

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 30 MARCH 2026

WEATHER

Max: 37.7°C
Min: 25.0°C
RH: 29%
Rainfall: 0mm

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky
Max/Min temp. 38/25 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Parabhava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Chaitra Shukla Dwadasi till 7.10 am
Star: Makha till 2.50 pm
Varjyam: 11.01 pm to 12.39 am (Tuesday)
Durmuhurtam: 12.45 pm to 1.33 pm; 3.11 pm to 3.59 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HJRI CALENDAR
Shawwal 10, 1447 H
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.11 am
Zohar: 12.31 pm
Asar: 4.41 pm
Maghrib: 6.34 pm
Isha: 7.42 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 06.11 AM
SUNSET TODAY 18.28 PM
MOONRISE 16.14 PM
MOONSET 04.16 AM

COUNTER POINT



...these political party-hopping peaks during elections!

BRIEF

Maoist with ₹5 L bounty shot dead

Sukma: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, two days before the Centre's March 31 deadline to eliminate Maoism from the country, police said. The gunfight occurred in the forest under the Polampalli police station area, where a team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation.

Full report on Page 11

First cheetah born in India turns 3

Bhopal: Mukhi, the first cheetah born in India after 75 years, turned three on Sunday, marking a milestone for the country's cheetah reintroduction programme.

Born in May 2023 at Kuno National Park to South African cheetah Jwala and Namibian cheetah Freddie, Mukhi survived early setbacks to grow into adulthood and later gave birth to five cubs. Mukhi was the lone survivor of Jwala's first litter after her three siblings died due to dehydration.

CHINESE ENACT EPIC RAMAYANA DRAMA IN BEIJING

Beijing, March 29: A group of Chinese dancers have staged "Adi Kavya - The First Poem", a dance drama based on the translation of Ramayana by noted Chinese scholar Prof. Ji Xianlin.

The drama, directed by Chinese Bharatanatyam exponent Jin Shanshan, featured a cast of over 50 local performers and was held at the old Indian Embassy premises on Saturday.

Outgoing Indian Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat along with officials of the embassy attended the event.

Rawat, who will retire later this month, will be succeeded by the current Indian Ambassador to the UK Vikram Doraiswami.

According to organisers, about 200 people, mostly Chinese and Beijing based diplomatic community took part in the event. This is the third time the dance drama was staged in Beijing. It was first staged in January last year. —PTI



WORLD | 13

Anti-Trump 'No Kings' rallies hit US



SPORTS | 16

Mumbai win opening match against KKR

TABLOID

Dia, Aneet & Reet face backlash over their views



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Revanth hits out at BRS for House probe CBI can probe BRS' time mining too: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday announced in the Legislative Assembly that the state government was prepared to hand over the probe into alleged illegal mining activities to the CBI if the Opposition expressed lack of confidence in the CID investigation. Responding to the BRS demand for a House committee inquiry on illegal mining, he asserted that the CID was more empowered and effective than a House committee, and hence the state government had ordered a comprehensive probe by the CID into all mining irregularities from BRS regime in 2014 to date.

He maintained that the government had no hesitation in involving the CBI if required, but criticised the Opposition's insistence on a House committee, alleging that similar panels constituted during the previous BRS regime were misused. Revanth Reddy charged that three House committees were formed by the BRS regime

GUILTY NOT TO BE SPARED

● Revanth offers CBI probe if Opposition doubts CID mining investigation credibility.



- CID ordered to probe mining irregularities from 2014 BRS regime onwards.
- CM alleges BRS leaders' kin grabbed land via Dharani portal in Balanagar.
- Revanth vows strict action against all guilty, rules out minister resignation.

had yielded no results and were instead used to blackmail legislators and engineer defections in Opposition parties.

The Chief Minister also levelled fresh allegations against BRS leader T. Harish Rao's brother, T. Mahesh Rao, father-in-law Hanumantha Rao and brother-in-law Suman Rao, accusing them of threatening private industry owners and illegally grabbing hundreds of acres of land using the Dharani portal in Balanagar mandal of Mahabubnagar district with the support of Harish Rao.

He said the state government was prepared to constitute a House committee

to probe the alleged land encroachments in Balanagar if BRS leaders, including party working president K.T. Rama Rao and BJP MLA Venkat Ramana Reddy, agreed to it. The Chief Minister made it clear that strict action would be taken against anyone found guilty in illegal mining, including minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy or even members of his own family. "We will act against anyone, regardless of their status," he said, while ruling out the resignation of Srinivas Reddy from the Cabinet.

Pg 3: Revanth hits out at KCR, flags anti-Dalit stance

CM backs parental care law

NEERAJ KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, in an emotional address, said that while elderly parents desperately needed their children's kindness and affection in the final phase of their life, it was the unfortunate yet essential duty of the government to enact a law to enforce this moral duty at a time where many of them face neglect from their own offspring.

Speaking on the Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026 in the Assembly, which the House later passed, Revanth Reddy invoked ancient lore and modern tragedies to underscore filial duty. Revanth Reddy cited the devotion of Shravan Kumar — who carried his blind parents on his shoulders — and contrasted it with family dispute involving industrialist Vijaypat Singhania who died on Saturday. After handing over assets to his son Gautam, Revanth Reddy said, Singhania was forced to approach courts.

Full report on Page 3

24 BRS MLAs suspended from House for 2 days

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

High drama unfolded in the Assembly on Sunday as Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar suspended 24 BRS MLAs for two days, until the end of Budget Session, for disrupting proceedings and referred the conduct of BRS Huzarabad MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy to the ethics committee.

The suspension of BRS MLAs, including senior leaders K.T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao, came after party members stalled the House for nearly three hours by raising slogans and trooping into the Well. They demanded the dismissal of revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy over alleged illegal mining activities linked to Raghava Constructions reportedly associated with his family, and sought the constitution of a House committee to probe the issue.

Despite repeated appeals by the Speaker to return to their seats, the BRS members remained defiant. Chief Minister A.



Gaddam Prasad Kumar

Revanth Reddy intervened and urged strict action to ensure the smooth conduct of business, particularly with key Bills pending on the last two days of the session.

Simultaneously, tensions escalated between Congress and BRS members over the alleged behaviour of Kaushik Reddy towards BRS 'rebel' MLA Kadiyari Srihari. Congress members accused Kaushik Reddy of making threatening gestures in the House and demanded his expulsion, calling his conduct a violation of Assembly norms. Some legislators also described the behaviour as indicative of "upper caste arrogance" against a Dalit leader.

Pg 3: House adopts motion to refer Kaushik's conduct

SILENT | SENTINELS

Pandavula Gutta, Trikuta, Nainapaka need urgent attention

Protected TG monuments exist on paper

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

They officially exist on paper, but on the ground they have disappeared. This is the situation of more than 70 state-protected monuments in Telangana, which have reportedly vanished, according to heritage activists who conducted extensive field visits as part of documentation.

Telangana is home to 346 state-protected monuments, ranging from pre-historic burial sites to colonial-era structures, including megalithic burials, Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and Islamic religious sites,



The megalithic burial site at SR and BGNR college in Khammam. Page 2 — List of vanished sites.

forts and British-period monuments. All are under the department of heritage. During recent visits, activists were shocked to find that over 70 of these sites no longer exist, though they continue to be listed in official records.

Many megalithic burial sites have been destroyed due to rapid urbanisation, infrastructure projects and agricultural expansion. Examples include Bizigiri, Jammikunta in Karimnagar district, Vastapur, Raikal in

LDF, UDF as looters; NDA will rule Kerala, vows PM

Says youth have faith, women affection, farmers love for BJP

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
with bureau inputs
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday claimed that the public sentiment in Kerala is "sending a message of change" and that the NDA will form the next government in the state. Leading the BJP charge in the election-bound state ahead of the April 9 polling, Modi pointed at the "tacit understanding" between the Left-led LDF alliance and the Congress-led UDF alliance, accusing them of taking turns to "rule and loot" Kerala.

Addressing a massive election rally in Palakkad, Modi spoke about the ongoing war in West Asia and said his government is working to ensure the crisis in the region has minimal impact on India. He also noted that many people from Kerala are working in conflict-hit regions and stressed that their safety remains top priority.

Accusing the Congress of making "dangerous" remarks that could risk Indian lives for "political gains", Modi said, "You must also remember the kind of statements the party is making on this sensitive issue — they are dangerous. The Congress wants the lives of nearly one crore Indians living in Gulf to be put at risk so that it can gain political



Prime Minister Narendra Modi plays Chenda, a traditional cylindrical percussion instrument from Kerala, during a public meeting, in Palakkad, Kerala on Sunday. — PTI

Cong. too promises 5Gs for Assam poll

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, MARCH 29

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday released the party manifesto for the upcoming Assam Assembly elections, outlining five guarantees including cash transfers for women, health insurance and land rights.

On the West Asia conflict, Modi said, "Since the outbreak of the conflict, I have been in constant touch with world leaders. The safety of Indians in

Addressing a rally in Naoboicha in North Lakhimpur district, he said women would receive unconditional monthly cash transfers and an incentive of ₹50,000 to start business ventures if the party is voted to power.

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affected regions is our top priority, with our embassies working round the clock."

Pg 12: PM flags migration, promises local jobs

Navy ensures safe passage for Indian cargo ships in Hormuz

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

The Indian Navy is coordinating with forces in the Persian Gulf to ensure safe passage of Indian-flagged vessels through the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing tensions in West Asia.

Under Operation "Urja Suraksha" (Energy Security), the Navy has deployed four to five warships in the region to escort Indian merchant vessels, particularly those carrying critical energy supplies, as they transit the Strait of Hormuz.

According to government sources, naval units guide Indian-flagged ships on navigation through the strait and coordinate with other forces in the region to prevent them from being targeted. The sources did not specify the forces involved. Meanwhile, two India-bound LPG tankers carrying

Pak hosts West Asia summit with Saudi

Islamabad, March 29: Foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkiye and Pakistan held consultations on the West Asia conflict in Islamabad on Sunday to find a way to de-escalate the ongoing war that has unsettled the region and caused severe global economic disruptions.

The foreign ministers discussed the evolving regional situation and exchanged views on security issues, an official said.

Talks were held amidst a delay in the direct talks between US and Iran.

Full report on Page 13

US plans ground attack; Iran warns

Islamabad, Tel Aviv, March 29: Iran said it was ready to respond to any US ground attack, accusing Washington of preparing a land assault while seeking talks. The Washington Post reported on Saturday, citing US officials that the Pentagon is preparing for weeks of ground operations in Iran. The plans could involve raids by Special Operations and conventional infantry troops, the Post reported. Whether President Donald Trump would approve any of those plans remains uncertain, according to the Post.

Full report on Page 13

India is unlikely to join any US-led naval coalition aimed at securing the Strait of Hormuz. At present, 18 Indian-flagged vessels with 485 Indian seafarers are in the western Persian Gulf region.

TG's soak pits are PM's Mann Ki Baat

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, MARCH 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday, highlighted a water conservation initiative in Mudhigunta village of Jaipur mandal in Manchar district.

He cited its impact on improving groundwater levels. Referring to the initiative, he said 400 families in the village adopted soak pits to address water scarcity, resulting in a rise in the groundwater table. He noted that villagers

had turned water conservation into a mass movement and described the effort as an effective step towards water management.

The villagers also installed rooftop rainwater harvesting systems in their homes as part of conservation measures.

As part of Praja Palana and Pragati Pranaliika programmes, additional collector (local bodies) P. Chandraiah visited Mudhigunta on Sunday and inspected the rainwater harvesting structures and interacted with villagers.

Full report on Page 6

EVENTS TODAY



Sangeeta vibhavi by Praveen Cultural Association
Time: 4 pm
Venue: Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha

Bhupathi Musicals programme
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Allied Artists Auditorium, Himayatnagar

Workshop on how to overcome fear, anxiety and tension
Time: 6 pm
Venue: Ramakrishna math

Stand-up comedy by Kanan Gill
Time: 8 pm
Venue: Shilpa Kala Vedika

Different Shades: National workshop by Parichay Arts Foundation
Time: 5 pm
Venue: Chitramayee State Gallery of Art, Madhapur



Constructed over a nala at Hafeeznagar in Yakutpura, the bridge, which is a well-known landmark in the Old City, was damaged due to floods the city witnessed in the recent past.

— P. SURENDRA

Yakutpura bridge all set for revival

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The Old City's iconic 'London Bridge', which the Hafeeznagar locals refer to, is set to get a new lease of life as the repair works will soon begin. The GHMC has initiated works to restore the bridge at an estimated cost of ₹2.95 crore. In addition, plans are afoot to widen the road, facilitating a smooth path for four-wheelers.

Constructed over a nala at Hafeeznagar in Yakutpura, the bridge, which is a well-known landmark in the Old City, was damaged due to floods the city witnessed in the recent past.

The bridge's name, as per locals, has a unique story. Several small bridges, including this bridge, over the Chandrayangutta to Chaderghat nala were damaged due to heavy downpour in the past. The officials, who were executing repair works, left for the locals to give a name to the bridge, which had no name till then.

Locals who discussed among themselves named it London Bridge, which has no link to the famed bridge in London.

Consumers still billed for banned gas charges

Helpline numbers issued for lodging consumer grievances

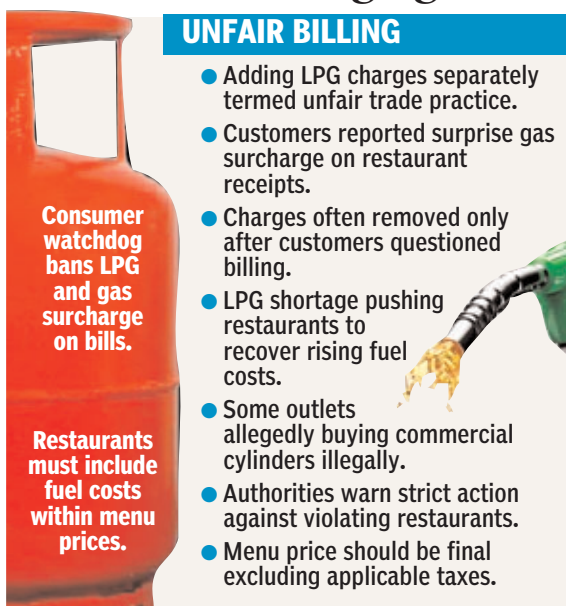
PRATHYUSH NALLELLA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Despite a clear ban by India's consumer watchdog on adding "LPG charges" or "gas surcharges" to customer bills, several restaurants across Hyderabad are still adding charges to bills.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) recently directed that no hotel or restaurant should levy such charges separately. It stated that costs like fuel and LPG are part of normal business expenses and must already be included in menu prices, not added as extra fees on bills.

CCPA stated that no hotel or restaurant should levy "LPG charges", "gas charges", or similar charges by default or automatically in the bill, with the price displayed on the menu being the final price exclusive only of applicable taxes.

The advisory followed a rise in complaints from customers who noticed additional charges labelled as "gas sur-



charge", "fuel recovery cost" or "gas crisis charge" on their receipts. In many cases, these charges were added automatically, without prior notice. With the LPG shortage increasing in the country, especially to commercial outlets, businesses which are dependent on commercial LPG cylinders are facing severe troubles. Many outlets are experiencing limited output, with some even purchasing commercial cylinders illegally for extra money just to run their outlets. To compensate for the rising demand, restaurants began charging additional amounts on the bills.

UNFAIR BILLING

- Adding LPG charges separately termed unfair trade practice.
- Customers reported surprise gas surcharge on restaurant receipts.
- Charges often removed only after customers questioned billing.
- LPG shortage pushing restaurants to recover rising fuel costs.
- Some outlets allegedly buying commercial cylinders illegally.
- Authorities warn strict action against violating restaurants.
- Menu price should be final excluding applicable taxes.

Customers say that when questioned, some restaurants are removing or refunding the charges, but only after arguments. Sreedhar Mudiraj, a resident of Himayat Nagar said "I went to a restaurant on Friday, and on the final bill they added an LPG charge of Rs. 100. They removed it when I asked, but the question is why it was added in the first place", he said. Officials have made it clear that such practices are illegal and amount to an "unfair trade practice" under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Restaurants that continue to impose these charges could face strict action. Authorities urged citizens to not pay the additional surcharge and insist the restaurant remove the charges. Citizens can also lodge a complaint on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) by calling 1915 or through the NCH mobile app, and if in the Hyderabad district, can put up a grievance on 7416687878 with the Hyderabad collector's office.



G. Janaki Sharmila

SP WINS SKOCH AWARD FOR POLICE AKKA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Nirmal district SP G. Janaki Sharmila received the Skoch Award in New Delhi on Saturday for the Police Akka programme. She said the scheme's success lay in students overcoming fear and speaking openly about their problems.

The initiative aims to support girl students who hesitate to approach police. As part of it, women officers stay overnight in KGBV schools, listening to students' concerns and counselling them on good touch, bad touch, the Pocco Act and child marriage. More than 7,000 students and women are said to have benefited. Police also conduct village patrols and respond promptly to Dial 100 calls, providing speedy justice. DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy praised the programme, calling it a community policing model that has won nationwide appreciation. "Police Akka stands as an assurance to address complaints of harassment, domestic violence and cyber crimes faced by women and girls," he said.

TSLPRB HOLDS EXAMS FOR 198 TGRTC POSTS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Telangana State-level Police Recruitment Board (TSLPRB) chairman V.V. Srinivasa Rao stated that written examinations were conducted on Sunday for filling 198 vacant posts of traffic supervisor and mechanical supervisor trainees at the TGRTC. The exams were conducted in cumulatively in 32 centres in Hyderabad and surrounding areas. Srinivasa Rao said written tests were conducted as per the notification issued on December 25 last. The primary keys for these two papers will be made available on the official website www.tgrb.in in a few days. Candidates were advised to submit individually any objections the key with suitable evidence through the template provided in the personal login area of the website of the candidates. He said 20,128 candidates had downloaded the hall tickets for the traffic supervisor trainee examination held at 25 centres in the morning session and 15,796 (78.48 percent) appeared. For the mechanical supervisor trainee exam, 4,617 candidates appeared out of 5,865 who had downloaded their hall tickets at seven centres in the afternoon session.



LIST OF VANISHED SITES

- KARIMNAGAR DISTRICT**
 - Bizigiri, Jammikunta – Megalithic burials (10th century BCE)
- JAGTIAL DISTRICT**
 - Vastapur, Raikal – Megalithic burials (10th century BCE)
- KHAMMAM DISTRICT**
 - Madhira – Prehistoric flakes, cores & stone implements (10th century BCE)
 - Khammam – Megalithic burials SR and BGNR college (10th century BCE)
- BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM DISTRICT**
 - Waira – Megalithic burials (10th century BCE)
 - Mallaram, Manuguru – Stone circles & burials
 - Palvancha – Megalithic burials
- MAHBUBNAGAR DISTRICT**
 - Badepalli, Jadcherla – Cairns (Rakasi Gullu)
 - Jadcherla – Stone circles
 - Nazrullabad – Cairns
- NAGARKURNOOL DISTRICT**
 - Kollapur (Fathepur) – Cairns
 - Dindi Project – Cairns sites
 - Kothur – Stone circles
- WANAPARTHY DISTRICT**
 - Balanagar – Stone circle (megalithic burial)
- RANGAREDDY DISTRICT**
 - Farooqanagar (Mughalghida) – Megalithic burials
 - Chevella (Gundala, Kethireddyapalli, Shapur) – Megalithic burials
- HYDERABAD DISTRICT**
 - Tolichowki / Charminar (Tolukatta) – Neolithic artifacts (25th century BCE)
- MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI DISTRICT**
 - Moula Ali – Cairns & cromlechs
 - Alwal / Bowenpally – Cairns
 - Balanagar (Hasmathpet) – Cairns
 - Kukatpally – Megalithic burials
- SIDDIPET DISTRICT**
 - Ponnal – Proto-historic burials
- KAMAREDDY DISTRICT**
 - Yellareddy – Cairns
 - Mahur – Megalithic burials
- NIZAMABAD DISTRICT**
 - Armur (Kolhapur) – Megalithic burials
- YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI DISTRICT**
 - Raigir (Bhongir) – Cairns
 - Nagavaram (Valigonda) – Stone circles
 - Shaligouraram (B. Yadagiri) – Cairn circles
- NAGANANDRA DISTRICT**
 - Nakirekal – Stone circles, cairns & menhirs
- HANAMKONDA DISTRICT**
 - Alipur – Stone circles
 - Hunter Road – Cairns
 - Kondaparthi – Cairns
 - Arepalli – Cairns
- WARANGAL DISTRICT**
 - Hasanparthy (Sidapur) – Stone circles
- MULUGU DISTRICT**
 - Mulugu Road – Cairns
- JANGANA DISTRICT**
 - Ghanpur Station – Megalithic burials
- MAHBUBABAD DISTRICT**
 - Dornakal – Flakes, cores and neoliths

Kondaparthi cairns site in Hanamkonda using as paddy fields
<< Stone of the cairn are visible at the protected site in kondaparthi

UNSAFE KULFI, CASHEWS SEIZED IN HYD RAIDS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Flying squad teams of the commissioner of food safety department uncovered major hygiene violations and seized unsafe food products, including kulfi, falooda, badam milk, chocolates and cashews, during surprise inspections in Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana.

