

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | 15 MARCH 2026



## WEATHER

Max: 37.6°C  
Min: 22.9°C  
RH: 40%  
Rainfall: Nil  
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky.  
Max/Min temp. 37/22 °C

## WORLD | 14

Netanyahu's video fuels online debate

## SPORTS | 16

World Cup champs to be feted at BCCI awards today

## TABLOID

Allu Cinemas' 'Wall of Greats' sparks debate

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## ASTROGUIDE

Vishwawas: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Ekadasi till 9.13 am  
Star: Shravana till 5.55 am (Monday)  
Varjyam: 8.59 am to 10.39 am  
Durmuhurtam: 4.47 pm to 5.34 pm  
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
HJRI CALENDAR  
Ramzan 25,1447 H  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.24 am  
Zohar: 12.35 pm  
Asar: 4.45 pm  
Maghrib: 6.31 pm  
Isha: 7.39 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 06.23 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 18.25 PM  
MOONRISE 03.42 AM  
MOONSET 03.08 PM

## COUNTER POINT



Relax! There's no ban on political conversions or party defections!

RAMZAN TIMINGS  
IFTAR: 6.31PM (TODAY)  
SEHER: 5.01 AM (TOMORROW)

## IN BRIEF

### Revanth to host Dawat-e-Iftar

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will host the annual state sponsored Dawat-e-Iftar at LB Stadium on Sunday, reflecting the government's commitment to communal harmony and support for minority communities. The main programme begins at 5.30 pm, with the CM expected to address the gathering at 6 pm, highlighting benefits for minorities under the Congress government.

Full report on Page 3

### BJP will stop conversions: Shah

New Delhi/Moga: Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday attacked the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab over law and order, drug menace, religious conversions and corruption, asserting that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP could free the state from drugs. Addressing a "bad-lav" rally in Moga, Shah also signalled the BJP's push for the 2027 Assembly elections and urged voters to give the party a chance to form the government.

Full report on Page 13

## US Prez says Iran military is 100% destroyed Trump seeks warships to open Hormuz Strait

Washington, March 14: US President Donald Trump stepped up calls to reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz, saying warships will "hopefully" be sent to the area near Iran's coast to help commercial vessels sail through safely. His comments on Truth Social — which didn't provide a timeline — came hours after he ordered a strike on military sites on Kharg Island, from which Iran exports almost all its oil, upping the ante in a Middle East war that's raged for more than two weeks. As he urged nations to send ships to the strait, he added that "the United States will be bombing the hell out of the shoreline, and continually shooting Iranian Boats and Ships out of the water. One way or the other, we will soon get the Hormuz Strait OPEN, SAFE, and FREE!"

The president said military facilities on the Persian Gulf island had been "obliterated," adding that he chose not to hit oil infrastructure "for reasons of decency." He threatened to do just that should Iran "do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz." "Many Countries, especially those who are affected by Iran's attempted closure of the Hormuz Strait, will be sending War Ships, in conjunction with the United States of America, to keep the Strait open and safe," he wrote in his latest post.

He gave little detail beyond saying he hoped China, France, Japan, South Korea and the UK would also send warships. He stated that even though Iran's military was "already destroyed 100%," it was "easy" for Tehran to continue threatening ships with drones, mines and short-range missiles.

More reports on pg 14



Plumes of smoke and fire rise after debris from an intercepted Iranian drone struck an oil facility, according to authorities, in Fujairah in UAE. — PTI

## India seeks safe passage for ships

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

India is in contact with Iran, the United States, Israel and Gulf nations, and two Indian ships carrying LPG have crossed the Straits of Hormuz and are due to arrive at Indian ports on March 16 and 17, ministry of external affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Saturday.

He said the two ships, Shivalik and Nanda

Devi, are carrying more than 92,700 metric tonnes of LPG between them and had crossed the strait as a "result of these multiple contacts".

Government officials said that of the 22 Indian ships in the Gulf region, six are LPG carriers and four are oil tankers. Jaiswal said several other Indian ships in the Gulf region were "on standby".

Page 13: India holds sufficient fertilisers

## Centre confirms no LPG dry-out so far

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

Amid concerns over fuel supply due to the widening conflicts in West Asia, the government on Saturday said that LPG availability remains a concern in some areas, but there has been no "dry out" reported at retail stations across the country.

LPG cylinder distribution has begun in 29 states and Union Territories, while authorities have stepped up raids and surprise inspections across the country to curb hoarding and black-marketing amid heightened pressure on cooking gas supplies, a senior oil ministry official said.

Page 13: Book LPG only if necessary: Centre

## TG targets ₹ 10,000-cr Urban Challenge Fund

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The state government is aiming to secure nearly ₹10,000 crore from the Centre's ₹1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF), announced in the Union Budget for 2026-27, to finance major urban infrastructure initiatives, official sources said on Saturday.

The government plans

to utilise the UCF to support projects such as the Musi rejuvenation programme and expansion of Hyderabad Metro Rail as part of a broader push to undertake infrastructure works worth nearly ₹40,000 crore in the 2026-27 financial year. Allocations for these projects are expected to feature prominently in the State Budget to be presented in the Assembly on March 20, sources

added. The UCF, planned for the period 2025-31, is a competitive and reform-linked mechanism for large-scale urban infrastructure development. Under the funding structure, the Centre provides 25 per cent of the project cost as a grant, the state contributes another 25 per cent.

Page 6: CM directs UCF funding for BFC, RRR

## Congress acts as puppet of anti-India forces: Modi

Says Centre trying to ensure least hardship for the people

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, MARCH 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused the Congress of acting as a "puppet" in the hands of forces opposed to India's development, while addressing an election rally in Silchar in poll-bound Assam.

"The forces across the globe that are unable to digest India's rapid development, the Congress is increasingly becoming a puppet into the hands of these very forces," Modi said.

Continuing his attack on the opposition party, the Prime Minister alleged that Congress was trying to create panic among citizens over the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

"Our government is making every possible effort to ensure that the citizens of our country face the least hardships possible. Our objective is to minimise the impact of this war on our citizens. At this critical juncture, it was expected that the Congress would fulfil the role of a responsible political entity. However, Congress has once again failed in this vital task concerning the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded by BJP leaders during a rally, at Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata on Saturday. — PTI

national interest," he said. Modi said the Congress had suffered repeated electoral defeats across the country.

"You have ousted the Congress from Assam. Today, every state in the country is teaching the Congress a lesson. The Congress is losing election after election. In the near future, Congress is poised to hit a century of defeats," he said. Alleging that the party lacked vision for the country, he said Congress was spreading propaganda through "fake reels".

"Everyone should be care-

ful of the Congress. They are running an industry of making fake reels just to create propaganda," he said. "The Congress is making every attempt to create panic within the country, hoping the nation gets entangled in difficulties, so that they can subsequently heap endless abuse upon Modi," he added. Referring to a Youth Congress protest at an AI Summit in New Delhi, Modi said the Opposition party was acting out of desperation.

Page 13: Modi: Cong. targeting nation

## PM: TMC is anti-SIR to help illegals

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MARCH 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accused West Bengal's ruling All India Trinamul Congress (TMC) of trying to protect infiltrators by opposing the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters' list ahead of the Assembly elections.

Addressing a massive BJP rally at the Brigade Parade Ground, which marked the culmination of the party's Parivartan Jatra, the Prime Minister backed the Election Commission and criticised the TMC for attacking the poll body over the voter roll revision.

The rally followed the launch of Central projects worth ₹18,600 crore in the poll-bound state, covering sectors ranging from infrastructure to transportation.

Page 13: Modi: TMC protecting illegal migrants

## BACK HOME SC adjourns Wangchuk wife's plea to March 17

## NSA revoked against Sonam

RAKESH K. SINGH | DC  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

Hours after the Centre revoked the detention order against climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, 59, who had been arrested under the stringent National Security Act, on September 26 last year he was released from Jodhpur Central Jail on Saturday.

The Union government revoked the detention with immediate effect, nearly six months after Wangchuk was arrested following violent protests in Leh that left four people dead.

I HAVE not stepped away from activism. My commitment to Ladakh remains unchanged. Our struggle has always been for Ladakh's protection and dignity."

— SONAM WANGCHUK  
Climate activist



In a statement, the Centre said the decision was taken to foster peace in Ladakh. The government said it had been engaging with stakeholders and community leaders in the region to address public concerns. "The government has been actively engaging

with various stakeholders and community leaders in Ladakh to address the aspirations and concerns of the people of the region. It remains hopeful that the issues will be resolved through constructive engagement and dialogue, including through the

High-Powered Committee and other appropriate platforms," the statement said.

The decision came days after the Supreme Court adjourned the hearing of a plea filed by Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, challenging his detention, to March 17. Wangchuk was detained under the National Security Act on September 26, 2025, by Leh district authorities, two days after Ladakh statehood protests, and later shifted to Jodhpur jail.

Page 13: Ladakh LG welcomes release order

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LIC/PI/2025-26/32/Eng

## EVENTS TODAY

**Annamaya Nava Mohana Geethika: Commentary, vocal concert**  
Time: 5 pm  
Venue: Telangana Saraswatha Parishath Hall, Boggulakunta

**Vishwanatha Shastri centenary celebrations**  
Time: 9 am  
Venue: Ravindra Bharathi

**Fukra Entertainment comedy show**  
Time: 7 pm  
Venue: Shilpa Kala Vedika

**Sangeetha vibhavari by Shruthi Layalu**  
Time: 7.30 pm  
Venue: Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha

## SHORT TAKES

### ₹5,000 FINE TO DETER WEDDING GATECRASHERS

**PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC WARANGAL, MARCH 14**

Function halls across the erstwhile Warangal district have begun displaying banners warning gatecrashers with criminal cases, amid a rise in uninvited people attending private functions and consuming food meant for guests.

The banners, placed at entrances of several venues, warn that entering a private function without an invitation could attract action under Section 329 of the BNS (Section 441 of IPC) for criminal trespass, which entails imprisonment of up to three months and a fine of ₹5,000. A photograph of one such flex banner recently went viral on social media. The issue has been reported from parts of Mahabubabad, Warangal and Hanamkonda districts. Prathap, who recently organised his sister's marriage at a function hall near the 100 Feet KUC Road in Hanamkonda, alleged that more than 200 uninvited people entered the venue, consumed food meant for guests and left.

### TRAFFIC CURBS AT YOUSUFGUDA FOR FILM RELEASE

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

Traffic diversions will be in place around Kotla Vijaya Bhasker Reddy (KVBR) stadium in Yousufguda, on Sunday in view of the pre-release event of a Telugu film scheduled to be held from 3 pm to 10 pm. Traffic from Jubilee Hills checkpoint towards KVBR stadium will be diverted at Krishnanagar Junction towards Srinagar Colony and Panjagutta. Vehicles from Maitrivanam Junction towards Jubilee Hills checkpoint and Madhapur will be diverted at Yousufguda Basti towards RBI Quarters and Krishnanagar junction. Traffic from Maitrivanam Junction towards Borabanda bus stop will be diverted at Savera Function Hall via Krishnakanth Park, GTS Temple, Kalyannagar, Motinagar. Vehicles travelling from Borabanda bus stop towards Maitrivanam junction will be diverted at Prime Garden via Midland Bakery, GTS Colony, Kalyannagar junction, Umesh Chandra Statue U-turn. Parking arrangements have been made at Janakammathota Parking and Metro Parking in Yousufguda for all vehicles, while Savera Function Hall and Mahamood Function Hall will be available for four-wheelers.

### BTECH STUDENT DIES AT SEC'BAD METRO STATION

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

A B'Tech student died allegedly by suicide at Secunderabad East Metro Rail station on Friday evening. Police identified the deceased as Nityateja, student of a private university located in Ghatkesar and resident of Boduppal. Locals found him lying injured on the ground and alerted authorities. He was rushed to Gandhi Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. Inspector Madhu Kumar said the boy had spoken to his father shortly before the incident and appeared normal. He had told his parents he was going to a friend's place in Ameerpet. "His parents are in shock. They said he was studying well and were not pressuring him for marks. He had, however, been talking to someone over the phone in recent days," the inspector noted.

## Neta's natter

### REVANTH GIVES IT STRAIGHT TO THE OPPOSITION

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy briefly set aside politics and turned philosophical while speaking about the ambitious Musi rejuvenation project on Friday. Addressing a gathering after a detailed presentation on the project, the Chief Minister responded to the ongoing criticism and smear campaign on the Musi project by Opposition parties with an unusual reflection on life, faith and public duty. Revanth Reddy said he was ready to stop the Musi project if the majority of the people believed it was of no use. "What will I do with this development if people do not want it," he asked, stressing that the project was meant purely for the good of Hyderabad and the people. Then came the punchline that had the audience smiling. Development, he said, was not wealth one can wire to the afterlife. "This is not money I can send through RTGS after I die and receive it in heaven. This is not a post-dated cheque which I can encash in heaven," he quipped.

Calling himself a strong practising Hindu, Revanth Reddy said he firmly believed in the philosophy of karma. Whatever people earn or build in life, he said, must remain here - because nothing travels beyond.

### TRIPATHI TEACHES STAFF A TIMELY LESSON

Government offices are notorious for their reputation of officials and staff either not turning up in time, or disappearing for long periods from their seats. Apparently having had enough of such behaviour, Nizamabad district collector Ila Tripathi has begun a crackdown and none, it appears, is immune from the impact. Suspension orders have been served on teachers in government schools, and staff in offices for neglecting their duties.

Suddenly, the past practice of some political help for those facing action and escaping is no longer the norm and union leaders are reported to be wondering on how to stay relevant supporting truancy. The buzz in the official corridors is that the government has the collector's back on streamlining services, and for now, the only policy that appears to "save" government employees is the principle of all-hands-on-the-deck, and on time.



Contributions from L. Venkat Ram Reddy, Neeraj Kumar, Balu Pulipaka, P. Srinivas, Narender Pulloor and Md Nizamuddin

### TRANS PEOPLE FLAG AMENDMENT TO LEGAL RIGHT

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

Members of Hyderabad's transgender and queer community have voiced concern over the proposed amendment to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, which activists say could remove legal recognition based on self-identified gender and introduce medical board certification. The amendment Bill was introduced in LS on March 12. Hyderabad-based drag artist Patrini Sastry and LGBTQIA+ collective Mobbera Foundation described the proposal as a rollback of protections recognised in the 'NALSA v Union of India' (2014) judgment. Further, national LGBTQ advocacy collective Yes, We Exist reacting online along with community members under the hashtag #RejectTransBill2026.

### REVANTH SETS UP A GRADING SYSTEM FOR IPS

The era of quiet lobbying for coveted police postings may finally be facing a shake-up in Telangana. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has rolled out a performance-based grading system for IPS officers, signalling that influence may no longer trump efficiency in the race for plum assignments. In a move that has become a talking point within

police circles, the Chief Minister has divided IPS officers into three categories - Grades A, B and C - with those delivering strong results getting the A Grade, with average performance Grade B, and officers with poor records receiving a C. The grading will not be merely symbolic. Promotions, incentives and the most sought-after postings will now hinge on these report cards. Top

performers are expected to land key positions, while those in the bottom tier may have to settle for relatively low-profile roles. At the recent Police Retreat, the Chief Minister gave a clear message: The familiar practice of "pairavis" for postings should stop. In the new system, the only recommendation that counts is performance.



### KOTWAL GETS COPS TO LOOK SHARP

It's not just work, but how one looks doing it. And giving some grooming tips on how a crisp professional vibe when it comes to uniforms will go a long way in reflecting discipline was none other than the Kotwal of Hyderabad, V.C. Sajjanar. The tips were clear: Clean, fitted formal attire, coupled with well-groomed hairstyles, along with nicely trimmed beards if such fuzz is sported by anyone. Duty calls for well-polished shoes, and slippers, chappals, and the like are henceforth off limits while at work. To make sure everyone was adhering to these requirements, don't be surprised if a senior officer popped in and checked if everyone was looking sharp, at least when it came to appearance. Sajjanar's tips have, of course, been welcomed by those in the city's cop world, but then a well-groomed look doesn't come cheap with a middle-aged officer pointing out that such a look could involve some costs, and could be tough to keep up in the long run.

### FROM BULLET, MAOISTS INVITED TO THE 'BALLOTFIELD'

Surrendered Maoists are suddenly the most sought-after recruits. Having walked away from the gun, they now find themselves being courted by political parties eager to offer them a new role - this time in electoral politics. The unusual scramble began after a group of top Maoists surrendered before the police and later met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Without missing the moment, the Chief Minister extended a political olive branch, saying the Congress would gladly welcome them if they wished to work for the welfare of the poor.

The unusual scramble began after a group of top Maoists surrendered before the police and later met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

The invitation quickly sparked a counter-pitch. CPI leader and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao urged the former rebels to join the CPI, calling it the ideological "mother organisation" of Maoism. To underline the offer, he invited them to the party's state office in Hyderabad for discussions. Caught between these competing political embraces, the surrendered Maoists appear in a hurry. They say politics can wait, and that they will decide their next move at the "appropriate time."

### KAVITHA GETS THE TIMING RIGHT, BEATS BRS

Ever since K. Kavitha left the BRS, or rather was forced to leave the party, there has been a spoken, as well as unspoken war, between her and BRS leaders K.T. Rama

Rao and T. Harish Rao. The winners of each round in this battle keep changing but in the latest one over demolition of houses in Velugumatla in Khammam district, the Telangana Jagruthi leader stole a march over her brother who went to the village, made the mandatory comments criticising the government and raised a slew of demands. Fast grasping the potential for the government walking back on the demolitions, Kavitha launched an indefinite fast, and as things turned out, the government promised to rebuild the houses, at least a good number of those demolished, giving Kavitha bragging rights on the issue. In politics, it can be all about the timing and, in this instance, Kavitha appeared to have timed her protest just right.

## EDGY | DREAMS Anxiety high due to wage-weighted selection

# Indian employees in the US anxiously await H-1B results

**NEERAJ KUMAR | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

Thousands of Indian professionals in the US are on edge as the Trump administration prepares to finalise the FY 2027 H-1B visa lottery selections by March 31, with the registration window closing on March 19. Anxiety was running high due to the new wage-weighted selection process effective from February 27, 2026, which prioritises higher base salaries over random draws.

Indians, who have comprised over 70 per cent of H-1B approvals in previous years, fear non-disclosure of employee wage levels by companies - a standard US practice - could disadvantage them further.

"It's nerve-racking this

time," said Priya Sharma, a software engineer from Hyderabad now living in Texas after relocating from Silicon Valley. "Last year was luck-based, now it's all about my base pay, which my company bumped up by merging restricted stock units (RSUs). But they won't confirm the wage level - whether I am in Level I, II or III."

Rajesh Reddy, IT worker from Nirmal and based in Atlanta, echoed the sentiment: "My company advanced my appraisal in January, but the uncertainty is killing me. My friends in California are panicking over high prevailing wages pushing them out."

Companies have overhauled employee compensation to boost the chances of selection under the

wage-based system, where Level IV wages get four times more entries than Level I. Many have merged stock options and perks into base pay, as cash-only salary counts toward wage tiers. This has pressured start-ups the most. Other employers have advanced salary appraisals for key roles, auditing job codes and offering hikes well ahead of registration to hit higher Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) levels.

Employees are adapting by relocating from high-wage hubs like California to lower-cost suburbs or less prominent areas, where prevailing wages align with lower tiers but still qualify. "I moved to Raleigh in North Carolina for a 15 per cent lower base, probability feels bet-

### WITH 'GAS PROBLEM' KTR GETS A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE

It is not uncommon in politics to have the shoe ending up on the other foot and finding himself in this position was BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao who was the focus of several social media posts on his silence on the LPG cylinders supply situation over the past few days. The recent practice has been that the BRS always claims credit for "pushing" the government into action on several issues the party says it highlighted first, such as water from Devadula for irrigation, or houses for the Velugumatla villagers. As the pendulum began firmly swinging against him, KTR, facing social media ire thanks to some well-aimed shots by the Congress, which used a technique that the BRS itself heavily relies on, ended up rushing a letter to the Centre to ensure LPG supplies.

The recent practice has been that the BRS always claims credit for "pushing" the government into action on several issues the party says it highlighted first.

### WHEN THE GOING GETS HOT, FRIENDS TURN COLD

Being a bureaucrat means being stuck in situations where they are damned if they are not and damned if they don't. Finding himself in just such a tricky spot is Khammam district collector Anudeep Durishetty following the demolition of houses allegedly built illegally on Bhoodan land in Velugumatla. Former Bhoodan Board chairman Rajender Reddy's stand that the houses had permissions did not make matters any easier for the besieged bureaucrat. Anudeep, criticised roundly by political parties and people's organisations, found himself all by himself. The government deciding to allot plots to more than 300 evicted families in the same Bhoodan land, and sanctioning Indiramma houses at the very place where existing houses were demolished, proved that brickbats are just one throw away for a bureaucrat.

The government deciding to allot plots to more than 300 evicted families in the same Bhoodan land, proved that brickbats are just one throw away for a bureaucrat.

# 5 held: Rave at Rohith's farmhouse

## Police deny they were fired at

**MANVI VYAS | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

The EAGLE team, along with Moinabad police, detailed five persons for allegedly consuming cocaine, during a party at a farmhouse owned by former MLA 'Pilot' Rohith Reddy in Moinabad, according to reports at 12 midnight. While reports mentioned that the police were fired at, officials denied being attacked.

According to EAGLE DG Sandeep Shandilya, the party was held at a farmhouse owned by BRS former MLA P. Rohith Reddy. Reportedly present were Eluru MP Putta Mahesh and Namit Sharma, former MLA

from Jaipur, an advocate and five real estate businessmen. While the quantity of the contraband is yet to be ascertained, police said it seemed to be close to two grams.

There were nine people at the farmhouse when the police raided the place and five tested positive. The EAGLE team handed over the accused to the Moinabad police, who would again subject them to a drug test and book them if they test positive again.

While officials denied any firing, they said those in the farmhouse behaved aggressively and tried to prevent the team from entering the premises. Investigation into the incident is underway.

