page showing only the users who gave the film 10/10. His sister, actor Sara Ali Khan posted several pictures on Instagram and snippets from the movie, praising her brother's performance and how well the movie was doing on Netflix. The Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham director seems to be taking the backlash in stride. He was seen celebrat-



ing with the stars of the reality TV show Fabulous Lives Of Bollywood Wives after they won the award for the Best Reality or Best Non-Scripted Show at the 2025 IIFA digital awards.

## Gigi Hadid shares surprisingly low-key way she met Bradley Cooper, opens up on relationship with ex Zayn Malik



Gigi Hadid gives fans a glimpse into her life as a mom, sharing rare moments with daughter Khai. The supermodel opens up about her new romance and co-parenting with Zayn Malik while balancing her thriving career.

opens up about co-parenting with Zayn Malik and balancing her thriving career. Gigi shared how she first met Bradley Cooper and how the two ended up falling for each other in what she calls a low-key meeting. Gigi Hadid is finally addressing the rumours surrounding her romance with Bradley Cooper. The supermodel, in a recent interview with Vogue, got candid about everything, her career, friendships, relationships, and, of course, her daughter Khai, whom she co-parents with ex Zayn Malik. Gigi also shared how she first met Bradley Cooper and how the two ended up falling for each other in what she calls a low-key meeting. She even revealed why the couple has chosen to keep their romance out of the spot-

light. "I think just getting to the point where you know what you want and deserve in a relationship is essential," Gigi told Vogue, stressing what a healthy relationship looks like for her. And then to find someone who's in a place in their life where they know what they want and deserve... and you both do the work separately to come together and be the best partner you can be," she said.

Gigi Hadid then finally let her fans in on how things sparked with Bradley Cooper, and it's surprisingly very normal. Forget fancy Hollywood setups or secret apps, these two A-listers first met at a backyard birthday party. A random get-together for a mutual friend's kid was where it all started. And as Gigi puts it, that's kind of the best way to meet if you're two world-famous celebrities trying to date. "You want to give yourself a normal experience of dating," Gigi shared in her new Vogue interview. "And even for my friends who aren't public figures, that's hard. Where do you go? And, what? You just start talking to people? And then there's another added layer of privacy and security." But meeting Bradley seems to have brought a lot of calm and a little bit of Broadway into her life. "Bradley," she says, "has opened me up to going to the theater more, and that's something that's so nice to bring back into my life." Despite all the noise that comes with dating in the spotlight, Gigi describes their relationship as "very romantic and happy." Though she admits there are things she keeps private, not because they're secret, but because "it's just not part of our relationship to share for whatever reason."

In the same interview, Gigi also opened up about her relationship with ex-Zayn Malik, with whom she co-parents their daughter Khai. The two were together for about six years, and while their breakup made plenty of headlines back then, Hadid made it clear that it's all in the past now. During the chat, she scrolled through photos on her phone, including one of Zayn holding Khai on her first day of pre-kindergarten. The soon-to-be 30-year-old mom pointed out Khai's "innate musicality" that she gets from her dad. When it comes to co-parenting, Gigi explained, "Zayn and I do our custody schedules months in advance." She added, "That doesn't mean it doesn't change here and there, but we help each other out and have each other's backs." She also said they've entered this new phase of their lives with "love and a feeling of camaraderie." And while they know people are always going to speculate about their past, Gigi's focus is clear: "We're not interested in giving everyone our whole story. What we are interested in is raising our daughter together, with so much respect

## Ranbir Kapoor takes a dig at Aamir Khan turning 60 after being called 'Ranbir Singh', Team India steps in: 'Sathiya gaye hain'. Watch new ad

Ranbir Kapoor and Aamir Khan are at loggerheads, but the damage is borne by Ranveer Singh. Aamir and Ranbir recently featured in an advertisement where they engage in a verbal spat, even dragging players of the Indian cricket team into it. It all began when Aamir addressed Ranbir Kapoor as Ranveer Singh, which offended the latter. The ad's clip showed Aamir speaking to Rishabh Pant as the cricketer expresses his wish to click a photo with Ranbir Kapoor and not Aamir. A little embarrassed, Aamir goes to Ranbir but doesn't miss a chance to pull his leg. "Tumhari generation ka sabse bada star (Your generation's biggest star), Ranbir Singh." When Ranbir corrected Aamir, he responds, "Ek hi baat hai yaar, dono handsome munde hain (It's the same thing, both are handsome)."