During a raid at a kulfi and beverage manufacturing unit in Mallapur, officials found badam milk and other items being prepared in highly unhygienic conditions, with products exposed to flies. Nearly 50 litres of contaminated items were discarded on the spot to prevent health risks. Officials said strict action is being initiated against the food business operator for violations.

In another inspection at a cashew repacking unit in Mallapur, 36 kg of insect-infested cashews were destroyed, while 210 kg worth around ₹1.5 lakh was seized on suspicion of poor quality. Samples have been sent for laboratory testing. As part of a statewide drive, officials inspected 109 establishments, including manufacturing and retail units. A total of 190 samples were collected for analysis. Suspected and unsafe confectionery items such as candies, eclairs, chocolates, mango bites and flavoured sweets were seized across districts. Additionally, 35 kg of expired or unsafe products were discarded.

Improvement notices and show-cause notices have been issued to several violators. Officials advised consumers to avoid loose or unbranded products.

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INDEPENDENT HOUSE

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LAND

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PLOTS

MEDCHAL MAIN Road, NH-44, Land for Sale, 8800 Sq.Yds HUDA, Residential Plot for Sale. Ph:9849124291. (A/2526/C00879)

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RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

2837 SFT, in Kavuri Hills, Madhapur entire first floor, 4 car parking, just 550 meters to Madhapur P.S. Metro station, adjacent to Orchids International School. Contact: 9704979203, 9000666329, 9440134907. (Whatsapp only) (S/2526/C02275)

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OFFICE SPACE 1500 Sft Fully Furnished & Fully Air Conditioned in Raj Bhavan Road, Somajiguda available for Lease/ Rent. Ph:9348322599, 9908133369. (A/2526/C00882)

FLATS

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2 BHK Flat For Rent, 57/58 lane, 03, GMR Garden Route Estate, Railway Employees Colony, Bollaram, Secunderabad. Ph:996688080, 9885462945. (B/2526/C00721)

NEW 2 BHK Flat for Rent, Swecha Dynasty Semifurnished Gated Community 1000 metres from Medchal Highway, Gundlupochampally. 8106408666/ 9676163412. (HYMM/2526/C05747)

REQUIRED

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SITUATION VACANT

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SANGHVI CYLINDERS Pvt Ltd, Vacancies for Accountants (Female), 402, 4th floor, Maltnaik Plaza, Abids, Hyderabad 500001. s.a.n.g.h.v.i. @ g.m.a.i.l. c.o.m 04066842569 (HYMM/2526/C05751)

ADVT. SALES & MKTG.

FAN & Capacitor Manufacturing Company at Balanagar Requires Assistant Marketing Manager For Trade & Oem Sales Call 9848088622 Email auricengg@hotmail.com (HYMM/2526/C05851)

URGENTLY REQUIRED Sales/ Business Development Executives For MNC Distributor At Hyderabad For Walk In Interview Call 970872967 (HYMM/2526/C05759)

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REQUIRED: SENIOR marketing managers for a reputed company with 10+ years of experience in real estate in the sale of open plots. Candidates must possess communication skills in English, Hindi, Telugu and computer savvy. Contact: info@acegroup.com, 919002022. (HYMM/2526/C05822)

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

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CHANGE OF NAME

I MOHAMMED Mubeen S/o Late Mohammed Abdul Khader R/o H.No. 9-8-110/C/40, Dhankota, Golconda Hyderabad have changed my name from M.Mubeen to Mohammed Mubeen for all future purposes (HYMM/2526/C05850)

MEDICAL

MEDICAL

DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE for sale in tarnaka, Secunderabad, diagnostic centre with ultrasound scanner, digital x-ray, cell counter, Analysers, ECG ETC for sale. Rented premises. 9391052910 (HYMM/2526/C05752)

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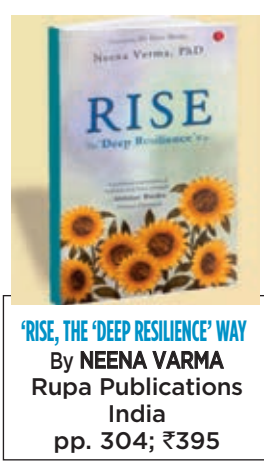
BOOK | REVIEW Adversity does not just test us, but transforms us, writer says

Exploring the meaning of Resilience

S. UMAMAHESHWAR

If one thing defines the 21st century, it is technology. Over the last 20 years, if not more, people have become habituated to seeking technological solutions for every problem they face. The advent of artificial intelligence has further deepened humans' dependence on technology, even for advice. One thing, however, that technology cannot take over from humans is dealing with problems or setbacks in one's life. Neena Varma's 'Rise, the 'Deep Resilience' Way' tries to address this precise issue. However, this book isn't the typical "pull

yourself up by your bootstraps" self-help manual of the kind often found stacked in bookstores. Instead of the shallow "bounce back" narrative, the author argues that true resilience isn't about returning to who you were before a crisis, but rather about being fundamentally shaped by it. The author argues that modern society has a "fragility problem" because we focus on avoiding discomfort rather than building the capacity to sit with it. It also underscores an often-overlooked fact: resilience is often a product of necessity rather than choice. One of the most com-



'RISE, THE DEEP RESILIENCE' WAY By NEENA VARMA Rupa Publications India pp. 304; ₹395

stick to psychology; it draws parallels from ecology — how forests recover after a fire through nutritional cycling — and structural engineering — how buildings are designed to sway, not snap, during earthquakes. The book also introduces the concept of 'Resilience Cycles', identifying that growth happens in distinct phases: Disruption, Integration, and Emergence. By identifying which phase one is in, the book provides a roadmap for navigating the "messy middle" of a life transition. The author skillfully deconstructs the myth of the "unshakeable" leader,

replacing it with the image of the "integrated" individual — someone who acknowledges vulnerability and harnesses it as a source of strength. This approach positions the book as a timely antidote to toxic positivity. The book makes us understand that while a person cannot control the depth of the valley they fall into, they can control the quality of the climb back out. It is an essential read for anyone navigating a high-pressure career, personal loss, or the general "permacrisis" of the modern world, or for those looking for a book on inner strength, growth, and well-being.

SHORT TAKES

HOUSE ADOPTS MOTION TO REFER KAUSHIK'S CONDUCT

FROM PAGE 1

The Chief Minister condemned the incident, asserting that members must speak only with the Speaker's permission and stressing that leaders like Srihari, whom he described as being of stature equal to that of former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, deserve respect. While acknowledging demands for Kaushik Reddy's expulsion, the Chief Minister suggested referring the matter to the ethics committee instead of immediate dismissal.

"We are not inclined to dismiss Kaushik Reddy's membership at this stage. Let the ethics committee examine his conduct," the Chief Minister said, while reiterating that members disrupting proceedings should face suspension.

Following continued disruptions, legislative affairs minister D. Sridhar Babu moved a motion for suspension, which was passed by voice vote. The House subsequently adopted a motion to refer Kaushik Reddy's conduct to the ethics committee.

PUSHKAR GHATS TO BE READY BY JUNE 2027

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has drawn up a comprehensive master plan for successful conduct of Godavari Pushkaralu next year. A technical committee of engineers has been constituted to develop Pushkar ghats.

Reviewing plans at the Assembly premises for the development of major temples and ghats along the Godavari stretch at Basara and Bhadrachalam, the Chief Minister set June 2027 as the deadline for completion of all works.

Following a presentation by officials, Revanth Reddy directed them to conduct a field visit and submit a report within 15 to 20 days. He instructed that the report, along with detailed cost estimates, be forwarded to the Cabinet Sub-committee for consideration before a final decision by the Cabinet.

He emphasised that both permanent and temporary works must be completed as scheduled.

As part of Pushkaram arrangements, special measures will be taken to expand ghats at major temples and tourist destinations.

The Chief Minister also reviewed road network development and connectivity between temples. Officials briefed him on plans for the expansion of the Basara Sri Gnana Saraswati Temple.

BJP: CM DIVERTING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION FROM FAILURES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao claimed that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was trying to divert the attention of the people from his government's alleged failures by taking up the construction of a temple, mosque, church and a gurudwara alongside the Musi river.

Rao said that the Modi government had built a grand Ram Mandir in Ayodhya with the trust and contribution of countless people, unlike the Telangana government which wished to take up religious places for its own interests.

He was addressing a gathering of people who joined the party, including youths, members of local welfare associations and leaders of different political parties. Rao said that the continued influx of people across society and different corners of the state into the BJP was a clear signal of impending political transformation. Rao noted that the state party headquarters was witnessing ceremonies where people were joining the party almost daily. "It is not just politicians, local residents' welfare associations and youth are choosing BJP. Former sarpanches and activists from BRS and Congress are realizing that BJP is the only credible alternative for Telangana's future," he said. He alleged that the city was neglected during ten years of BRS rule and continues to suffer under the Congress government. Rao credited Prime Minister Modi's leadership for the infrastructure boom surrounding the city like national highways and improved connectivity around Hyderabad.

Mining row: Congress puts BRS in tight spot

Orders CID probe into all developments from state's formation

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The Congress has turned the tables on the BRS in the mining controversy, putting the opposition party in a tight spot by ordering a CID probe into all developments from the state's formation in 2014.

The first indication of the BRS attempting to wriggle out of the situation came from BRS leader T. Harish Rao, who on Sunday called for an inquiry by a sitting High Court judge instead of a probe by the CID.

Notably, Harish Rao, who had earlier strongly demanded a House committee probe, backtracked on the matter by seeking an investigation led by a sitting judge, effectively proposing a compromise formula to sideline both the House committee and the CID probe with a fresh demand that may never happen.

Congress sources claimed the BRS has scored a self goal by attempting to target revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy by raking up Raghava Constructions mining issue in the Assembly. It only ended up with the government ordering the CID inquiry into all mining irregularities starting from BRS government tenure.

The ruling party believes that the CID probe will unearth mining scams worth hundreds of crores of the decade-long BRS regime. The Congress maintained that attempts by the BRS to implicate Raghava Constructions were misplaced, as the company was only consuming the material supplied by Tirumala Crushers in which it had no direct or indirect stakes.

The Congress is preparing to take its counterattack into the public with detailed facts. The Congress Legislative Party has readied a two-pronged strategy to counter the BRS over the Kotwalguda mining issue, asserting that the Opposition's move would ultimately expose large-scale irregularities linked to land and mining activities during BRS regime.

Congress sources say the BRS raised the Raghava issue fearing that alleged illegal land acquisitions involving BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao in Siddipet and Harish Rao in Sircilla and Harish Rao in Sircilla constituencies would come to light. They alleged that during the



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy along with ministers D. Sridhar Babu, Konda Surekha, Tummala Nageswara Rao and Ponnamp Prabhakar during a meeting for Godavari Pushkaralu at Praja Bhavan, on Sunday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Revanth calls KCR anti-Dalit

FROM PAGE 1

The Chief Minister added that the government had introduced policies to boost revenues and channel them towards welfare, noting that pending mining-related dues from Raghava Constructions were recovered in 2025. Reiterating his stand, the Chief Minister said the Congress government would not constitute a House committee merely for political gain and instead urged BRS leaders, including Harish Rao and K.T. Rama Rao, to submit evidence to the CID to aid the investigation.

Revanth Reddy accused former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao of being "anti-Dalit" and avoiding Assembly sessions to escape facing a Dalit Speaker.

He alleged that Chandrashekar Rao had reneged on his promise of making a Dalit the first Chief Minister of Telangana during the statehood agitation and had later abolished the Deputy Chief Minister's post given to a Dalit in his second term. Revanth Reddy termed these as insults to

the Dalit community.

The Chief Minister also criticised the previous BRS regime for limiting Dalit representation in government, stating that only a few leaders from the forward castes were given prominence, while highlighting that the present Congress government had elevated Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka from Dalit community as Deputy Chief Minister and finance minister, along with providing key roles to several Dalit and tribal leaders including Damodara Rajanarsimha and Danasari Seethakka Anasuya.

He accused BRS of encouraging defections during its tenure and making derogatory remarks against ministers, while also alleging that BRS members were disrupting Assembly proceedings and disrespecting the Speaker. Revanth Reddy asserted that members must adhere to legislative norms and speak only with the Speaker's permission.

He said the government is committed to a thorough probe into illegal mining and strict punishment for those found guilty.

BRS SLAMS STATE GOVT OVER ILLEGAL MINING CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

BRS deputy floor leader T. Harish Rao alleged that the Congress government had gone into a defensive mode over the 'illegal mining case'. He said even Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had effectively admitted that Raghava Constructions committed wrongdoing, and accused him of resorting to diversion politics by announcing a CID probe.

Addressing the media at Telangana Bhavan, Harish Rao said the BRS had demanded a House committee inquiry, but instead of agreeing to an impartial probe, the ruling party attempted to turn the issue into a political controversy involving Dalits. He strongly condemned what he described as a targeted attack on BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy, saying the government was attacking him only because he was exposing corruption.

BRS regime, debris and waste materials accumulated at a site near Kotwalguda as part of the Buvvel land development were later sourced by Raghava Constructions from Tirumala Crushers in compliance with all rules.

The Congress pointed out contradictions in the BRS stand, noting that the previous BRS government had granted several exemptions under GO 111, undermining the very existence of Osmansagar and Himayatsagar, while now was now raising concerns over pollution in the same water bodies. The Congress believes this shift indicates a larger conspiracy, which it intends to expose. The government stated that Raghava Constructions had purchased aggregate material from Tirumala Crushers after paying the applicable seigniorage cess. It cited payments made on December 18, 2025, including ₹1.52 crore and ₹1.22 crore towards road works royalty to the mining department, adding that there is no direct or indirect violation attributable to the company. The Congress plans to present before the Assembly details of min-

ing leases and operations across several districts, including Rangareddy, Medchal, Sangareddy, Siddipet, the erstwhile Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Khammam. It intends to highlight vigilance reports, penalty notices and the scale of mining carried out over hundreds of hectares to underline alleged irregularities during the BRS regime. Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy is expected to disclose details soon related to alleged irregularities in Dharani, housing and mining sectors during the BRS regime.

Revanth blasts Centre over delay in Klis probe

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy lambasted the BJP-led government at the Centre for failing to order a CBI probe into the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme (KLIS) irregularities despite repeated requests from the state government over the past year.

Speaking in the Assembly on Sunday, Revanth Reddy alleged the BRS and the BJP were colluding in the Kaleshwaram scam case, claiming that as part of a quid pro quo deal the BRS had transferred its vote bank which helped the BJP win eight Lok Sabha seats during the general elections in 2024.

The Chief Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah had themselves publicly accused the family for BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao multiple times of siphoning funds in the name of Kaleshwaram project.

He also cited remarks by Union minister G. Kishan Reddy that the Centre was ready to order a CBI probe and ensure the arrest of Chandrashekar Rao and former minister T. Harish Rao within 48 hours if the state formally requested it for CBI probe. "Anticipating prompt action, we wrote to the Centre seeking a CBI inquiry into the Kaleshwaram scam, but there has been no official



File picture of Medigadda barrage.

BJP: Centre ready to conduct Klis probe

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

BJP Assembly floor leader A. Maheshwar Reddy said the Centre was ready to immediately conduct a CBI investigation into the entire Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme irregularities over ₹1 lakh crore instead of confining the probe into three barrages of the project and that too based on the National Dam Safety Authority report.

Responding to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's charge that the Centre had not initiated the CBI probe a year after it made a formal request, Maheshwar Reddy said that there was no mention of corruption in the

terms of reference of Justice P.C. Ghosh commission which examined the KLIS irregularities.

"What can the CBI do when the state government is not maintaining transparency to expose the guilty by handing probe to only three barrages," he asked.

He said the Centre was ready to order CBI probes into all the alleged scams carried out during the BRS tenure, including Dharani portal, Mission Bhagiratha, power purchase agreements, phoning, Formula E-Car race, and Outer Ring Road lease scam, which Revanth Reddy had highlighted as PCC president, if the state government came out with clarity.

response so far," Revanth Reddy said, questioning the Centre's silence. He reiterated his stance that BJP leaders should offer

suggestions to the state government on the issue only after the arrest of Chandrashekar Rao and Harish Rao.

Maneka reviews animal welfare initiatives in TG

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A delegation led by animal rights activist and former Union minister Maneka Gandhi called on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at the Assembly premises to review and strengthen animal welfare measures across the state.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister outlined a roadmap for state-wide cow protection, including the construction of a modern, high-tech Goshala at Yenkapally. Plans were



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy with former Union minister Maneka Gandhi.

prominent temples, to enhance animal care infrastructure. Officials briefed Maneka Gandhi on measures being implemented for street dog management and cow protection within municipal limits.

They presented details of sterilisation programmes for street dogs through a powerpoint presentation.

She expressed satisfaction with the government's initiatives and welcomed the steps being taken to improve animal welfare in Telangana.

Bhatti urges public reps to join solar village drive

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has urged public representatives to actively participate in the prestigious Model Solar Village programme, launched by the government to transform Telangana into a green, energy-efficient state.

On Sunday, at the Assembly Hall, the Deputy Chief Minister handed over letters to ministers, MLAs and MLCs, inviting them to be part of the initiative. He advised that every public representative should install a 2KW grid-connected solar rooftop system in their residence, stressing that leaders must lead by example to create awareness about



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka speaks in the Assembly.

Khairatabad. A technical team will then conduct a survey and complete the installation process. Bhatti Vikramarka described the decision as an important step towards achieving carbon neutrality and building an energy-secure Telangana.

Interacting with the media later, the Deputy CM acknowledged his own pending IT dues but insisted his earnings were legal. "I have the capacity to feed at least 10 families. I have not committed any crime. It hardly matters whether the gold I wear is pure or imitation. Whenever IT or any other department comes, I have a reason - I was depressed over personal issues in recent years and could not clear my IT dues in my declaration," he said.

Cong.-led UDF will win in Kerala: Ponguleti

P. SRINIVAS | DC NALGONDA, MARCH 29

Revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, campaigning for the party in Kerala, on Sunday expressed confidence that the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) would secure an absolute majority in the April 9 Assembly elections and form government.

He cited the results of recent local body elections as an indication of public support for the UDF.

Campaigning in Adoor Assembly constituency in Pathanamthitta district for Congress candidate Shantha Kumar, Srinivas Reddy said there was a visible shift among voters in



Revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy campaigns in Adoor Assembly constituency of Pathanamthitta district in Kerala for Congress candidate Shantha Kumar on Sunday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

favour of the Congress, which had been in the Opposition for a decade.

Alleging that the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government had neglected

the welfare of the poor during its 10-year rule, he said its development programmes had not benefited common people.

"After 10 years of LDF rule, unemployment has risen and the financial burden on common people has increased. Is this not a failure of the LDF government," he asked.

Targeting the BJP, Srinivas Reddy alleged that it was attempting to create divisions among people through religion-based politics.

The minister said only the Congress-led UDF had a clear vision for Kerala's development and was committed to protecting democracy, social justice and secularism.

Bill mandates that public representatives, govt and pvt employees care for their parents

Neglect parents, lose salary: Telangana passes new Bill

NEERAJ KUMAR | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, in an emotional address, said that while elderly parents desperately needed their children's kindness and affection in the final phase of their life, it was the unfortunate yet essential duty of the government to enact a law to enforce this moral duty at a time where many of them face neglect from their own offspring.

Speaking on the Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026 in the

Assembly, which the House later passed, Revanth Reddy invoked ancient lore and modern tragedies to underscore filial duty. Revanth Reddy cited the devotion of Shrawan Kumar—who carried his blind parents on his shoulders—and contrasted it with family dispute involving industrialist Vijaypat Singhania who died on Saturday. After handing over all assets to his son Gautam, Revanth Reddy said, Vijaypat Singhania was forced to approach courts even for personal expenses. Vijaypat Singhania described these bitter experi-

ences in his autobiography 'An Incomplete Life', repenting his "big mistake" in giving everything to his son and warning that at no father should endure a worse fate, Revanth Reddy pointed out.

Revanth Reddy lamented that children fought over the assets after the death of their parents while ignoring them when they were living. He quoted a line from a film to stress his point: "We can give birth to children, but not their minds," and called for social ostracism of those who neglected their parents. People have forgotten human bonds and attach-

ments, even blood ties, drowning in physical pleasures, financial gains, and wealth pursuits, Revanth Reddy said.

The Chief Minister affirmed that the Bill instilled fear in the undevout, ensures justice for seniors, and prevents any

parent from becoming "orphans" in their final days. He explained that the state's proposed law went beyond the existing Central legislation, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. The state's new Bill will also cover public representatives and private employees, he pointed out.

The Central legislation made it a legal duty for children to care for parents. "Yet, we see discrimination and neglect in society. The decline of joint families and other societal changes are responsible for this plight of the aged,"

he said. He noted that India has robust protections for children and women—like the RTE Act 2009, Pocco Act of 2012, and domestic violence laws—but care for elders lagged despite existing statutes, prompting this key step toward veneration. Stating that the state government was bringing Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill as a social responsibility, Revanth Reddy said the effort was to instill confidence in elderly parents that they would get justice through this law. "No parents

should be left orphaned. The government is bringing this Bill with the intent that they shouldn't struggle for well-being in their final days," he said.