### PA TO BHUPALPALLY MLA HELD FOR CHEATING WOMAN, SC/ST ABUSE CASE

**DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, MARCH 14**

Police on Saturday arrested M. Srinivas, personal assistant to Bhupalpally MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao, on charges of cheating a young woman and abusing her in the name of her caste in Chityala mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

According to the complaint filed by the victim, Srinivas had been in a relationship with her and allegedly promised to marry her. She alleged that he exploited her physically on the pretext of marriage. The woman

later found that Srinivas was making arrangements to marry another woman. When she confronted him, he allegedly refused to marry her, abused her by referring to her caste and issued threats to her life. Based on the complaint, Chityala police registered a case against Srinivas under the SC and the ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act along with relevant sections related to cheating and criminal intimidation.

Police said the accused was arrested and produced before a court, which remanded him to judicial custody.

# Women narrow AI learning gap

**RACHEL DAMMALA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 13**

Women in Hyderabad are gradually narrowing the gender gap in artificial intelligence learning, with participation in generative AI courses rising, though men continue to dominate overall enrolments.

According to a report by online learning platform Coursera, women accounted for 37 per cent of generative AI learners in Hyderabad in 2025, up from 34 per cent in 2024, marking a three percentage point increase within a year. Men constituted the remaining 63 per cent of learners.

Across India, women are completing generative AI courses at rates three per cent higher than men, the report noted, indicating strong completion rates once they enrol.

### PROLONGED SCREEN TIME STEALS SLEEP

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14**

Heavy reliance on artificial intelligence (AI) tools and prolonged screen exposure may be quietly disrupting sleep patterns, according to a survey released by the city based Heartfulness Institute after World Sleep Day.

The survey found that 82.6 per cent of respondents use AI tools daily or multiple times a day, while 59.1 per cent spend more than four hours on screens, underscoring how deeply digital tools have entered everyday routines. Conducted among more than 550 respondents across Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Pune and Chandigarh, the study points to a clear link between higher digital exposure and poorer sleep health.

Researchers reported that individuals with more than six hours of daily screen time show nearly 80 per cent higher rates of sleep issues compared with those with lower exposure. Overall, 41.3 per cent of respondents said they experience daytime sleepiness somewhat regularly.

Students and IT professionals formed the largest share of frequent AI users, particularly in the 25-44 age group, which recorded the highest levels of interaction. Respondents aged 15-17 reported the longest average sleep duration at about 7.09 hours, while those aged 55-64 recorded the shortest at 5.64 hours.

GenAI for Everyone, Data Analysis and Visualisation with Python, and Natural Language Processing in TensorFlow.

According to Coursera's analysis, application-oriented courses that demonstrate real-world use of AI tend to attract higher participation from women compared to purely technical programmes.

**SHORT TAKES**

**TRAFFIC CURBS AT LB STADIUM IN VIEW OF CM'S IFTAR**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Hyderabad traffic police have issued traffic restrictions at the LB Stadium on Sunday in view of the Dawat-e-Iftar being hosted by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy between 5 pm and 10 pm. Police asked motorists to avoid the road at Lakdikapul, Iqbal Minar, Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad Traffic Police junction, Basheerbagh, BJR statue circle, SBI Gunfoundry, AR Petrol Pump, KLK Building and Liberty.

Traffic will be either stopped or diverted at the following places, routes on need basis as below, police said: Traffic from AR Petrol Pump junction towards BJR statue will be diverted towards Nampally station. Traffic from Basheerbagh towards AR Petrol Pump will be diverted at BJR statue towards SBI, Abids and Nampally station road.

**TG TO BECOME OIL PALM HUB SOON, SAYS TUMMALA**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Agriculture minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said the state government was taking steps to position Telangana as the country's oil palm hub. With Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's encouragement, the government was expanding cultivation statewide to provide farmers with stable income. Oil palm, he noted, offers continuous returns for 25 to 30 years once planted.

Rao, accompanied by transport minister Ponnam Prabhakar, Oil Fed chairman Janga Raghavareddy and senior officials, inspected the ultra modern oil palm processing factory built at Narmetta in Nangoor mandal, Siddipet district.



Dr G. Sanjeeva Reddy, president of the Intuc, wins the trade union election held at Asian Paints, Patancheru Industrial Area, on Friday.

**INTUC PRESIDENT WINS ASIAN PAINTS TRADE UNION POLLS**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 13

Dr G. Sanjeeva Reddy, president of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (Intuc), won the election for the recognised trade union held at Asian Paints, Patancheru Industrial Area, on Friday. Dr Sanjeeva Reddy secured 142 out of the 277 votes polled in the election.

Dr Sanjeeva Reddy defeated by eight votes, the Citu panel comprising Central Industrial Trade Union state president Chukka Ramulu and Mallikarjun. Speaking on the occasion, Kolukuri Narasimha Reddy, Intuc general secretary and president of the Sangareddy unit, said that under the leadership of Dr Sanjeeva Reddy, they would continue their relentless struggle to protect the rights of workers. A large number of workers participated in the rally organised to celebrate the victory.

**KTR: MUSI CAN BE CLEANED WITHOUT RAZING HOUSES**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on Saturday said that the Musi river could be cleaned and developed without demolishing a single house, and that the previous BRS government demonstrated the same by developing nearly six kilometres of the Musi river stretch in Uppal and Nagole.

Addressing a 'Musi Rejuvenation - PowerPoint Presentation vs Public Point' event near Himayatsagar, Rama Rao said some of the buildings as depicted in the government presentation on Friday, at the junction of the Musa and Esa rivers near Babu Ghat, were to come up exactly where the Madhu Park apartments were located. "If these apartments are in the buffer zone of the river, why is the government showing images of plans with new buildings at the same location," Rama Rao asked.

# False info to Census staff to attract ₹1K fine: Official

Self-enumeration facility to be available for residents from April 26-May 8

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Director of Census Operations-Telangana, Bharathi Holikeri, said on Saturday that providing false information or refusing to share details with enumerators during the Census 2027 would attract a penalty of ₹1,000.

The first phase of Census operations in Telangana will run from May 11 to June 9, during which house-listing operations (HLO) will be undertaken. The digital Census will be conducted in two phases, the HLO being followed by the main population enumeration from February 9 to 28, 2027. An optional self-enumeration facility will be available for residents from April 26 to May 8, 2026. Addressing a press conference here, Holikeri said all arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of the Census. Holikeri clarified that self-enumeration data will not be treated as final unless verified by

**CENSUS OPS**

TELANGANA has been divided into about 76,000 blocks.

Nearly 75,000 enumerators appointed.

Around 13,000 supervisors will monitor the field staff.

ADDITIONAL 10 PER CENT PERSONNEL TO BE KEPT IN RESERVE.

IN FIRST PHASE, enumerators will collect housing and household information through a mobile application using a questionnaire consisting of 33 questions.

DATA will cover details such as construction material used for houses; number of rooms; ownership status of the building; availability of toilets, LPG or PNG connections; type of cooking fuel.



Director of Census Operations, Telangana, Bharathi Holikeri addresses media on census of India 2027 at Koti on Saturday. —DEEPAK DESHPANDE

MAIN FOODGRAINS consumed by the family will also be enumerated.

QUESTIONS will also cover vehicles, utilities, and access to phone, television and internet services.

INFORMATION on housing conditions, household particulars and amenities will also be gathered digitally.

enumerators through mandatory house-to-house visits. Residents who opt for self-enumeration will receive a unique self-enumeration ID, which must be shared with the visiting enumerator for verification through a mobile application.

She said the dual process has been designed to ensure data accuracy and prevent exclusion, while

also offering convenience through the online option. The self-enumeration portal will feature tool tips and FAQs to assist users, but all submitted data will be verified before being officially finalised.

Holikeri assured that strict measures had been put in place to protect the confidentiality of the information collected.

She said the census follows stringent legal provisions under the Census Act, 1948, which ensures that individual data remains confidential, cannot be shared with other agencies and is not accessible even to courts.

Holikeri noted that Census 2027 held a special significance for Telangana as it would be the first census conducted

after the state's formation. The previous census was conducted in 2011 in the then undivided Andhra Pradesh. As the exercise is taking place after a gap of 16 years, the updated data will help both the Central and state governments frame policies and schemes based on current demographic and socio-economic realities.

# Finish hostel building works: Bhatti

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka directed officials of the welfare departments to complete the work on hostel buildings that are 80 per cent complete so that they can be used from the new academic year 2026-27. He was reviewing Budget proposals of the SC and ST welfare departments along with welfare minister Adhuri Laxman.

Later, reviewing prop-



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka along with welfare minister Adhuri Laxman takes part in the Budget meeting at the Secretariat on Saturday.

osals from the medical and health department and the endowments department, Bhatti direct-

ed the appointment of a senior officer who would be responsible for ensuring that hostel repair bills

are submitted to the finance department every 15 days so that they can be cleared without delay. He said repair works of welfare hostels must be completed during the summer and warned that negligence by officials in this regard will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Bhatti directed that officials of the welfare departments must send bills to the finance department on time for hostel rents, electricity bills, cosmetic charges, and sala-

ries of outsourcing staff, as the government was committed to paying these expenses every month. Bhatti recalled that during the previous BRS regime, such bills were cleared only once in seven months. On medical and health department, he noted that the entire world was increasingly turning toward Ayurveda. He instructed the AYUSH department to prepare proposals to promote medicinal plant cultivation under the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

# Cong. demands PM's scalp on LPG crisis

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Congress on Saturday held a protest here demanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation, citing issues including the LPG crisis.

Led by Khairatabad DCC president Motha Rohit Mudiraj, demonstrators carried a 100 ft banner and marched from the Babu Jagjivan Ram Statue at Basheerbagh to the Jawaharalal

with bribery and fraud, and PM Modi is protecting him. PM Modi has surrendered India's sovereignty to the US," he claimed.

The banner, emblazoned with "PM is compromised", highlighted questions about alleged links to the Epstein files and cases involving Adani. Protestors demanded a rollback of the trade deal and called on Modi to respond to the allegations or step down.

# Bandi completes 40 km Anjanna Ashirvada Yatra

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 14

Union minister of state Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday completed his day-long 'Anjanna Ashirvada Yatra', walking nearly 40 km from Karimnagar to the Kondagattu Sri Anjaneya Swamy temple in Jagtial district. He undertook the walkathon, lasting 11 hours, to fulfil a votive for the BJP's success in local municipal elections. The minister was accompanied by 108 sarpaches, 450 ward members and more than 50 corporators and councillors. The yatra concluded around 7.30 pm when Sanjay, along with the elected representatives, offered prayers at the Kondagattu temple.

The yatra began at 7 am from the Mahashakti temple in Karimnagar shortly after he arrived from Delhi. Despite temperatures touching 40°C, Sanjay walked in socks, citing the spiritual nature of the pilgrimage.

As the march coincided with the start of the SSC examinations, Sanjay asked supporters and police to ensure that the procession remain-



Union minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar concluded his day-long 'Anjanna Ashirvada Yatra' after trekking nearly 40 km from Karimnagar to Kondagattu Sri Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Jagtial district on Saturday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

# Bee attack briefly halts Bandi's yatra

Karimnagar: Union minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's 'Anjanna Ashirvada Yatra' faced a brief disruption on Saturday after a swarm of bees attacked participants in Ramadugu mandal of Karimnagar district.

The incident occurred near Konaraopet when a drone, deployed by supporters to film the event, struck a beehive on a

nearby tree. The sudden bee activity triggered chaos, with several BJP activists being stung.

Sanjay ensured immediate medical attention for the injured workers. Following a routine medical check-up and a brief rest, Sanjay resumed his walkathon, determined to reach the Kondagattu temple by evening.

ed on one side of the Karimnagar-Jagtial highway so that students could reach examinations centres without disruption.



Arrangements being made at the LB Stadium, Basheerbagh, for the state-sponsored Dawat-e-Iftar hosted by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday. — P. SURENDRA

# Revanth to host Iftar at LB Stadium

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will host the annual state sponsored Dawat-e-Iftar at LB Stadium on Sunday, reflecting the government's commitment to communal harmony and support for minority communities.

The main programme begins at 5.30 pm, with the Chief Minister expected to address the gathering at 6 pm, highlighting benefits for minorities under the Congress government, including budget allocations and scholarships, as well as economic support schemes for youth.

The state has earmarked 815 locations, mostly mosques, for Dawat-e-Iftar, targeting four lakh beneficiaries. During the holy month, three lakh gift packets of clothes were distributed to

THE STATE has earmarked 815 locations, mostly mosques, for Dawat-e-Iftar, targeting four lakh beneficiaries. During the holy month, three lakh gift packets of clothes were distributed to 13.5 lakh families. On Saturday, minority welfare secretary B. Shafiqullah inspected preparations and instructed officials and volunteers to ensure a hitch free event. Earlier, on March 11, minister for minority affairs Mohammad Azharuddin inspected logistics at the stadium, focusing on seating, food quality, security and sanitation. The event typically draws religious leaders, community members and political figures. In previous years, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi has attended.

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IN BRIEF

Police warn of new LPG fraud

Hyderabad: Hyderabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar urged the public to be wary of a new cyber fraud in which criminals are exploiting the rush for LPG cylinders. He said fraudsters are sending fake messages and WhatsApp links asking people to update their gas connection KYC or book emergency cylinders. Clicking on such links or downloading APK files sent by unknown persons can allow criminals to gain full control of a mobile phone and access bank messages and OTPs. Citing a recent case in Dombivli, Maharashtra, he said two women lost about Rs. 4 lakhs after installing a fake app sent by scammers posing as gas company representatives. Commissioner Sajjanar advised people to use only official apps or websites of authorised LPG companies for bookings or KYC updates. He also warned the public not to share bank details.

8-year-old claims mom murdered dad

Nalgonda: A tip-off from an eight-year-old girl has led to the police questioning her mother for the alleged murder of her father, at Thippanapally in Chundrugunda mandal of Bhadradi-Kothagudem district. The accused, Khateteja, had earlier tried to pass off the death of the victim, Sk Jaffer, 35, at their house in DV Nagar on March 11 as an accident caused by his drinking. Believing her account, the family conducted the funeral on the same day, police said. The couple have a son, who studies at Kothagudem, while their eight-year-old daughter was staying with the couple.

Crane wire snap leaves 3 dead

Warangal: Three agricultural labourers were killed when the cable of a crane snapped and buried them under its debris. The workers were desilting an agricultural well in Korikishala of Mogullapally mandal in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Saturday when the incident occurred. According to police, the workers, Sukina Devaraju, 48, Bandari Abhilash, 26, and Sarigommula, 53, were inside the well when the steel cable of the crane that was deployed to lift the soil suddenly snapped. The workers were crushed under the falling crane components. Retrieved bodies were shifted to a government hospital for post-mortem examination.

2 dead as SUV rams into bike

Warangal: Two persons on a motorcycle were killed when a SUV rammed their vehicle on the Warangal-Khammam highway at Rangashaipeet near Mamnoon in Warangal on Saturday. The victims, Sripathi Vamsi, 26, a resident of Rangashaipeet, and Raju, 30, of Kasibugga, died on the spot. Police reached the spot after receiving information of the accident and seized the SUV, that was heading towards Wardhannapet from Warangal. Investigation is underway to ascertain whether overspeeding or negligent driving led to the accident. Bodies were shifted to MGM Hospital for an autopsy. A case of accidental death was filed.

CAUTION NOTICE GENERAL PUBLIC are hereby informed that my client Sri Mittakanti Raj Gopal Vinod Reddy S/o Late M. Ram Reddy, R/o H.No:3-6-213/3, Street No-16, Himayath Nagar, Hyderabad is the absolute owner and possessor of the lands total admeasuring Ac.32.02 gts in S.Y. No.214, 219, 220m 221, 222, 224, 225 and 226 situated at Vagali village, Alwalmandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri district, having inherited the same from his Grand Father late Samala Gopal Reddy, who had only daughter and sole legal heir Smt.Samala Hemalatha Devi, who is his mother. The Revenue Records clearly establish that Late Samala Gopal Reddy, R/o, Yagrali was the pattidar and possessor of the said lands. After death of his grand father and his Mother Smt. Samala Hemalatha Devi, who succeeded to the said lands, being the Legal Representative of them. But meanwhile Samala Veera Raghava Reddy and his sons S. Ranga Reddy and S. Shyam Mohan Reddy have managed to get recorded their names in Revenue records in a fraudulent manner. My client has also taken steps for correction of fabricated / wrong entries in the revenue records. My client has reliably learnt that taking undue advantage of the wrong entries in the revenue records, the said persons are trying to alienate the said lands without having right, title and possession, only with an intention to create trust parties interest in respect of the above said lands and to deprive the rights of my client. If any person/s or Institution or organization enter into any sort of Sale transaction viz. Agreement of Sale, Sale Deed, Gift Deed, mortgage Deed, etc. with said persons and others in respect of above said lands belongs to late Samala Gopal Reddy, it will be at their own risk. Costs and Consequences thereof, including the Criminal Liability, Hence this Caution Notice. (C. RUTHVIK REDDY) Advocate, H.No 2-24/A/24, D.D. Colony, Bagh Amberpet, Hyderabad-500013 Cell: 8978986398

3 lose ₹4.4 cr in 3 cyber rackets

Man poses as judge, shows forged docs

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14 Three senior citizens, two from Cyberabad and one residing within Malkajgiri commissionerate limits, lost a combined ₹4.4 crore in separate cybercrime cases, including one of the fake 'digital arrest' scam, according to complaints lodged this week. In one case, a 62-year-old retired engineer from Ramachandrapuram was cheated of ₹1.72 crore in an investment fraud and lodged a complaint with the Cyberabad cybercrime wing on March 12. He saw a message invited users to learn stock trading and victim joined a WhatsApp group named after a bank on January 9. The victim said members were encouraged to invest in block trades, qualified institutional placement (QIP) stocks and IPO allotments using what was described as an institutional trading account. After initially transferring ₹5 lakh to a bank account, he continued making deposits. Between January 14 and March 9, he carried out about 25 transactions, transferring a total of ₹1,71,74,000 to various bank accounts and UPI IDs shared by the accused. The platform allegedly displayed large profits and even allowed a ₹1,000 test withdrawal initially to gain his confidence. The account later showed a value of ₹32.53 crore, supposedly generated through investments in IPOs. When he attempted to withdraw funds, he was asked to pay a ₹65 lakh commission, after which the withdrawal option became inactive. In another case, a 76-year-old retired employee of All India Radio and Doordarshan residing in LB Nagar, alleged that he was cheated of ₹80 lakh in a "digital arrest" scam. According to the complaint, he received a call on March 5, from a person claiming to be an investment advisor and asked him to download a mobile app linked to the platform. He initially deposited ₹23,000 (about \$250). The platform showed small profits and even allowed a \$3 withdrawal, which increased his confidence. By December 9, the account allegedly showed profits of \$90,000, and when he attempted to withdraw \$80,000, the platform demanded several charges including an 8 per cent conversion fee (\$6,400), capital gains tax, transaction fee, gas fee, crypto tax, securities transaction tax (STT), swap charges, overseas transaction fee and declaration charges. Despite making multiple payments, he was not allowed to withdraw the money. The Cyberabad cybercrime police have registered a case in this regard.

Cautious move



Passengers alighting at East Metro station in Secunderabad face inconvenience as street dogs sleep on staircases. — S. SURENDER REDDY

2 leopards found dead in KTR, Kamareddy

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS AND NARENDER PULLOOR | DC ADILABAD, NIZAMABAD, MARCH 14 Two leopards were killed at different places by poachers. In the first case, forest officials arrested three persons on Saturday in connection with the suspected poaching of a leopard in the Utl forest area of Thallapet forest range in the Kawal Tiger Reserve in Jannaram of Mancherial district. Officials suspect the animal may have been killed about four days ago by poachers using a snare trap and later burnt the carcass to destroy evidence. A sniffer dog, Hunter, was pressed into service to trace those involved in the killing. In the second case, A leopard was found dead in the forest area near Hanmajipet village in Banswada mandal of Kamareddy district. Villagers noticed the carcass on Friday and alerted forest officials. "We identified three persons, who visited the death of the leopard incident place," she said, adding that their involvement would be verified during the investigation. Banswada forest divisional officer P. Sunitha and other staff visited the spot to inspect the site. Officials found that two legs of the leopard had been removed, raising suspicion that hunters were involved in the incident. Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Nikhitha said an inquiry had been initiated into the leopard's death near Hanmajipet village. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith 2 Timothy 4:7"

2 KILLED AS AUTORICKSHAW RAMS SCOOTER IN ARMOOR

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, MARCH 14 Two youths were killed on the spot after a speeding autorickshaw hit their scooter near a petrol bunk at Pipri under Armoor police limits on Saturday. The victims, Sanchu Srinivas of

Pipri and Vijay of Bheemgal, were unmarried and worked at a bar in Armoor. According to police, the autorickshaw was driven at allegedly at high speed by Shahed. Police, informed of the accident by locals, reached the spot and took Shahed into custody. Jonalagadda N Peter S/o Late Jonalagadda Nathaniel Called to glory on Friday, March 13th 2026 DOB: 11-04-1989 DOD: 13-03-2026 Funeral service on 15-03-2026 at Narayanaaguda Baptist Church at 2:00pm & Committal at Narayanaaguda cemetery at 3:00pm. Inserted by: J. Esther (Mother) B. Sheela Rani Simon (Wife) J.P. Mark Kevin (Son) J.P. Meshach Kenneth (Son) H.No: 18-485/2, Mallikarjuna Nagar Malkajgiri, Hyderabad-47 Ph# 9849721097 & 9390798154

4 MEMBERS OF ROBBERS' GANG ARRESTED, STOLEN BOOTY WORTH ₹13L RECOVERED

DC CORRESPONDENT NALGONDA, MARCH 14 Four members of an alleged gang of robbers, including a woman and a minor, were arrested by the Central Crime Station (CCS) and Athmakur (S) police in a joint operation at Enubamula in Suryapet district on Saturday. Police said they recovered stolen property including gold and silver worth about ₹13 lakh from their possession. The arrested were identified as Kanchukommula Sathesh, his brother Sai Kiran, Sheik Nasreen and a minor boy, all residents of Kodad, Nalgonda SP K. Narsimha said the group targeted people who were alone.