Ranbir, however, didn't let go of Aamir's mistake and says, "Aise kaise Kapoor ko Singh bol diya? Main unko Salman bulaun toh? (How can he call me Singh? Should I call him Salman?)" The banter didn't stop there as Aamir said he wouldn't mind being called Salman but no one should refer to him as Arbaaz Khan. To Aamir's surprise, Arbaaz appeared in the frame and confronted him, "Sohail pe bill phad deta (Why didn't you target Sohail Khan?)." The multiple star appearances didn't stop at this point, as Jackie Shroff entered the frame. Ranbir was seen complaining to him, "He is jealous of me because he is just Khan and I am Khandan. Saath (60) ke ho gaye hain, sathiya gaye hain. Retire hone bolo unko (He is 60 now. He has lost his mind.



Ask him to retire)." In his cool Bhidu style, Jackie responded, "I asked for tissue, why are you handing me issue." Aamir hits back at Ranbir, "These youngsters' ego is bigger than their box office collection." Quickly, the actors are seen face to face, engulfed in a heated exchange as cricketer Rohit Sharma tries to ease the tension. Aamir declares, "Let's settle it on the field." Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya and Rishabh Pant watch from the sidelines as the two actors try to claim them from their own team. Their verdict, "Isse toh retire ho jaate". This isn't the first time Aamir and Ranbir are seen together on screen. Ranbir made a cameo appearance in Aamir Khan's PK.

## Nora Fatehi trolls Kartik Aaryan as rumours of him dating Sreeleela gain momentum: 'Is there anyone in the industry you haven't dated?'



Kartik Aaryan has often been linked to various actresses in the film industry over the years. It is well known that he dated his Love Aaj Kal co-star Sara Ali Khan, and rumours have suggested brief relationships with Janhvi Kapoor and Ananya Panday as well. At the recently held IIFA 2025 awards, Nora Fatehi playfully trolled Kartik, quipping, "Is there anyone in the industry you haven't dated?"

The moment unfolded during an award show segment when Kartik took on hosting duties alongside filmmaker Karan Johar. As part of the interaction, Karan and Kartik stepped off the stage and approached Nora, who was seated in the front row. Karan initiated the exchange by asking, "Will you go to London with a first-class ticket?" To this, Nora jokingly responded, "Am I going with you?" Karan then clarified, "I am talking about Kartik." Kartik quickly jumped in, explaining that neither he nor Karan would be accompanying her, but she would receive a fully sponsored ticket to London. Karan further asked Nora if she was single, adding, "You told me this last night." Taking the opportunity to tease Kartik about his rumoured past relationships, Nora

replied, "Koe hai iss industry mein jisko apne date nahi kia (Is there anyone in the industry you haven't dated?)" As the audience erupted in cheers, Kartik responded, "She is just asking a question." At the IIFA event, Kartik Aaryan's mother playfully hinted at a connection between him and actress Sreeleela. When host Karan Johar asked if she would prefer an actress as her daughter-in-law, she replied that the family's preference was for a doctor. Interestingly, Sreeleela holds an MBBS degree. Adding to the speculation, she was recently seen attending an intimate family gathering with Kartik. At the event, Kartik bagged the Best Actor award for his role in Bhoole Bhooley 3 (2024). On the professional front, he is set to share screen space with Sreeleela in Anurag Basu's next film.

## Tollywood actress Samantha turns producer for this film

Hyderabad: Samantha Ruth Prabhu is making headlines this time as she turns producer for an upcoming Telugu film "Maa Inti Bangaram." According to reports, the actress is also committed to make sure everybody who works for the film is paid equally. At BIFFEs 2025, director Nandini Reddy revealed that Samantha plans to implement equal pay for everyone working on the film. If successful, this could set a new industry standard and influence financial policies in the entertainment sector. "Maa Inti Bangaram" marks Samantha's debut as a producer under her banner, Tarala Media Entertainments. While the film's production is yet to begin and the director is not officially announced, the project has already created buzz. Apart from her production venture,