The legislation mandates deduction of up to 15 per cent of salary or ₹10,000—whichever is lower—from government and private sector employees, and public representatives like MLAs and sarpanches who neglect elderly parents. The money will be deposited directly to the parents' accounts.

The Assembly later unanimously approved the Bill that minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar tabled.

IN BRIEF

Cops bust illegal hookah unit

Hyderabad: Vanasthalipuram police busted an alleged illegal hookah centre operating in Ganeshnagar near a private hospital on Saturday night. According to police, the centre was being run in violation of government norms. Four persons found consuming hookah at the premises were detained. Officials seized hookah equipment and other materials from the spot and booked a case. Police said such establishments are being closely monitored as part of efforts to curb illegal activities.

Accident disrupts traffic near Metro

Hyderabad: Traffic disruption was reported in Kukatpally in the early hours of Sunday after a sugarcane-laden lorry overturned and blocked the road after hitting a divider near the Metro Station at Pillar 819. The vehicle, travelling from Zaheerabad to Erragadda, went out of control after the driver reportedly fell asleep at the wheel. A Dial 100 call alerted Kukatpally police, who reached the spot and informed traffic personnel. Given the heavy load of sugarcane, officials arranged for a crane to remove the vehicle.

Driver murdered after food quarrel

Hyderabad: A heated argument over food turned fatal after a cook murdered a driver at a villa in Kokapet under Narsingi police limits late on Saturday. According to police, the complaint was lodged by Katragunta Dharmateja, a resident of North Star Allura Villas, where the incident occurred. The villa had been rented by his maternal uncle, and the family had been staying there for the past four months. Shaik Basha, employed as a cook and residing in the servant quarters, had recently brought in Peenumalla Karthik as a driver about 15 days ago. On the night of the incident, a quarrel broke out between the two over serving food when only the complainant's sister-in-law was present in the house. In a fit of rage, Basha allegedly attacked Karthik with a knife, inflicting multiple stab injuries that led to his death on the spot.

OVER 495 BOOKED DURING DRUNK DRIVING CHECKS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri commissionerates booked over 495 cases of drunk driving during checks conducted over the weekend. Police said all offenders would be produced before the respective courts for penalisation and possible jail terms. The Hyderabad traffic police said they had booked 239 motorists, including 190 two-wheeler riders, 18 handling three-wheelers and 31 at the wheel of four-wheelers and other vehicles. Police said in two cases, the BAC was 300, 10 times the permissible 30 micrograms of alcohol for 100 ml of blood.

WIFE CONFESSES, BODY FOUND AFTER 4 MONTHS

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, MARCH 29

Police unearthed the body of a man four months after he was murdered and buried by his wife at their house in Pathacheruvu village, Kalyandurgam mandal, on Sunday. The crime came to light following a quarrel between the accused and her daughter.

Kalyandurgam DSP Ravi Babu said Hanumanthu and his wife Sukanya lived in the village. Sukanya, who allegedly had an extra-marital affair, quarrelled with her husband and killed him by striking him with a stick. She buried the body in the house premises and threatened her children with dire consequences if they revealed the incident. To mislead relatives and villagers, she claimed her husband had gone to the city in search of work. Four months later, Sukanya reportedly tried to arrange her daughter's marriage with the man she was involved with. The girl strongly resisted, left for her grandmother's village.

Crooks defraud man of ₹2 cr in loan scam

Scammers ask victim for access to accounts

PRIYA RATHNAM | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A 59-year-old businessman from Madhapur approached the police after his company bank accounts were misused by a fraudster who promised to arrange a business loan and later routed transactions worth nearly ₹2 crore through them.

According to the complainant, a representative of Shilpa Electricals Engineers and Sai Krupa Constructions, opened accounts with a bank. In July 2025, he was contacted via WhatsApp by a person identified as Dharmarapu Venkanna, who claimed he could facilitate a business loan.

The accused insisted that company bank accounts were required for processing the loan and obtained relevant documents from the complainant. He further convinced the businessman to grant temporary access to the accounts, assuring him it was necessary to credit the loan amount.

Trusting the claims, the complainant allowed access. However, he later discovered that multiple credit and debit transactions amounting to approximately ₹2 crore were carried out through the accounts without his knowledge or consent. Though the complainant did not suffer direct financial loss, the issue came to light after company managers found the accounts frozen. Bank officials informed him that fraudulent transactions took place.

Shilpa Electricals Engineers and Sai Krupa Constructions, opened accounts with a bank.

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28-YEAR-OLD TECHIE CHEATED CO-WORKER

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Jubilee Hills police registered a case against a 28-year-old software employee, Komakula Arthan, for allegedly cheating his co-worker by promising marriage and collecting ₹20 lakh from her. Police booked him on charges of cheating and criminal breach of trust and are making efforts to arrest the accused.

Police said Arthan entered into a relationship with the woman in 2021 at their workplace. The two began living together in Yousufguda in 2022, during which he assured her of marriage but repeatedly postponed it despite her insistence.

In her complaint, the victim stated that when she recently raised the issue again, Arthan avoided her and stopped responding to her calls. Over the past four years, he allegedly collected ₹20 lakh from her.

Police said Arthan entered into a relationship with the woman in 2021 at their workplace. The two began living together in Yousufguda in 2022, during which he assured her of marriage but repeatedly postponed it despite her insistence. Over the past four years, he allegedly collected ₹20 lakh from her.

Man cheated of ₹87L in fake stock

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A 36-year-old private employee from Alwal fell victim to an online investment scam, losing ₹87.69 lakh to fraudsters who lured him through a fake stock trading network operated via WhatsApp.

According to the victim, he was added to a WhatsApp group named VIP Group Infinity on January 1, 2026. The group, allegedly managed by a person identified as Kaustubh and several associates using multiple mobile numbers, regularly shared stock market tips, IPO recommendations and fabricated profit screenshots to gain credibility.

The victim was persuaded to download a mobile application called EPQC, projected as a legitimate trading platform. After completing registration and KYC formalities, he was encouraged to invest with promises of high and guaranteed returns. Initially, he invested ₹25,000 and was allowed to withdraw ₹1,000 as profit, which boosted his confidence. Gradually, the fraudsters convinced him to invest larger amounts. He transferred funds multiple times and was shown increased profits through a manipulated interface. He was later induced to invest in an IPO of Ashapura Minechem Limited using wallet funds on the app. However, when the accused demanded additional payments to complete the IPO process and he refused, the victim attempted to withdraw his funds. The application stopped functioning after some time and the fraudsters became unreachable.

PRIEST KILLED IN ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT NALGONDA, MARCH 29

Chennuri Hari Ramakrishna, priest at a temple in Palakeedu, died when a speeding lorry hit his motorcycle and ran over him, at Ramnagar in Miryalaguda district at about 5.30 am Sunday. Police said Ramakrishna was heading to the temple from his house in Miryalaguda when the accident occurred. He is survived by his wife and two children. Miryalaguda police station-I circle inspector Nahabishan Rao said rash and negligent driving by the lorry driver caused the accident. A case has been registered against the driver.

3 MIGRANT WORKERS KILLED IN ACCIDENT

DC CORRESPONDENT KAMAREDDY, MARCH 29

Three migrant workers were killed when their motorcycle crashed into a roadside culvert near the Gandhari mandal headquarters on Saturday night. The victims, Mukhya, 21, Rahul, 21, and Javed Ansari, 22, natives of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, were employed at a rice mill near Rampur Gadda in Gandhari mandal, police said.

On noticing the trio fallen on the road, local residents alerted the police and ambulance services. The injured were shifted to Banswada Government Hospital, where doctors declared them brought dead. Gandhari SI Anjaneyulu conducted the inquest under the supervision of Sadasivanagar CI Santosh Kumar. A case has been registered and investigation is underway.

On noticing the trio fallen on the road, local residents alerted the police and ambulance services.

Risky move



Two bikers and pedestrians dangerously cross through a gap in the road divider at Beeramguda. — K. DURGA RAO

Cops help refund of ₹25 cr to fraud victims

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB), in coordination with the Telangana Legal Services Authority, banks, digital payment service providers, and police commissioners and superintendents, has facilitated the return of nearly ₹25 crore to cybercrime victims in the first Lok Adalat of 2026.

Shikha Goel, director TGCSB, said during the current calendar year Telangana Police and TGCSB have continued their focused efforts towards victim restitution and financial recovery in cybercrime cases through the Lok Adalat mechanism. She noted that 2026 marks a further strengthening of cybercrime response systems, building on significant progress achieved in 2025.

The expansion of Lok Adalat-based recovery reflects TGCSB's commitment to increasing victim outreach, improving coordination with financial institutions, and accelerating refund processes. Since its inception,

RETURNS FACILITATED

SHIKHA GOEL, director TGCSB, said during the current calendar year Telangana Police and TGCSB have continued their focused efforts towards victim restitution.

| TOP PERFORMING UNITS | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| TGCSB HQ | 87 victims | ₹5.64 crore |
| Malkajgiri | 832 victims | ₹4.79 crore |
| Hyderabad | 553 victims | ₹3.99 crore |
| Cyberabad | 837 victims | ₹1.52 crore |
| Sangareddy | 161 victims | ₹1.52 crore |

YEAR-WISE IMPACT

- 2023: ₹8.3 crore refunded to 1,830 victims
- 2024: ₹183.9 crore refunded to 17,912 victims
- 2025: ₹183 crore refunded to 29,273 victims
- 2026 (till date): ₹24.91 crore refunded to 4,627 victims

TGCSB has facilitated totalling ₹399.06 crore, benefiting 53,434 cybercrime victims across the State through structured recovery mechanisms, including Lok Adalats, bank coordination, and judicial facilitation. Shikha Goel said: "This cumulative achievement reflects TGCSB's sustained commitment to victim-centric cybercrime response and financial restitution, with a strong upward trajectory in both recovery value and victim outreach. TGCSB's Lok Adalat framework continues to function as a robust, institutionalised victim restitution mechanism, enabling real-time coordination between law enforcement agencies, judiciary, unit officers and financial institutions to accelerate refunds in cases involving UPI frauds, investment scams, impersonation frauds and other digital offences."

2 ARRESTED FOR KIDNAP, ASSAULT BID ON MINORS

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, MARCH 29

Nirmal police arrested two persons on Sunday on charges of kidnapping and trying to rape two minor girls in Sofinagar colony of Nirmal town. The accused, Abbas Khan and Sheikh Kaleem, were taken into custody by a police team led by ASP Sai Kiran. The incident occurred on Saturday. Police registered cases against the accused under the PCO Act and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Superintendent of police Janaki Sharmila said strict action would be taken against those involved in crimes against women and girls.

CLASS 8 STUDENT DROWNS IN CANAL

Nalgonda: A Class VII student drowned in the SLBC canal at Arjalabavi on the outskirts of Nalgonda on Sunday. The victim, Parvatham Kiran Sai, 12, son of Venugopala Chary of Vidhyuth Colony, had gone to the canal with a friend on Sunday morning. Police said the boys assumed that there was not much water in the canal, as in the previous days. They were unaware that water had been released into the canal earlier in the day. Kiran Sai entered the canal first and drowned.

GURU NANAK GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS, BIDAR

"A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again."

Late. Panth Ratan Shiromani Sardar Joga Singh Ji
(26th December 1934 - 30th March 1989)

President, Gurdwara Sri Nanak Jhira Sahab, Bidar & President, Sri Nanak Jhira Sahab Foundation, Bidar

on his 37th Death Anniversary

Fondly Remembered by Trustees, Staff Members & Family Members

16th ANNIVERSARY

Your memory guides us in every step we take in our life and work

Fondly remembered by

Late Dr. Y.V.S.S. MURTY
D.O.B. 21.08.1927 D.O.D. 30.03.2010

ALKALI METALS LIMITED

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
Your good nature will always be remembered
In Grief:
Naresh Agarwal & Family
Satish Agarwal & Family
Arun Ganatra & Family

SAD DEMISE

Smt. Boddu Anasuya
W/o Boddu Om Prakash (Retd. S.E. I.C.A.D.), expired on Sunday 29-3-2026
Funeral Ceremony on Monday 30th March 2026 at 12 noon, At Arya Samaj Cemetry near Lalapet, Tarnaka flyover Boddu Family members.
Sons: Dr. Navneet Kumar Boddu, Narendra Kumar Boddu.
And Grand children: Boddu Om Prakash, H. No. 12-13-693, Behind Nagarjuna Nagar Community Hall, Tarnaka, Hyderabad.
Ph: 885070918

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
We will always miss you
In Grief:
Manoj Mansukhani & Family
Rakesh Mather & Family
Radhesam Sharma & Family

SHRADHANJALI

SRI SRIGOPAL INNANI
(S/o LATE SRI RAMPRASADJI INNANI)
(Founder Director)
DoB : 27th March 2026
"Your sweet memories shall always be cherished in our hearts".
Chairman & Board of Directors
MERCANTILE BANK
Secunderabad

REMEMBRANCE

LAKSHAMMA
D.O.B: 30-03-2022
We remembering you with deep respect in our hearts.
Inserted by: Bhandari's Family,
Sons, Daughter's and Grand Children
(8/2526/00094)

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
We will always remember you for your smiling face
In Grief:
Rajesh Mody & Family
Nagesh Pampati & Family
Lakshma Reddy & Family

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
We will always miss you
In Grief:
Kishore Kabra & Family
Dinesh Datar & Family
Rajender Kothari & Family

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. — II Timothy 4:7

Late. D'COSTA RATHNAMMA GEORGE
Retd. South Central Railway (Claims Dept. Official)
DOB: 14/08/1922 - DOD: 30/03/2024
We miss you every moment in our lives.
Sons: John D'Costa, Paul D'Costa
Daughter's in law: Pramila D'Costa, Anita D'Costa
Grandsons & Grand Daughters: Goidy/Prathiba, Sunny/Dominica, Diana/Vinay, Nicky/Anna, Abhi D'Costa, Ashi D'Costa/Any D'Costa
Great Grandsons & Great Granddaughters: Neil Nicholas, Abiel Ethan, Joel, Meshika Sarah, Emmanuel Moshe, Adalia Hazel, Arlo D'Costa & Ainos D'Costa Mr. +9193916 32314

13th DAY CEREMONY

With Profound Grief and Sorrow, we inform the demise of our beloved **PARAG SHAH**, who left for his heavenly abode on **18th March 2026**. We request your kind presence to grace this solemn occasion for the eternal peace of the departed soul.
30th March Shradha Time: 9:00 AM followed by Lunch: 12:30 PM onwards
Plot no. 21, Happy Enclave Colony, Balamra, Secunderabad.
Fondly Remembered by: Shaik Parivar
Jayesh Bhai: 995013395, Chagat: 953021188, Kinjal: 985441039

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

The Memory of Just is blessed. Pro10:7
The glory of children are their Parents. Pro-17:6

Mrs. G. MARY (30 Mar 2023)
W/o. Late Mr. GV. EBENEZER (26 Nov 1997)
The glory of children are their Parents. Pro-17:6
Dear Mom and Dad,
You have shown us how to live for Christ. We are blessed because of your Prayers.
Inserted by Son: John Milton
Contact: maryge2023@gmail.com

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
Your good nature will always be remembered
In Grief:
P Nagender Reddy & Family
Narain Devnani & Family
Kishore Rai & Family
Dr Sanjeev Singh Yadav & Family

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

"A family that prays together, stays together"

MRS. PRISCILLA DHYRIAM
FONDLY REMEMBERED AND DEARLY CHERISHED BY HER HUSBAND, CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN & GOODNEWS FAMILY

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
Your memories will always be cherished
In Grief:
Dharmender Sharma & Family
Anil Mutha & Family
Manoj Mutha & Family

65th BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

"And those who live and believe in me will never die" John 11:26

Late. Sri. T.N SATHYA DEV
(Canara Bank, Marredpally, Secunderabad)
Born on 30-03-1961
Called to Glory: 11-01-2016
You will remain in our Hearts Forever
Inserted by: MRS. D. SWARNA LATHA (WIFE)
Children & Grand Children

SHRADHANJALI

Parag Jayesh Shah
(S/o. Hina & Jayesh Shah)
Your memories will always be cherished
In Grief:
Burra Moses & Family
Kantilal Patel & Family
T Raj Kumar & Family

SHORT TAKE

₹157-CR MODERN GOSHALAS FOR MOINABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The proposed world-class, modern goshalas at Yenkapally, Moinabad, for which Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy laid the foundation stone on Saturday, is expected to incorporate global best practices in cattle care, welfare, sustainability and management. Spread over 99 acres and 14 guntas, the project is estimated to cost ₹157 crore.

The initiative aims to create a model facility that blends traditional values with scientific standards for animal health, environmental sustainability, cultural enrichment and public engagement. The HMDA has been entrusted with the work which it will fund. The goshalas will shelter at least 1,000 cows and include facilities such as a veterinary hospital, isolation wards and staff residences.

The project will adopt a sustainable energy model, featuring a 3 MW solar plant and a biogas plant. Cattle waste will be utilised to produce biogas, CNG and solar power.

GHMC steps up action against tax defaulters

Of 28 lakh properties in CURE, 17 Lakh have paid tax

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A crackdown has begun in the Core Urban Region (CURE) on properties that have undervalued their property tax and on commercial establishments with pending arrears, several of which have already been sealed.

The CURE area covers 28.08 lakh properties, of which around 17 lakh have paid their tax. Among the 28,80,260 properties, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) accounts for 11,45,321, Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) for 9,43,432, and Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC) for 7,91,507. The special drive spans 2,053 sq km across the three civic bodies.

Officials said three major discrepancies were detected. First, property owners undervalue tax through self-assessment on websites and

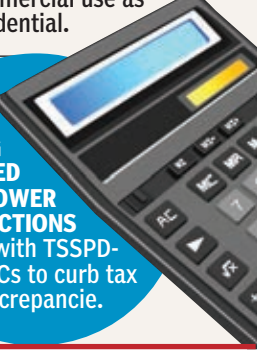
CRACKDOWN IN CURE REGION BEGINS
Action targets undervalued properties and commercial units with arrears.

THREE DISCREPANCIES FLAGGED BY OFFICIALS
Undervaluation, unassessed extra floors, commercial use as residential.

6 ESTABLISHMENTS SEALED FOR ARREARS
Names released publicly by authorities.

OTS SCHEME OFFERS 90% INTEREST REBATE
Scheme valid for pending dues till March 31.

PTINS BEING MAPPED WITH POWER CONNECTIONS
Linked with TSSPDCL USCs to curb tax discrepancy.



mobile apps by entering less plinth areas. Second, additional floors built are not brought under the tax net. Third, residential properties used commercially continue to be taxed at lower residential slabs.

“To curb this, we are mapping property tax identification numbers (PTINs) with unique service connections (USCs) of Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL),” a GHMC official said.

released publicly. Meanwhile, a one-time settlement (OTS) scheme offering a 90 per cent rebate on interest for pending dues is in force until March 31.

These included Katriya Hotel on Raj Bhavan Road with dues of ₹6.16 crore pending since 2017; Swarna Transport in Goshamahall ₹36 lakh and Shamim Sultana Cloth Mall in Banjara Hills Road No. 10 ₹35.27 lakh. Hotel Belsons Taj Mahal in Kalasiguda, Secunderabad, was issued with a warrant notice but it cleared ₹33.52 lakh arrears immediately. Following this the establishment was not sealed.

The other establishments sealed include Aurora College in Nampally with ₹1.28 crore arrears since 2016; Synfosys Business Solutions in Nagarjuna Circle with ₹17.94 lakh due since 2012 and Sony Centre, Goshamahall, with ₹39.68 lakh due since 2018.

FREE HEALTH CHECK-UP AT NIMS TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (Nims) will organise a free comprehensive health check-up camp for senior citizens as part of the Telangana government's Health Mission-

100 programme on Tuesday. The camp will be held at the nephrology seminar hall on the ground floor of the old block. Registrations will be open from 9 am to 1 pm, and attendees are required to carry their Aadhaar card.