Advertisement for Pedda Karma featuring portraits of Dora Mahathma Rao, Shabrendar Raj Yadav Vengala, and Dr. Ajay Kumar Goud. It includes details for a 11th Day Ceremony, a 12th Death Anniversary for Mrs. Blandina Prakasham, and a 10th Anniversary for Mrs. Ganduri Mary Sumalini. Other notices include a 13th Day Ceremony for Late Shri Indar Mohan, a 2nd Anniversary for J.P. Manohar, and a 10th Death Anniversary for Mrs. Pampam Devakrupa Wesley.

Advertisement for Guntur featuring a portrait of K. S. Sri Babu and text in Telugu. It mentions the founder of the BBM Group of Companies, Guntur, born on 10.07.1931 and passed away on 13.03.2026. The text lists family members: Sons: BOMMIDALA VENKATA SRIMANNARAYANA-SAILAJA, BOMMIDALA VENKATA SRI KOTI RATNAM-SATYA LAVANYA, BOMMIDALA VENKATA SRI RAJA VARA PRASAD-RAMADEVI; Daughter-Son in Law: PADMA-GUPTA SRINIVAS; Grand Sons: BOMMIDALA BHANU PRAKASH-POOJA, BOMMIDALA NALIN-PANYA.

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SHORT TAKES

STATE POWER DEMAND HITS NEW RECORD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Telangana's power utilities set new records on March 13, supplying 341.08 million units (MU) of electricity in a single day — the highest ever delivered in the state. This surpassed the previous record of 335.19 MU achieved on March 18. On the same day, the state successfully met a peak demand of 18,228 MW at 11.17 am, exceeding the earlier peak of 18,139 MW recorded on March 3 at 11.01 am.

Officials said the surge in demand was driven by soaring temperatures and increased agricultural requirements. The utilities are strengthening their systems to meet future needs, with Telangana prepared to handle daily consumption above 350 MU and peak loads of around 19,000 MW. A robust grid and coordinated operational planning, they added, ensure the state is well-positioned to manage rising demand.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka praised staff from the two power utilities for maintaining uninterrupted supply during this period of exceptional demand.

FIRE SAFETY CHECKS IN 252 BUILDINGS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The GHMC carried out a special drive on Saturday to review fire safety preparedness, inspecting 252 buildings across the city. Officials said most commercial establishments had basic fire safety arrangements, though some were found lacking adequate facilities. Such cases will be closely monitored to ensure compliance.

During the inspections, officials checked fire safety systems and raised awareness among owners and occupants about preventive measures. "Focus was on cellars — we checked whether they were being used to store hazardous materials that could pose fire risks," an official said.

Where hazardous materials were found, owners were instructed to remove them. Notices were also issued to establishments with absent, non-functional, or poorly maintained fire safety equipment, directing them to rectify systems in line with norms.

TELANGANA TO AID TANZANIA'S DIGITAL PUSH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Telangana has pledged technological cooperation and institutional support to assist Tanzania in its transition to a digital economy. Tanzania has expressed keen interest in working closely with the state to advance its ambitions.

During a meeting with a high level delegation led by Mudrick Ramadhani Soraga, Tanzania's minister for communication and innovation, IT and industries minister D. Sridhar Babu said digital transformation is now a key driver of inclusive social and economic growth. Telangana, he noted, is ready to share its experience, technical expertise and institutional knowledge to support Tanzania's efforts.

Sridhar Babu said Telangana would serve as a knowledge partner in areas such as citizen service delivery through MeeSeva, promotion of women's entrepreneurship via WE Hub, and strengthening start up and innovation ecosystems. Support could also extend to skilling, reskilling and upskilling programmes through the Young India Skills University.

He added that the state would examine the feasibility of establishing a pharmaceutical distribution hub in Tanzania to support the supply of medicines and healthcare products. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Tanzania and Telangana will soon be signed to formalise cooperation.

The meeting also explored opportunities to deepen collaboration across a range of sectors. It was attended by Fatma Mabrouk Khamis, principal secretary in Tanzania's Ministry of Communication, ICT and Innovation; Shukuru Awadh Suleiman, chief executive officer of Zanzibar ICT Authority; John Mahundi, head of Technology and Investments at President's Delivery Bureau; and other officials.

TG proposes RRR south segment linking 8 dists

201-km stretch to cost ₹16K-cr, works after Centre's nod

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telangana government has submitted the detailed project report (DPR) for the 201-km southern segment of the Regional Ring Road (RRR) to the Union ministry of road transport and highways, official sources said.

Sources said the DPR was sent to the Centre last week. The project cost has been estimated at around ₹16,000 crore, including about ₹6,500 crore towards compensation for land acquisition and nearly ₹9,500 crore for construction works.

According to the DPR, about 2,010 hectares of land will be required for the project. The proposed road will begin near Choutuppal and pass through Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Nalgonda, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Vikarabad and Sangareddy districts before ending near Sangareddy, covering a total distance of 201 km.

The project was also reviewed by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at a meeting with roads and buildings department officials on Wednesday. He is

ROAD TO FUTURE

Telangana submits DPR for 201 km southern segment of RRR.

PROJECT COST estimated at about ₹16,000 crore for southern RRR segment.

₹6,500 cr earmarked for land acquisition compensation in DPR estimates.

NEARLY ₹9,500 crore allocated for construction works in proposed project.

About 2,010 hectares of land required for southern segment alignment.

Telangana's share of northern segment compensation estimated at ₹2,560 crore.

PROPOSED road begins near Choutuppal and ends near Sangareddy.

ALIGNMENT PASSES through eight districts including Nalgonda and Rangareddy.

CENTRE and state sharing northern segment land acquisition costs equally.

understood to have directed officials to expedite the land acquisition process and take necessary steps for implementation. Officials said the required land parcels have already been identified.

The state government is working on mobilising funds for its share of compensation for land acquisition for the northern segment of the RRR. The Centre and the state have agreed to share land acquisition costs for the northern segment on a 50:50 basis. Officials estimate the state's share at

₹2,560 crore. Of this, the government has already deposited ₹100 crore with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). It is now planning to raise about ₹2,000 crore through a loan from HUDCO to meet remaining requirement.

The loan will be raised through the Road Development Corporation (RDC) under the roads and buildings department, with the state government expected to provide a guarantee. The proposal is currently under consideration by the finance

department. The DPR for the six-lane northern segment of the RRR is under examination by the Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC), a central body chaired by the secretary of the department of economic affairs that evaluates National Highway projects implemented through the NHAI. Both the NHAI and the state government are undertaking preparatory work so that construction can begin once the Union Cabinet grants approval.

Power ride



Women motor bikers organise the Arrived Alive women's and road safety awareness programme with Cyberabad Police at IDA Lake, Kukatpally. DCP Madhapur Riti Raj and first para cyclist Tanya Daga also participated. — K. DURGA RAO

₹350 cr rice waits for buyers

MD NIZAMUDDIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

RICE STOCK CRISIS

- 1.4 LAKH metric tonnes coarse rice
- NEARLY 1 year old
- 2 tenders issued
- No bidders
- Fresh rabi arrivals incoming

Even as the state government prepares for rabi procurement, civil supplies authorities are struggling to dispose of 1.4 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of coarse rice that has remained accumulated at various levels for nearly a year following the implementation of the Sanna Biyyam scheme.

Despite floating tenders twice to clear the doddu biyyam stocks, there has been no response, creating significant logistical and storage challenges ahead of fresh arrivals from the current rabi season. With millers showing little interest, officials are exploring alternative options, including negotiations with breweries that use

rice in beer production. Given the large volume of stock, breweries from other states may also participate if fresh tenders are issued. The accumulated stock, estimated to be worth ₹350 crore, is lying in buffer godowns, Mandal Level Stock (MLS) points, and Fair Price Shops (FPS) since the launch of fine rice distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS). On December 20, the Civil Supplies Department issued an e-tender notification to dispose of 1.4 LMT of coarse rice. "There has been no response even to the second tender. The doddu biyyam remains stockpiled," official sources told DC. Ration dealers, who had stocked the rice prior to the rollout of the Sanna Biyyam scheme in March 2025, say they have begun discarding damaged stocks following repeated representations

CM directs UCF funding for BFC, Metro Rail, RRR

FROM PAGE 1

The remaining 50 per cent must be mobilised through market-linked sources such as municipal bonds or public-private partnerships. The state government has already begun leveraging the fund for key projects. Last week, it sanctioned ₹5,257.20 crore for the first phase of a comprehensive underground drainage system in the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation area covering the tri-cities of Warangal, Hanamkonda and Kazipet. The project aims to address chronic waterlogging, improve sanitation and replace incomplete drainage works executed under earlier schemes.

Officials said the Warangal project follows the UCF funding model, with about ₹1,314 crore

expected as Central support, a matching contribution from the state government, and the remaining amount through external assistance or loans. Encouraged by this progress, the government hopes to draw up to ₹10,000 crore from the UCF to support infrastructure development across urban local bodies.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to tap the UCF for major infrastructure initiatives including the Bharat Future City, expansion of Hyderabad Metro Rail, Regional Ring Road, radial roads and expressways that require additional funding for early completion.

The State Budget is expected to allocate higher funds for the municipal administration and urban development department to ensure the state's

matching share for such projects is built into the budget, enabling quicker access to Central assistance.

Apart from the UCF, the state government is also seeking to maximise benefits from the Centre's special assistance to states for capital investment, which provides 50-year interest-free loans for infrastructure development.

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has allocated around ₹1.8 lakh crore under this scheme in the Union Budget for 2026-27, and the state government is hopeful of securing at least ₹15,000 crore for its infrastructure projects. These funds would be in addition to allocations available through other Central schemes such as the Central Road Fund and Urban Infrastructure Development Fund.

TSUTF TO HOLD STIR OVER STAFF SERVICE ISSUES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telangana United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) has announced protest demonstrations at district and divisional headquarters on March 16 as part of the second phase of its agitation over service conditions of staff working in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), Urban Residential Schools and the Samagra Shiksha programme.

The union says teachers and employees in these institutions continue to face unresolved issues related to pay, service status and leave benefits. Chava Ravi and A. Venkat, president and general secretary of TSUTF, said the protests seek minimum wages, regularisation of services, leave on par with regular government employees and increments.

"Teachers and staff working in KGBVs, URS and Samagra Shiksha have been raising these issues for a long time. The government must step in and resolve them," the leaders said.

BJP plans protest against Cong rule

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telangana BJP has unveiled a fortnight-long series of protest programmes targeting the Congress government, accusing it of failing to deliver on poll promises and neglecting public grievances.

At the party office here, BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao released a poster titled "Telangana will not tolerate anymore — Save Telangana" and vowed relentless agitation against what he described as the remaining 999 days of Congress rule. On March 16, BJP leaders will submit memoranda to officials at district and mandal headquarters, followed by protests outside District Collector offices across the state on March 20. Appealing for public support, Rao said the party would intensify its agitation until the government responds to people's concerns. He also

criticised opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's protest outside Parliament, calling it "insulting to democracy" and a violation of protocol.

Senior BJP leaders including general secretary T. Veerender Goud, vice president Dr Kasam Venkateswarlu, and media in-charge N.V. Subash attended the poster release. Earlier, Rajya Sabha MP Dr K. Laxman, Chevela MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and other office bearers held a review meeting to strengthen the party ahead of the GHMC elections.



BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao burns an effigy of Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi at the BJP state office along with senior party leaders on Saturday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

No election if society is suspended, says HC

L. RAVICHANDER HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Justice T. Madhavi Devi held that elections to a cooperative society cannot proceed when the registration of the society stood suspended by an order of the Cooperative Tribunal. The judge disposed of a writ petition filed by Kunala Suresh challenging an election notice issued for the Asian Sun City Flat Owners Maintenance Mutually Aided Cooperative Society at Serilingampally. The petitioner contended that the election officer issued a notice in April 2025 scheduling elections to the managing committee of the society in May even though the Tribunal had earlier passed an interim order suspending the registration of the society and the election process.

The respondents argued that the appointment of an ad hoc committee and the initiation of elections followed earlier directions of the High Court and a division bench order. They sought vacation of the interim suspension earlier granted by the court. The judge noted that the Tribunal's interim order suspending the registration of the society remained in force. Once the registration of the society stood suspended, the society cannot be treated as existing in law and therefore elections cannot be conducted. The judge emphasised that judicial discipline required courts and authorities to respect and give effect to orders of competent tribunals until those orders were modified or vacated. Conducting elections despite the subsisting sus-



LEGAL STORIES

pension would amount to acting contrary to that principle.

COPS CHALLENGE PROMOTION PROCESS

The Telangana High Court will continue to hear a batch of writ petitions challenging promotions made to the post of additional superintendent of police (ASP) (non-cadre). A panel of Chief Justice Aparsh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin was dealing with a batch of writ petitions filed by N. Venu Gopal Reddy and

others questioning the action of the state authorities in effecting promotions without completing the required preparatory exercise in the feeder cadres. It was the case of the petitioners that the state authorities made certain promotions to the post of superintendent of police (non-cadre) without first reviewing the earlier ad hoc promotions made in the cadre of ASP and without preparing year-wise promotion panels as mandated under Rule 6 of the AP State and Subordinate Service Rules. The petitioners, therefore, sought directions to prepare year-wise panels for promotion from DSP to ASP in accordance with Rule 6 of the AP State and Subordinate Service Rules. The panel adjourned the matter for further hearing.

CIVIC BODY QUIZZED OVER DIGGING UP ROAD

Justice S. Chalapathi Rao quizzed the Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA) over allegations that a public access road to a residential plot was dug up despite the authorities granting building permission earlier. The judge was dealing with a writ plea filed by the legal representatives of B. Srinivasulu, who alleged that the respondents were attempting to close the only access road to a building constructed in a layout at Lashkar Singaram in Hanamkonda mandal. Counsel argued that the layout contained an open space from which two plots were carved out and building permissions were granted. The petitioner and two others construct-

ed buildings pursuant to those approvals. Notices regarding alleged violations were earlier issued and explanations were furnished. During the hearing, the judge asked the authorities who had approved the building permission. When the officials stated that they had granted permission, the court questioned why the road was dug up and remarked that due process ought to have been followed. The judge expressed doubt as to why the authorities would dig up the road and wondered whether the act could have been carried out by private persons. The court directed the petitioner to file the sale deed to ascertain the location of the road and asked the KUDA and the Warangal Municipal Corporation to verify the actual situation.

WOMAN, CHILD DIE IN TRAGEDY AT BORABANDA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A woman allegedly killed her five year old son and tried to kill her two year old daughter before dying by suicide in Borabanda on Friday night. According to police, Satyavani lived in Borabanda with her husband Murali Venu, their two children aged five and two. The family was reportedly facing personal and family issues, and the woman is believed to have been suffering from depression. Police said the incident occurred when Venu stepped out to take his father to dialysis treatment. During this time, Satyavani choked both her children before dying by suicide.

SHORT TAKES

**FIRE IN BEGUMPET APARTMENT, NO CASUALTIES**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A major fire broke out at an apartment in Prakash Nagar on Saturday. No loss of life was reported. According to reports, the blaze is suspected to have been triggered by an LPG leak. The incident occurred at one of the flats on the second floor of Mayfair Apartments in Prakashnagar, Begumpet. The residents had gone out after locking the house.

Neighbours who noticed smoke alerted the fire department, which reached the spot and doused the flames. Further investigation into the incident is underway, with a response from fire officials awaited.

**GUARD COUPLE MURDERED IN PATANCHERU**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A couple working as security guards at a construction site in Indresham, Patancheru, were found murdered on Saturday morning, police said.

The deceased were identified as Somla Dasarath, 50, and his wife Manyamma, 46, both natives of Warangal.

The couple had been working as guards at the site and were living in a hut nearby.

According to police, locals discovered the bodies inside the hut on Saturday morning and alerted the authorities. Preliminary investigation revealed that the couple had been attacked with a centring rod, leading to their death on the spot.

The complaint in the case was lodged by their daughter Mounika, who is married and resides in Nizamabad.

Police suspect the murder may be linked to family related issues, though the exact motive is yet to be established.

**Firewood smoke rises amid shortage of LPG**

Images circulated on social media showing smoke near buildings

DEEPIKA PASHAM | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A shortage of LPG cylinders in Hyderabad has forced several hostels and restaurants to switch to firewood stoves, leading to thin layers of smoke across parts of the city on Saturday morning.

Many establishments began cooking as early as 6.30 am using large vessels and multiple firewood stoves to meet demand. Officials from the Telangana Pollution Control Board said PM2.5 levels — fine airborne particles — showed a slight rise, with monitoring stations moving from minimum to average levels.

Readings included 57 in Ramachandrapuram, 60 in New Malakpet, 62 in Nacharam (TGHC), 46 near Kompally Municipal Office, 61 in Kokapet, 67 at IIT Hyderabad (Kandi), 87 at IDA Pashamylaram, around 60 in ECIL, Kapra, and 36 at the University of Hyderabad, which recorded the lowest. Most stations reported AQI levels between 60 and 88, categorised as satisfactory.

Images from the IT corridor circulated on social media showing smoke near buildings and a corporate hospital. Some restaurants posted that they had reduced menus and were relying on firewood stoves for popular dishes. One owner wrote: "Food cooked on firewood tastes good, but the cooks are also facing heat while preparing the meals."

Meanwhile, several cloud kitchens and street food outlets said building owners were not permitting firewood use. 'Kumari Anu', who became famous on social media, said she had been barred from using firewood and



PG hostel cooks prepare meals on firewood stoves due to scarcity of LPG refills. — S. SURENDER REDDY



Activists belonging to CPM stage a protest at RTC Crossroads on Saturday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

was relying on extra gas cylinders provided by individuals. Aruna, a cloud kitchen operator from Uppal, said restrictions in her rented apartment had forced her to cut down menu items.

**LPG SCARCITY BOOSTS DEMAND OF FIREWOOD**

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, MARCH 14

Demand for firewood has risen in parts of Adilabad district amid fears of a possible shortage or delay in LPG cylinder supply, despite assurances from the state government and district officials that sufficient supplies were in place.

The cost of firewood ranges from ₹500 to ₹1,000 depending on the quantity, and demand has increased as people stock it for future use, said K. Rajeswar, a firewood collector from Adilabad.

He said the price of firewood varied depending on the size of the bundle, locally known as "mopu", which is often carried on bicycles or on the head. Larger quantities transported by bullock carts fetch higher prices.

To prevent large-scale removal of wood from reserve forests, the forest department has dug trenches along forest boundaries to restrict entry of bullock carts and other vehicles. Forest officials also seize axes, bicycles and bullock carts carrying firewood when people are found transporting it from forest areas.

Hotel and dhaba owners are also purchasing firewood and maintaining stocks to meet their cooking requirements.

In several rural areas and small towns, eateries continue to rely on firewood for cooking.

**24x7 LPG control centre activated**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The civil supplies department activated a 24x7 multi-agency command and control centre on Saturday to utilise real-time GPS tracking to monitor statewide distribution of LPG to ensure uninterrupted supply to cooking gas to domestic consumers and priority commercial sectors. The department also activated a toll-free number, 1967.

Officials said the new centre would function as the state's hub for identifying and resolving LPG supply bottlenecks. Officials to oversee transport logistics and verify daily stock availability at the grassroots level, a statement said.

"To guarantee transparency, the government has directed all major oil marketing companies (OMCs) to grant state officials immediate access to their fleet GPS tracking systems. Furthermore, representatives from OMCs, police, industries, and distributor representatives were physically stationed at the command centre on rotation to ensure seamless coordination and rapid response, an official said.

DC CORRESPONDENT HYD ERABAD, MARCH 14

Civil supplies minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy urged the Centre to provide additional commercial LPG cylinders to Telangana to tide over the current shortage, noting that the present supply was meeting only 20 per cent of demand. He said domestic LPG supplies were near normal, with around 2.15 lakh cylinders delivered daily through 8,010 distributors.

However, commercial LPG deliveries had dropped sharply to roughly 6,200 cylinders per day against a typical requirement of 23,000.

A state level committee under the chief secretary and district level committees led by collectors have been formed to monitor the situation daily. The

minister assured the LPG Distributors Association, which feared panic driven customer influx and law and order issues, of all possible help and protection.

Reviewing the situation with representatives of the Telangana LPG Distributors Association, the minister said the state government was working aggressively to ensure stable LPG supplies for domestic households.



N. Uttam Kumar Reddy

**STATE GETS KEROSENE TO TIDE OVER CRISIS**

MD NIZAMUDDIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Telangana does not distribute kerosene via the public distribution system (PDS) but has been allocated 1.740 kilolitres, apparently to tide over the LPG crisis. This has puzzled officials since the state does not have a network to handle distribution of the fuel.

In a letter, the Union ministry of petroleum and natural gas asked states and union territories to ensure that the kerosene must be distributed through PDS or any other mode at any designated place including retail outlets of PSU oil marketing companies. The Centre specified that the fuel must be used only for cooking and lighting. In state, the consumption of white kerosene (non-PDS kerosene) has transitioned significantly due to the state's move towards becoming 'kerosene-free' for domestic use in recent decades. White kerosene is primarily available through private dealers and OMCs, being sold at approximately ₹80 to ₹90 per litre. It is currently utilised mostly for industrial applications. The kerosene allocations were made for distribution only in case of emergency. "A decision will be made shortly over viable distribution channels in adherence with the guidelines of the Union ministry," a source informed.

Fair price shops are not ready to burden the new responsibility of distributing kerosene, citing lack of equipment and facilities.

"Distribution through petrol pumps will be the feasible option. Since we lack infrastructure to handle kerosene, there is nothing we could do to help the government," an FPS representative said.

**West Asia conflict pushes dry fruit prices up, ramzan sales drop in Hyd**

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Consumption of dates in the state rises fourfold during ramzan, but traders in Hyderabad said sales have dropped by 30 to 40 per cent this season as prices increased by about 30 per cent amid the West Asian conflict.

India imports most of its dates from Iran and some from Afghanistan. Traders in Hyderabad's dry fruit market, which handles about 45 containers of dry fruits and spices a month, said the rise in prices had affected demand. Each con-

● PRICE OF pista has gone up from ₹1,900 to ₹2,300 per kg, black kishmish from ₹250 to ₹450, green kishmish from ₹550 to ₹700, shah jeera from ₹900 to ₹1,200, and dry apricot from ₹200 to ₹350 per kg.

tainer carries about 26,000 kg.

Mohammed Arafath Khan of Kohnoor Traders said, "During the month of Ramzan, sales usually rise sharply, but prices of dry fruits and spices have increased significantly. The price of pista has gone up from ₹1,900 to ₹2,300 per kg, black kishmish from

₹250 to ₹450, green kishmish from ₹550 to ₹700, shah jeera from ₹900 to ₹1,200, and dry apricot from ₹200 to ₹350 per kg."

He added, "Because of the 20 to 30 per cent price rise in the market, sales are expected to decline, even though this is usually the peak season when demand is high."

Traders attributed the spike to supply chain disruptions linked to the West Asian crisis, particularly from Iran and Afghanistan, and said the disruption of the Pakistan route had forced a shift to costlier air cargo. They said walnuts, raisins and pistachios were

among the items most affected.

Krishna Tak of Salasar Traders, Begum Bazar, said, "Supply chain disruptions, limited supply and rising demand have led to shortages, prompting wholesalers and retailers to increase prices. Around 40,000 containers of dry fruits and spices are currently stranded at sea. Hyderabad, one of the largest dry fruit markets in India, handles nearly 45 containers every month."

He added, "Once the war ends, it may take about a month for supply chains to stabilise and for prices to return to normal levels."

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA : MINISTRY OF DEFENCE EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME, STATION HQ (ECHS CELL), SECUNDERABAD Ph.: 7382361574 | E-mail : echsstnhqsecbad@gmail.com**

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| Peon                      | 8th Class or GD Trade (Armed Forces)   | 21,800/-    | 01  | Vijayawada   |

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

2) For Terms & Conditions, Application Form & Remuneration. For qualifications, work experience and age limits, kindly see website www.echs.gov.in. Application Form can be downloaded from the website under EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES. For additional details, contact on Tele No 07382361574 & email ID : echsstnhqsecbad@gmail.com during working hours. Preference will be given to the Ex-Servicemen as per merit. 3) Last Date of Receipt of Application as per Format Given at our Website. Application as per format alongwith self attested photocopies of testimonials for educational qualification (with Mark Sheets), work experience, Registration Certificates, Discharge book & PPO will be submitted to Officer-in-Charge, Station HQ ECHS Cell, HQ TASA, Near Rastrapati Nilayam, Secunderabad-500010, Telangana by 29 Mar 2026 (1800 hours). Any application received after 29 Mar 2026 will not be accepted. Online applications will not be accepted. 4) Written Test cum Interview Date, Timing & Venue. Date & time of written test will be intimated to all accepted applicant through email. Candidates meeting the Qualitative Requirements will only be called for written test. Subsequently only written test qualified candidates will be called for interview. Candidates must bring all the original educational certificates, work experience certificate, registration certificate (medical and para medical staff) discharge book, PPO, Service Records, PAN Card, Aadhar Card and two PP size colour photographs at the time of interview. No TA/DA is admissible. NOTE : CANDIDATES NOT SUBMITTING COMPLETE / INCORRECT DOCUMENT WILL NOT BE CALLED FOR WRITTEN TEST INTERVIEW

**BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS**  
Hyderabad Branch Office  
Plot No.1, Sy. No. 367/1, ZTS-NFC Main Road,  
Industrial Development Park, Moula-Ali, Hyderabad-500040

**Participate in NATIONAL QUIZ**  
on  
**SAFE PRODUCTS, CONFIDENT CONSUMERS**

World Consumer Rights Day 2026 📅 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Participation is open for all

10 First Prizes ₹5,000 each, 10 Second Prizes ₹4,000 each,  
10 Third Prizes ₹3,000 each, 10 Consolation Prizes ₹1,000 each

**Standard Hai, Toh Sahi Hai.**

SCAN TO REGISTER

quiz.bis.gov.in

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FOR SALE AUTOMOTIVE

FOUR WHEELERS

TATA NEXON 04/2024 petrol auto transmission Grey colour 18,500 Km...

2015 WHITE Audi Q7, 1,00,000 km + good condition, with showroom trade...

SKODA KODIAK L&K Top model 4x4 Black 2023, 21000 kms NRI owned...

KIA SELTOS 2020 HTK price diesel engine 17000 kms done maroon colour...

1. TOYOTA Hyryder G Hybrid sun roof 2022 GRed, 74300 Km, 13.5 L 2...

2013 HYUNDAI i-10 Car White Sportz Automatic Car Low Mileage...

2015 BLUE Jaguar XF, 65,000 km + good running, single owner...

BMW 2017 GT 3 Series with AT BSIV single owner white colour factory number for sale western side...

LAND ROVER DISCOVERY 3.0 V6 petrol 4x4 auto, 305 km, 2017 Reg. Sep 2018...

MERCEDES BENZ E200 Petrol W213, Reg. Jan 2018 (TS10EP0341), Polar White, 4 Cyl, Single Owner...

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JUBILEEHILLS KRISHNA Nagar Main road 500 sqyds 10,320 sq ft E/F Commercial old Building For Sale...

JUBILEEHILLS 1250 sqyds West facing 1400 sqyds South East Madhapur 1200 sqyds North East 500 sqyds South East...

COMMERCIAL SPACE for sale at high-demand Yadagiritha star hotel, Only 12 lakhs, Rent 11,000/- PM...

INDIRA PARK near Lower Tankbund Swimming Pool, Vacant Commercial Bldg, G+5 Floors, 630 Sqyds...

GENOME VALLEY, Turkapally, 2000 sqyds commercial plots for sale, Reputed Client, 30 Years Lease, 3 Floors, 27000 Sft...

SHAIKPET NALA, Near Film Nagar, 2000 Sq.Yards & Kokapet, 3000, 9000 Commercial Plots For more details...

SHOWROOM For sale at Attapure pillar no 140 main road ground floor excellent interior Ph.985099474...

JUBILEEHILLS, BANJARAHILLS, Commercial, Semi Commercial 600, 900 Sq.Yds, Madhapur 400, 1000 Hotel, any Commercial suitable sites...

FABULOUS INCOME opportunity evergreen-tenant, Sleep Private Ltd, monthly income 1 lakh 70 thousand plus...

TOYOTA Hyryder G Hybrid sun roof 2022 GRed, 74300 Km, 13.5 L 2 Honda City 1.5 AT Red Pearl 2013...

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HIMAYATHNAGAR, 2 BHK, Semi furnished for sale Venkat Vihar Apartments, Street No.18, 720 Sft...

HIMAYATHNAGAR 2 BHK semi furnished, 3rd floor, Lift, Car parking, vastu, 24 hours water near Madina College...

HIMAYATHNAGAR Main Road Lane 8th Main Road 2 BHK 1118 Sq.Ft. E & N Position 5 Months...

2 BHK, 1500 sq ft, East Facing Semi Furnish, 2nd Floor, Car Parking/Lift/24 hours Water...

MUSHEERABAD 2 BHK for Sale Near Metro Station, Lift, Car for Residential or Commercial 1156 Sft...

2 BHK Brand New Flats for Sale, lift & Car parking, chance price 65 lakhs Negotiable...

FLATS FOR sale 960, & 927 sft, S1, S2, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK...

FLATS FOR sale S1, S2 @ Tarnaka, Ballard estate & 1 BHK flat @ vidyanagar, Bhagirath Apartment...

GROUND FLOOR Flat for Sale, 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath, separate drawing room, 2 balconies...

THREE & MORE NEW PERFECT vastu 3 BHK flats (1574 & 1374 sft) @ Ashok Nagar, Gandhi nagar, two Car parking...

URGENT SALE 3 BHK flat at shikara bliss, attapur, semi furnished, 2 balconies, 2 car parking with lift...

ATTAPUR, RAJENDRANAGAR, Golden Heights Colony, Luxury Flats Under Construction, 3 BHK Flat Area 1818 Sft...

LUXURIOUS 3-BHK sale in Lanco Hills, Manikonda, 2106 Sft, 32.5 UDS West facing, 31st floor...

3 AND 4 BHK Flats for Sale in Banjara Hills in a gated community, 3 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK...

BANJARAHILLS brand-new very Prime location flat for sale 3270 sft 4BHK second floor East facing UDS...

NO GST Perfect Vasthu Luxury flats 1887 sft ready to occupy @ Banjara Hills, 900 sqyds, 4 BHK, 4 car parking...

FORTUNE ENCLAVE, BanjaraHills, 3095 sft, Brand New Ultra Modern interiors renovated, 3 BHK+home theatre, 265 sqyds...

3 BHK Luxurious Flats with Wood Work for Sale at Platinum One, Nallakunta, 1850 and 1575 Sft each...

LUXURY FLATS available at Medchal and Kompally, 2 BHK and 3 BHK options starting from 40 lakhs to 60 lakhs...

MUSHEERABAD BHOLAKURP 3 BHK 2024 sft S/F Flat for Sale Near Sharda Hills Temple, 910831764...

NAGOLE CONCRETE Avasa Gated Community, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK...

3 BHK Luxurious Flats with Wood Work for Sale at Platinum One, Nallakunta, 1850 and 1575 Sft each...

LUXURY 5 BHK Apartment for Sale- Panajagutta 3200 Sq.Ft, Prime Location, Spacious Flat, Car Parking, 100% Vastu...

3 BHK Flat for sale with parking at Uma nagar Begumpet, Agents Exclusive, Contact: 879057122...

SPACIOUS 3 BHK Begumpet, 2000 sqft, Full furnished, 100% vastu, 3 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK...

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RARE BARGAIN Flat For Sale Located at bhk- 5th Floor 350 Sft Private Open Space...

BANJARAHILLS Srinagar Colony East facing 6 kks Villa 400 sqyds built up area 4500/5000 sq feet G pluses one Newly Renovated with lift...

BANJARAHILLS Road No-12 Prime Property's 600 square yards, 3 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK, 2 BHK...

BANJARAHILLS, very prime location independent House North East facing 3k sqyds Agent Kesav Ph.9866618796...

RASOOLPURA, 180 sqyds sindhi colony, 220/ and 280/ sqyds tadbund, 240/ and 283/ sqyds, Bowenpally 180/ and 225/ sqyds...

JUBILEEHILLS NEAR, Padmalaya Studio 7000Sft 3Bd 7th Floor, E & N Position 5 Months...

ONLY 3 BHK Hi-End Flats at Turkayamjal, Very Walkable at Surgay Highway, 1840 Sft to 1875 Sft...

3 BHK flat for Sale at G floor, area 1752 Sq.Ft, Anasagar Colony, Khairatabad, All Amenities & Car Parking available...

3 BHK 2550 Sft Premium Fully furnished East Flat, 2 Parkings, Gym, Power backup, 24hrs Water, Lift, Car parking, Kompally, 1.42 Cr negotiable, Call: 888503210...

3 BHK Luxury Corner Flat 2066 Sft, East Facing, 2 Car Parking, Well Ventilation, Gated Community, Prime Legend, Botanical Garden, Kondapur...

KONDAPUR BOLLINEI bion gated community 3 BHK flats for sale 1840 sft, 2290 sft 3350 sft, Contact: 970306669...

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MADHAPUR KAVURI hills (Katalkota) Road No. 9 silt plus 5 floors 20,000 sft in 800 yards, total 10 flats each flat 2000 sft east/west, entire building or flat wise for sale, contact builder, ph.9840361909...

3 BHK, Fully Furnished, East Facing Deluxe Flat For Sale Near Malkajgiri X Road, Old, 1740 Sft, 2 BHK, 8977816396...

3 BHK, Mayflower Platinum, Golden Heights Colony, Luxury Flats Under Construction, 3 BHK Flat Area 1818 Sft...

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ONLY 3 BHK Hi-End Flats at Turkayamjal

PLOTS

DTC/PC/REPA approved plots just 7 lakhs 150 sqyd at Narayankonda... OLD BOWENPALLY, Raja Reddy Colony, East Facing 225 sq yds...

FINANCIAL DISTRICT, Near U.S. Consulate, plug N play 24000 Sft, fully furnished 400 seater Highend Office set up available immediately...

HIMAYATNAGAR/ BANJARAHILLS, 4200 Sft, fully furnished, 4 Bedrooms, 4 attached baths, drawing, dining hall...

KOKKAPET MAIN Road opp: RKKKAPET 3760st lot 6, 2nd flr for Rent/Lease to Tenant 60% per cent...

WANTED MALE computer operator knowing excel and SAP at Uppal IDA, near by residents preferred...

SRISTAR GOLD company Required for all Hyderabad & Telangana & Andhrapradesh: Receptionists for Hyderabad & Field Managers...

UNICENT SCHOOL, a reputed CBSE School at Kompally requires Qualified, experience and fluency in English...

EDUCATIONAL BE A Chartered Accountant with confidence. ICAI approved complete CA access...

RAMQJI FILM City Pochampally 1000 Sq.Yds. Full Road, North Facing, Colony, 221 Sq.Yds Plot with 7, 8, 9, 3 side road 15x18 size Road...

PRIME COMMERCIAL Space For Rent/Lease: 1100 Sft super area, south-facing office space available in Sandhya Techno 1, Raidurg...

GOLF ESTATE Financial District 3 BHK Apt Fully Furnished East Facing Bachelors or Families Contact Owner: Ph:9884026793

PRIME LOCATION in Whitefield, Kondapur- 5100 Sq. Ft. Spacious space for lease on 1st floor with dedicated car parking & ATM...

URGENT WANTED Dynamic Hard Working and Young Experience Above 10 years Civil Supervisors...

WANTED SPORTS Volunteers, including MTB Coaches, Sports Managers Online Affiliate Managers/Ed Tech Sales T.S.

WE ARE hiring for our Advertising & Creative Agency Open Positions: Business Development Head / Business Operations Head / Marketing Executives...

FINANCE Loan Starts from 1Cr - 100Cr. Secured Loan. Unsecured Loan. Take over Loan. Project Loan. NPA Release.

SHAMSHABAD NEAR JP Dargah-17 Zone plot with 7 year old sandalwood trees. Clear title. Price Rs.9,000/ sq.yd. Ideal investment...

COMMERCIAL BUILDING for Lease @ Shamsabad, Newly Constructed 1,00,000 Sq.ft. Commercial building (Ground + Floors) with Cellars & Parking for 120 Cars...

HABSIGUDA BEHIND ICICI Bank, 1400 Sft, First Floor, With Furniture, Suitable for Corporate Office, Guest House, extra, Ph:9177710248

COMMERCIAL OPEN Plot For Long Lease at HUDA Mayuri Colony, Miyapur, 1150 Sq.Yds. Three Side Road Access, Fully Fenced, Open Area, Construction Permissible...

URGENTLY WANTED Dynamic Hard Working and Young Experience Above 10 years Civil Supervisors...

WANTED CIVIL Engineers with 2-3 years experience to work in a construction firm at Bhogaram, near Keesara, Medchal- Malkajgiri District. Interested Candidates may contact at 9885013369/ 9100033626

REPUTED SCHOOL Opening New Branches In Kothapet And Nagole Invites Applications for Principal, Coordinators, Subject Teacher (All Levels)...

FINANCE Loan Starts from 1Cr - 100Cr. Secured Loan. Unsecured Loan. Take over Loan. Project Loan. NPA Release.

SHAMSHABAD GHMC & HMDA Plots 100 sqyds RR Naga & 286 sqyds RB Nagar Near Indira Hospital. Bus stand, OHR, Bank Loans Contact: 9849295662

AMERPET MAIN Road Office Space 1st Floor 400 sq ft & Sharing Cabin Space Total 800 sq ft (Half ) for Rent Ph:9849297146

HABSIGUDA BEHIND ICICI Bank, 1400 Sft, First Floor, With Furniture, Suitable for Corporate Office, Guest House, extra, Ph:9177710248

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450 Sq. Yards Registered, Plot for Sale, Rs 25000 Per Sq Yrd At Auto Nagar Shamsabad Main Road W/C: 8790067324

KOKAPET, 1245 sft, 4th floor, Commercial space, Rent at Kay Whishing circle, one golden mile Road. Rent 75,000/-, ph:9100546532

HABSIGUDA BEHIND ICICI Bank, 1400 Sft, First Floor, With Furniture, Suitable for Corporate Office, Guest House, extra, Ph:9177710248

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HMDA PLOT 200 sqyds Rachoollu, Tukkuguda, BTR Makl Villas, 330 Ft Road Best for Invest and House Construction. Bank Loans Contact: 9849295662

KOKAPET, 1245 sft, 4th floor, Commercial space, Rent at Kay Whishing circle, one golden mile Road. Rent 75,000/-, ph:9100546532

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REPUTED SCHOOL Opening New Branches In Kothapet And Nagole Invites Applications for Principal, Coordinators, Subject Teacher (All Levels)...

FINANCE Loan Starts from 1Cr - 100Cr. Secured Loan. Unsecured Loan. Take over Loan. Project Loan. NPA Release.

HMDA PLOT 200 sqyds Rachoollu, Tukkuguda, BTR Makl Villas, 330 Ft Road Best for Invest and House Construction. Bank Loans Contact: 9849295662

KOKAPET, 1245 sft, 4th floor, Commercial space, Rent at Kay Whishing circle, one golden mile Road. Rent 75,000/-, ph:9100546532

HABSIGUDA BEHIND ICICI Bank, 1400 Sft, First Floor, With Furniture, Suitable for Corporate Office, Guest House, extra, Ph:9177710248

COMMERCIAL OPEN Plot For Long Lease at HUDA Mayuri Colony, Miyapur, 1150 Sq.Yds. Three Side Road Access, Fully Fenced, Open Area, Construction Permissible...

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REAL ESTATE VERY Big Reputed Builder is looking for Land for Development, Residential or commercial, 10-20 Acres, High class, 30 Acres, Construction, 30-50 Acres-London model Gated Community, 50-100 Acres- Plotting development or Weekend Farmhouse concept, In & Around the City, near ORR, Very serious Land Owners only. Call: 9581779779

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SHORT TAKES

**LONE CANDIDATE ABSENT IN INTER EXAMINATION**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

An intermediate student from a gurukul school, who was the only candidate allotted to a centre in Nagarkurnool district, failed to turn up for the examination on Saturday.

The Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) had made elaborate arrangements for the student to appear for the general bridge course Mathematics I paper at Government Junior College for Boys, Nagarkurnool. As per rules, an invigilator, chief superintendent and attendant were deployed at the centre.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Nagarkurnool nodal officer Ramana said whenever a single or more students apply in a district, only one centre is designated. This year, only one first year student registered, but he did not appear. Meanwhile, 4,037 of the 37,915 students registered for the first year Public Administration Paper I and Bridge Course Mathematics I for B.P.C. candidates were absent. The Board said examinations were conducted smoothly and peacefully, with zero malpractice cases.

**SANGAREDDY CHOSEN FOR DIGI. HEALTH PROJECT**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 12

The state government has selected Sangareddy district to implement a pilot project for a digital health profile system aimed at improving the delivery of medical services. Profiles will be created for patients visiting 64 government healthcare facilities in Sangareddy for the initiative. These include a government general hospital, four area hospitals, five community health centres, four urban primary health centres, 31 primary health centres, and 19 basti dawakhanas.

Health minister Damodar Rajanarsimha announced the initiative during a coordination meeting held at the district collectorate on Thursday with senior officials from the state and district health departments. Officials discussed the method of implementation, preparatory arrangements, and the technological infrastructure required for the programme.

The minister directed health officials to begin preparations for issuing a digital health card to every patient visiting these facilities. The card will contain the patient's complete medical history in digital form. Officials were instructed to ensure that the patient's health information is digitally recorded at every stage of treatment — from outpatient registration to consultation with medical officers, laboratory tests, and pharmacy services. Necessary information technology infrastructure, basic facilities, and staff will be arranged to support the system, the minister said.

According to the minister, the digital health card would help doctors access a patient's medical history quickly and provide appropriate treatment without delay. The system will also support early detection and monitoring of non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, maternal and child health conditions, cancer, and heart diseases.



Officials check hall tickets of students attending their first SSC exam at Mahubia school, Abids on Saturday. Right: Students of New Era School, Kukatpally, head to their examination hall set up at the same school where they study. — R. PAVAN, DEEPAK DESHPANDE



**SSC exams start smoothly; 99.65% attendance recorded**

5,15,374 students attended, 1,823 were absent from the examination

MRITTIKA BANERJEE | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The first day of the SSC Public Examinations 2026 in Telangana passed off largely smoothly on Saturday, with 99.65 per cent attendance among regular candidates who appeared for the First Language paper across the state amid tight monitoring by flying squads and officials visiting 1,240 exam centres. Authorities reported no malpractice cases, though disciplinary action was taken in one district for negligence. A separate controversy surfaced in Hyderabad's Kukatpally after reports suggested several candidates from New Era High School had been allotted the same campus as their examination centre.

Figures released by the Directorate of Government Examinations showed that 5,15,374 of the 5,17,197 regular candidates registered for the exam were present, with 1,823 absent. Among private candidates, 626 of the 786 registered appeared while 160 remained absent. Disciplinary action was reported from Khammam district, where a chief superintendent, a departmental officer and an invigilator were relieved of examination duties for negligence. In Hyderabad, sev-



Students at Keyes Girls High School, Secunderabad check hall ticket numbers before their first SSC exam, on Saturday. — S. SURENDER REDDY.

eral students from New Era High School, Kukatpally, were allotted the same school as their examination centre. A student said about 81 candidates from the school had been allotted the campus. "None of our teachers were inside the exam halls," the student said, adding that flying squads visited the centre during the examination. Another student noted that candidates from other New Era branches had also been sent to the Kukatpally campus.