Beerappa said on Sunday that the camp will be conducted jointly by the department of geriatric medicine and the hospital administration, with a focus on assessing the overall physical, mental and functional health of elderly individuals.

| TELANGANA EDUCATION & WELFARE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 4th Floor, Rajiv Vidya Mission Building, SECERT Compound, Hyderabad-500 001 | | | | | | | |
| E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE | | | | | | | |
| Tender Notice No. TGEWIDC/SE(projects)/NIT 55 to 57/2025-26 | | | | | | Dt: 28.03.2026 | |
| Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform for the following works from registered firms and contractors: | | | | | | | |
| NIT No. | Name of the work | Start Date and Time of Tenders: | Last Date and time of Receipt of Tenders: | Date of opening of Technical bid: | Date of opening of Price bid: | (EMD)-lakh (approx.) | ECV-in crores (approx.) |
| 55 | Establishment of 430 bed Hospital at Kodangal in Vikarabad District. | 02-04-26 from 5:00 PM | 24-04-26 upto 3:30 PM | 24-04-26 upto 4:00 PM | 30-04-26 upto 2:00 PM | 143.00 | 143.00 |
| 56 | Construction of Buildings for Young India Integrated Residential School (YIIRS) Complex at Adilabad Rural Constituency in Adilabad District. | 02-04-26 from 5:00 PM | 24-04-26 upto 3:30 PM | 24-04-26 upto 4:00 PM | 30-04-26 upto 2:00 PM | 133.00 | 133.00 |
| 57 | construction of building for Young India Integrated Residential School (YIIRS) complex at Gajwel Assembly Constituency in Siddipet District. | 02-04-26 from 5:00 PM | 24-04-26 upto 3:30 PM | 24-04-26 upto 4:00 PM | 30-04-26 upto 2:00 PM | 133.00 | 133.00 |
| Date and place of pre-bid meeting: | | 13-04-26 for Nit Nos 55,56 & 57 | | at 11.00 am at the C/O The Managing Director, TGEWIDC, Hyderabad. | | | |
| Office inviting the tender: | | P. Sasidhar, Superintending Engineer (Projects), TGEWIDC, Hyderabad. Ph. No. 040-29701041. Email: seprojectstgwidc@gmail.com | | | | | |
| Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Projects), T.G.E.W.I.D.C. Hyderabad | | | | | | | |
| DIPR.R.O.No. :1290-PPICL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2025-26 Date:28-03-2026 | | | | | | | |



Badminton champion Pullela Gopichand flags off 'Sundays on Cycle' at IIT Hyderabad. — DC

1,000 join cycling drive at IIT-H

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Over 1,000 people participated in the 'Sundays on Cycle' event organised at IIT Hyderabad to promote fitness and healthy living under fit India initiative. Organised by the IITH Cycling Club, the event featured 10 km and 20 km cycling routes, alongside warm-up sessions, Zumba, and community engagement activities.

Badminton champion Pullela Gopichand, who flagged off the event, emphasised the importance of integrating sports into

daily life, stating that physical activity builds long-term strength and discipline. He encouraged students to adopt sports as a regular habit.

IITH director Prof. B.S. Murthy said, "We believe that fitness and well-being are integral to education. We actively encourage students to adopt cycling as a lifestyle and, in fact, provide support to buy a cycle at the time of admission to help them take up cycling on campus actively. We are also working to integrate sports and physical activity into our academic framework."

Anaesthesiologists take lead from OT to patient recovery

DEEPIKA PASHAM | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A transformative shift in anaesthesiology was highlighted at the first national conclave of the Society of Perioperative Physician Anaesthesiologists (SOPPA) here on Sunday. "We now manage the entire surgical continuum before, during and after surgery, bridging the gap between surgery and medicine," anaesthesiologists said.

They noted that India is transitioning from a high-volume surgical nation to a value-driven perioperative care system. While global leadership is still evolving, India is emerging as a key contributor through clinical expertise, innovation and scale. Anaesthesiology, once perceived narrowly, is undergoing a profound transformation. "Earlier, anaesthesiologists were seen as sulane wale doctors who put patients to sleep. Today, they are the architects of recovery, managing patients before, during and after surgery," experts observed.

Dr Manimala Rao, anaesthesiologist, intensivist and academician, who inaugurated the conclave as Chief Guest, said: "Monitors may have made modern practice simpler, but anaesthesiologists themselves are the real monitors. Ours is a unique speciality—ours not only make patients sleep but also

ensure they wake up safely and recover faster."

Dr M. Chandrashekar, senior anaesthesiologist, said: "We have come a long way. Today, in any emergency, the first call is often to the anaesthesiologist. Our role is now pivotal."

Dr Satyanarayana Nuthula, President of SOPPA, stated: "This first national conclave has received an overwhelming response with participation from over 300 delegates, reflecting the growing importance of perioperative medicine."

A key driver of this transformation is the adoption of Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols, which emphasise minimal fasting, early feeding, early mobilisation and opioid-sparing analgesia—leading to shorter hospital stays, fewer complications and improved patient experience.

The field is now gaining recognition as a distinct subspecialty, with rapid growth in areas such as geriatric surgery, onco-surgery, cardiac risk assessment and ambulatory surgery. Experts called upon policymakers to recognise, support and integrate anaesthesiologists as leaders in perioperative care through policy reforms, improved infrastructure, advanced training and stronger patient safety systems.

APPEAL TO THE CITIZENS

National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026

The country's first household income survey

Participation is everyone's responsibility

Survey period: April 2026 - March 2027

What is the National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026?

This survey is being conducted to determine the income of different regions and groups across the country.

Objectives

- To understand income distribution
- To develop effective strategies

Security and Privacy

- Your information will be kept completely secure and confidential.
- It will not be used for any personal matters (such as income tax, etc.).
- The information shared will be used for policy formulation and analysis purposes only.

Who is conducting the survey?

- The National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- NSO surveyors carry official government identity cards.
- The survey will collect information from approximately 4.5 lakh households at all India level selected through a scientifically designed sampling methodology.

What should you do?

- If your family is selected in the sample and NSO surveyors contact you, please provide accurate information.
- NSO surveyors **NEVER** ask for any money, OTP or password.
- Active public participation is vital for the successful completion of this survey and for evidence-based policy formulation.

www.mospi.gov.in @GoStats /GoStats GoStats Ministry of Statistics & PI



SHORT TAKES

GOVT INTRODUCES BILL AGAINST HATE SPEECHES

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 29

The government on Sunday introduced the Telangana Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2026 in the Assembly, proposing a maximum jail term of 10 years to related offences. If passed, Telangana would become the second state after Karnataka to pass such a law in the Legislature.

Legislative affairs minister D Sridhar Babu moved the motion to introduce the Bill on behalf of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Under the Bill, whoever commits a "hate crime" shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than one year, which may extend to seven years, along with a fine of Rs 50,000.

Repeated offences will attract a fine of ₹1 lakh and imprisonment ranging from two years up to ten years.

Offences under the new Bill are non-bailable. "The existing legal framework does not comprehensively address the evolving nature and manifestation of hate speech, and hate crimes, necessitating dedicated and robust legislation to effectively prevent, regulate and penalise such conduct, while also ensuring protection and redress for affected persons," it said.

The cabinet approved the Bill on March 23, designed to curb speeches that incite riots and conflicts. The government also introduced the Telangana Platform-Based Gig Workers Bill.

BIHAR MIGRANTS SEEK DAILY TRAINS TO PATNA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Members of the Bihar community in the city have urged Union minister G. Kishan Reddy to ensure that Indian Railways introduces daily trains on the Secunderabad-Varanasi-Patna and Hyderabad-Darbhanga routes, citing the growing influx of passengers.

They said that a large number of workers from Bihar travel on the Hyderabad-Darbhanga route, while Telugu-speaking devotees use the Secunderabad-Varanasi-Patna route to visit the Vishwanath temple in Kashi. They said additional services would further strengthen religious and cultural ties between the two regions.

The delegation, led by Bihar Samaj Seva Sangh chairman Raju Ojha, met the Union minister during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme organised at Gymkhana, Himayat Nagar. They highlighted the hardships faced by migrants travelling home during festivals and holidays, noting that in the absence of regular trains, passengers are forced to contend with long waiting lists and exorbitant fares charged by private buses.

According to a statement by Bihar Samaj Seva Sangh, the Union minister assured the delegation that he would take up the matter with the Ministry of Railways for appropriate action.

GOVT ASKED TO INTRODUCE PG AYURVEDA COURSE

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, MARCH 29

Members of the Anantha Lakshmi Government Ayurvedic Medical College Development Committee have formally requested Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to sanction postgraduation (PG) seats for the institution. Committee convener Dr B. Sambamurthy alleged that despite being a premier institution established in 1956, the college has not been allotted PG seats for the current academic year.

This was forcing Telangana students to seek admission in other states, or pay exorbitant fees at private colleges, Dr Sambamurthy alleged. This situation has placed a heavy financial burden on families, particularly those from economically weaker sections who rely on the state's affordable education system.

The college supports a 100-bed hospital. The committee said introducing PG courses in the college would not only benefit students but also significantly strengthen the state's healthcare infrastructure.

Govt staff quarters in Malakpet abandoned

Salary hike, HRA push staff to shift to houses with good infra

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The once-bustling Malakpet government quarters have now fallen into disuse. A few blocks are being utilised as office spaces by the RTO and GHMC to save on rent, while others have turned into locations for shooting eerie scenes.

Former residents recalled that there was once high demand for allotment of these quarters, popularly referred to as the Andhra quarters. After state bifurcation and the hike in salaries and house rent allowance (HRA), many employees vacated the premises and shifted to houses offering better facilities than the quarters built in the 1960s and 1970s.

"Given the high HRA, we thought it was better to move out of the quarters and purchase a new house and pay EMIs for it," said



The Malakpet B Block quarters, which had been deserted for years, are now lively again as government offices have shifted into these buildings. — DC

N. Aruna, a retired government employee.

With a large number of quarters abandoned, locals have raised serious safety concerns, particularly in the evenings, as deserted roads have turned into dens for tippers. A resident of C Block said that although some youth create disturbances, police patrols are frequent.

K. Murali, a gazetted officer who studied at Nehru Memorial School located amidst the quarters, recalled: "The area was lively till 2012. Now several quarters are either demolished or turned into dumping sites. The doors and gates have already been stolen by unknown individuals," he added.

Earlier, the colony was known for its institutions and cricket and football grounds. Today, only a few people use the grounds, while the nearly deserted colony has become a spot for movie and short film shoots. Several youths are often seen clicking pictures along the quarters' roads. "We come here regularly because the roads are calm and we can get beautiful pictures," said Md. Afroz, a local youth.

Government offices including the RTO, GHMC Moosarambagh circle office, Malakpet police station and pension office were recently shifted to renovated quarters to save on rents. A large portion of government land near the metro station remains unused. "The government should make use of it to develop a commercial complex or IT office space," Murali suggested.

Chaas chill



Members of the Sri Jain Seva Sangh provide butter milk to commuters on a warm day at Malakpet in Hyderabad on Sunday, ahead of Mahavir Jayanti which will be celebrated on Monday. — P. SURENDRA

KISHAN PRAISES MODI'S MANN KI BAAT IMPACT

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Union minister G. Kishan Reddy praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat as a remarkable platform that has, over 11 years, connected directly with the nation.

Speaking to the media after watching the 132nd episode, Reddy described the monthly broadcast on the last Sunday of every month at 11 am as a rare global phenomenon. "PM Modi directly shares his thoughts with the people, spotlighting innovative initiatives, inspiring stories from ordinary citizens, social workers, inventors and motivational figures," he said. This, he added, has elevated recognition for diverse states, regions and villages.

Reddy noted the special mention of Telangana in Sunday's episode highlighted Suryaveer youth Kotla Raghuveter Reddy's success in the My Bharat Budget Quest on farmer welfare, and the soap pits initiative by nearly 400 families in Mudigunt village, Mancherial.

Modi highlights Mudhigunta water saving in Mann Ki Baat

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, MARCH 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday, highlighted a water conservation initiative in Mudhigunta village of Jaipur mandal in Mancherial district, citing its impact on improving groundwater levels.

Referring to the initiative, he said 400 families in the village adopted soak pits to address water scarcity, resulting in a rise in the groundwater table.

He noted that villagers had turned water conservation into a mass movement and described the effort as an effective step towards water management.

The villagers also installed rooftop rainwater harvesting systems in their homes as part of conservation measures. As part of Praja Palana and Pragati Pranaliika programmes, additional collector (local bodies) P. Chandraiah visited Mudhigunta on Sunday and inspected the rainwater harvesting structures and interacted with villagers.



A district official inspects soak pit and rainwater harvesting system in Mudhigunta village, Jaipur mandal, Mancherial district, on Sunday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

District collector Kumar Deepak said that despite being a mining district, Mancherial has managed to prevent water scarcity through conservation measures taken up under MGNREGS and JSJB with public participation.

He said emphasis was laid on constructing community and individual soak pits, rooftop harvesting structures, percolation tanks, farm ponds, check dams, borewell recharge systems, moisture conservation trenches and water conservation ponds across mandals.

MANAIR RIVER PROJECT TO BE FAST-TRACKED

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 29

Karimnagar district in-charge minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Sunday directed officials to expedite the Manair riverfront project and treat it as a top priority. At a review meeting held at the Assembly committee hall, attended by ministers Ponnampallam Prabhakar, Aduri Laxman Kumar and Juppalli Krishna Rao, officials were asked to clear hurdles on a war footing. The ministers reviewed progress of works, pending funds and bottlenecks. Rao said the project was key to developing Karimnagar.

Youths prefer cold coffees, protein drinks in summer

RACHEL DAMMALA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A change is playing out across the city's cafes and roadside stalls this summer. Alongside lassi, buttermilk, nimbu sodas and sugarcane juice, a new set of drinks is finding space on menus and in the hands of younger customers.

Cold coffees, cold brews, protein shakes, kombucha and electrolyte-based drinks are in steady demand, especially among college students and young working professionals. Cafe owners say this is no longer occasional curiosity but a regular shift in what people are ordering.

"At least 40 to 50 per cent of our summer orders are now cold coffees and protein-based drinks," said Manish V, a cafe owner in Madhapur. "Even school and college students are asking for whey-based shakes and iced americanos. That wasn't common even a year ago."

At a kiosk in SD Road, Secunderabad, the change is visible through stocking patterns. "We started with a small fridge for zero sugar drinks, kombucha and electrolyte drinks. Now we've added more because they sell out by evening," the vendor Ashraf said. "What surprised us is how young the customers are."

For many consumers, the change is linked to fitness and lifestyle choices. "I avoid sugary drinks now," said Tanya Verma, a 19-year-old student in Alwal. "A protein shake or cold brew feels lighter and more useful, especially after a workout." Office-goer Navaneeta in Hitec City said, "Electrolyte drinks help during the heat. It feels better than having something too sweet."

At the same time, traditional drinks have not lost their place. A sugarcane juice vendor in Tarnaka said demand remained strong through the day. "People still come for nimbu soda, buttermilk and fresh juice. In this heat, nothing replaces that," he said. "These new drinks are fine, but our drinks are natural, healthy, filling, help with digestive issues, cheap,

OLD FAVES, NEW CRAVES
The rise of summer drinks in Hyderabad

| Traditional Favorites | Trendy Options |
|---|---|
|  Nimbu Soda |  Sugarcane Juice |
|  Cold Coffee |  Protein Shake |
|  Buttermilk |  Kombucha |

"40-50% of summer orders are now cold coffees & protein drinks."
— Manish, Cafe Owner

WHY THE SHIFT?

- Fitness Consciousness
- Less Sugar, More Energy
- Healthy Alternatives

PRICE POINTS

- Cold Coffee ₹250+
- Kombucha ₹150+

Expert Advice

- Be Cautious with Artificial Sweeteners
- Protein & Electrolytes Not for Everyone
- Balance Natural Drinks & New Trends

Traditional & new drinks: side by side in the summer heat

and more importantly, aren't addictive."

Doctors urged caution, especially around packaged and "zero sugar" options. City-based nutritionist Radhadevi Kandukuri said, "Many of these drinks use artificial sweeteners like aspartame. The World Health Organisation has called it a possible carcinogen, and excessive intake may increase cravings rather than reduce them."

She added that while protein shakes and electrolyte drinks could be useful in specific cases, they were often consumed unnecessarily. "Not everyone needs protein supplements. And electrolyte drinks are meant for dehydration, not regular use. People should not replace water and natural drinks entirely."

Cafe owners say they were trying to balance both trends. "We've added more clean-label options and fresh ingredients

because customers are asking questions," said Banjara Hills cafe manager Imran Ali. "At the same time, classics like cold coffee and fresh lime soda are still bestsellers, while Boba Tea and Kombuchas are catching on, with many looking for healthier options, even if they have to acquire such tastes."

While roadside drinks remain affordable, café-based beverages can cost significantly more, yet continue to draw crowds. "A decent cold coffee too costs nothing less than ₹250 while and clean Kombucha too, is at least ₹150," Vihana Ketu, a student & intern said.

For now, Hyderabad's summer drink scene is not replacing one with another. Instead, it is expanding, with traditional coolers and new-age beverages existing side by side, shaped by changing tastes, health awareness, and the city's long, hot afternoons.

Stop Krishna use for power produce: Uttam to AP govt

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy urged the Andhra Pradesh government to stop utilising Krishna waters for power generation at Srisailem, on the lines of Telangana, in view of reduced inflows. He said the state had placed high priority on preserving water for drinking and irrigation.

Replying to queries during voting on demands, the minister acknowledged the alarming drop in water levels and said precautionary steps were being taken. "Now that the water levels have dropped alarmingly, we have requested the AP government to stop utilising power production and preserve it for standing crop and drinking water purposes," Uttam Kumar Reddy explained.

He reiterated that the government would complete the SLBC, a "long-cherished dream", by



N. Uttam Kumar Reddy

June 23 and assured that the Dindi project would be completed within two years, supporting composite Nalgonda with 0.5 TMC per day. The minister blamed the previous government for delays, noting it had borrowed ₹97,000 crore for projects. "After coming to power, the Congress government has repaid ₹41,000 crore principal and ₹16,000 crore interest. A balance of ₹54,000 crore principal and ₹27,000 crore interest remains. There is no need for apprehensions over projects as they are being undertaken on pri-

ority. Unlike the previous government which tried to skip critical links like R&R, land acquisition and forest clearance, we have earmarked ₹5,000 crore as a special package to clear hurdles and fast-track priority projects by June 2," he said.

Marking one year of the Sannabhyam scheme launched on March 30, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Congress government had covered 86 per cent of the population under the PDS initiative and crossed one crore ration cards. "In contrast to the previous government which issued most fresh cards during the Huzurabad bypoll, we kept the window open for issuing new cards. It is now a continuous process," Uttam noted.

On the shortage of LPG, he said the Union government and agencies had promised to contain the issue. "The supply of commercial LPG is affected and is being slowly overcome," he added.

SPECIAL | PRAYERS

Children hail the arrival of Jesus Christ in a procession marking his entry into Jerusalem

Palm Sunday processions usher in Holy Week in Hyd

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Christians marked Palm Sunday with processions and special services, signalling the beginning of Holy Week in the Lenten season. The faithful carried palm branches, sang hymns and raised "Hosanna" slogans as they proceeded to their respective churches.

Addressing a congregation, Hyderabad Regional Conference Bishop A. Simeon said, "Jesus Christ made a triumphant yet humble entry into

Jerusalem on a donkey, marking the beginning of his journey toward crucifixion for the redemption of humanity. Palm Sunday heralds the start of Holy Week in the Lenten season."

Sister Jessy Paul echoed similar sentiments when she said, "Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem celebrates him as a humble King. It is a symbol of peace rather than war, fulfilling prophecy and revealing a kingdom founded on love and spiritual salvation."

She led Palm Sunday services at Lord's Church,

● **AT BAPTIST Church, Hyderabad, more than 200 children from the Sunday school took part in a procession holding placards through Narayanaguda, Himayatnagar and Vittalwadi.**

Bowenpally with Pastor Raj Prakesh Paul where thousands attended.

Children dressed in nativity attire and music performances formed part of the programme.

At CSI Wesley Church, Clock Tower, Secunderabad, around

2,000 members participated in a procession. Presbyterian-in-charge Rev Wilson led the service. A mini truck carrying women and children dressed in Jewish attire was part of the procession.

At Baptist Church, Hyderabad, more than 200 children from the Sunday school took part in a procession holding placards through Narayanaguda, Himayatnagar and Vittalwadi.

Pastor David Gollapalli said, "Children hailed the arrival of Jesus Christ during the procession

marking his entry into Jerusalem."

At Centenary Methodist Church, Chapel Road, coordination committee member K. John Wilson said their church, which is one of the largest congregations in India, had their services begin at 6 am

CSI Wesley Church, Ramkote, also reported large attendance. Committee member G.S. Daniel said, "CSI Bishop delivered the message, marking the faithful's entry into Holy Week. Special services will be held each day, culminating in Easter Sunday."



Christians walk with palms during a Palm Sunday procession in Secunderabad. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Residents flag unattended civic problems

Consumers face hardships due to LPG refill delay

I wish to bring to the attention of the authorities the difficulties that consumers face regarding LPG supply, despite repeated claims by the government and agencies that there is no shortage. I had booked a refill on March 18 through the official app of Indian Oil Corporation. While the app continues to show the booking as open, I have not received any delivery confirmation or update. On contacting the delivery personnel, I was informed that there is a delay of up to 35 days. This situation is highly concerning, especially for senior citizens like myself, who cannot frequently visit the agency and wait for long hours to resolve such issues. The contradiction between official claims and ground reality is causing unnecessary hardship to consumers.