Posts circulating on social media alleged that the allotment had raised questions about the process and claimed that students had been instructed not to show their hall

tickets. Those allegations remain unverified. The district educational officer (DEO) of Medchal Malkajgiri issued a statement explaining that 257 examination centres had been set up for the SSC examinations beginning March 14, and that students are allotted centres through the jumbling method by the Directorate of Government Examinations. On the situation at New Era, the DEO said 337 Class X students were appearing from the school across four centres arranged on campus, with a total of 857 students from 13 schools allotted to those centres. "Through the jumbling method, some students from this school have also been allotted to this centre. However, it is not possible for all stu-

dents of the same school to be grouped together at one centre through the jumbling software," the statement said. The DEO added that only government teachers had been assigned examination duty and that four sitting squads from the Revenue Department had been appointed to monitor the

**2 write SSC exam after losing father**

P. SRINIVAS | DC NALGONDA, MARCH 14

Two Class X students in Telangana appeared for their SSC examinations despite the death of their fathers hours before the exam, in two separate instances on Saturday.

At Mothkur in Yadadri-Bhongir district, Kurella Harshavardhan, student of a private school, wrote the first language examination at Zilla Parishad High School even as his father's body lay at home. Harshavardhan appeared for the examination with the support of family members. The last rites of his father were conducted after the exam. His father, Yelliah, a government school teacher at Pashhakonduru in Gundala mandal,

suffered a heart attack on Friday morning.

He was taken to a private hospital in Nalgonda and later shifted to Hyderabad for treatment, where he died on Friday night. At Bathunapally in Kallur mandal of Khammam district, Gandepally Manikantam, a student of Government High School in Bathunapally, wrote the examination after his father died earlier on Saturday. His father Kondal Rao, who was suffering from jaundice, died while undergoing treatment at the Government General Hospital in Khammam.

Teachers and students at both centres expressed sympathy with the students who appeared for the examinations despite their personal loss.

Authorities maintained that the examinations were being conducted in a transparent manner without irregularities. The matter concerning New Era High School remains under discussion as the SSC examinations continue across Telangana.

**Autonomous wheelchair showcased**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

An autonomous self driving wheelchair designed to help persons with disabilities navigate independently, along with experimental robots and cybersecurity research, drew attention at the 25th R and D Showcase at the International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad (IIIT Hyderabad) on Saturday. The two-day exhibition features more than 400 research posters, prototypes and demonstrations from 29 research centres, offering a glimpse of how emerging technologies in artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity and digital public infrastructure are being developed in research labs.

Among the notable demonstrations is the autonomous wheelchair equipped with 3D LIDAR



Students showcase innovative tools and projects at the 25th R&D Showcase at the IIIT Hyderabad on Saturday.

sensors for environmental perception and powered by Jetson Orin using ROS2, enabling the system to detect obstacles and navigate indoor environments with minimal user input. Researchers said the system uses advanced path planning and obstacle avoidance techniques to move safely through complex spaces.

Visitors also saw experimental flapping wing robots and spin drones, along with architectural models that illustrate traditional earthquake

resistant housing methods used across India. These include Kath Kuni houses from Himachal Pradesh, Adobe houses from Rajasthan and Ikra houses from Assam, which use wood, mud brick and bamboo structures to absorb seismic shocks.

The showcase, themed "Trust in Technology - Security, Privacy and Transparency," brought together researchers, students, policymakers and industry representatives to examine how technological systems

can be designed with greater reliability and security. Speaking at the event, Shivkumar Kalyanaraman, chief executive officer of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, listed various national research funding initiatives aimed at strengthening collaboration between universities, industry and government laboratories.

IIIT Hyderabad direc-

tor Sandeep K. Shukla said discussions around cybersecurity and digital trust were central to the event. "Technology should not control us. Instead, we should control technology," he said.

Experts at a panel discussion pointed to growing scale of cybercrime and the shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals.



ALL FOR A CAUSE

**Women visit church in traditional Nigerian Kaftan, Aso Ebi, Buba, Gele robes**

**Nigeria in focus on World Day of Prayer**

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Churches across the city organised special prayer meetings led by women congregations as part of the annual World Day of Prayer, with Nigeria chosen as the focus country for 2026 by the National Council of Churches in India.

Women attending the services dressed in traditional Nigerian attire such as Kaftan, Aso Ebi and Buba, along with Gele head ties, wrap skirts and flowing robes, reflecting the cultural traditions of the country. The gatherings were held to pray for Nigeria amid ongoing conflicts and violence affecting women in the country.

Susana Ougustina from Malkajgiri said, "A day when women participated



Women congregations in Hyderabad held World Day of Prayer for Nigeria, showcasing traditional attire, cultural displays, and prayers for peace. — BY ARRANGEMENT

in prayers, reflecting on the difficult conditions and conflicts faced in Nigeria." Churches organised the programmes on Friday depending on the availability of women congregations. Surekha Paul, a railway employee, said, "World Day of Prayer was observed in our churches with the

theme "Pray for Nigeria." As part of the observance, we displayed their staple foods such as fruits, vegetables and grains. Since music is an important part of their culture, musical instruments were also exhibited." At SD Road in Secunderabad, several churches

came together for the event, which included prayers and cultural displays reflecting Nigerian traditions. Navaneetha Norfolk, vice-president and secretary for projects, HRC, MCI, said, "Special prayers were also offered for children, men and families, lifting up the entire nation and seeking

peace, wellbeing and stability for people everywhere. It was a meaningful occasion as hearts came together in prayer for the nation and its people."

Participants said preparations for the event took several days, with women arranging Nigerian flags, maps and displays of jewellery traditionally used in the region.

Women from different denominations gathered at churches on Chapel Road for the programme. Vaddipally Saangeeta Sagar said, "We enacted Beatrice's story, portraying how widows in their community support and encourage one another. The play reflected the strength and resilience of Nigerian women and helped those who attended better understand their experiences."

**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, SANGAREDDY, (SANGAREDDY DISTRICT) e-Procurement Tender Notice**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| e-Procurement NIT No | 1) E/10834/JDF/SRD/2025, Dt:13-03-2026, (2nd Call)  |
|                      | 2) E/164/2025-26, Dt: 13-03-2026, (2nd Call)        |
|                      | 3) E/1/SRD/2025-26, Dt: 13-03-2026, (2nd Call)      |
|                      | 4) E/164/2025-26, Dt:13-03-2026, (2nd Call)         |
|                      | 5) E/164/2025-26, Dt:13-03-2026, (2nd Call)         |
|                      | 6) E/2358/MCS/2025-26, Dt: 13-03-2026, (2nd Call)   |
|                      | 7) E/2358/MCS/2025-26, Dt:13-03-2026, (2nd Call)    |
|                      | 8) E/1/Ranjan/Grants/MCS/2025-26, Dt:14-03-2026     |
|                      | 9) E/1/Record Room/MCS/2025-26, Dt:14-03-2026       |
|                      | 10) E/1/Mesh around Sump/MCS/2025-26, Dt:14-03-2026 |

Total No. of works: 1. Under MGP/15th FC Grants - 5 Nos.  
2. CDMA Grants 2025-26 - 4 Nos.  
3. UIDF Grants 2025-26 - 1 Nos

Bid submission start date & time: 14-03-2026 @ 10.30 AM  
Bid submission closing date & time: 23-03-2026 @ 04.00 PM

Further details can be seen @ e-Procurement market place tender.telanganagov.in  
Phone No. Dy. Executive Engineer, Sangareddy Municipality, Mobile: 9849907770.  
Sd/- Municipal Commissioner Sangareddy Municipality

DIPR R.O. No.: 17035-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender Notice**

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

Description of Work: Vrangana lakshmi Bai Jhansi- Construction of RCC road (Work 570.00 mt X6.10 mt) to Wagon Care Center & Freight Examination Depot Office.

E-Tender No.: JHS-ENGG- HQ -2026-49

Approx Cost ₹ 16776152.75 Earnest Money : ₹ 233900.00

Date of closing Tender: 09.04.2026 at 15:00 hrs.

Date of Completion/period from issue acceptance letter: 06 Months.

Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 09.04.2026. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 57326(DG)

North central railways @CPDROR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender Notice**

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

Description of Work: Jhansi division: Provision for Gangs tools cum rest room in JHS-PRN Section under ADEN/HQ-JHS jurisdiction.

E-Tender No.: JHS-ENGG- HQ -2026-47

Approx Cost ₹ 23110419.10 Earnest Money : ₹ 265600.00

Date of closing Tender: 09.04.2026 at 15:00 hrs.

Date of Completion/period from issue acceptance letter: 12 Months.

Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 09.04.2026. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 58126(DG)

North central railways @CPDROR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

**CORRIGENDUM NO. 2**

Corrigendum No. 2 for Tender Notice No.: Mech-LMG-ET-14-2025-26; dttd.: 19-02-2026. Name of the work : Turnkey contract for the work of Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Plant/ Equipment & Related Infrastructure and Operation of Mechanized Laundry at Badapur, Collection of soiled linen from coaches from Agartala, Silchar, Sairang Railway station and loading of washed linen into coaches at Agartala, Silchar, Sairang Railway station for a period of 10 years under BOOT (Build- Own - Operate- Transfer) Basis and Transportation of linen from BOOT Laundry to nominated Stations including onboard distribution of linen to passenger, blanket repair & stitching of curtains. Tender Closing Date: 13:00 hrs. on 30-03-2026. Details are as under:-

New Items Added: Documents

| S No. | Document Description       | File Name         |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1     | Corrigendum 2              | Corrigendum-2.pdf |
| 2     | Modified Tender Document 2 | ApprovedTD3.pdf   |

For Detail please visit N.F. Railway website www.ireps.gov.in Sr. DME/Lumding

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PLANNING AND INVESTIGATION DIVISION ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT (RCD), RANCHI Nirupan Bhawan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Room No. 401, 56-Set, Doranda, Ranchi-834002**

Invitation of Proposal (e-procurement Notice)  
Letter of Invitation (LOI) No.-34/2025-26

1<sup>st</sup> Call

**NATIONAL BIDDING**

e-Tender Ref No&RCD/PID/RANCHI/34/2025-26 Date:-13.03.2026

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1  | Name Of Work   | Consultancy Services for Preparation of Feasibility cum DPR for upgradation of existing Ghaghar-Natarhat road as 4-lane tourist corridor with Tunnel roads in Hilly stretches in the State of Jharkhand   |
| 2  | Tentative Length                                       | 60 Km   |
| 3  | Period of Completion of Work                           | 90 Days   |
| 4  | Cost of Tender documents                               | Cost of Tender Document- Rs 10,000/- (Ten Thousand only)<br>EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: -Rs. 5,00,000/(Five Lakhs only) irrespective of participation in either a single package or both the packages.<br>As per the Departmental letter no.-4632(S) dated 06.10.2023, cost of tender document and Earnest Money Deposit will be received in online mode only through e-procurement portal<br>(https://jrharkhandtenders.gov.in) by internet banking/NIFT/RTGS facility as per Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by information Technology & e-Governance Department, Government of Jharkhand vide letter no-120 dated 03.10.2023. |
| 5  | Mode of Bid Submission                                 | tendering(https://jrharkhandtenders.gov.in)   |
| 6  | Date/Time of Publication of Tender on Website          | 17.03.2026,5.30 P.M.  |
| 7  | Date of Pre Bid Conference                             | 01.04.2026 (In the Chamber of CE, CDO, RCD, 1st Floor, Nirupan Bhawan, Doranda, Ranchi-834002)  |
| 8  | Last Date/Time of Submission of Bid                    | 07.04.2026, 12:00 Noon  |
| 9  | Date and Time of Technical Bid opening                 | 08.04.2026, 12.30 PM  |
| 10 | Bid validity   | 120 days  |
| 11 | Designation and Contact no. of Tender inviting Officer | Executive Engineer, Planning and Investigation Division,RCD,Ranchi, Mob No.-9471650883  |

Note:- Only e-Tender shall be accepted. Executive Engineer, Planning & Investigation Division, Road Construction Department, Ranchi, PR 375113 Road(25-26),D

**Government of Jharkhand Jharkhand Flying Institute Department of Cabinet Secretariat & Vigilance (Civil Aviation Division) State Hangar, Birsa Munda Airport Road, Hinoo Ranchi-834002 E-mail-jfi.govtly@gmail.com, Website-www.jharkhandaviation.in**

Ref No:-IAIC-18-2026/JFI-153/Ranchi, Dated:-13.03.2026

**Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) Request for Quotation (RFQ)**

Reference for Quotations Ref.No:- IAIC-18-2026/JFI-153, dated-13.03.2026 for the selection of reputed & experienced Chartered Accountant & Tax Consultant Firm for the Internal Audit & all Tax Related Works for the Financial Year 2026-27 & 2027-28.

Jharkhand Flying Institute (JFI), Department of Cabinet Secretariat and Vigilance (Civil Aviation Division) invites Quotation for the selection of reputed & experienced Chartered Accountant & Tax Consultant Firm for the Internal Audit & all Tax Related Works for the Financial Year 2026-27 & 2027-28. Eligibility Criteria as detailed in the RFP.

Important Dates:-

- Last date & time for submission of Quotation-25.03.2026 at 01:00 PM
- Date & Time of opening of Quotation-25.03.2026 at 03:00 PM

The process to participate in the Request for Quotation has been clearly elaborated in the RFP. Firms/ Agencies may download the RFP documents from the website of Jharkhand Flying Institute i.e. https://www.jharkhandaviation.in and submit the quotation within the stipulated time limit.

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SHORT TAKES

**NIT WARANGAL TO STUDY ALIPIRI SITE SOIL**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Soil samples from the Alipiri Padala Mandapam site in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, have been sent to the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Warangal for geotechnical analysis to design a suitable foundation for reinstalling the structure.

Archaeological Survey of India epigraphy director K. Muniratnam Reddy said that based on the findings, a proper foundation and resetting would be carried out.

He noted that a similar method was adopted during the restoration of the Ramappa temple, describing it as a standard process for preserving ancient temples. "We will get the reports shortly and accordingly the work will begin," he added.

**377 PG MEDICAL SEATS VACANT IN TELANGANA**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A total of 377 postgraduate medical seats remain vacant in Telangana, according to the Telangana State Private Medical and Dental College Managements Association. The tally includes 125 under the competent authority quota and 252 under the management quota.

Officials said the competent authority quota covers a smaller number of government college seats. The health department is expected to brief the minister and follow up with the National Medical Commission (NMC).

KNRUHS vice-chancellor Dr K. Ramesh Reddy noted that vacant seats are seen every year, largely in private colleges. "Most of the non-clinical seats in government colleges are filled, but more seats remain vacant in private colleges. This is not new to our state and happens across the country," he said.

The association has filed a writ petition seeking an extension of the admission deadline and revision of eligibility criteria, arguing that otherwise many students will have to prepare again for the next entrance examination.

**SUGAR-FREE PADDY BRINGS HIGHER RETURNS**

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC  
NELLORE, MARCH 14

Farmers in SPSR Nellore district, who have cultivated RNR-15048 paddy, popularly known as the "sugar-free rice," are reaping handsome returns this harvest season, as there is strong demand for this variety from millers and consumers.

The fine-grain paddy variety, developed in 2016 by Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, has gained popularity for its low glycemic index, making it suitable for diabetics. Its blast resistance and ability to grow in both Kharif and Rabi seasons have also encouraged many farmers in the district to grow this variety.

This season, the variety is fetching around ₹23,000 per putti (about 850 kg) in the open market, significantly higher than the ₹19,000-₹21,000 being offered for other fine varieties of paddy.

Progressive farmer Tata Hariprasada Vidavalur said millers are willing to pay a premium because of the variety's high rice recovery rate.

"RNR-15048 offers head rice recovery of more than 67 per cent, resulting in fewer broken grains and higher profits for millers," he explained.

According to official estimates, paddy has been cultivated over about 3.75 lakh acres in the district this season, besides another 50,000 acres under unofficial cultivation.

The administration is preparing to open 161 Paddy Procurement Centres (PPCs). Farmers have been ensured that payments will be made within 24 hours of procurement.

Despite this, many farmers continue to prefer selling in the open market, even if the price is slightly below the Minimum Support Price (MSP)—₹20,306 per putti for A-grade paddy and ₹20,135 for common variety. Farmers cite strict quality norms at PPCs, including moisture levels below 17 per cent, colour standards, and limits on broken grains.

**Justice Nath flags risks of AI in Law**

Says AI can't replace human judgment

VUJINI VAMSHIDHAR | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Supreme Court judge Justice Vikram Nath on Saturday cautioned against the uncritical use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal profession, stating that while technology could assist legal work it could not replace the trained intellect, ethical responsibility and judgment that form the foundation of the justice system. Justice Nath emphasised that AI must remain a supportive tool rather than a substitute for human reasoning that is essential to law and adjudication.

He was addressing the South Zone-II Regional Conference, "Advancing Rule of Law Through Technology: Challenges and Opportunities", here on Saturday. The two-day conference, jointly organised by the Telangana High Court, the National Judicial Academy and the Telangana Judicial Academy, brought together over 130 judicial officers from southern states along with Chief Justices and judges of High Courts.

Justice Nath observed that technology could make certain aspects of legal work more efficient, such as organising material or summarising documents. He warned that it should never be allowed to "invent the law" or influence judicial reasoning. "A tool must remain a tool. It cannot replace the trained mind of a lawyer, the ethical responsibility of an officer of the court, or the disciplined judgment required of a judge," he said.

Raising concerns over the careless use of AI-generated content in legal submissions, Justice Nath pointed to instances where fabricated citations and non-existent authorities had been included in documents, and these had even reached the Supreme Court. Such inaccuracies, he noted, were not merely technical errors and undermined the integrity of legal arguments and the credibility of the judicial process.

Justice Nath also cautioned against rejecting emerging technologies entirely due to their potential risks. According to him, the appropriate response lay in informed and responsible use, guided by ethical discipline and professional standards. Technology presents both opportunities and challenges and it can widen access to justice and improve transparency, but it can also deepen exclusion or lead to distortions if used irresponsibly, he said.

Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, judge of the Supreme Court and a former Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court, spoke on the expanding role of technology in the judiciary. "Technology provides powerful tools, but the rule of law remains in



Supreme Court judge Justice Vikram Nath speaks at the South Zone-2 Regional Conference on advancing the rule of law through technology, in Hyderabad on Saturday. — DC



Supreme Court judges Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma launched the Telangana Legal Services Authority's Lok Adalat vans in Hyderabad on Saturday. Telangana High Court Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh, senior judge Justice P. Sam Koshy, executive chairman of the Telangana Legal Services Authority, and High Court judges participated in the programme. — DC

**TG LAUNCHES MOBILE LOK ADALATS**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telangana Legal Services Authority on Saturday launched 'Mobile Lok Adalats' to expand legal services to the remote corners of the state. The Lok Adalat vans will provide free legal aid and support to litigants and conduct

legal awareness camps in villages, especially for weaker and vulnerable sections of society. A statement said legal guidance would be provided to affected individuals about their legal rights, entitlements, and the steps required to seek compensation or relief.

the domain of human judgment. No algorithm can govern a human soul," he remarked.

Justice Sharma also noted: "So let the circuits assist the court, let knowledge flow in a widening stream; But let the gavel remain in human hands, guarding the promise of the constitutional dream".

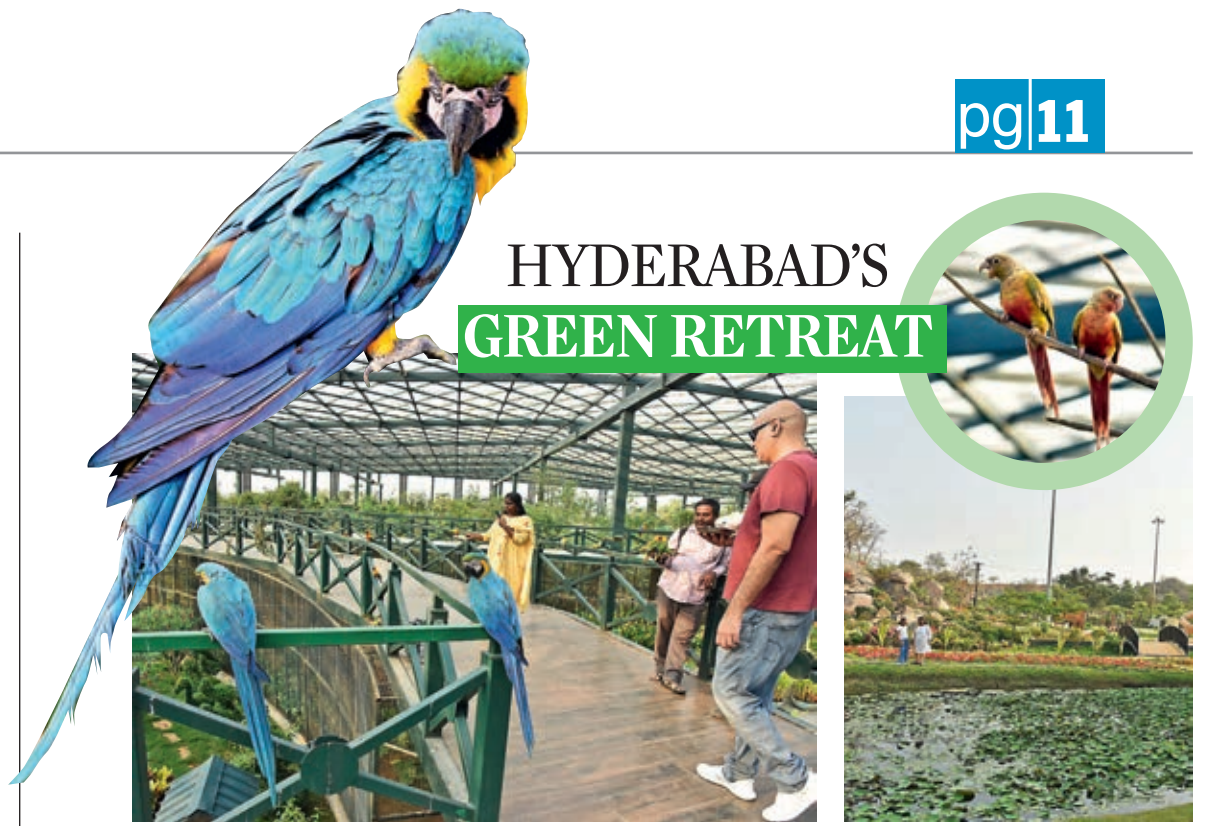
Justice Sharma highlighted the growing risks associated with algorithmic bias and data security as courts become increasingly digitised. "The days have come when voices travel through fibre and light. The law will still ask its oldest question: What is fair? What is just? What is right?," Justice Sharma said. "A screen now opens doors once barred, making the path to courts less hard".

Telangana High Court Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh, speaking at the conference, reflected on the evolving relationship between law and technology. Quoting eminent United States jurist Benjamin N. Cardozo, Justice Singh noted that "the law, like the traveller, must be ready for the morrow," underscoring the need for the legal system to adapt to changing societal and technological realities while remaining anchored in constitution-

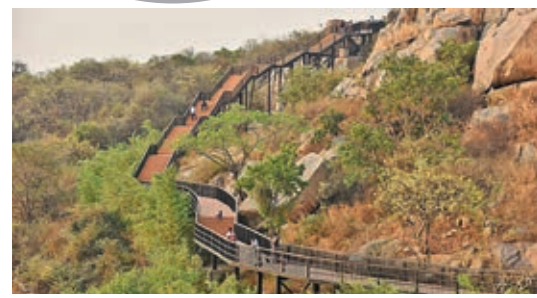
al principles. Justice Singh also spoke about the growing importance of technology in dispute resolution, particularly through online dispute resolution platforms that enable remote mediation, digital documentation and virtual settlements. However, he cautioned that the rapid spread of information in the digital age also raises complex questions about balancing freedom of expression with the need to preserve the fairness and integrity of judicial proceedings.

The conference witnessed the participation of Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Dhiraj Singh Thakur, Sikkim High Court Chief Justice A. Muhamed Mustaque and several judges from Telangana HC and neighbouring High Courts.

Justice Anirudha Bose, former judge of the SC and presently director of the National Judicial Academy and judicial officers from southern states participated in discussions and interactive sessions on matters like effective use of technology in alternative dispute resolution, the role of courts in the safeguarding privacy, and censorship in the era of electronic and digital media.



**HYDERABAD'S GREEN RETREAT**



Eco Hills Park is a scenic urban green space developed to protect the environment while offering a refreshing recreational destination for city residents. Located near Kothwalguda on the outskirts of Hyderabad, the park aims to preserve urban greenery, support biodiversity and promote environmental awareness among visitors. The park features several attractions that make it an ideal destination for nature lovers. The vibrant Butterfly Garden showcases colourful butterflies amid flowering plants, while the Tree Machan offers a unique elevated view of the surrounding greenery. Visitors can also enjoy a peaceful walk along the 1.8-km boardwalk that winds through natural landscapes. Other highlights include the beautifully designed Japanese Garden, bright flowerbeds, the scenic Fort View Point and a birds' aviary that fascinates wildlife enthusiasts. Together, these attractions make Eco Hills Park an ideal place for relaxation, learning about nature and promoting eco-tourism in the region.

— R. Pavan

DC IMPACT

**CMC plans removal of IT Corridor garbage heaps**

NABINDER BOMMALA | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The long pending issue of two massive piles of rubbish in Hyderabad's IT corridor is finally set to be addressed. The apathy was first reported in Deccan Chronicle on January 19. Both heaps resemble hills in the middle of the corridor, and locals have begun calling them "garbage mountains," even using them as landmarks.

The first pile consists of debris from cellar excavation near the Shilpa Layout flyover close to IKEA, while the second is a mix of construction waste, discarded furniture, clothes and other refuse on the road towards Madhapur from Meenakshi Building. Officials of the Cyberabad Municipal



Picture of the Deccan Chronicle report carried on January 19.

Corporation (CMC) have inspected the sites and said two approaches are under consideration: lifting the debris and transporting it to Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste processing facilities, or processing it at the site using appropriate meth-

ods. CMC officials added that they are exploring the best possible solution, welcome suggestions from citizens, and will soon decide on clearing the C&D heaps.

The stretches near the piles were inspected by CMC commissioner G. Srijana, officials of the Ranga Reddy Collectorate, the Telangana Pollution Control Board (TGPCB) and members of Re Sustainability Limited (formerly Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd).

Meanwhile, in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), commissioner R.V. Karnan inspected the Eidgah premises at Pahadi Shareef and reviewed sanitation conditions. An e waste drive was also conducted in GHMC, CMC and Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation.

**25-year-old arrested for bid to inject HIV blood**

MANVI VYAS & DEEPIKA PASHAM | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A 25 year old man was arrested for allegedly injecting his blood into a woman in an attempt to infect her with HIV, reportedly over her refusal to marry him, at her residence in Annojiguda in the Pocharam IT corridor.

According to Uppal deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Suresh Kumar, the incident occurred on March 11 while the victim was alone at home. The accused allegedly entered her house and an argument broke out between the two. Following this, the accused injected his blood into the victim using a syringe, in an attempt to infect her with HIV. Names of persons involved have been withheld as per law.

Soon after, the victim developed a fever and informed her parents, who rushed her to a nearby hospital where she is

currently being treated. Police said the accused later burned the syringe in a fire at a rubbish yard to destroy evidence.

Police said both the accused and the victim were in a relationship and are also related to each other. However, in September, when the victim had the accused tested at a hospital in Uppal, she discovered that he and his parents were HIV positive.

Learning of this, the victim and her family turned down the marriage proposal made by the accused and his family. Resenting this, the accused is known to have taken this step. Police confirmed that he injected his own blood into the victim.

Regarding the medical condition of the victim, two conflicting versions emerged from different officers. While one official said that medical reports and the complaint suggest


the victim has tested positive for HIV, another official closely involved in the investigation said confirming the HIV status would take longer, as it ideally takes 10-45 days, and that the current reports have yielded a negative result.

Pocharam IT corridor inspector B. Raju said the accused had been planning the crime for the past two weeks and had been monitoring the victim and her family's movements.

Gandhi Hospital additional superintendent Dr Shobha said, "We had treated her in the outpatient of the ART centre. Only after further inquiry would we be able to officially confirm whether she was injected." Based on a complaint by the victim's father Pocharam police registered a case under Section 109 of the BNS (attempt to murder), and further investigation into the incident is underway.



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## K'taka MPs to meet in Delhi over Krishna row

GURURAJ A. PANIYADI | DC BAGALKOT, MARCH 14

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said a meeting with Karnataka MPs would be held in Delhi on Tuesday to discuss the stance of Andhra Pradesh, which has objected to the Upper Krishna Project Phase III, and was not cooperating in stopping the wastage of water from the Tungbhadra Dam. Speaking to reporters in Bagalkot on Saturday, the deputy CM said the meeting would be attended by some of his Cabinet colleagues, and they will also exert pressure on the government of India.

Shivakumar said that Andhra Pradesh had written to the Centre, objecting to the implementation of the Krishna Upper Bank project and the land acquisition process associated with it.

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INORBIT MALL-4.50PM | ATRIUM MALL-12.30PM  
GSM MALL-1.15PM | SATTVA NECKLACE-3.45PM

Kalasrusti International Release

# LDF wary of women entry in Sabarimala

## Stresses on consultations with Hindu scholars

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 14

The ruling CPM-led LDF government in Kerala has stopped short of taking a clear stance on the entry of women of a certain age group into the Sabarimala temple, telling the Supreme Court that any change to the long-standing practice should only come after broad consultations with religious scholars and social reformers within the Hindu community.

The government is trying to balance the sentiments of devotees with its earlier position supporting the entry of women of all ages into the temple. In written submissions filed in the ongoing review proceedings related to the Sabarimala verdict, the state government emphasized that long-held practices tied to beliefs should not be considered in isolation, and that a wider consultative process involving experts with deep knowledge of Hindu traditions is necessary to address the matter.

Submissions were filed in the Supreme Court in the review petitions arising from the 2018 judgment in the case of Indian Young Lawyers Association vs State of Kerala, which struck down the restriction on the entry of women aged 10 to 50 years at the Ayyappa temple.

The state said Article 25 guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess and practice religion, including rituals, ceremonies, and modes of worship that form an integral part of a faith. However, the



**GOVT IN DILEMMA**  
The government is trying to balance the sentiments of devotees with its earlier position supporting the entry of women of all ages into the temple.

## SC RULING IN 2018

IN ITS SEPTEMBER 2018 ruling, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that the exclusion of women of menstruating age from the temple was unconstitutional.

**THE MAJORITY JUDGMENT** stated that this practice violated women's right to freely practice religion under Article 25 and that Rule 3(b) of the 1965 Rules was unconstitutional and ultra vires the parent Act.

**THE COURT ALSO** ruled that devotees of Lord Ayyappa did not constitute a separate religious denomination.

**A NINE-JUDGE** bench was later constituted to examine the wider issues, including the scope of religious freedom under Article 25

right is not absolute and may be subject to restrictions related to public order, morality, health, and other provisions of the Constitution.

It further emphasized that Article 25 allows the state to introduce laws for social reform and for opening Hindu religious institutions of public character to all classes and sections of Hindus, including women.

The government argued that the concept of 'morality' in Articles 25 and 26 should be understood as constitutional morality, rooted in principles such as equality, non-discrimination, protection of liberty, and the welfare of society. The state submitted that determining whether a particular practice is an essential religious practice should primarily

depend on the doctrines of the religion and the beliefs of the community following it.

The Kerala government reiterated that, given the sensitive nature of the Sabarimala issue and the strong response from devotees, any judicial review of the long-standing practice should follow wide consultations with religious scholars and social reformers.

In its September 2018 ruling, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that the exclusion of women of menstruating age from the temple was unconstitutional. The majority judgment stated that this practice violated women's right to freely practice religion under Article 25 and that Rule 3(b) of the 1965 Rules was unconstitutional and ultra vires the parent Act.

## SOUTH BRIEFS

### 4 men hack gangster to death

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 14

A group of four men hacked gangster Aluva Athul to death in a broad daylight at Puthiyakavu, Karunagapally, in Kollam district on Saturday.

Athul, the main accused in Gym Santosh murder case, was out on a bail and returning in a car after checking in at the police station, when the incident happened. A CCTV footage which went viral on social media showed a car ramming another vehicle from behind, causing it to tumble into an excavated section of the under-construction stretch of the national highway. Moments later, the gang members armed with sharp-edged weapons, came out from the car and attacked Athul, who was seated in the front seat of the vehicle. The assailants also smashed the windpanes of the vehicle in which the victim was travelling. Passersby stopped their vehicles, but no one stepped out to rescue him.

### IM Vijayan not keen on contesting

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 14

Football legend and one of the country's greatest players, I. M. Vijayan, put to rest all rumours about him contesting the upcoming assembly elections in Kerala.

Speaking in Thrissur, Vijayan said that several political parties had approached him to run as their candidate. He revealed that the CPM-led LDF, Congress-led UDF, and BJP had all reached out, with a BJP representative from New Delhi even visiting him recently to request his participation. "I am not interested in joining any political party or contesting elections as a party candidate. I declined their offer because I want the love of all people. I have no commitment to any party. I want everyone," he said.

### Jnanpith for lyricist-poet Vairamuthu

ANUPAMA SUBRAMANIAM | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 14

Renowned Tamil poet and lyricist Vairamuthu has been conferred with the prestigious Jnanpith Award for 2025, honouring his outstanding contributions to Indian literature. He is the third Tamil writer to receive this honor at its 60th edition which is regarded as India's highest literary honour after Akilan (1975) and Jayakanthan (2002).

72-year-old Vairamuthu began his speech saying, "Rather than saying 'Vairamuthu has received the Jnanpith Award, I would very much prefer it being said that Tamil has received the Jnanpith Award. Poets and creators like Vairamuthu will come and go in the flow of time, but Tamil will stand permanently."

# Metlotsavam held with fervour in Alipiri: TTD

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, MARCH 14

The sacred Metlotsavam, symbolising the gradual spiritual progress of devotees towards attaining the grace of the Almighty, was celebrated with great fervour at Alipiri in Tirupati on Saturday as part of the 523rd death anniversary of saint-poet Tallapaka Annamacharya.

Speaking on the occasion, TTD Annamacharya project special officer Dr Medasani Mohan said the deeper meaning of Metlotsavam lies in climbing each step of life on the path of righteousness and ultimately reaching the divine.

He noted that many great saints and devotees in the past had reached Tirumala by trekking the sacred footpath and were blessed with the grace of Lord Venkateswara. The event was organised



Artists donning the role of divine couple. — DC

by the TTD Annamacharya Project at the Alipiri Padala Mandapam, where devotees, bhajan groups and musicians gathered early in the morning to participate in the spiritually uplifting programme. Adding a global touch to the festival, 20 artistes from Singapore voluntarily travelled to Tirupati to take part in the celebrations. The group, known as the Ashtalakshmi Students' Ensemble, performed under the leadership of Dr K. Bhagamurthy, adding devotional fervour and cultural richness to the event.

SHORT TAKES

HC: IN-LAWS CAN'T FORCE WOMAN TO LIVE WITH THEM

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 14:

In a significant ruling reinforcing the autonomy of adult women, the High Court of Orissa has held that parents or in-laws cannot compel an adult daughter to live either in her parental home or at her matrimonial residence if she chooses to live independently.

The court made the observation while dismissing a habeas corpus petition filed by a mother seeking to trace her married daughter, who had been living away from both her parental and matrimonial homes.

CLASS 1 STUDENT MADE TO STAND IN SUN FOR 2 HOURS

Bengaluru, March 14: A case has been registered after a class one student at a private school in the city was allegedly made to stand under the scorching sun for two hours as punishment for arriving late, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred at a school in Yelahanka Attur Layout here, they said.

According to Police, the child's parents alleged that for being two minutes late to class, the school authorities made the boy stand in the sun for two hours as a punishment.

FATHER OF MONALISA SEEKS MP CM'S HELP

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, MARCH 14

The father of Monalisa Bhonsle, the Kumbh Mela fame girl, on Saturday sought Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's intervention to bring her back home, and also terming her marriage to Farman Khan in a Kerala temple recently, a case of 'love jihad'. Jayasingh Bhonsle, hailing from Maheshwar town in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, alleged that his daughter was "trapped deceitfully by a Muslim youth" to marry her after she gained fame during the Prayagraj Mahakumbh. He alleged, Monalisa, 18, became an Internet sensation when a content creator captured her image of selling 'rudraksha' garlands during the Kumbh Mela and made it viral on social media.

CONG. TARGETING NATION AFTER DEFEAT: MODI

FROM PAGE 1

"Driven by the desperation of defeat, the Congress has launched an offensive against the nation itself. Congress leaders have dedicated themselves to maligning the country," The Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister was in Silchar to launch and lay the foundation stones for projects worth ₹23,550 crore.

He performed the 'bhoomi poojan' for a ₹22,864-crore access-controlled expressway between Silchar in Assam and Shillong in Meghalaya, described as the first of its kind in the Northeast. The 166-km four-lane greenfield corridor is expected to reduce the distance between Guwahati and Silchar from 295 km to 252 km and cut travel time from about 8.5 hours to around five hours. Modi also performed the 'bhoomi poojan' for a ₹565-crore elevated corridor on NH-306 in Silchar.

TMC PROTECTING ILLEGAL MIGRANTS: PM

FROM PAGE 1

Modi's remarks came amid an ongoing legal battle between the TMC and the EC over the SIR exercise. The Supreme Court recently ordered the formation of judicial tribunals to hear appeals from voters whose names were deleted and directed that around 60.06 lakh cases involving discrepancies in the electoral rolls be examined under the supervision of the Calcutta High Court.

Accusing the TMC of appeasement politics, the Prime Minister alleged that the party was encouraging infiltration and protecting illegal migrants for political gain. He claimed that infiltration had affected employment opportunities and security in the state.

Tamil Nadu subsidises induction stove in crisis

States give subsidies to help restaurants, hotels, shops

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

As the fuel crisis deepened across the country, many states have responded with measures to mitigate the impact on commercial establishments. In Tamil Nadu, the government announced a subsidy of ₹2 per unit of electricity for restaurants, hotels, and tea shops switching to induction stoves. Additional chief secretary J. Radhakrishnan said electricity demand from commercial establishments has risen by about 50 MW above average in recent days. Factories using alternative fuels such as kerosene no longer require additional clearance, provided authorities inform the Pollution Control Board. Loans with subsidies are also being offered to MSMEs for purchase of induction stoves and electric cooking equipment.

The 'gas trouble' has begun to affect hotels and paying guest accommodations across coastal Karnataka, though there has not been any major disruption so far. While large hotels and most PGs continue to function, many establishments have started altering their menus and making alternative arrangements due to limited availability of commercial gas.

Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, which host several universities and educational institutions, attract students from across the country and abroad. While many stay in hostels, a large number live in PG accommodations, houses and rooms rely on nearby eateries for their daily meals.

The authorities in Uttar Pradesh raided 1,483 places in Lucknow to stop marketing of LPG cylinders. They arrested six people. Filed 24 cases. In Karnataka the authorities warned people that they will take action against those who hoard or black market LPG. However they said that the supply



A worker sorts coal in a godown amid ongoing LPG crisis, in Nerul area of Navi Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

Fadnavis denies shortage of LPG

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, MAR. 14

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday accused the Congress party of creating panic over the availability of domestic LPG cylinders, asserting that there is no shortage in the state. He alleged that the party was spreading rumours that gas cylinders would not be available and was attempting to disrupt the supply chain.



Devendra Fadnavis

Amid concerns triggered by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the state's food, civil Supplies and consumer protection department issued direc-

tions on Saturday to ensure the regular supply of LPG and prevent unnecessary panic among citizens. The department instructed authorities to immediately implement measures to maintain a smooth supply of LPG cylinders across the state and to monitor any potential shortage situation.

Concerns over LPG availability have surfaced in parts of the country as tensions in the Middle East strain energy supply chains. In several areas, consumers have reported delays in cylinder deliveries despite advance bookings, leading to long queues outside gas agencies.

ernments of projecting normalcy despite disruptions on the ground. "BJP leaders are busy campaigning in the South while people face cooking gas shortages," he said.



The Iranian warship that docked in Kochi on March 4. — BY ARRANGEMENT

India repatriates Iranian ship crew

New Delhi, March 14: India has repatriated the non-essential crew members of an Iranian warship that docked in Kochi on March 4 amid the escalating military conflict between Iran and the US, people familiar with the matter said on Saturday.

Over 50 of the 183 crew members have stayed back as the ship, IRIS Lavan, remains in Kochi, they said. The non-essential sailors left India by a Turkish airline aircraft. The aircraft landed in Kochi late last night after picking up the bodies from Colombo of over 80 Iranian sailors of another warship that was sunk by

a US submarine off the coast of Sri Lanka on March 4. IRIS Lavan has remained in Kochi since March 4. The ship had developed urgent technical issues and was granted emergency docking approval on March 1 following a request from the Iranian side. It is learnt that the Iranian sailors of IRIS Lavan will travel to Iran by road from Yerevan, Armenia's capital city.

The repatriation of the crew members comes as New Delhi makes efforts to ensure safe passage for over two dozen Indian-flagged merchant vessels stationed on either side of the Strait of Hormuz.

CENTRE: BOOK CYLINDERS ONLY IF NEEDED

FROM PAGE 1

The government has conceded the fact that there's a sharp uptick in "panic booking of LPG cylinders in a fear of shortage across the country. Briefing the media as part of the measures initiated by the government, joint secretary (marketing and oil refinery) at the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, Sujata Sharma, said India has sufficient crude oil supplies and that refineries across the country are operating at full capacity, with no reports of fuel shortages at retail outlets. "There is an excessive amount of panic booking for LPG. Please book only when you actually need it. As nearly 8.8 million, or 88 lakh, panic bookings have been observed. Pre-war, daily bookings totalled around 55 lakh and oil marketing companies delivered 50 lakh cylinders per day.

INDIA HOLDS SUFFICIENT FERTILISER STOCKS: JAISWAL

FROM PAGE 1

On fertiliser stocks, Jaiswal said, "India has more than adequate stocks of fertilisers at this point of time". He also said the Iranian government had operated a chartered flight from Kochi on Friday night to take stranded Iranian citizens back to Iran. These included tourists, Iranian diplomats stationed in India and also "non-essential crew" of the Iranian naval ship "Lavan", which remains docked at Kochi.

In a separate development, Jaiswal said India, as Chair of BRICS, was trying to evolve a common position within the grouping on the West Asian conflict, but the effort had been "difficult" and "impacted" because some BRICS members were directly involved in the conflict.

He said India would nevertheless continue to engage with its BRICS partners on the matter.

Shah: BJP will stop conversions in Punjab

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/MOGA, MARCH 14

Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday attacked the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab over law and order, drug menace, religious conversions and corruption, asserting that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP could free the state from drugs.

Addressing a "badlav" rally in Moga, Shah also signalled the BJP's push for the 2027 Assembly elections and urged voters to give the party a chance to form the government in the state.

"All of Punjab is facing the issue of religious conversions. I am saying this to all Hindu and Sikh brothers and sisters, you form the BJP government once, we will bring a Bill to ban religious conver-



Union home minister Amit Shah with BJP leaders Tarun Chugh, Raveet Singh Bittu and others during the "Badlav" rally, in Moga, Punjab. — PTI

sions," he said. Alleging that the ruling Aam Aadmi Party government had failed to address key issues, Shah said, "Today, Punjab has been destroyed due to debt, drugs, religious conversions, corruption and terror of gangsters."

"AAP doesn't have the gumption to end the drug menace; Congress and Akalis have already failed. If there is anyone who can rid the state of

the drug menace, it is only Narendra Modi and the BJP," he said.

Shah accused the AAP government of functioning as an "ATM" for party chief Arvind Kejriwal and alleged that the state administration was controlled from Delhi.

"The AAP government in Punjab has become an ATM for Arvind Kejriwal. It is playing with Punjab's dignity... Give one chance to the BJP... We will bring

SC to start hearing on definition of 'industry'

RAKESH K. SINGH | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

A nine-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court is slated to commence on Tuesday the hearing on the contentious issue of defining the word 'industry' under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

The matter would be heard by a nine-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna, P S Narasimha, Dipankar Datta, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma, Joyimalya Bagchi, Alok Aradhe and Vipul M Pancholi. On February 16, the court had formulated the broad issues to be adjudicated by the nine-judge bench.