— Masood Ali Quraishi
Mallapally

Lane road in bad shape at Premnagar

I am writing to highlight the poor condition of a lane in Premnagar, Khairatabad, which GHMC contractors had dug up in January and left unrepaired. We residents have been struggling to use this road for the past three months. Every two weeks, an earth-mover is deployed to dig some more, leaving the road in a worse condition than before. Former Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi travelled on this road during the Republic Day ceremony at the Ambedkar community centre. The centre hosts many government programmes, and children heading to the place because there is no proper walkway. I tried to contact GHMC and other authorities, but most of the email addresses listed on government portals are inactive. We are unable to use our vehicles. The contractors visit occasionally to do minor work, giving an impression of progress but nothing changes.

— Priyam Srivastav
Hyderabad

Cattle shed comes up again at RK Puram

A road at SV Officers' Colony in RK Puram has been closed and used for a cattle shed. HYDRAA officials cleared the encroachment on February 5, 2025, and opened the road for citizens. Within a month, the encroachers stopped free movement and the cattle shed has come up again. The only difference now is that semi-permanent structures have been erected.

— Residents
SV Colony, RK Puram

Stinky menace



Women passengers cover their noses at a bus stop on Srinagar Colony Road as foul odour from nearby urinals causes discomfort. — R. PAVAN

Damaged manhole lid at Indrapuri

A manhole cover is broken and is on the verge of giving in, at a crossroads near Plot. 30, Indrapuri Railway Colony, opposite MG Sabithraj Apartments in West Marredpally. The road witnesses heavy vehicular traffic. In the interest of the safety of the residents and motorists, I request the authorities to immediately replace the manhole cover.

— Dr Padmakar
Indrapuri Railway Colony,
West Marredpally



PILED UP GARBAGE AT HUSSAINI ALAM SCHOOL

The Hussaini Alam School, Junior Degree & PG College for Women has a 4.9-acre campus and was established more than 42 years ago. Piles of garbage have accumulated inside the college premises. The college security guard is burning garbage on the campus, which is harmful to college staff and students. I request the GHMC to clear the debris daily to maintain a clean and green environment.

— Syed Hameeduddin Quadri
Hyderabad

Electric pole in the middle of a road

This non-functional streetlight pole located in the middle of the road at the Indian Oil petrol pump opposite LB Stadium obstructs traffic. It poses a danger to motorists, especially at night. I request the official to remove the pole in the interest of safety of road users.

— Rakesh Kumar
Hyderabad



Parking problems at Telangana info panel

Visitors to the Telangana Information Commission office are facing a problem to park their vehicles over several months due to severe mismanagement of the available space. A couple of pushcarts are stationed in front of the main gate for a long time, partially blocking access. Many vehicles parked in front of the office do not appear to belong to individuals with official work there. People visiting a nearby place for wedding-related photo and video shoots are using the office frontage to park their vehicles for extended periods. In addition, a nearby mechanic shop has encroached upon part of the entrance by placing damaged scooters and vehicles. As a result, genuine visitors, including appellants and officials, are left confused and inconvenienced, with no clear space to park their vehicles. This situation calls for immediate attention.

— V.K. Upendarrao Parcha
Hyderabad



Residents throw garbage at plot in IDA Bolaram

For five years, residents have been throwing garbage at an open plot in front of my house at H. No. 2-147/1, Vinayaknagar, IDA Bolaram. We have lodged complaints at the municipal office many times but to no avail. The authorities have not taken action to remove the garbage. This is causing a bad odour to hang over area, and the place is infested with insects. I request the authorities to ensure that the plot is cleaned and garbage is not dumped there again.

— P. Sugumar
Vinayaknagar, IDA Bolaram

Sanitation works put on hold at lane in Red Hills



GHMC staff has not been undertaking sanitation activities for the past 25 days in front of House No.s 11-6-822, 823, 824, and throughout the lane. When asked, the reason provided by the officials is that the staff has been transferred to another area. It is unclear why the transfers were made without arranging for replacement workers. It is extremely disappointing that local officials have taken no action despite lodging complaints (2603265784120, 2403265779483, 1903265771768). I request senior officials to take immediate action and resolve this issue by appointing workers to carry out regular cleaning, as was done previously.

— Mohammed Ali
Nayyar
Red Hills



Low water supply pressure at Rd No. 12 Banjara Hills

The residents of Sriramnagar, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills, are suffering from critically low drinking water pressure and erratic supply for the past two years. We call the HMWS&SB local manager every time on the day of supply to complain but we are ignored. We request the authorities concerned to ensure that water is supplied to the area on schedule and with sufficient pressure.

— Rajasekhara
Banjara Hills

Fraudulent activities are suspected in LPG booking

I have a cooking gas connection with Bharat Gas, the distributor being Dattatreya Bharat Gas Agency, Shamirpet. Since March 1, we have received two messages confirming that against our request for booking two cylinders have been delivered to our residence. We have neither booked the refills nor received the cylinders from the agency. We lodged a complaint with the

branch when the first cylinder was supposedly delivered around March 2. The agency apologized and said it happened by mistake. Now the error has been made again which leads us to suspect fraudulent activity. Senior officials must look into the matter and take action.

— C.B. Venkataramana
Reddy

HC notice on reservoirs' pollution

L. RAVICHANDER
HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

The Telangana High Court took on file a public interest litigation (PIL) alleging pollution in the Himayatsagar and Osmanagar, drinking water sources for the twin cities. A panel comprising Chief Justice Apresh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin entertained a letter and treated it as PIL. The letter, based on a news report, highlighted an increase in toxic levels of pollution in the reservoirs and referred to the findings of a study by the Maulana Azad National Urdu University. It was alleged that the primary causes of pollution included the discharge of untreated sewage from surrounding villages, industrial effluents, and agricultural run-off into the reservoirs, posing a serious



LEGAL STORIES

threat to public health and environmental safety. The panel directed the irrigation and command area development department; the HMWS&SB and the Telangana Pollution Control Board to file their response detailing the extent of pollution and the steps taken in discharge of their statutory responsibilities, including setting up sewage treatment plants and ensuring a safe water supply. The panel directed the GHMC and the municipal administration department to place on

record the measures undertaken to prevent the inflow of polluted sewage from nearby colonies, villages, and industrial units into the reservoirs. Granting four weeks, the panel adjourned the matter for further hearing.

ACCUSED GETS BAIL IN ALPRAZOLAM CASE

The Telangana High Court granted regular bail to an accused in a narcotics case involving the alleged illegal manufacture and distribution of alprazolam. The judge allowed the criminal petition filed by S. Narendra Goud who was arrested in connection with a case registered by the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. The case originated from a raid conducted in September 2025 at a premises

in Old Bowenpally, Hyderabad, where an alleged illegal alprazolam manufacturing unit was uncovered. The officials reportedly seized over 3.3 kg of alprazolam, precursor chemicals, laboratory equipment, and ₹21.4 lakh in cash, believed to be proceeds from the sale of narcotics. Counsel for the petitioner argued that the accused was falsely implicated based solely on inadmissible confessional statements, with no direct recovery of contraband from his possession. The prosecution maintained that the offences were serious in nature and that the accused, if released, could influence witnesses or tamper with evidence. After considering the submissions and the period of custody since November 5, the judge observed that the main accused was already been granted bail.

PULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
WARANGAL, MARCH 29

Centuries-old stone sculptures dating to the Kakatiya and Vijaya Chola periods have been found lying neglected at the historic Kaleshwara Mukteswara Swamy Temple in Mahadevpur mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. The issue came to light following recent renovation works at the temple complex. While the main temple continues to draw devotees, surrounding structures, including the Someshekhar and Chandrashekhar temples, and idols unearthed during excavations, have been left in the open. Several idols, including a 'Chaturmukha Brahma' and other carved deities, are lying unattended near the Par-



Archaeology department officials, including assistant director Madhavi and deputy superintendent Kotaiah, inspect neglected ancient sculptures at the Kaleshwaram temple premises in Mahadevpur mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. — DC

vati and Maha Saraswati temples. Archaeology department officials, including assistant director Madhavi and deputy superintendent Kotaiah, recently inspected the site, raising concerns over preservation. Historians said shifting the sculptures from the river basin and temple premises to a protected museum would help conserve them, document local heritage and support tourism. Local residents said many such artefacts once found across the village and along the Godavari riverbanks have already been lost, and called for a dedicated museum at Kaleshwaram. They urged government and archaeology department to take steps to protect the remaining sculptures and create a central facility for preservation.

DECCAN Chronicle

30 MARCH 2026

Amid crude surge, strive for energy independence

Brent crude, the international benchmark, has climbed by 51 per cent since the start of March, beating the previous monthly record of 46 per cent in September 1990 after Iraq President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, leading to the first Gulf war. This fact highlights the enormity of the oil price surge since last month.

The average price of India's crude basket is at \$115 a barrel, which is at least \$45 more than the price (\$70) the country is comfortable to pay. Every dollar rise in the crude oil price will increase the country's fiscal deficit, current account deficit, pull down stock markets, increase pressure on rupee, spike urea cost and make transportation costly.

No other major economy is as vulnerable to the ups and downs of imported crude oil as India is. Even since 1973, every oil crisis has led to multi-dimensional problems in the country, including unseating the incumbent political party from power.

Almost 99 per cent of petrol imported by India — 42 million metric tonnes — is used by people to run their private vehicles. Of this, 59 per cent is used by bikers, 30 per cent by passenger cars and 10 per cent by utility vehicles. At least half of the diesel — 44 million metric tonnes — imported to India is used by medium and heavy commercial vehicles.

Crude oil and its derivatives are essential for producing and cooking food, travelling, clothes (polyester and nylon), packaging, equipment and gadgets (plastic). Imported crude oil is to India what blood is to human beings.

Though India is comfortably placed with roughly 50 days of crude oil reserves and has diversified its sources, the country cannot escape from the impact of crude oil prices. Yet none of successive governments have tried to arrange alternative systems.

In the 1990s, the world might not have had the technology to replace crude oil. But now in 2026, the world has various technologies to replace crude oil or at least reduce its dependency drastically. For food production, India could use green hydrogen to produce green ammonia without using natural gas. Similarly, the country could switch to methane, supplied through piped gas network, or dimethyl ether (DME) supplied through existing LPG distribution network, or nudge households to shift to electric induction tops.

For transport, the emerging sodium ion technology can help India to produce batteries that are safe and fast charging. Green hydrogen could also be fuel for cars that are run on fuel cell technology as well as internal combustion engines after some modifications. Hydrogen-run cars produce only water as exhaust.

Nevertheless, successive governments have not taken any interest in implementing these new technologies. It is understandable that politicians, who are more concerned about elections, may not have the required knowledge or bandwidth to think long term. However, what were top officials, who represent the cream of cream of Indian youth and are selected through rigorous entrance tests, doing? If the government does not take steps to achieve energy independence for the country at least now, the future will not forgive it.

Social media: Let parents take control

The two verdicts handed down by juries in Los Angeles courts last week mark a critical moment of accountability for social media companies. Meta, YouTube, TikTok and Snap will be facing thousands of lawsuits in courts all over the US not only from parents and individuals but also soon.

The verdicts represent a moment of reckoning for companies that like Big Tobacco failed to respond to the off-repeated and valid criticism that their platforms are addictive and hence extremely harmful for children. The blame for not caring about the people while focusing on business and revenues and a sphere of influence ruling over the world's children has been squarely laid on social media handles.

While social media companies may be engaged with litigation for a couple of years to come, the landmark judgment pronounced should be a wake-up call for all parents who have the interests of their children at heart. The message is simple and straightforward — the use of social media poses a very serious danger to children. The verdicts represent a moment of reckoning for companies that like Big Tobacco failed to respond to the off-repeated criticism that their platforms are addictive and hence extremely harmful for children. The blame for not caring about the people while focusing on revenues and spheres of influence ruling over the world's children has been squarely laid on social media companies. The use of social media is closely tied to well-being. Addiction has been known to wreck children's lives, causing body dysmorphia, imposing anxiety and planting suicidal thoughts. To recognise the danger is more important than the kind of penalties running into millions of dollars.

It is time parents woke up to this clear and present danger to their kids. They must open conversations with their young to restrict the use of social media as banning it may not work because of peer pressure. Many nations have introduced or are contemplating social media bans for children below 16. It remains to be seen how effective such bans are.

It is, however, the parents' response to the danger that will be far more relevant to how this opportunity can be seized to teach their children to make healthier choices about technology use. They must sit with their children and work it out lest humanity loses another battle to addictions as it did, first to tobacco and then to more harmful recreational drugs. Parents must take some control of their children's lives in this matter.

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Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003; Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256

Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284.

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004; Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: H. No. 1-21-12/1, Cheralabhtur Road, Mugudhumpur Village, Karimnagar-505186, PH. NO. 9121181123.

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatchalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

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Subhani



The silent crisis of the rise in urban noise pollution



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

The air pollution crisis in the National Capital Region during the winter months has made this urban challenge a major policy and media concern. There is another form of pollution that has gripped urban India that does not get the media and policy attention that it deserves. While noise pollution was officially identified as a major social problem in urban India a quarter century ago, with the notification of Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules 2000, few state governments are willing to address it determinedly.

The noise pollution rules notified under the Environment Protection Act 1986 aim to stem the rising tide of urban noise through several sources, especially loudspeakers, traffic, construction and public events. The rules acknowledged the fact that noise exceeding certain medically acceptable decibel levels not only disrupt peace but also affect the quality of life and health of residents, especially the young and the old.

The hazardous effects of sustained, repeated and high-decibel noise pollution are many and include hearing loss, indcement of stress, anxiety and contribute to cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease. Individuals prone to nervous stress are particularly vulnerable to sharp and sustained noise. Noise pollution also delays recuperation and rehabilitation of ailing patients in hospitals, which is why traffic rules do not permit honking in the vicinity of hospitals. This rule is today observed in its callous breach.

Mention should be made that sustained neighbourhood noise has a deleterious impact on the learning abilities of children and youth studying at school, college or at home. In fact, most

urban neighbourhoods are no longer conducive to serious reading and study and the education of the young. How can one expect students to focus and concentrate on their studies when they are constantly subject to noise from loudspeakers in the neighbourhood?

Living intermittently in a residential neighbourhood in New Delhi and in Hyderabad, I have identified three prime sources of noise pollution that have become a public nuisance: (a) Vehicular traffic, especially honking by most drivers; the use of sirens by police vehicles escorting ministers and other senior government functionaries and political busybodies (a nuisance across the country); (b) loudspeakers deployed by mosques, temples and other religious places, as well as by political parties and social activists; and, (c) construction activity.

The use of loudspeakers in public places and residential areas has generally been limited in most cities to between 6 am and 10 pm. Any use after 10 pm requires special permission. This has not inhibited rampant use of loudspeakers through the night. During religious festivals, loudspeakers are routinely deployed.

This can range from loudspeakers blaring music out of Ganesha and Durga Puja pandals to high-decibel speakers being placed in huge vehicles that carry idols around cities before their immersion, or accompany devotees such as the Kanwariyas. The blaring of film and religious music at exceedingly high decibels through the night have made these events a major cause of noise pollution in several cities across India.

Hearing the screeching and often an audibly unmusical voice of a muezzin at a mosque, summoning the faithful to worship, in the early waking hours, one

Most urban neighbourhoods are no longer conducive to serious reading and the education of the young. How can they focus on their studies while being constantly subjected to noise from loudspeakers?

wonders how the faithful were summoned in the age before loudspeakers. In that distant era when humans did not have watches and alarm clocks, the loud summoning of the faithful by a muezzin is understandable. But with everyone having a mobile phone does one require a loudspeaker to remind one that it is time for prayer, time to eat, time to fast?

The unchecked spread of mosques in several cities, including Hyderabad, and across residential areas, with an ill-trained voice of a muezzin have made their calls on loudspeakers periodic bursts of shrill noise. It is no longer restricted to the five times that the faithful are summoned to prayer, with loudspeakers blaring sermons from mosques and madrasas through the day.

It is not as if the penalties for noise pollution are light. Criminal charges can be brought against repeat offenders. The law provides that loudspeakers that are set beyond permissible decibel levels can be confiscated. However, this requires action by the relevant authorities.

My attempt to get the several mosques in my neighbourhood in Hyderabad that have their loudspeakers directed at my home and the surrounding areas to merely alter the direction of their speakers has met with no success despite my complaining to the local police and other influential persons. I even made the additional point that there are two hospitals in the vicinity and the law prohibits noise in the vicinity of hospitals.

When ministers drive around with police escort cars blaring sirens loud, how does one expect the government and the police to be sensitive to the prob-

lem of noise pollution? Apart from the failure of the authorities in checking noise pollution, there is a cultural dimension to the challenge. Most Indians tend to be noisy.

This fact was recently highlighted by a directive issued by the civil aviation authorities urging airline passengers to use earphones while listening to music or viewing entertainment on a flight. Indeed, one often has to request fellow passengers to speak softly so that one can read a book or get a shut eye. The upwardly mobile Indian is a very noisy animal. She speaks loudly, laughs loudly, sets decibel levels on mobile phones very high and will rarely discipline a noisy child.

Urban India has become sensitised to an extent to the hazards of air pollution because it is beginning to feel the deleterious effect of toxic air, with the rising incidence of lung disease. However, there is very little appreciation of how noise pollution is also a health hazard. Episodic noise, emanating from loudspeakers at religious places, to sustained noise, of vehicular traffic and construction activity are deleterious to one's health.

The time has come for a national campaign against noise pollution. Three immediate steps that can be taken and that would immediately reduce decibel levels would be (a) ban the use of loudspeakers at all places of worship, marriages and other social events at all times; (b) ban on loudspeakers being placed on trucks carrying idols during festivals; (c) ban on use of sirens by police vehicles escorting ministers and all other government vehicles, except ambulances.

Urbanisation isn't just about building the hard infrastructure of roads, flyovers, metros, high-rise buildings, drainage and public parks. It is equally about creating a shared culture of urban living, of which minimising noise is an important element.

*Sanjaya Baru is a writer and economist. His most recent book is *Secession of the Successful: The Flight Out of New India*.*

LETTERS

ELDERLY PARENTS

The introduction of elderly parents Bill by the Telangana government is highly appreciated (*State introduces Bill to protect elderly parents, March 29*). It will be helpful to the parents once they cross 60 years if children neglect them. It is the prime responsibility of every child to look and take care of their parents as long as they are alive.

Syed Amjad Ali

Secunderabad

MUSI REJUVENATION

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy pushing the Musi rejuvenation project which includes shrines is highly commendable and shows his religious tolerance (*Dakshina Kasi on the banks of Musi, March 29*). But for a stretch of about 50 km, drain water joins the Musi river in Hyderabad. The sewage must be purified before it joins the river.

Venkat Rudra

Hyderabad

WELFARE BOARDS

It is pathetic to see that the so-called corporations and boards to take up welfare activities for the people under their jurisdiction are a big zero in performance (*Corporations, welfare boards have little to show for work, March 2028*). Not even 1 per cent of the funds allotted to them have been spent except on salaries for the chairpersons luxurious offices and other paraphernalia.

Aditya Shivane

Hyderabad

Reports highlighting the poor performance of corporations and federations raise serious concerns about administrative efficiency. It is imperative that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy focuses on strengthening governance so that institutions function effectively for public welfare. Non-performance in any department ultimately reflects on the overall leadership, as the entire administrative machinery operates under the CM's guidance.

T. Kailash Ditya

Hyderabad

RCBEE STING

Wow, what a charming headline for the IPL season 19 inaugural match (*RCBee sting, March 29*). Such creativity truly fascinates the reader.

Bison Nadukani

Mancherial

Email your letters to
info@deccanmail.com,
editor@deccanmail.com.

John J. Kennedy



Amidst NCERT row: Respect all institutions, not silence criticism

The controversy surrounding the inclusion of a chapter on corruption in the judiciary in a National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbook is rapidly turning into a national debate about the nature of civic education in India. What began as a disagreement over textbook content has now acquired institutional and political overtones. The Supreme Court has banned the textbook and directed the Centre, state governments and publicly funded institutions to dissociate Prof. Michel Denino and two associates involved in preparing the material from any curriculum or textbook development work.

Meanwhile, senior advocate Prashant Bhusan has publicly stated that he read the entire chapter and found it balanced and factually grounded.

Amid the exchange of sharp statements, legal directives and political reactions, it may be useful to step back and examine the issue more calmly. Beyond the immediate controversy lies a deeper question: how should a democracy educate its young citizens about the institutions that govern them? Should civic education present only the strengths of institutions, or should it also acknowledge their weaknesses? Should students be shielded from uncomfortable realities, or should they be encouraged to understand the complexities of democratic governance? If so, how?

At first glance, the Supreme Court's response may appear quite understandable. The judiciary holds a special place in India's constitutional system as the guardian of fundamental rights and the final inter-

preter of the Constitution. Because public trust is central to its authority, judges may worry that any discussion of judicial corruption, especially in school textbooks, could weaken confidence in the institution. However, the way the controversy has been handled raises concerns. Halting the chapter's circulation and effectively blacklisting the experts involved appears excessive. While protecting institutional dignity is legitimate, such a response appears defensive, particularly for a judiciary long regarded as a defender of free speech and open debate. It also raises a broader constitutional issue. Blanket restrictions on free speech are viewed with suspicion in all democracies. Stopping discussion before it reaches the public (what scholars call "prior restraint") is often considered more troubling.