"Whether the test laid down in paragraphs 140 to 144 in the opinion rendered by Justice V R Krishna Iyer in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board's case (of 1978) to determine if an undertaking or enterprise falls within the definition of 'industry' lays down correct law? And whether the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 1982 (which seemingly did not come into force).



THE SUPREME Court had granted further opportunity to the parties to update their written submissions or submit fresh consolidated written submissions by February 28.

Resign if you don't feel competent: HC

Prayagraj, March 14: Rejecting an order of the Uttar Pradesh government restricting the number of people offering prayers at a mosque in Sambhal district due to law and order issues, the Allahabad High Court has said the SP and collector should either resign or seek transfer if they feel they are not competent enough to enforce rule of law.

A bench of justices Atul Sreedharan and Siddharth Nandan observed, "It is duty of the State to ensure that every community is able to offer worship peacefully in the designated place of worship and if it is a private prop-

erty as already been held by the court earlier to perform worship without any permission from the State." The court was hearing a petition filed by Munazir Khan of Sambhal alleging that he was prevented from conducting prayers during Ramadan on Gata No.291, where according to the petitioner, the mosque exists.

"This court has already settled that it is only where prayers or religious functions have to be held on public land or spill over the public property that the involvement of the state is essential and permission must be sought," the court said. —PTI

SIT formed after Abdullah attack

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MARCH 14

Jammu Police have set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the dramatic attempted firing on former chief minister Farooq Abdullah during a wedding function in the winter capital on March 11. The incident, which unfolded in the Greater Kailash area of the city, has raised serious questions about security protocols.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described it as a clear assassination attempt, questioning how an armed individual managed to breach the tight security ring around a high-risk protectee.

Given the gravity of the attack, the Jammu Zone



Farooq Abdullah

Police, under the direction of IGP Jammu Bhim Sen Tuti, has constituted a high-level SIT supervised by the DIG JSK Range. The team includes senior officers such as SSP Sanjay Sharma, SP headquarters Jammu Irshad Hussain Rather and DySP Arvind Kumar Sambyal. They have been tasked with conducting a thorough, time-bound investigation, examining all angles.

LADAKH LG WELCOMES RELEASE ORDER

FROM PAGE 1

Wangchuk had been detained on September 26, 2025, under the National Security Act on the orders of the Leh district magistrate, two days after protests erupted over demands for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. He was later shifted to Jodhpur jail.

More than 45 people, including 22 policemen, were injured during the protests. Welcoming the decision, newly sworn-in Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena called it a positive step for the region. However, he added that agitation, bands and violence had no place in Ladakh and urged stakeholders to pursue peaceful dialogue and cooperation to resolve issues.

The government also said that prolonged protests and bands had adversely affected students, job aspirants, businesses, tourism operators and the overall economy of the region. Wangchuk was released from jail around 1.30 pm after the completion of formalities by his wife.

Earlier this week, the activist said in a post on X that a just future for Ladakh would require sincere dialogue. "I have not stepped away from activism. My commitment to Ladakh remains unchanged. Our struggle has always been for Ladakh's protection, dignity and long-term well-being," he wrote.

CONFLICT | RESOLUTION System uses bio-acoustics to hear spl alarm calls

AI-generated alerts to prevent tiger attacks

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MARCH 14

In a major boost to man-animal conflict resolution, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based early warning system to track the movement of big cats has been activated in three locations in Nagpur's rural belt near the Pench Tiger Reserve. The advanced system will soon be expanded to 40 sensitive locations.



Jai Anmol Ambani

In a statement, the state government informed that

a new AI-based warning system successfully alerted residents of Pipariya village, near Deolapar, about a tiger lurking in the vicinity. "The system, a joint initiative by the Nagpur Rural Police and the forest department, provided a timely warning on Thursday night, allowing villagers and forest officials to take immediate precautions," the statement said.

The technology, developed by an organization called Marvel, operates

ACCORDING TO the government, the system is currently active at three locations and it has successfully issued two predator alerts in just the last four days.

through two sophisticated methods. First, it uses bio-acoustics to listen for the specific alarm calls of prey animals like monkeys, sambar, and peacocks that naturally signal the presence of a predator. Second, it utilizes bio-

visual sensors via high-capacity cameras to physically identify tigers or leopards. Once a predator is detected through sound or sight, the AI analyzes the data and sends an instant alert to the mobile phones of forest officers and local villagers.

Nagpur Rural SP Harsh Poddar said that the project was prompted by 15 fatal attacks in the district over the last three years. "These tragic incidents often led to significant public anger and law-and-

order challenges. By using AI, we hope to prevent such deaths and maintain peace in tribal-dominated areas," he added. The system is currently active at three locations and it has issued two predator alerts in just the last four days. Following the success in Nagpur, expansion plans are already in motion for the Navegaon-Nagzira and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves, with a formal agreement signed between the department and Marvel.

SHORT TAKES

**STRIKES KILL 26 PARAMEDICS, SAYS LEBANON**

Beirut, March 14: Lebanon's health ministry said on Saturday that Israeli strikes had killed 26 paramedics and wounded 51 others since conflict erupted between Israel and Hezbollah.

Lebanese authorities said an overnight Israeli strike killed 12 doctors, paramedics and nurses working at a healthcare centre in Burj Qalawiya, following another strike in Sawneh that left two paramedics and its ally Amal dead. The ministry also accused Israel of repeatedly "targeting ambulance crews while they were performing rescue duties."

**SL REPATRIATES REMAINS OF 84 SAILORS**

Colombo, March 14: Sri Lanka has repatriated the remains of 84 Iranian sailors who were killed when their frigate was sunk by a US submarine, an official said. Last week on Wednesday, Sri Lanka said it had recovered 84 bodies of Iranian sailors after the US submarine attack sank the Iranian frigate *IRIS Dena* off Galle on the island's southern coast. The ship was returning to Iran from Visakhapatnam, India, where it had participated in a naval fleet review exercise. "Human remains were sent by the Iranian embassy, all 84", a foreign ministry spokesman said.

**ABU DHABI POLICE ARREST 45 OVER MISINFORMATION**

Dubai, March 14: Police in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi said on Saturday they had arrested 45 people, including foreigners, for "spreading misinformation and filming and sharing event locations" as Iran continued to strike the Gulf.

"The Abu Dhabi Police Criminal Investigation Department arrested 45 individuals of various nationalities," police said. "They were also accused of spreading inaccurate and misleading information, which could incite public opinion and spread rumours within the community," they added.

**DOHA INTERCEPTS MISSILES, CLEARS KEY AREAS**

Doha, March 14: Qatar said on Saturday it intercepted two missiles, after blasts were heard in the capital Doha and authorities said they had evacuated some key areas.

Interceptors were seen downing two projectiles over the Qatari capital's downtown area and blasts were heard, according to AFP journalists, as Iran presses on with its retaliatory air campaign against Gulf states.

The country's defence ministry said in two separate posts on Saturday that its military had "intercepted" a missile attack targeting the country.



**HABERMAS WHO SHAPED POST-WAR GERMANY DIES**

Berlin, March 14: Juergen Habermas, best-known for his theory of political consensus-building, shaped the discourse of post-war Germany more than any other popular intellectual. He died on Saturday, aged 96, in Starnberg, Germany, publisher Suhrkamp said.

Over the course of seven decades, his public interventions — from searing critiques of fascist thought in the 1950s to more recent warnings against resurgent militarism and nationalism in Germany — steered the country at critical junctures.

Not only his longevity, but also the renewed relevance of his ideas are remarkable in a country where post-war pacifism is waning and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) has become the second-strongest party in parliament. Born on June 18, 1929 to a bourgeois family in Dusseldorf, Juergen Habermas underwent two surgeries after birth and in early childhood for a cleft palate. A resulting speech impediment is often cited as having influenced his work.

**US bombs Iranian island's military sites, Trump threatens its oil infra**

Iran vows retaliation for Kharg strike; UAE's oil hub suspends loadings after drone attack

Dubai, Washington, Jerusalem, March 14: President Donald Trump said the US destroyed military sites on an island vital to Iran's oil network and warned that its oil infrastructure could be next if Iran continues to interfere with the passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz. Trump said US forces on Friday "obliterated" targets on Iran's Kharg Island, which is home to the primary terminal that handles the country's oil exports.

The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament had warned that such strikes would provoke a new level of retaliation. Meanwhile, an American official said 2,500 more Marines and an amphibious assault ship are being sent to the Middle East nearly two weeks into the war with the Islamic Republic. Iran has continued to launch widespread missile and drone attacks on Israel and neighbouring Gulf states, and effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil passes, even as US and Israeli warplanes pumelled military and other targets across Iran.

Iran warned it could target US "hideouts" in the United Arab Emirates as a major UAE energy hub suffered disruption after a drone attack on Saturday, and US President Donald Trump said "many countries" would send warships to the region.

The war has killed more than 2,000 people, mostly in Iran, and created the biggest oil supply disruption in history, pushing prices sharply higher as maritime traffic has halted in a region that delivers a fifth of the world's oil.

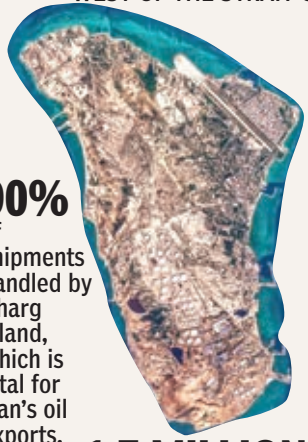
Some oil-loading operations have been suspended in the UAE's Fujairah emirate, a bunkering hub and crude export terminal, industry and trade sources said, with TV footage showing plumes of dark thick smoke rising into the air.

An Iranian military spokesperson called on people in the UAE to evacuate the ports, docks, and "American hideouts" saying US forces had targeted Iranian islands. Trump's administration has rebuffed efforts by West Asian allies to start diplomatic negotiations aimed at ending the war.

● **TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION** has rebuffed efforts by West Asian allies to start diplomatic negotiations aimed at ending the Iran war.

**KHARG ISLAND: KEY IRAN OIL EXPORT HUB**

KHARG SITS 16 MILES (26 KM) FROM IRAN'S COAST, ABOUT 300 MILES (483 KM) NORTH-WEST OF THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ.



90% of shipments handled by Kharg Island, which is vital for Iran's oil exports.

1.7 MILLION bpd crude exported by Iran so far this year.

1.55 MILLION bpd of that was shipped via Kharg.

2.17 MILLION bpd shipped by Iran prior to the war in February.

3.79 MILLION bpd, a record, was shipped in the week of February 16.

1.1-1.5 MN barrels per day: Iran has ramped up oil output.

20% of global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz, mostly to Asia.

11.6% of Iranian oil has accounted for China's seaborne imports so far this year.

18 MILLION barrels of crude held as of early March.

4.5% of global oil supplies pumped by Iran, which is the third-largest OPEC producer.

3.3 MILLION bpd of crude, 1.3 million bpd of condensate and other liquids are Iran's output.

**Bibi video fuels online debate**

Jerusalem, March 14: A recent video of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing the nation amid the escalating Israel-US-Iran conflict has exploded into a viral controversy, with social media users claiming it shows him with six fingers, a classic AI generation glitch.



Benjamin Netanyahu

**ELEVATED TERROR THREATS FOR U.S.**

Washington, March 14: In New York City, two men who federal authorities say were inspired by the IS brought powerful homemade bombs to a far-right protest outside the mayoral mansion. In Michigan, a Lebanese rammmed his vehicle into a synagogue before being shot by security.

In Virginia, a man previously imprisoned on a terrorism conviction was heard yelling "Allahu akbar" before opening fire in a university classroom in an attack that officials said ended when the shooter was killed.

The video surfaced during a period of heightened tensions in the West Asia. — Reuters

**WH BEGGING ALL TO BUY RUSSIAN OIL: IRAN OFFICIAL**

Dubai, March 14: Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi has said the US, despite "bullying India" to end Russian oil imports, is now begging them to buy crude from Moscow, two weeks after its war with Iran. "The US spent months on bullying India into ending oil imports from Russia," said Araghchi in a post on social media platform X. "After two weeks of war with Iran, White House is now begging the world, including India, to buy Russian crude," he added. — PTI



Flames and smoke rise from an apartment building hit by an Israeli airstrike as people gather nearby in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, on Saturday. — AP

**Stop targeting neighbouring countries, Hamas urges Iran**

Gaza City, Tehran, March 14: Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas on Saturday called on Iran to refrain from targeting neighbouring countries, while affirming Tehran's right to defend itself against Israel and the United States.

In a rare appeal, Hamas also urged the international community to take steps to end the war that has gripped the Middle East since it began on February 28.

"While affirming the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to this aggression

● **IRAN'S CULTURAL** heritage and tourism ministry said on Saturday at least 56 museums and historic sites across the country have been damaged, as the West Asia war entered its 15th day.

devastating two-year war with Israel in Gaza, also called on the international community to "work towards halting" the ongoing war immediately. The group condemned the killing of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei as a "heinous crime", acknowledging his long-standing support for the Palestinian movement. Iran's cultural heritage and tourism ministry said Saturday at least 56 museums and historic sites across the country have been damaged, as the Middle East war entered its 15th day. — AFP

**Trump, Xi prepare to meet amid war, uncertain goals**

Washington, March 14: Just over two weeks before President Donald Trump is due to meet his counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing, Chinese uncertainty over the US leader's goals and the impact of the Iran war hang over the highly anticipated state visit.

Trump's trip, his first to China in his second term, is aimed at sealing a trade war truce the two leaders shook hands on when they met in South Korea in October. But for Beijing, which likes to carefully choreograph such events to avoid any possibility of embarrassment, Trump's free-wheeling style is proving a challenge.

A source familiar with negotiations told AFP that Chinese officials were expecting more ambitious pre-



Xi Jinping and Donald Trump

parations for such a summit between the leaders of the rival superpowers.

The White House insisted however that preparations were going well for the visit from March 31 to April 2, with regular contacts and interactions with Beijing.

"Unlike the autopen Biden administration that

prized performance over outcomes, the Trump administration is very comfortable with trip planning, on both logistics and deliverables," a White House official told AFP, referring to the accusation that former president Joe Biden used an automated device to sign documents. — AFP

**NK fires 10 missiles during US-SK drills**

Yeoncheon (South Korea), Tokyo, March 14: North Korea fired more than 10 ballistic missiles into the sea on Saturday, South Korea's military said, as the US and South Korean forces conducted military drills and US President Donald Trump renewed overtures towards Pyongyang for dialogue.

Japan's Coast Guard said it had detected what could be a ballistic missile that fell into the sea. It appeared to have fallen

outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, public broadcaster NHK said, citing the military.

The missiles were launched from an area near the capital Pyongyang, around 1.20 p.m. (0430 GMT) towards the sea off the country's east coast, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

North Korea has test-launched a wide range of ballistic and cruise missiles for more than two decades. — Reuters

**Blast outside Jewish school in Amsterdam, no injuries: Mayor**

Amsterdam, March 14: An overnight blast against an exterior wall of a Jewish school in Amsterdam did not cause any injuries, mayor Femke Halsema said on Saturday, denouncing "a cowardly act of aggression".

An investigation has been opened and the incident comes after nighttime attacks this week in front of synagogues in the Belgian city of Liege and the Dutch port city of Rotterdam.



A police car outside a Jewish school, in Amsterdam. — AFP

Haslema condemned the attack in a statement, noting that Amsterdam's Jewish community has

been "increasingly often confronted with anti-Semitism and this is unacceptable." "A school must be a place where children can attend classes in complete safety. Amsterdam must be a place where Jews can live in safety," she said.

The police and fire departments quickly arrived at the scene of the blast in Buitenveldert district in the south of Amsterdam, the statement said. — AFP



Firefighters put out the fire at a residential neighbourhood following a Russia missile and drone attack, in Brovary, close to Kyiv, on Saturday. — AP

**Russian refinery, port hit by drones**

Moscow, Kyiv, Athens, March 14: Drone attacks on Russia sparked a fire at an oil refinery and caused damage at a key port in the southern Krasnodar region, while Ukraine faced one of the largest missile and drone barrages so far this year, with at least four people killed.

A blaze broke out at unidentified processing units at the Afipsky refinery, according to a statement from Russia's regional emergency services on Saturday. There were no immediate reports of casualties and the fire was later extinguished.

● **A GREEK-OWNED** tanker, *Maran Homer*, was attacked near the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk on Saturday.

In a separate incident, drone debris fell at Russia's Port Kavkaz near the Kerch Strait, which links the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, the authorities said. A Greek-owned tanker, *Maran Homer*, was attacked near the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk on Saturday. — Bloomberg

**SCANDAL | SURFACES Details only emerged after a March 12 ministry update**

**Microchip reveals racehorse served**

Istanbul, March 14: A four-year-old English racehorse, which was retired after an injury, ended up being slaughtered and served to unwitting diners at a Turkish soup kitchen, local media reports said.

The scandal surfaced after one of the diners complained about finding something in his food in the southern city of Mersin last month.

Agriculture ministry investigators discovered the

object was a microchip belonging to a racehorse called Smart Latch, a thoroughbred mare which had won first-place finishes at the hippodrome in the nearby city of Adana.

On examining the food where the chip was found — a dish called 'kavurma' normally made of fried beef or lamb — they realised it was horse meat.

Details only emerged after a March 12 ministry update which said the

● **A FOUR-YEAR-OLD** English racehorse, which was retired after an injury, ended up being slaughtered and served to unwitting diners at a Turkish soup kitchen, local media reports said.

'kavurma' from Mersin municipality's soup kitchen had been "added to the list of unsafe products after testing showed

it contained meat from a single hoofed animal" — a horse, donkey or mule. "We are in distress," owner Suat Topcu told DHA news agency on Friday, saying the mare, which began racing in 2024, had been recently retired after suffering a leg injury. Her last race was in October.

Topcu said he had arranged to have her donated to a riding club, using a local transporter he knew,

but had no idea what actually happened to the mare until he was contacted by the agriculture ministry. The ministry fined him 1,32,000 Turkish lira (around \$3,000) for not formally reporting the donation, the agency said. "The fine is not important, what's important is finding those who committed this cruelty," he said. Investigators quoted believe the horse never reached the riding club. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BEIJING CRITICISES TAIWAN'S PREZ OVER REMARKS

Beijing, March 14: China's Taiwan Affairs Office rejected remarks by Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te linking democracy with sovereignty, calling the argument misleading. Democracy cannot be used as a basis for asserting statehood, China Central Television reported Saturday, citing a spokesperson who accused Lai of heightening cross-strait tensions by portraying the mainland as a threat. The spokesperson reiterated Beijing's position that Taiwan is part of China.

AIR CHINA TO RESUME FLIGHTS TO NORTH KOREA

Beijing, March 14: Air China will resume flights flying between Beijing and North Korea from March 30, the airline's website said on Saturday, after passenger train services running between the two nations restarted earlier this week. According to the website of the state-owned airline, flights from China's capital to Pyongyang, North Korea's capital will run every Monday until May 18, but would scale down to two Mondays in June. In 2020 with the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, North Korea banned tourists, jetted out diplomats and curtailed border traffic.

PAKISTAN POLICE GUN DOWN 6 TERRORISTS

Peshawar, March 14: The Counter-Terrorism Department of Pakistan police gunned down six terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in the restive north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The operation took place late on Friday. A spokesman for the CTD said the operation was conducted in the Shagai area of Lakki Marwat district.

Trump seeks to close \$1.6 tn revenue gap with new tariffs

Administration has to use different legal provisions to impose new duties

Washington, March 14: The Trump administration this week stepped up its ambitious effort to replace about \$1.6 trillion in lost tariff revenue that was eliminated by the Supreme Court's decision to strike down a range of the president's import taxes. Recovering that lost revenue, which the White House was counting on to help offset the steep, multi-trillion dollar cost of its tax cuts, is possible but will be challenging, experts say. The administration has to use different legal provisions to impose new duties, and those provisions require longer, complex processes that US

companies can use to seek exemptions. It could be months or more before it is clear how much revenue the replacement tariffs will yield. "I wouldn't bet against this administration being able to get back on paper the same effective tariff rate they had before," said Elena Patel, co-director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. But the new approach will "make it easier for people to contest the tariffs, which is going to put a big asterisk on the revenue until all that is settled."

On Wednesday, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the administration will investigate 16



Trucks move shipping containers on a dock at the Port of Los Angeles, in Los Angeles, California. — AP

economies — including the European Union — over whether their governments are subsidizing excessive factory capacity in a way that disadvantages US manufacturing. The investigation will

also cover China, South Korea, and Japan, Greer said. In addition, he said there would be a second investigation of dozens of countries to see if their failure to ban goods made by forced labor amounts to

an unfair trade practice that harms the United States. That investigation will also cover the EU and China, as well as Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Brazil.

Both investigations are being conducted under Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act, which requires the administration to consult with the targeted countries, as well as hold public hearings and allow affected US industries to comment.

A hearing as part of the factory capacity investigation will be held May 5, while a hearing on the forced labor investigation will occur April 28. — AP

Strong chemical smell: Flights halt at 4 DC airports

Washington, March 14: Four airports serving Washington, DC, Baltimore and Richmond, Virginia, halted all flights on Friday evening for over an hour because of a strong chemical smell that was impeding air traffic controllers, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The ground stop affected Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Washington Dulles International Airport, Baltimore-Washington International Airport and Richmond International Airport. FAA Secretary Sean Duffy announced on social media Friday.

The declaration caused flight delays to soar to roughly two hours across some of the busiest airports in the country. Flights began to leave the airports after 7 pm ET on Friday, but the ground stop — which prevents planes from landing

at an airport — remained in place. The smell was coming from Potomac TRACON, Duffy wrote, referring to a terminal radar approach control facility that manages air traffic for the Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Richmond, Virginia, and the Richmond-Charlottesville areas, according to the FAA website.

A spokesperson for the federal agency didn't respond to an emailed question clarifying how the smell was affecting traffic controllers on Friday evening. — AP

OSCARS TOMORROW: WHO'LL WIN THE STATUETTE?