Besides, there is the question of proportionality. Even if the aim is to protect institutional reputation, a complete ban is an extreme step. If the chapter contained inaccuracies or lacked context, revisions or expert review could have addressed the concerns without silencing discussion altogether.

The controversy has also unfolded against the backdrop of a wider debate over school textbooks in recent years. Several revisions and deletions in NCERT textbooks, particularly in subjects such as history and political science, have already raised concerns about the direction of civic education in India. In this context, removing discussions of institutional shortcomings reinforces the perception that textbooks are increasingly avoiding difficult conver-

sations about public institutions.

However, the most important issue concerns the purpose of civic education itself. Democracies rely on citizens who are able to understand how institutions function, not only in theory but also in practice.

If textbooks present institutions as flawless, students may grow up with an idealised picture of governance. When reality inevitably proves more complicated, disillusionment may follow. A carefully balanced discussion of institutional challenges can encourage a more mature and realistic understanding of democracy. In this regard, a balanced approach would involve three key elements. First, any discussion of judicial corruption must be embedded within a larger explanation of how the judiciary functions, its constitutional safeguards, and its historical contributions. Students should understand the doctrine of separation of powers, the role of judicial review, and the mechanisms designed to ensure judicial accountability. When corruption cases are mentioned, they should be presented as deviations from constitutional ideals rather than defining characteristics of the institution.

Second, textbooks must clearly distinguish between systemic critique and sensationalism. A few high-profile cases cannot be extrapolated into sweeping generalisations about an entire institution. Instead, students can be introduced to the concept of institutional design — how systems create checks and balances, and how those checks sometimes fail. By examining both successes and shortcomings,

learners develop analytical skills rather than emotional reactions. This approach treats students as thinking individuals capable of nuance, not passive recipients of simplified narratives.

Third, civic education should encourage constructive engagement. If students learn about corruption, they should also learn about reform efforts, legal remedies and citizen action. Discussions may include how transparency laws, internal oversight mechanisms, and public interest litigation have addressed institutional lapses. In this way, the narrative moves beyond exposing flaws to exploring the processes of democratic self-correction.

From a constitutional perspective, the solution lies not in erasing such discussions but in refining them. If a chapter lacks balance or context, revision and expert review would be more proportionate. Democracies derive legitimacy not from avoiding criticism but from the ability to confront it.

The controversy also reveals a deeper tension in Indian public life between pride and introspection. Calling India the "mother of all democracies" reflects civilisational confidence. Yet democratic maturity lies not in claiming perfection but in openly examining shortcomings. Civic education should indeed prepare students to understand and strengthen the democratic institutions that they have inherited.

The writer is retired professor and former dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at Christ University in Bengaluru

SHORT TAKE

MAN HELD FOR ASSAULT ON SPECIALLY-ABLED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Attapur police arrested a 40-year-old man for sexually assaulting a 28-year-old differently abled woman. Police said the accused entered the victim's house when her family members were away and committed the crime. He later confessed during questioning.

The victim, who is hearing and speech impaired, informed her family through sign language on Sunday. Based on her complaint, police teams, in the presence of Bharosa officials, recorded her statement with the help of a sign language expert.

TIGER RETURNS TO PAPIKONDALU RESERVE FOREST

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MARCH 29

A tiger that had been moving in plain areas for the past month entered the Papikondalu reserve forest on Sunday, bringing relief to forest officials. The animal had earlier strayed into human habitations, killing cattle and causing concern among villagers.

Private vaccine choices leave parents confused

Experts urge timely vaccination despite multiple available options

YOGA ADITHYA and NAGA ADITHYA HYDERABAD, MARCH 28

Vaccination programmes against polio mandated by the World Health Organisation and mandatory immunisation certificates for children travelling abroad have increased awareness among people about the benefits of vaccination. However, different approaches adopted by government healthcare facilities and private hospitals towards the vaccination of newborns has become a key concern for parents.

According to some parents in Hyderabad, government facilities do not offer the full range of vaccines, forcing them to rely on private hospitals to complete the schedule. A paediatrician from a private hospital says, follow the National Immunisation Schedule (NIS) and also an additional schedule recommended by the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP). The IAP schedule mandates six more vaccines for influenza, typhoid, varicella,

VAX IT IN TIME

- WHO polio drives increased awareness about vaccination benefits.
- Parents concerned over differing newborn vaccination approaches in hospitals.
- Government facilities reportedly lack full range of recommended vaccines
- Private hospitals advertise pain-free vaccines costing 6,000 to 10,000.
- Parents rely on private hospitals to complete vaccination schedules.
- Indian Academy of Pediatrics recommends additional vaccines beyond national schedule.

MMR, HPV and hepatitis A.

Private hospitals, the parents say, have been advertising pain-free vaccines for a hefty price of ₹6,000-₹10,000 per schedule, excluding consultation fees. The cost of these vaccines vary depending on the brand of the vaccine.

Explaining the difference, a paediatrician said, "Painless vaccines are acellular vaccines. Private hospitals provide acellu-

lar vaccines, whereas the government of India provides whole-cell vaccines. These acellular vaccines do not give side effects or fever."

While whole-cell vaccines use inactivated bacteria, the paediatrician said, acellular vaccines contain specific purified protein subunits, which may result in fewer side effects but require additional booster doses.

Dr Vittal Kumar Kesireddy said, "Pain-free vac-

ines are designed to cause less pain and fewer side effects." He noted that "the first year is very important for a baby's immunity," and added that advances in technology have led to combination vaccines that protect against multiple diseases in a single shot.

While this can make vaccination appear expensive, it reduces the number of injections and helps build immunity early. He also pointed out that hospitalisation due to preventable infections would cost significantly more than vaccination.

Another medical professional, however, opined that government vaccines may be preferable in some cases, as they are administered in large volumes and are less likely to be stored for long periods, unlike in some private settings.

Doctors emphasise that timely vaccination is more important than the choice between government and private facilities. While both systems have their advantages, the decision ultimately rests with parents.

Imitation jewellery lands 'Gold Man' in IT scanner

SYED OMAR FAROOQ | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29



Surya Bhai

Frequent temple visits, flashy appearances at public events, involvement in land settlements and the habit of wearing over two kilograms of gold-coloured ornaments have landed Surya Bhai, popularly known as Hyderabad Gold Man, under the income-tax department's scanner.

Surya, who often claimed his jewellery was worth more than ₹1.3 crore, reportedly told I-T officials during questioning that he wore imitation ornaments to attract attention in real estate and cinema circles. Sources said only jewellery worth about ₹2.8 lakh was genuine, while the rest was imitation.

"His intention was to project himself as wealthy to gain the confidence of realtors, social media and the film industry," an I-T official disclosed.

Despite denying in public that he wore imitation jewellery, Surya, a resident of Rajendranagar, eventually displayed 41 imitation articles when officials checked his returns. They found he had failed to clear dues of

₹3.9 lakh over the past four years. Surya runs a wholesale chicken centre and works as a personal trainer at a gym in Attapur.

Further probe revealed properties in the names of his family members. Officials grew suspicious after learning that Surya, despite owning property, lived in a rented flat in Rajendranagar and moved around in luxury cars. His associate Suraj Singh told investigators that Surya purchased luxury cars and wore imitation jewellery to appear rich and gain influence in land settlements and real estate deals.

After questioning, I-T officials released Surya late on Friday night,

• **DESPITE DENYING** in public that he wore imitation jewellery, Surya, a resident of Rajendranagar, eventually displayed 41 imitation articles when officials checked his returns.

• **FURTHER PROBE** revealed properties in the names of his family members. Officials grew suspicious after learning that Surya, despite owning property, lived in a rented flat in Rajendranagar and moved around in luxury cars.

directing him to furnish a list of his assets and sources of income.

Interacting with the media on Sunday evening, Surya confessed that he had pending I-T dues. "I have earned enough legally and have the capacity to feed at least 10 families. I have not committed any crime. It hardly matters to anyone whether the gold I wear is pure or imitation. Whenever I-T or any other department comes, I have a reason — I was depressed over personal issues in recent years and could not clear my I-T dues in my declaration," he said.

Rally against war



Leaders from the Congress, Left parties and the TJS hold a massive rally protesting the America-Israel bomb attacks on Iran, from historic Charminar to Exhibition Grounds, Nampally on Sunday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

DOC URGES TO SUPPORT HER PLEA ON ORS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

A city-based paediatrician has renewed her appeal to parents to support a petition highlighting concerns over the branding and marketing of a commercially available ERZL electrolyte drink, warning that it could cause confusion during critical dehydration management.

Dr Sivaranjani said the issue was not about the safety of the drink in isolation, but about how it is presented and perceived by consumers, particularly in high-pressure situations such as treating dehydration in children.

She pointed out that the product's communication and positioning may create an association with Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS), which are medically recommended for dehydration. References to similarly named products in branding or advertising, she argued, could reinforce consumer recall and blur the distinction between scientifically approved ORS and commercially marketed electrolyte beverages.

"In pharmacy settings, people often make quick decisions under stress and rely on familiar names or visual cues. This can directly influence their choice," she said.

Health board releases merit list for 174 asst professor posts

Hyderabad : The Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board (MHSRB) on Sunday issued the merit list for recruitment to 174 assistant professor posts in government medical colleges. Vacancies span Gynaecology (90), Anaesthesia (44), Paediatrics (28) and Orthopaedics (12). Certificate verification

for shortlisted candidates will be held on April 1 at the Indian Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Vengal Rao Nagar. The final selection list will follow completion of verification. Separately, the board announced the final merit and selection lists for 2,312 nursing officer posts will be released by April 9.

Wedding of couple who died by suicide held for 23 years in row

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC WARANGAL, MARCH 29

A tribal couple in Santulal Podu thanda of Bayyaram mandal in Mahbubabad district conducted the ceremonial wedding for their deceased son and his partner for the 23rd consecutive year on Sunday.

The annual ritual, held on Sri Rama Navami, commemorates a relationship that ended in tragedy in 2003. According to family members, Ram Koti, son of Lalu and Sukkamma, was in a relationship with Lakshmi from the same village, but faced opposition from elders. Following the opposition, Ram Koti died by suicide, and Lakshmi also died days later.

Lalu and Sukkamma later constructed a shrine at their residence with statues of Ram Koti and Lakshmi and began performing annual wedding rituals. Sukkamma said, "He came to me in my sleep and asked us to build a temple for them and perform their marriage. We couldn't unite them when they were



Tribal couple performs ceremonial wedding for deceased son and his partner for the 23rd year at Santulal Podu thanda in Mahbubabad district's Bayyaram mandal on Sunday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

breathing, so we decided to spend the rest of our lives making amends by uniting their souls every year."

The ceremony includes traditional practices such as offering new attire, performing talambrahu and playing mangala vaidyam. Over the years, the event has drawn participation from villagers and relatives of both families.

A village elder said, "It is a reminder that love should be celebrated while people are alive, not just mourned after they are gone."

Lalu said, "Every year when we offer talambrahu over their statues, I feel like my son is finally at peace." The annual observance continues to be held as part of local tradition.

ATTENTION! GST TAXPAYERS

Whose Aggregate Annual Turnover[#] is upto a specified limit* can opt for GST Composition Scheme for the FY 2026-2027 by 31st March, 2026

Eligible taxpayers who wish to avail the Composition Scheme can follow these steps on the GST portal (www.gst.gov.in):

- Log in to the Taxpayers' Interface
- Go to Services > Registration > Application to Opt for Composition Levy
- Fill the FORM GST CMP-02 and submit

Those eligible taxpayers, who are already availing Composition Scheme, need not file FORM CMP-02 if they are eligible.

- Easy & Convenient Compliance
- Attractive Tax Rates
- Minimum Compliance Requirements
- Automatic Continuation/Renewal to next year and Easy to Opt-out
- Available for supplier of Goods as well as Services
- Less Bookkeeping

| * Type of Suppliers | # Aggregate Annual Turnover during FY 2025-26 | |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| Supplier of Goods | Taxpayers registered in 08 Specified States | upto ₹75 Lakh |
| | Taxpayers registered in other States | upto ₹150 Lakh |
| Supplier of Services | | upto ₹50 Lakh |

For more details, please refer to section 10 of CGST Act, Rule 3-7 of CGST Rules and Notification No. 14/2019 - Central Tax dated 07.03.2019

GST Composition Scheme: Big Benefits for Small Taxpayers

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CBC 15502/13/0052/2526

SHORT TAKES

DGP HONOURS UMESH CHANDRA'S LEGACY AT SR NAGAR
DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

On the occasion of the 60th birth anniversary of late IPS officer Chadalaawada Umesh Chandra, Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy paid floral tributes to his statue at SR Nagar here on Sunday. The bravery and commitment of Chandra in maintaining law and order were remembered during the programme.

The DGP unveiled a book written by Umesh Chandra, noting in his foreword that the officer had rendered distinguished services to the police department with integrity throughout his career. Former DGP Ch. Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, Umesh Chandra's father Chadalaawada Venugopala Rao and others participated in the event.

The DGP hailed Umesh Chandra's determination, particularly at a critical time when terrorist activities were high, as proof of his commitment to public safety. He observed that Umesh Chandra's professional legacy, recognised as that of a mentor to fellow officers and a leader who inspired team spirit, continues to be an inspiration to young officers today. Publishing the book commemorating his dedication, he said, was a true tribute to him.

DOCS CONDEMN ATTACK ON NIRMAL PAEDIATRICIAN
DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

A reported assault on a paediatrician at a private hospital in Nirmal has drawn sharp condemnation from the Telangana Senior Resident Doctors Association (T-SRDA), which has demanded immediate action and stronger protection for healthcare workers.

According to the association, Dr Santosh Raj and hospital staff were allegedly attacked by a group of attendants following a dispute over billing. "T-SRDA unequivocally condemns the recent assault," the association said, warning that such incidents pose a serious risk to the safety of doctors and hospital staff.

The association noted that doctors often work under pressure, dealing with critically ill patients and distressed families. "Acts of violence not only jeopardise the well-being of medical staff but also compromise patient care and disrupt hospital functioning," it said.

T-SRDA has called for a prompt investigation, identification of those involved, strict enforcement of legal provisions, improved hospital security, and long-term policy measures to prevent violence against healthcare professionals. Extending support to the affected doctor, the association stressed: "Ensuring the safety of doctors is essential for a functional healthcare system," urging authorities to act swiftly.

MBBS STUDENT ADOPTS HONEY BADGER AT ZOO
DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

J. Rehan Prakash, a second-year MBBS student from Gandhi Medical College marked his 20th birthday on Sunday by adopting a honey badger at the Nehru Zoological Park. He handed over a cheque for ₹50,000 to Dr Sunil S. Hiremath, director of zoo parks, towards the animal's upkeep for six months.

Prakash said he was inspired by his father, a forest officer, to support wildlife conservation. He noted that caring for wild animals in zoos and conservation centres is demanding, and thanked officials for the opportunity to contribute. Dr Hiremath commended the initiative, pointing out that this was the first adoption of a honey badger at the zoo. He added that the species, also known as the ratel, is a nocturnal carnivorous mammal found in India, Africa and Southwest Asia, and is currently housed in the zoo's nocturnal section for public display.



Microgrids and solar stoves may usher in Gram Swaraj in India

If a country depends on foreign supplies for producing food and cooking food, two most essential requirements for life, it cannot consider itself to be a free nation. India needs total control over food production and cooking fuel to declare itself to be independent. *Deccan Chronicle* explores alternative systems to reduce India's dependence on imported ingredients for cooking.

S. UMAMAHESHWAR | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

Despite India suffering from the oil crisis in the past, villages remained unaffected by global developments. But they can no longer be so this time because almost every household in rural areas uses LPG to cook. Compared to this, less than one per cent of rural households had LPG during the 1990 oil shock, and only 18 per cent of rural households cooked their food on LPG stoves in 2013, when the crude oil price upset the Indian economy.

According to data from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC), India needs 33.1 million metric tonnes (MMT) of LPG. Of this, nearly 40 per cent or 12.8 MMT is produced domestically. The rest of the 60 per cent is imported from West Asia, which is reeling under the war.

Out of 33.2 MMT LPG, 88.2 per cent of demand comes from cooking purposes. The remaining gas goes for commercial purposes — Eateries 9.5 per cent, industry 2.1 per cent, and vehicles 0.2 per cent. Businesses which depend on LPG will secure it regardless of the shortage — either through official channels or through the black market. This will squeeze the availability of LPG for poorer sections of society.

To protect households, especially in rural areas, from unpredictable geopolitics and to make villages energy independent, the government should encourage all rural households to harness multiple energy sources for cooking — LPG for deep frying, among others and stoves or induction plates, powered by rooftop solar panels, for other cooking needs.

At the heart of this transition is a simple principle: consume locally, balance locally, and depend on the grid only when necessary. At the household level, rooftop solar panels can meet a share of daily electricity needs, including cooking needs. Homes should be designed to first use

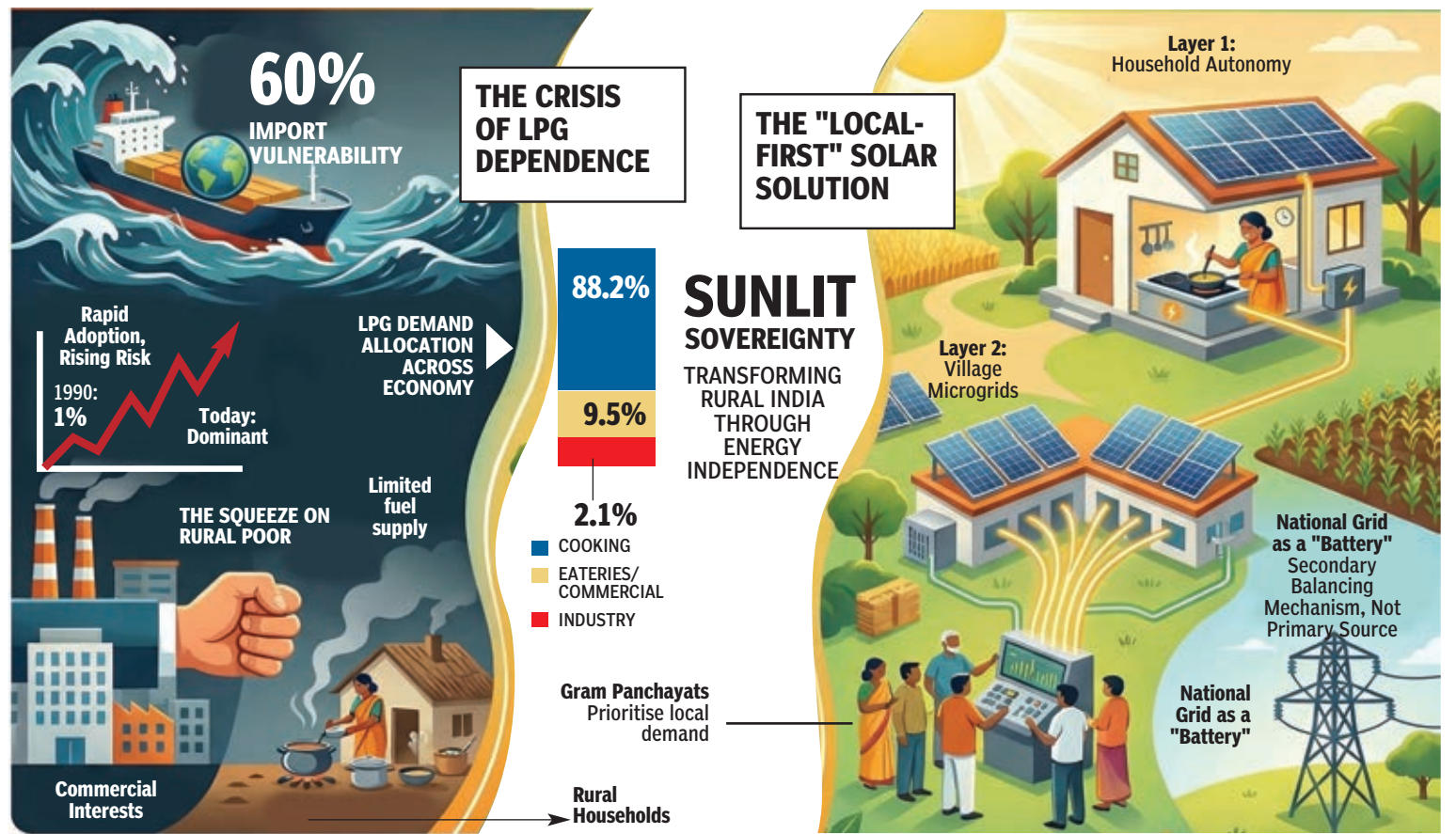
their own solar power. Any additional requirement can be drawn from a village-level microgrid, while surplus energy generated during the day can flow into that same system. This creates a self-reinforcing local energy loop.

The second layer is the village microgrid, ideally owned by the gram panchayat and operated through a professional energy service model. This microgrid aggregates power from all households and community solar installations. It prioritises meeting village demand using this pooled solar energy. If there is a shortfall, it draws power from the national grid. If there is surplus, it exports electricity back to the grid.

This system does not replace the national grid — it complements it. The grid becomes a balancing mechanism rather than the primary source of supply. This "local-first, grid-supported" model ensures reliability while dramatically reducing transmission and distribution losses, which occur when electricity travels long distances.

The benefits of this system are substantial. Local power generation reduces stress on the grid and lowers technical losses. Panchayat involvement improves accountability and billing efficiency. It will introduce another source of money for panchayats. Reliable electricity enables rural enterprises — from cold storage to small manufacturing — turning energy access into economic growth. Most importantly, it insulates India from global fuel shocks. This system does not suffer from a technological challenge; all the components already exist. The real task is policy alignment — integrating rooftop solar schemes, rural electrification programmes, and distribution reforms into a unified framework. If executed well, this model can transform India's energy landscape. Villages will not just consume electricity — they will produce, manage, and trade it. Villages will become energy independent, leading to true Gram Swaraj.

While piped gas networks, which use Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) or methane, and electric induction tops are the easy alternatives, the government should scale up its research on a domestic alternative Dimethyl Ether (DME), which could be transported to users in pressurised cylinders.



DME can end India's dependence on LPG

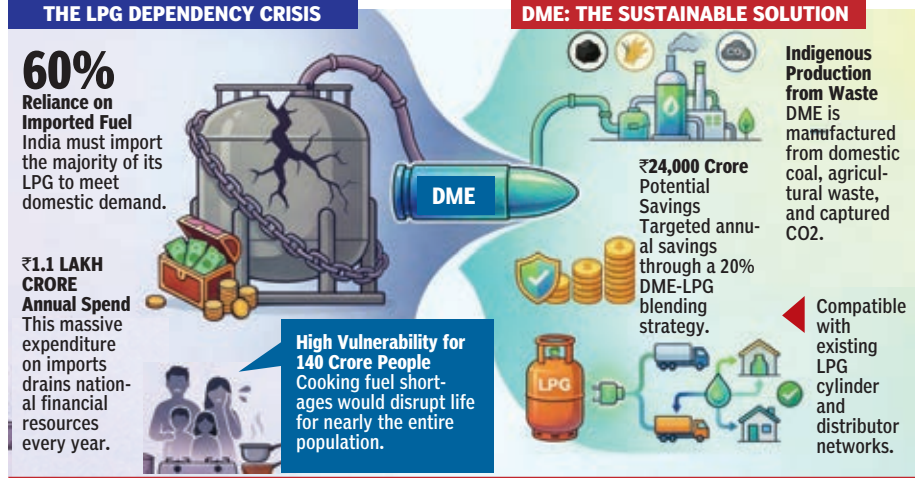
DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

DME: INDIA'S "MAGIC BULLET" FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

With nearly 98 per cent Indian households using LPG for cooking, its shortage would throw life out of gear for over 140 crore people in the country. If required, the government may ask people to stop unnecessary travelling as happened during the Covid lockdown. But any government asking people to stop cooking would be committing political suicide.

Though India meets 40 per cent of its demand for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) from local sources, the world's most populated country depending on imported fuel to cook is foolhardy and requires urgent steps to indigenous our cooking fuels.

While piped gas networks, which use Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) or methane, and electric induction tops are the easy alternatives, the government should scale up its research on a domestic alternative Dimethyl Ether (DME), which could be transported to users in pressurised cylinders.



DME is a clean-burning synthetic fuel that behaves almost exactly like LPG. It can be liquefied under moderate pressure, making it compatible with the infrastructure we already have. But unlike LPG, which is a byproduct of oil and gas refining, DME can be manufactured from India's own vast resources such as coal, agricultural waste, and even captured carbon dioxide from factories.

Experts suggest that Dimethyl Ether could also be blended with LPG. India currently spends over ₹1.1 lakh crore annually on LPG imports. If India scales up DME blending to 20 per cent — the limit currently allowed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) — the country could save nearly ₹24,000 crore.

While PNG requires the government or industry to lay pipelines, whose security

in remote areas could be at risk, the DME cylinders could be transported using the existing LPG distributor network.

In terms of its impact on the environment, DME is a cleaner fuel than LPG. It burns with a blue and soot-free flame. Unlike LPG, it produces zero particulate matter, which is a major contributor to respiratory issues.

If produced from bio-

mass, DME offers a dual victory. The crop residue that farmers across the country currently burn can be converted into DME. This transforms an environmental liability into a revenue stream for farmers, effectively powering Indian kitchens with the remains of Indian harvests.

The DME production technology is not at a concept stage. CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) in Pune has already developed a patented indigenous catalyst for DME production. Industry should join hands with NCL to operationalise demonstration plants and gradually set up one or more DME factories in each state to diversify its production.

The domestic LPG production, which meets the country's 40 per cent needs, could be used for industrial purposes or for exporting. India's transition to DME is more than a fuel switch; it will protect households, increase farmers' income, curtail pollution and proclaim India's energy independence.

Green Hydrogen a must to support Green Revolution

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 29

India is self-sufficient in food production. But in 1973, the country faced a spike in food prices due to drought and a fertiliser shortage caused by a crude oil crisis. The country was confronted with a similar crisis in 2013 when the crude oil price shot up. Unless the country can manufacture fertiliser with local inputs, the benefits of the Green Revolution will not be sustainable.

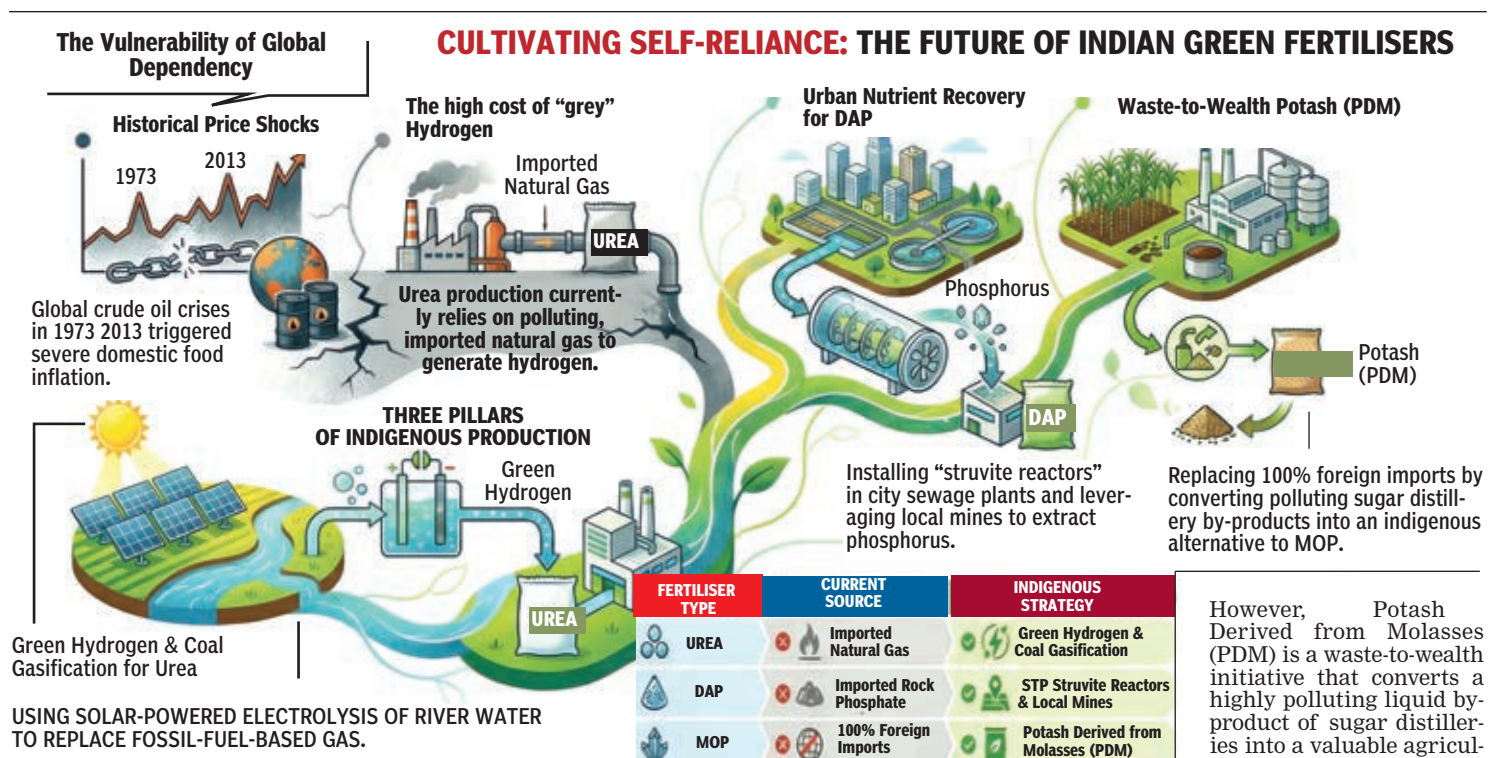
While green fertilisers are good for the world, the government cannot force farmers to adopt them without considering their impact on yield and national food security. The country, therefore, needs to switch to local sources to manufacture synthetic fertilisers. In India, farmers typically use three types of synthetic fertilisers — urea, Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) and Muriate of Potash (MOP). Urea is by far the most used fertiliser in the country, followed by DAP and MOP.

UREA
Urea is manufactured through a multi-step chemical reaction involving natural gas and air. In

this process, natural gas is made to react with steam to produce hydrogen, which is then combined with nitrogen from the air to create ammonia. Subsequently, ammonia is made to react with carbon dioxide at high temperature and pressure to form liquid urea, which is then dried into solid prills.

Hydrogen, which is produced through the electrolysis of water powered by solar power. The government can use the enormous water resources available in rivers originating from the Himalayas. It can give a big boost to the economies of UP, Bihar and West Bengal. Coal gasification is another way to produce hydrogen without depending on imported natural gas. The process is simple. Gas is produced using coal. This gas is used to react with steam to produce hydrogen, that will be used to produce urea.

DIAMMONIUM PHOSPHATE
Diammonium Phosphate



is produced by a chemical reaction between phosphoric acid and ammonia. Rock phosphate is treated with sulfuric acid to produce Phosphoric acid. This acid is then neutralised with ammonia to form a slurry, which is granulated and dried into

the final DAP product. India is one of the world's largest producers of sulfur. But it does not have high-quality rock phosphate, and it is imported from Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. About 10 per cent of the demand is met from local mines in Rajasthan

and Madhya Pradesh; some part of the current demand could be met by installing "struvite reactors" in Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in cities. Rock phosphate is available in various countries such as China, Morocco, Russia, the US, Brazil,

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, and it cannot be controlled by any group of countries.

MURIATE OF POTASH (MOP)
India imports the entire Muriate of Potash.

However, Potash Derived from Molasses (PDM) is a waste-to-wealth initiative that converts a highly polluting liquid by-product of sugar distilleries into a valuable agricultural nutrient. It provides an indigenous alternative to imported Muriate of Potash (MOP), which could end India's dependency on foreign potash. To encourage its production, the central government has included PDM under the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme.

60% free seat rule from April 20: DGCA

Airlines gear up to implement new rule

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

Airlines will start offering at least 60 per cent of seats in a flight without levying any additional charge from April 20, as well as maintain a transparent seat allocation policy, according to aviation watchdog DGCA.

On March 18, the civil aviation ministry announced that directions have been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers.

In this regard, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued the amended Air Transport Circular dated March 20. A DGCA official said the circular would come into effect from April 20.

The regulator has said that airlines should ensure at least "60 per cent of the seats in any flight shall be offered free of charge".

"Airlines should maintain transparent seat allocation policies and clearly communicate the availability of free seats and applicable conditions on their booking interfaces," as per a revised circular dated March 20.

Also, the regulator has said that passengers travelling on the same PNR (Passenger Name Record)

TRANSPARENT SEAT POLICY MANDATED

Airlines to clearly display availability of free seats and applicable conditions.

SAME PNR SEATING RULE
Passengers on the same booking should be allotted seats in close proximity.

AIRLINES OPPOSE MOVE
IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet say rule may force fare hike



INDIGO FLYER TRIES TO OPEN EXIT DOOR, SAYS 'POSSESSED BY GHOST'

Varanasi, March 29: Things turned spooky aboard an IndiGo flight on Saturday when a passenger tried to open the emergency exit door minutes before landing, later claiming he was "possessed by a ghost".

IndiGo flight 6E-185 from Bengaluru to Varanasi took off from Bengaluru around 8:15 pm, and among the pas-

sengers was a man named Mohammad Adnan, a resident of Mau district in Uttar Pradesh. Officials said just 15 minutes into the journey, Adnan attempted to tamper with the emergency door.

The cabin crew detected the attempt, were told it was a mistake and warned the passenger not to repeat the action.

— Agencies

should, as far as practicable, be allotted seats in close proximity to one another, ordinarily meaning adjacent seats in the same row. An official said airlines are preparing to implement the new directive. At present, 20 per cent of the seats can be booked free of charge, while the rest are paid. Generally, airlines charge ₹200 to ₹2,100 for choosing seats, depending on various factors, including front rows and extra leg room, a travel industry executive had said.

Maoist shot dead in Sukma gunfight

DC CORRESPONDENT
SUKMA, MARCH 29

A Maoist carrying a bounty of ₹5 lakh was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, two days before the March 31 deadline set by the Centre to eliminate Left Wing Extremism from the country, police said.

The gunfight occurred on a forested hill under the Polampalli police station area, where a team of the

Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said. Once the exchange of fire stopped, the body of a Naxalite, along with a weapon, was recovered from the spot, he said. The deceased cadre, Muchaki Kailash, was the section commander of platoon no. 31 of Maoists and carried a bounty of ₹5 lakh, the official said.

He said that Kailash was involved in incidents of civilian killing, planting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and attacks on police.

at least 27 Maoists have been killed in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year. On January 3, 14 Maoists were killed in two encounters in the Bastar region, which includes seven districts.

Inmates watch match on phones, 3 jail wardens suspended

DC CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU, MARCH 29

A video clip of three inmates lodged at Central Prison, Bengaluru, who were getting ready to watch — the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) playing against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) — on their smart phones, which went viral on social media on Sunday, resulted in suspension of three wardens of the jail. The wardens of the jail — Shivanand Karalabatti, Niranjan A. Kamat and Hanumanthappa Hadapad — were placed under suspension on charges of dereliction of duty.

In the video, the inmates identified as Darshan, Abhi and Andrews were heard cheering up. Sources stated preliminary investi-

gations revealed that trio hatched a conspiracy to defame a top ranking jail official, who had tightened the security, after assuming charge.



BENGALI ACTOR RAHUL ARUNODAY DROWNS IN SEA

Kolkata, March 29: Popular Bengali actor Rahul Arunoday Banerjee died on Sunday after drowning in the sea at Talsari beach in Odisha, film industry sources said.

He was 43, and left behind his 13-year-old son and actor-wife Priyanka Sarkar.

He had gone to the beach, located near Digha in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district, for shooting a Bengali soap titled 'Bhole Baba Par Karega', his co-actor Diganta Bagchi said.

Incarceration without trial is punishment: Apex court

New Delhi, March 29: Observing that incarceration without trial amounts to punishment, the Supreme Court granted bail to a Punjab resident in an attempt-to-murder case, noting that he had spent two years in jail without the trial even commencing.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and P. V. Varale, in its recent order, said Pradeep Kumar alias Banu was booked for various offences, including attempt to murder, in February 2024, but the prosecution is yet to examine any one of the 23 witnesses related to the case.

It set aside the July 11, 2025, order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court rejecting Kumar's bail plea. "Prosecution proposes to examine 23 witnesses to drive home the charges against the appellant, but none has been examined.



Thus, the trial is likely to take some time to conclude," the bench said in its March 13 order.

It added that almost two years have passed since Kumar was arrested, without a trial having commenced and a conclusion thereof nowhere in sight.

"Incarceration without trial amounts to punishment," the bench highlighted. Taking an overall view of the matter, the court was of the considered opinion that further detention of the appellant pending trial is

not necessary; and, since the appeal deserves acceptance, the appellant may be admitted to an order for the grant of bail, it said.

Imposing conditions on Kumar, the bench said he shall be released on bail, subject to furnishing of bail bonds to the satisfaction of the trial court and subject to such other terms and conditions as may be imposed by it.

"Needless to observe, the appellant shall not, directly or indirectly, by making inducement, threat or promise, dissuade any person acquainted with the facts of the case from disclosing such facts to the court," it said.

In the event there is any breach of the terms and conditions for the grant of bail, the trial court shall be at liberty to cancel the bail of the appellant, it added.

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SHALINI/SHIVANI-1.45, 4.45, 7.45PM
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SHORT TAKES

KERALA POLLS: CPM DENIES LDF-SDPI TIE-UP

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 29

The CPM on Sunday dismissed the Congress's accusation of an LDF-Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) deal for the upcoming assembly polls in Kerala.

CPM general secretary M. A. Baby said there was no truth to the allegations made by the UDF. "No discussions have been held with the SDPI regarding polls. There is no understanding whatsoever with that party," he told reporters in Kasaragod.

Baby's remarks came shortly after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan stated that the LDF would not extend support to communal parties.

Opposition leaders V. D. Sathees and Ramesh Chennithala accused the CPM leadership of striking a secret deal with the SDPI in the Mankada and Vengara assembly constituencies. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, however, dismissed reports of an LDF-SDPI tie-up.



SP LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR 2027 UP POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

Launching the poll bugle for 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, the Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Sunday that those who talked about winning 400 seats to change the Constitution have been defeated but the danger will remain till the BJP is in power.

Addressing a rally in Dadri in Gautambudhnagar, Mr Yadav countered Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks a day earlier at the inauguration of the Noida International Airport and alleged that several airports inaugurated by the BJP were not operational.

"Earlier also airports were inaugurated by them, but out of seven, six are not functional," he claimed, and also promised fair compensation to farmers for land acquisition once his party comes to power.

The remarks came a day after Mr Modi, while inaugurating the airport in Jewar, targeted the Samajwadi Party (SP), alleging that it had turned Noida into an "ATM for loot" during its tenure. He had also taken a dig at opposition leaders for allegedly avoiding Gautam Buddha Nagar due to "superstitions". Hitting back, the SP chief said, "Yesterday, it was said that we do not visit Noida. I want to remind them that I have visited the homes of my party workers here more times."

NITISH SET TO RESIGN FROM BIHAR MLC

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA | DC NEW DELHI/PATNA, MARCH 29

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is all set to resign from the state legislative council on Monday. The move comes days after his election to the Rajya Sabha earlier this month and this would also pave the way for his exit from the CM's post.

Though there is no official confirmation of his move, the ruling party sources on Sunday said that he may quit as a member of the Legislative Council (MLC) on March 30.

His party colleague and MLA Anant Kuamr Singh on Sunday said at Patna that JD(U) cadre was against his move but Mr Kumar is adamant on his decision to resign from Upper House of the Bihar Assembly. Kumar, who won the recently concluded biennial Rajya Sabha poll, is required to vacate his state legislature seat within 14 days.



PM urges citizens to unite during West Asia war crisis

Modi thanks Gulf nations for extending support to over 1 crore Indians

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

Noting that the month of March has been "full of turbulence globally", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged all citizens to join hands to overcome the "challenging" situation emerging due to the ongoing "fierce war" in West Asia. In his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat', the Prime Minister cautioned against attempts to politicise the crisis and said those who are spreading rumours are causing major harm to the country. He also expressed gratitude to the Gulf countries for providing every possible assistance to more than 1 crore Indians living and working there.

"Presently, a fierce war is going on in our neighbourhood for a month. These certainly are challenging times. Today, through Mann Ki Baat, I once again urge all my countrymen that we must unitedly overcome this challenge," Modi said.

In his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat', the Prime Minister also cautioned those politicising the present crisis and said there is no place for self-serving politics in the prevailing situation.

The Prime Minister slammed those politicising the West Asia crisis. He asserted that there is no place for self-serving politics in the prevailing situation and urged refrainment from doing so, as the matter concerns the interests of 140-crore citizens. "There is no



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets supporters during a roadshow ahead of the Kerala Assembly elections, in Thrissur. Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi is also seen.

place for self-serving politics," he said.

Striking a confident note in his address, Modi said he is confident that just as the people of the country have overcome past crises with collective strength, this time too, "we will together emerge victorious from this difficult situation".

The Prime Minister said West Asia is a major source of global energy needs, and on account of that, a crisis is emerging around the world regarding petrol and diesel. "Our global relations, the support we receive from various countries and the strengths the country has built over the past decade have enabled India to bravely confront these cir-

cumstances," he said.

The Prime Minister greeted people participating in Madhavpur Mela in Porbandar and said the vibrant celebration highlights the country's glorious culture and reinforces the timeless cultural bond between Gujarat and the Northeast.

The annual cultural event celebrates the marriage between Lord Krishna and Rukmini, which is said to have taken place at the village. Highlighting the Gyan Bharatam Survey, under which information about old manuscripts is being collected, Modi urged people to share information about such documents through the Gyan Bharatam App for their

proper verification and preservation. He cited the example of Chao Nantsindh Lokang of Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, who has shared manuscripts in the Tai script, and Bhai Amit Singh Rana of Amritsar, who has shared manuscripts in the Gurmukhi script. "This (the Gurmukhi) is a script associated with our great Sikh tradition and the Punjabi language. Some organisations have provided manuscripts written on palm leaves," Modi added.