Los Angeles, March 14: The end is in sight: after months of campaigning, roundtables, red carpets and hot takes, it's time for the big show. The Academy Awards are Hollywood's end of season party, its senior prom and sports day all rolled into one, as the film world's great and good stuff themselves into their tuxedos and/or fanciest frocks for a night of (we hope) entertaining mutual backslapping. It's fair to say that, so far, this awards season has been somewhat eventful, from the N-word fiasco at the UK's normally sedate Baftas to the Timothée

Chalamet Balletgate. Now the dust has settled, it looks like a straight fight between Ryan Coogler's vampire thriller Sinners and Paul Thomas Anderson's Thomas Pynchon adaptation One Battle After Another for most of the big prizes. Anderson's chunky auteur project looked for a while as though it might have the edge, but since nomination day, when Sinners got more nods than any other previous film, momentum has appeared to move decisively in its direction. We shall see. This year there are also quite a lot of noises off. — AFP

PREDICTIONS FOR WINNERS

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS Amy Madigan (Weapons)

BEST PICTURE Sinners

BEST INTERNATIONAL FILM Sentimental Value (Norway)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR Sean Penn (One Battle After Another)

BEST DIRECTOR Paul Thomas Anderson (One Battle After Another)

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY One Battle After Another

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY Sinners

BEST DOCUMENTARY The Perfect Neighbor

BEST ANIMATED FILM Zootopia 2

BEST ACTOR Leonardo DiCaprio (One Battle After Another)

BEST ACTRESS Jessie Buckley (Hamnet)



GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Four-wicket Shiva shines for South

New Delhi: Shiva Krishna took four wickets to bowl South Zone to a commanding win over East Zone in the JK Bose Inter-Zonal T20 Cricket Trophy being played as part of the Golden Jubilee edition of the Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) National Convention in New Delhi.

Shiva returned fantastic figures of 4 for 5 to bundle East for a paltry 49. Vijeth Kumar then struck a brisk 26 off 15 balls as South chased down the target inside five overs at the Delhi Police Ground on Saturday.

In another match, Rishabh Singh's blistering unbeaten century powered North Zone to a commanding nine-wicket victory over West Zone at the Roshanara Cricket Club. Rishabh hammered an unbeaten 102 off just 43 balls, striking 18 fours and two sixes, while captain Akash Rawal chipped in 29 as North chased down the target of 134 in only 11.1 overs. Earlier, West were bowled out for 133 in 19.2 overs. Sanjeev Samyal top-scored with 30, while Taus Rizvi (24) and Ashwin Ferro (23) made useful contributions. Vinay was the pick of the bowlers for North Zone, claiming three wickets.

Hruthik bags two tennis titles

Hyderabad: Telangana tennis player Hruthik Katakam won the singles as well as doubles titles at the ITF Juniors J60 tournament in Gurugram. In the singles finals, the fourth seed defeated third seeded Dev Vipul Patel with a 7-6(8), 6-0 scoreline.

Later, Hruthik and Prakaash Saran beat Dev Vipul Patel & Om Patel in straight games at 7-5, 6-4 to win the doubles title. Hruthik had an easy run in the singles. In the semifinal, he fought hard in the first set before taming top seed Tavish Pawha at 7-5, 6-2. In the quarter-final, Hruthik emerged victorious over Vivaan Bidasaria, beating him in straight sets at 6-3, 6-3. Hruthik's earlier victories came against Arush Kote 6-3, 6-2 and Harsh Marwaha, whom he blanked 6-0, 6-0.



Hruthik Katakam



Players of India, England and Scotland pose at the conclusion of the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers at the GMC Balayogi Hockey Ground in Hyderabad on Saturday. England won the tournament, India were runners-up while Scotland finished third.

Hockey girls second best

England two good in the final but India qualify for World Cup

Hyderabad, March 14: The Indian women's hockey team finished in second place at the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers, falling short to lose 0-2 against England in the final at the GMC Balayogi Hockey Ground here on Saturday. Grace Balsdon (13') and Elizabeth Neal (43') found the back of the net for England.

India began the game on the front foot with Navneet Kaur helping her side earn a penalty corner within the opening two minutes. However, her drag flick from the resulting set piece was kept out by the England goalkeeper. The hosts showed great discipline, maintaining a solid defensive shape while also making inroads on the end of the field. However, England grew into the game towards the end of the first quarter, earning a penalty corner with two minutes to go. Grace Balsdon (13') made the most of that opportunity, finding the back of the net with her drag flick and scoring her fifth goal from a penalty corner in this tournament, to give England the lead.

The second quarter began in a similar manner to the first, with both teams not giving much away in the engaging contest. With eight circle penetrations in the first half, India were asking questions of the England defence but didn't really test the rival goalkeeper, allowing the visitors to hold onto their one-goal advantage at half-time.

With the lead, England controlled the tempo of the game by neatly working the ball and maintaining possession. India had a few opportunities to pile on pressure, but the visitors stood firm at



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu and Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari (third, fourth and fifth from left) are felicitated ahead of the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers final at the GMC Balayogi Hockey Ground in Hyderabad on Saturday.

the back. They eventually doubled their lead courtesy Elizabeth Neal (43'). The midfielder was fortunate as her effort deflected off an Indian defender before finding its way past Bichu Devi, giving England a 2-0 lead at the end of the third quarter.

India continued to push forward in search of a goal that would get them back into the game. With the scoreline in their favor, England remained positive in their approach and ensured they don't go into a shell to give the hosts an opportunity. It was a free-flowing final quarter as India earned a penalty corner in the dying embers. However, they couldn't find the back of the net and eventually succumbed.

Scotland secured the third place with 1-0 win against Italy with Amy Costello scoring the only goal of the game.

Uruguay confirmed a fifth place finish defeating Wales 3-0, the goals coming from Teresa Viana (23'), Magdalena Verga (36') and Lupe Curutchague (57').

Austria clinched the seventh place with a hard-fought 1-1 (2-1 shoot-out) victory over Korea. Kristine Vukovich (3') scored for Austria, while captain Lee Yuri (31') got Korea back on level terms. Both keepers were exceptional in the shoot-out, but it was Michaela Streb who ensured Austria got over the line, with Carla Kemper scoring the winning goal for their side.

Salima reaches 150 milestone in Qualies final

Hyderabad, March 14: Hockey India on Saturday congratulated 24-year-old captain Salima Tete on making her 150th appearance for the Indian women's hockey team during the final of the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers at the GMC Balayogi Hockey Ground.

Known for her blistering pace and tireless work ethic in midfield, Salima made her debut for India in the 2016 Test matches against Australia held in Melbourne in November 2016. Since then, the 25-year-old Jharkhand-born midfielder has developed into one of the most influential players in the national setup, creating numerous scoring opportunities for her teammates while also netting 16 goals herself.

Salima attained Olympian status at just 19 years of age when she was part of the historic Indian team that finished fourth at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Her consistent performances and leadership qualities were rewarded in 2024 when she was appointed captain of the Indian women's hockey team. Under her leadership, India went on to win gold at the 2024 Women's Asian Champions Trophy in Rajgir (Bihar) and followed it up with a Silver medal at the 2025 Women's Asia Cup in Gongshu, China.

Sreenidi get past Gokulam game

Manjeri (Kerala), March 14: Sreenidi Deccan Football Club came back to winning ways with a 1-0 victory away against Gokulam Kerala at the Payyanad Stadium here in the Indian Football League.

Fabrice Kah scored the only goal of the game, in the 54th minute.

Head coach Carlos Vaz Pinto made three changes to his starting eleven following the defeat to Chanmari FC. Goalkeeper Kamaljit Singh was handed his debut, replacing Aryan Lamba in goal. In the outfield, Deepak DP and Ajay Chhetri made their first starts of the season ahead of Muhammad Hammad and Lalithankhuma respectively.

Sreenidi started the game enjoying the majority of possession and creating chances from set pieces. The first opportunity of the game came when David Castaneda was found unmarked at the far post from a corner, but the Colombian failed to keep his header on target. Although the defensive unit of the Deccan Warriors was called into

action a couple of times, the hosts were unable to trouble Kamaljit in goal. In the additional time of the first half, Idrissou headed a delivery from a corner onto the crossbar and away to safety.

The Deccan Warriors came into the second half with greater intensity, and the reward came in the 54th minute. Castaneda's cross from inside the box beat the goalkeeper, and Kah was at the far post to put the ball into the back of the net and give the visitors a vital lead. Moments later, Abhijith K had a go at the opposition goal from the edge of the box, but his effort went wide.

The Deccan Warriors enjoyed the majority of possession and created several chances in the second half but were unable to double their lead. After seven minutes of additional time, the full-time whistle confirmed the Deccan Warriors' second win in their opening three matches of the season.

Sreenidi Deccan will now host Namdhari Football Club on Thursday at the Deccan Arena in Hyderabad.

PARA-ATHLETE JYOTI WINS DISCUS BRONZE

Hyderabad, March 14: Indian para-athlete Jyoti from Haryana delivered an outstanding performance by winning the bronze medal in women's discus throw (F57 category) at the New Delhi World Para Athletics Grand Prix held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. Competing against top athletes, Jyoti showcased remarkable strength, technique and determination to secure a podium finish in her classification at this prestigious global para-athletics event.

Jyoti is an athlete of the Aditya Mehta Foundation, which continues to support para-athletes in their pursuit of excellence. This achievement marks a significant milestone in Jyoti's sporting journey as she prepares for upcoming major competitions, including the Asian Para Games and the Paralympic Games. The Aditya Mehta Foundation congratulated Jyoti and expressed gratitude to its valued supporters — Alcon, GMMCO, Invesco and Flutter Entertainment India — whose continued encouragement and support make such achievements possible.



Jyoti

## SHORT TAKES

### Mayank is India's 94th Grandmaster

**New Delhi:** Talented youngster Mayank Chakraborty crossed the final hurdle in his promising career by securing his third and final GM norm, becoming the 94th Grandmaster and the first from India's North-East region to achieve the coveted title. Hailing from Guwahati in Assam, the 17-year-old Chakraborty — who became an International Master in 2024 — achieved the feat with a round to spare in the eighth round of the Hotel Stockholm North by First Hotels Chess Talents Tournament, defeating Swedish IM Philip Lindgren. Chakraborty was at the top of his game in the victory over Lindgren, accumulating the required 6.5 points that were enough to secure his final Grandmaster norm. In the final round, he played out an exciting draw with English International Master Jonah B Willow to seal what was his most memorable performance to date. Chakraborty also crossed the critical 2,500 Elo rating mark in the process, with his current rating standing a few points above the threshold, thereby confirming the Grandmaster title as per the rules of the international chess federation, FIDE. — PTI

### 4 Indians in finals of Boxing Futures

**Bangkok:** India's young boxers continued their impressive run at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026, with Chandrika, Gunjan, Joyshree Devi and Ambekar Meetei advancing to the finals after registering convincing victories in their semifinal bouts here on Saturday. In the women's 51kg category, Chandrika delivered a strong performance to beat Rihab Hamdoun of Morocco by Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) in Round 2, sealing her place in the gold-medal bout. In the women's 48kg category, Gunjan delivered a dominant performance to defeat North Korea's Yu Gyong Kim by a 5-0 verdict. Joyshree Devi (54kg) produced another commanding display, outclassing Mexico's Sofia Ramirez by Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) in the first round to secure her spot in the final. In the men's 50kg category, Ambekar Meetei also advanced to the final after registering a 5-0 unanimous decision victory over Uzbekistan's Abdugani Yorkinjonov. — PTI

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# BCCI to felicitate Sky's blues

**Mumbai, March 14:** The Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian team, which scripted history by winning the T20 World Cup, will be felicitated by the BCCI during its annual 'Naman Awards' ceremony here on Sunday. The highlight of the BCCI Naman Awards 2026 will be the felicitation of all five Indian teams that have captured ICC titles recently, a historic first, the Indian cricket board announced on Saturday.

The Gautam Gambhir-coached side defeated New Zealand by 96 runs in the final in Ahmedabad on March 8 to become the first team to win the T20 World Cup three times, the first to successfully defend the title and the first to achieve the feat on home soil.

The ceremony will also honour the other Indian sides who lifted ICC trophies in the recent past, including the senior women's team that won the ODI World Cup 2025, the men's team that clinched the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the Under-19 Cricket World Cup 2026 and the women's U-19 T20 World Cup team of 2025.

India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill will receive the Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men) for the 2024-25 season, while Smriti Mandhana will be honoured as the Best International Cricketer (Women) for the fifth time in her career.

Former stalwarts Roger Binny and Rahul Dravid will be conferred the Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award, the board's highest honour, while former India captain Mithali Raj will receive the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award for Women.

Binny, a member of India's 1983 Cricket World Cup-winning team and the tournament's highest wicket-taker, later served the game as coach, selector and BCCI president from 2022 to 2025.

Among other awardees, Ira Jadhav will receive the Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Woman Cricketer (Domestic), while Shafali Verma will be honoured as the Best Woman Cricketer in the Senior Domestic One-Day format.

Ayush Mhatre will receive the Lala Amarnath Award for Best All-Rounder in domestic limited-overs competitions, while Vidarbha's Harsh Dubey will get the award for Best All-Rounder in the Ranji Trophy.



Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav dances with former captain and television commentator Sunil Gavaskar after winning the World Cup final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad last Sunday. — AP

## KKR's pinch of Salt, Shreyas

**Mumbai, March 14:** Kolkata Knight Riders "took the wrong decision" by letting Shreyas Iyer and Phil Salt leave after their title-winning campaign in 2024, and unless the three-time IPL champions understand the importance of retaining key players, they cannot be considered serious title contenders, cautioned the legendary Anil Kumble.

Iyer exited KKR to join Punjab Kings, whom he led to their first appearance in the IPL final in nearly a decade in the last edition, while Phil Salt — another vital cog in KKR's success in 2024 — moved to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, where he played an impactful role in the franchise's maiden title win last year.

"Two years ago, KKR won the IPL and lifted their third trophy. Two important cogs in that wheel were Shreyas Iyer and Phil Salt. Both played crucial roles in helping them win but KKR let both of them go," Kumble noted in a *JioHotstar* release.

"There is no consistency from them in terms of player retention. KKR took the wrong decision by letting Shreyas Iyer and Phil Salt leave (and) that has left them without an IPL-winning captain."

Kumble noted that even though KKR have an experienced campaigner in



Shreyas Iyer

Ajinkya Rahane as their skipper, he has not yet won the IPL as a captain.

"Yes, Ajinkya Rahane is an experienced campaigner. He has led Mumbai in domestic cricket and Rajasthan Royals in the IPL. But he has not lifted the IPL title as (a) captain (yet)," Kumble said.

"Having a skipper who has won the trophy gives you an advantage. KKR let

go of that advantage. They need to learn how to keep hold of their key players. Otherwise, they will keep struggling and cannot be considered favourites to win the trophy," the legendary spinner added.

The former India captain heaped praise on Iyer's leadership qualities for guiding Punjab Kings into the IPL final last year. "Shreyas Iyer is certain-

ly an underrated skipper. It is not easy to win a trophy with one franchise and then go to another. There is a different management, atmosphere and a team. The pressure is also different," he noted. "...the new franchise he joined had not played in the final in the last 10 years and in just his first season with the Punjab Kings, he took them to the final. I was not just impressed by his captaincy, but (also with) the way he led the team from the front."

"There are some players who have to prove themselves every time. Shreyas is like that. Even after performing, questions still come up. I think he is underrated, but is an exceptional leader."

Meanwhile, former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara termed Sunrisers Hyderabad's opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head as "more destructive" than the former Royal Challengers Bengaluru's first-wicket pairing of Virat Kohli and Chris Gayle.

"In the last couple of seasons, what we have seen from the openers of Sunrisers Hyderabad, Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head, I can certainly say they are one of the most destructive opening pairs in IPL history," Pujara said. — PTI

## CHINESE GRAND PRIX

# Antonelli becomes youngest to grab pole in F1 history

**Shanghai, March 14:** The 19-year-old Italian Kimi Antonelli took pole position for the Chinese Grand Prix on Saturday, becoming the youngest driver to achieve the feat in Formula One history.

Antonelli led a Mercedes front-row lock-out along with George Russell and erased the record of Sebastian Vettel, who was 21 when he took pole for the Italian Grand Prix in 2008.

"I'm happy with the lap I did," Antonelli told reporters. "And really happy to be starting on pole for my first time."

The Mercedes duo, as in Australia last weekend, have been dominant in Shanghai.

Antonelli blasted round in 1min 32.064sec, 0.222sec ahead of championship leader Russell, who had won the sprint race earlier in the day.

"It was a pretty clean session," added Antonelli.

"It was nice because for the first time in a qualifying session I was able to find lap times every time I was going on track."

The Ferrari pair of Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc will fill the second row of the grid for Sunday's race after qualifying third and fourth.

Then came the two McLarens of Oscar Piastri and world champion Lando Norris.

Max Verstappen was only eighth fastest, con-



Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli celebrates after getting pole position for the Chinese GP at the Shanghai International Circuit on Saturday. — AP

tinuing an unhappy weekend in a clearly struggling Red Bull.

Pierre Gasly was seventh in the Alpine with the second Red Bull of Isack Hadjar ninth and Oliver Bearman's Haas rounding out the top 10.

Russell had got stuck in gear on his opening lap in Q3 and had to return to the pits.

After the problem had been fixed it left him time for just one flying lap and he was unable to eclipse his teammate.

"Really happy for George who had an issue there," said Antonelli of his teammate.

Russell said he was relieved to have set a lap time right at the end of the session. — AFP

## THIS COULD BE DHONI'S LAST IPL, SAYS PATHAN

**New Delhi, March 14:** Former India allrounder Irfan Pathan believes the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League could be the "last time" fans see M. S. Dhoni turning out for Chennai Super Kings. As the 2026 IPL approaches, once again the talks surrounding Dhoni's retirement has again gathered pace. The speculation intensified after CSK traded Sanju Samson from Rajasthan Royals, a move that many felt could allow the veteran to further minimise his on-field involvement this season while continuing to mentor the side.

"CSK is incomplete without MS Dhoni. This season might be the last time we see him in the yellow jersey and it's tough to imagine CSK and the IPL without him. As soon as the IPL comes around, we start seeing Dhoni again, which means he is fully prepared for it, and he is looking very fit as well," Irfan said on *JioHotstar's Game Plan*.

The 44-year-old Dhoni has already joined the CSK camp in Chennai earlier this month and has been training alongside the squad led by captain Ruturaj Gaikwad. — PTI

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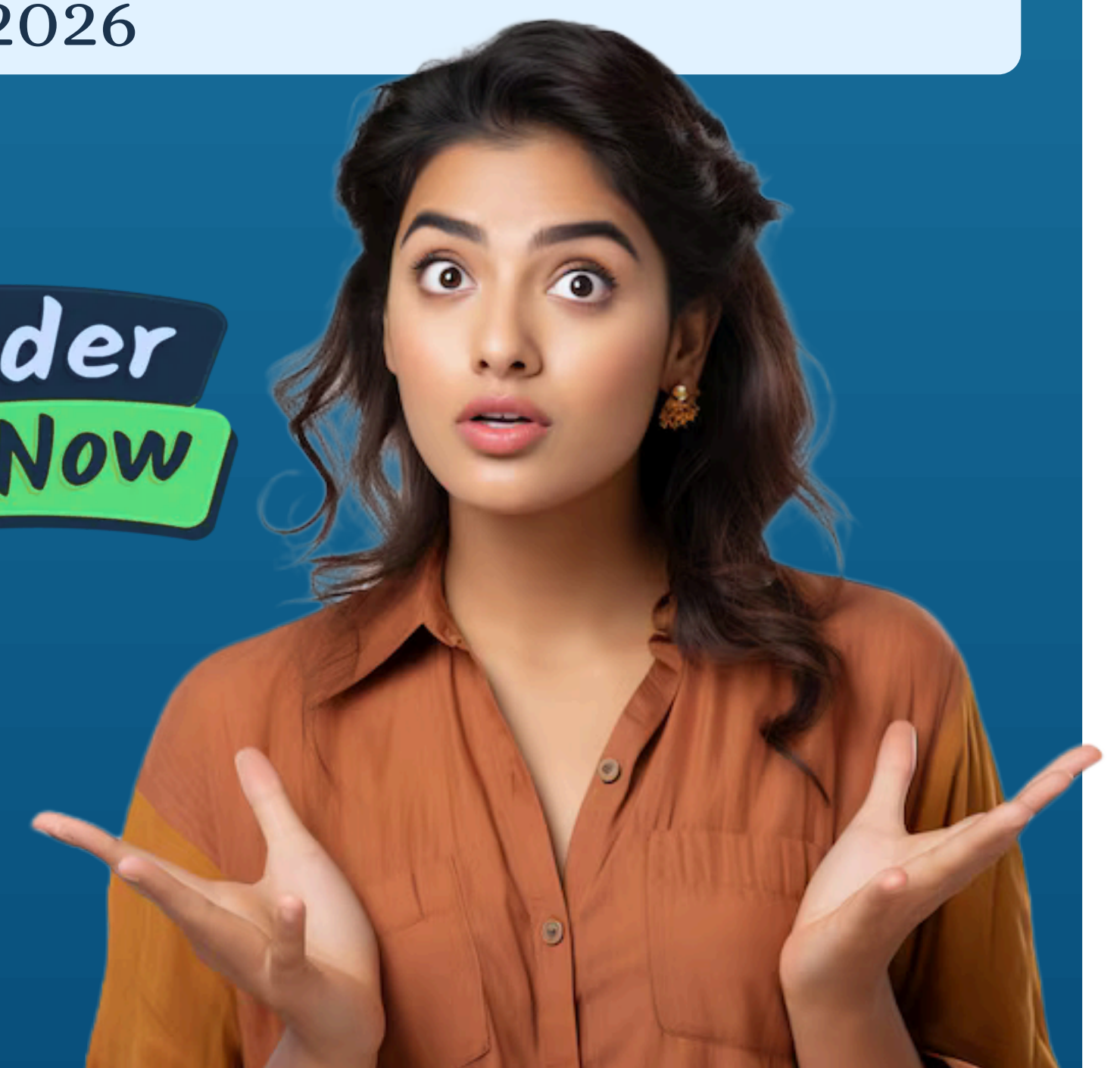
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