Modi also talked about India's "historic victory" in the T20 World Cup and Jammu and Kashmir bagging its first Ranji Trophy title after a "long wait of nearly seven decades".

MODI FLAGS MIGRATION, PROMISES LOCAL JOBS

FROM PAGE 1

"For the BJP-NDA government, the security of every Indian is paramount. However, the kind of statements being made by the Congress on this sensitive issue are dangerous, as they risk the safety of nearly one crore Indians in Gulf countries for political gain," Modi added.

Targeting both the Left and the Congress-led alliances, Modi said, "For decades, Kerala has been trapped between two faces of selfish politics - the LDF and the UDF. One is corrupt, the other is more corrupt. One is communal...the other is more communal. Their policies revolve only around votebank politics, with no concern for Kerala's development..."

"For years, the LDF and the UDF have taken turns to rule and loot. Now both are targeting the BJP, which shows they fear us. They know that once the BJP comes to power, their corruption will be exposed," said Modi and asserted that when the NDA comes to power in the state, it will investigate all scams and deliver justice to the people."

Assam: Kharge rolls out '5 guarantees'

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 29

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday released the Congress party's manifesto for next month's Assam assembly polls, promising five guarantees, including cash transfers for women, health insurance for all, justice in the Zubeen Garg death case and land rights if voted to power.

Addressing a public rally in Naoboicha in North Lakhimpur district, Kharge said that all women will receive an unconditional monthly cash transfer to their bank accounts, in addition to an incentive Rs 50,000 to start their own business ventures if Congress is voted to power. "We are calling the cash transfer uncondi-

tional as the money which BJP is giving to women now is conditional. To become a beneficiary, one has to be a member of the BJP, but we won't impose such restrictions and everyone will be given cash benefits," he said, explaining Congress's promise of unconditional monthly cash transfers.

Kharge said that the party would also provide guaranteed cashless health insurance of ₹ 25 lakh to each family, adding that such promises have been fulfilled in Rajasthan, Karnataka and Telangana where the party has been in power.

Launching a frontal attack on Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he called him a "naki" (fake) Chief Minister.



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, party leader Bhupesh Baghel, the party's Assam chief and candidate Gaurav Gogoi in Naoboicha.

WB: Adhir, Mausam to fight crucial seats

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

The Congress on Sunday released its first list of 284 candidates for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly polls, fielding former state unit chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury from Baharampur and Trinamu MP Mausam Noor from Malatipur.

The Congress, which is going solo in the polls for the 294 assembly seats in the West Bengal, announced the names of 284 candidates in one go.

While Adhir Chowdhury has been fielded from Baharampur and Noor, who joined the Congress recently from Malatipur, the party also fielded Madhap Rai from Darjeeling, Abdul Hannan from Sujapur,



Adhir Chowdhury Mausam Noor

Susmita Biswas from Dum Dum, Gautam Bhattacharya from Diamond Harbour, Souvik Mukherjee from Asansol Dakshin and Prasenjit Puitandi from Asansol Uttar.

"The announcement of candidates came a day after top Congress leaders held detailed deliberations on the list for the upcoming West Bengal assembly elections during the meeting of the Central Election Committee (CEC) here.



Union minister Amit Shah and Assam BJP President Dilip Saikia during a public meeting in support of NDA candidates in Dhekiajuli.

Stopping infiltration is not enough: Shah

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs DHEKIAJULI MARCH 29

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the BJP government has stopped infiltration in Assam in the last 10 years, but this is "not enough", as each illegal immigrant must be sent back to their countries.

Addressing a poll rally in Dhekiajuli assembly constituency in Sonitpur district, he accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of opposing the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in several states to "protect infiltrators".

"Rahul Gandhi and company are opposing SIR to protect infiltrators," he alleged.

Claiming that "Assam state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi wants to protect infiltrators", the BJP leader asked him to clarify his stand on the issue.

"The Congress, during its rule, did not take the nation's security seriously, and encouraged terrorists from Pakistan to kill people in our country," he alleged.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee gives an addressal during a public rally, in Bankura district, West Bengal.

Are you planning to kill me: Mamata

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 29

A day after union home minister Amit Shah accused West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee of playing "victim card politics" before elections to gain sympathy to get votes, the Trinamul Congress supremo came down heavily on him for her "character assassination" in a fierce retaliation.

Banerjee, who campaigned for her party candidate Sandhya Rani Tudu at Manbazar in Purulia on Sunday, not only blamed Mr Shah for leaving her injured in leg ahead of the Assembly polls in 2021 but also wondered whether he made any "plan" to kill her this time. Referring to the union home minister's comments, the TMC chief alleged, "He claimed I roam around, wearing bandages. Hey worthless, I returned many times from the jaws of death fighting. Go to hospitals and collect the medical reports." Don't you have any shame? Don't you know the tortures on me? You had intentionally left me with leg injuries in the last election."

CONTROL | RESET EC suspends 3 jawans for playing carrom at TMC office in WB

170 police chiefs removed across Bengal

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs KOLKATA, MARCH 29

In a broad administrative overhaul on Sunday, the Election Commission ordered the removal of the officer-in-charge (OC) of several key police stations, including Bhabanipur in Kolkata, the constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Nandigram in East Medinipur - the seat represented by Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari.

In total, 170 police station OCs were changed across the state as part of the transfer exercise.



Election Commission suspends 3 CRPF jawans after video shows them playing carrom inside TMC office in Birbhum, West Bengal.

Alongside these station heads, 11 senior police officers were also removed from their posts, bringing the total number of police officers replaced on Sunday to 184. The reshuffle reportedly



DMK President and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, left, party leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, during the release of the party's manifesto, in Chennai.

₹8K coupons for TN women: Stalin

N. RAVIKUMAR | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 29

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Sunday promised to provide a coupon worth Rs 8,000 for women in families who are not paying income-tax to purchase or exchange household articles such as refrigerator, washing machine, television, grinders, mixers, microwave ovens and induction stoves at shops near their houses under the 'Illatharasai' scheme, if his party is elected to power again.

Releasing the DMK election manifesto for the Assembly elections, Stalin said the monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 for women would be doubled to Rs 2,000. He said the monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 for boys and girls pursuing higher education would be increased to Rs 1,500. He further said the women who are members of self-help groups would be provided collateral-free bank loans up to Rs 5 lakh to become entrepreneurs.

Stalin promised to expand the free breakfast scheme in place for students up to fifth standard to include those studying upto eighth standard to benefit about 15 lakh more students. Laptops

would be provided to 35 lakh students studying higher education in the next five years, he said.

Mr Stalin said Rs 18 lakh crore investments would be attracted to generate 50 lakh jobs and state exports would be increased to \$120 billion. About Rs. 10,000 crore investments would be attracted in the IT field and two lakh jobs would be generated in that sector alone. Opportunities for manufacturing defence related equipment in Coimbatore would be created, he said.

On the political front, he said powers are concentrated with the Union government and in practice more violations of power are taking place. A limit should be determined for the Union government's powers and tax levying rights, he said, adding the Indian Constitution should be amended accordingly. The DMK wants the allocation of 50 percent taxes to the state government. The tax allocation to the developed states should be more and it should be fixed according to the tax collected from them. He also said that education should be transferred to the State list. For the Sri Lankan Tamils, the manifesto urged the Union government to recognise.

75 % jobs in private sector to youth: Vijay

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MARCH 29

Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) leader Vijay on Sunday announced that his party would take steps to provide 75 per cent of the jobs in the private sector in Tamil Nadu to Tamil youth by providing concessions to companies. This is one of the long-time demands of Tamil nationalist outfits who allege that the rising investments and rapid industrialisation of the State is not benefiting Tamil youth.

Vijay said under the 'Mudhalvar Makkal Sevai Nanbar' scheme, five lakh youth would be employed at ₹ 18,000 per month in urban and rural local bodies to provide government services to the people at their doorstep. They would act as a connection network between the people and the gov-

ernment, he added.

Releasing the election manifesto for youth at a private hotel in Chennai, Vijay said his government would implement the 'Nam Ooril Namakkey Velaivaippu scheme', companies which provide 75 per cent of jobs to Tamil youth would be provided 2.5 per cent reduction in the State GST and five percent concession in the electricity tariff besides priority in government procurement. Vijay's announcement follows a similar promise in the AIADMK election manifesto assuring 75 per cent of jobs in the private sector to Tamils. Going a step further, AIADMK ally AMMK has promised 85 per cent of private jobs in Tamil Nadu to the local youth. The demand was initially made by Th-amizhaga Vazhuvirimai Katchi leader T. Velmurgan who quit the DMK.



TVK Chief Vijay with party candidates after their introduction ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, in Chennai.

SHORT TAKES

EVACUATIONS AS NIGHTCLUB ON FIRE IN GERMANY

Berlin, March 29: Hundreds of people were evacuated from a nightclub in southwest Germany after a fire broke out, police said on Sunday, with images from the scene showing the blaze raging on the building's roof.

Police said the fire began around 3.45 a.m. (01.45 GMT) in the nightclub in Kehl, which is on the border with France.

The blaze went on to "spread over the whole building", a police statement added.

Around 750 people were inside at the time and all left unassisted.

THUNDERSTORM, FLOODING KILL 17 IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, March 29: Severe flooding, a landslide and thunderstorms in parts of Afghanistan left 17 people dead and 26 injured over the last 24 hours, with more heavy rainfall predicted, authorities said.

The number of casualties could increase as crews from the country's National Disaster Management Authority survey the affected areas, the authority's spokesman, Yousuf Hamid, said. Thirteen of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, were affected. The weather also left 147 homes either completely or partially destroyed.

ATTACK ON U.S. BANK'S PARIS HQ: 2 MORE ARRESTS

Paris, March 29: Police have arrested two more people over an apparent bid to explode a homemade device outside the Paris branch of the Bank of America, the French domestic security service said on Sunday. Interior minister Laurent Nunez said on Saturday he thought the war in the West Asia might have motivated the attempted attack.

Police detained a first suspect, possibly a minor, in the early hours of Saturday just after he placed a device outside the bank building, near the Champs-Elysees.

The suspect was accompanied by a second person, who appeared to be taking photos and videos with a mobile phone but who fled when police arrived. The device contained five litres of liquid believed to be fuel and an ignition system, a source close to the investigation said.

The two further arrests were made on Saturday night.

According to a police source, the first suspect said he had been recruited through the Snapchat app to carry out a bombing in exchange for 600 euros (\$692).

Nunez said he did not know who was behind the incident but speculated that it might have been "proxies" linked to the Islamic Republic.

Police said the suspect arrested early Saturday outside the bank had told them he was a minor and from Senegal. They were working to verify his identity.

PEDESTRIANS HIT IN UK, 7 INJURED, MAN ARRESTED

London, March 29: British police said on Sunday seven people suffered "serious but not life-threatening injuries" and a man had been arrested for attempted murder after a car drove into people on a street in an English city.

Officers arrested a man in his 30s shortly after the incident in Derby, about 40 miles (64 km) north of Birmingham, Derbyshire Police said.

He was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, causing serious injury through dangerous driving, inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent, and dangerous driving," the force added.

"The investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident are ongoing and we are keeping an open mind as to the motives." The statement said the suspect was "originally from India". UK police have started to release such details in some high-profile cases, after a 2024 Southport mass stabbing targeting children was initially falsely blamed on a purported immigrant.

Misinformation online was viewed as helping to fuel anti-immigration riots that subsequently swept the country.

The black Suzuki Swift car struck the pedestrians at about 9.30 p.m. (21.30 GMT), according to police.

The seven injured were treated at the scene and then taken to Royal Derby Hospital.

Pentagon preparing for weeks of ground operations in Iran

Tehran warns US against ground invasion; strike damages Qatari news channel

Washington, Dubai, Tehran, March 29: The Pentagon is preparing for weeks of ground operations in Iran, the *Washington Post* reported on Saturday, citing US officials.

The plans could involve raids by Special Operations and conventional infantry troops, the *Post* reported. Whether President Donald Trump would approve any of those plans remains uncertain, according to the *Post*.

The Trump administration has deployed US Marines to the West Asia as the war in Iran stretches into its fifth week, and also has been planning to send thousands of soldiers from the US Army's 82nd Airborne to the region.

A top Iranian official warned the US against a ground invasion, saying American troops would be set "on fire," as regional diplomats gathered in Pakistan on Sunday in a push to broker an end to the monthlong war.

Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, dismissed weekend talks as a cover while the US dispatches additional troops to the Middle East. He said Iran was prepared to confront any American forces on its soil and would respond harshly against both US troops and Washington's regional allies, according to Iranian state media.

Qatari news channel *Al Araby* reported on Sunday that an Israeli missile had hit the building housing its office in Tehran, causing damage. "An Israeli missile targets the *Al Araby* TV channel building in the capital, Tehran... extensive damage and the suspension of live broadcasting," it said in a post on X.

Iran claimed on Sunday attacks on two major aluminium plants in the Gulf, further raising the economic stakes of the West Asia war after Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis joined the conflict.

In the Iranian capital, two blasts shook northern areas of the city early on Sunday, according to a journalist. — *Agencies*



People retrieve computer servers and equipment from an office building that housed the offices of the Doha-headquartered news network Al Araby TV following a missile strike earlier in the day in Tehran, on Sunday. — *AFP*

Pakistan plays host to regional powers

Islamabad, Istanbul, March 29: Pakistan hosted talks with Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia on Sunday as part of its efforts to broker an end to the Iran war, with initial discussions focused on proposals to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to shipping, sources familiar with the matter said.

Foreign ministers from the three regional powers landed in Islamabad for the talks as Iran warned the US against launching a ground attack and global oil prices surged amid continued fighting between Iran, the US and Israel.

The countries meeting in Pakistan have floated proposals to Washington tied to maritime traffic and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, five sources familiar with the matter told *Reuters*, as part of wider efforts to stabilise shipping flows.

The Strait of Hormuz was previously a conduit for about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, but Iran has effectively halted shipping flows through it in response to the US and Israeli air strikes that began a month ago.

Pakistan, which like Turkey borders Iran, has leveraged its close ties to both Tehran and Washington. — *Reuters*

SAUDI PIPELINE TO BYPASS HORMUZ HITS 7 MN BARREL

Riyadh, March 29: Saudi Arabia's crucial East-West pipeline that circumvents the Strait of Hormuz is pumping oil at its full capacity of 7 million barrels a day, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The technical milestone is the culmination of the kingdom's longstanding contingency plan for keeping its oil flowing after the effective closure of their main export route. Flotillas of tankers have been redirected to the Red Sea port of Yanbu to collect the oil, providing an important lifeline for global supply.

— *Bloomberg*

ISRAELI MEDIA REPORTS IMPACT ON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AFTER IRAN MISSILE FIRE

Israeli media reported an impact at the Ramat Hovav industrial zone in southern Israel on Sunday.

— *Reuters*

SYRIA SAYS REPELLED DRONE ATTACK FROM IRAQ ON US BASE

Syria's assistant defence minister said on Sunday that his country's forces had repelled a drone attack from neighbouring Iraq targeting one of Syria's last US military bases.

— *Reuters*

U.S. SEES FIRST COMBAT LOSS OF VALUABLE E-3 JET IN MISSILE STRIKE

An Iranian missile strike on a base in Saudi Arabia damaged several military jets and destroyed a valuable E-3 Sentry early warning and control aircraft — the first known combat loss.

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IRAN SAYS IT WILL TARGET USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN CARRIER IF IT MOVES WITHIN RANGE

Iran's navy chief Shahram Irani said on Sunday that the *USS Abraham Lincoln* aircraft carrier would be targeted if it comes within range.

TWO AUSTRALIA STATES TO OFFER FREE TRANSPORT AS FUEL PRICES RISE

Two Australian states will temporarily offer free public transport to ease the effects of rising fuel costs.

— *Reuters*



Members of the Backbone Campaign, portraying V-P JD Vance, President Donald Trump and homeland security advisor Stephen Miller march during a 'No Kings' protest in Seattle, on Saturday. — *AP*

Anti-Trump 'No Kings' protests across US cities

St Paul, Minnesota, Dallas, Los Angeles, Washington, New York, March 29: Demonstrators decrying US President Donald Trump's aggressive deportation efforts, war in Iran and other policies took to city streets across the country on Saturday in the third round of the "No Kings" rallies. More than 3,200 events had been planned in all 50 states, after the two previous nationwide events attracted millions of participants.

Large rallies took place in New York, Dallas, Philadelphia and Washington, but two-thirds of No Kings events were happening outside major cities, a nearly 40% jump for smaller communities from the movement's first mobilisation last June, organizers said.

In Minnesota, a flashpoint in Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration, a massive rally was held outside the state capitol in Saint Paul. Many held aloft posters bearing photos of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, US citizens fatally shot by federal immigration officers in Minneapolis this year.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 2024, told the crowd that their resistance to Trump and his policies makes them "the heart and soul" of everything good about the US. "They call us radicals," Walz said. "You're damn right we've been radicalised — radicalised by compassion, radicalised by decency, radicalised by due process, radicalised by democracy, and radicalised to do all we can to oppose authoritarianism." Musician Bruce Springsteen performed his song "Streets of Minneapolis" — a ballad criticising Trump's immigration crackdown. — *Reuters*



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects a test to verify the active protection system of a new main battle tank at an undisclosed location, on Sunday. — *AFP*

NK tests missile engine to hit US

Seoul, March 29: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed a test of an upgraded, high-thrust, solid-fuel engine for weapons and hailed it as a significant development to boost the country's strategic military capability, state media reported on Sunday.

While the test was in line with Kim's stated goal of acquiring more agile, hard-to-detect missiles targeting the United States and its allies, some experts speculate North Korea's claim may be an exaggeration.

The Korean Central News Agency reported Kim watched the ground jet test of the engine using a composite carbon fiber material.

It said the engine's maximum thrust is 2,500 kilotons, up from about 1,970 kilotons reported in a similar solid-fuel engine test in September.

KCNA reported the test was conducted as part of the country's five-year arms build-up meant to

upgrade "strategic strike means," a term referring to nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and other weapons.

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Drone attack damages Russia's Ust-Luga port

Moscow, March 29: Russia's Ust-Luga port sustained fresh damage from a Ukrainian drone attack, as Kyiv steps up strikes on Russian oil export infrastructure.

The Leningrad region came under a fresh Ukrainian drone attack overnight, Governor Alexander Drozdenko said in a *Telegram* post early on Sunday. Air defences have shot down 31 drones, while the emergency services are working to put down a fire at Ust-Luga.

The Leningrad region on the Baltic coast hosts major Russian export hubs and has come under repeated Ukrainian attacks over the past week.

Loadings at Ust-Luga were halted since Wednesday after it sustained damage, endangering Russian oil exports. Another port in the region, Primorsk, has also sustained damage. Just before the recent Ukrainian attacks, Primorsk and Ust-Luga handled about 45% of Russia's seaborne crude exports.

— *Bloomberg*

FINLAND REPORTS DRONE VIOLATION

Helsinki, March 29: Finland's defence ministry reported on Sunday a suspected territorial violation by unmanned aerial vehicles in the southeast of the country.

Nearby countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania earlier this week said several Ukrainian drones had crashed on their territory after going astray during attacks on Russian oil export facilities on the Baltic Sea coast.

Ukraine has stepped up

drone attacks on Russian oil refineries and export routes over recent weeks in an attempt to weaken Russia's war economy and as peace talks, brokered by Washington, have stalled. It was not immediately clear where the drones detected in Finland came from. "Drones have strayed into Finnish territory. We are treating the matter very seriously," defence minister Antti Hakkanen wrote in a social media post. — *Reuters*

FLOODS EMERGENCY IN N. CAUCASUS

Moscow, March 29: Daghestan, a Russian region in the North Caucasus, declared a state of emergency after heavy flooding that state media said had left as many as half a million people without power.

Emergency crews worked for a second day on Sunday to restore electricity supply after rain triggered widespread flood-

ing, state-run *Tass* reported. More than 1,10,000 were still without power and access to many populated areas was difficult because of washed-out roads. The flooding, described by local media as the worst in more than 100 years, caused severe damage in the regional capital, Makhachkala, and other cities. — *Bloomberg*



Supporters protest against the arrest of Nepali former PM K.P. Sharma Oli in Kathmandu, on Sunday. — *AFP*

Nepal ex-PM Oli attends hearing

Kathmandu, March 29: Nepal's former prime minister K.P. Sharma Oli appeared in court via video-link from a hospital on Sunday after his arrest for his alleged role in a deadly crackdown on the 2025 protests that ousted him. Oli, 74, and ex-home minister Ramesh Lekhak were arrested in pre-dawn raids on Saturday, a day after PM Balendra Shah was sworn in following the first polls since the September uprising.

They were arrested over their alleged involvement in the protest crackdown that killed at least 76 people, though neither man has been charged, and both deny responsibility for the violence.

Hearings took place on Sunday on whether to extend their detention during investigations, Kathmandu District Court information officer Deepak Kumar Shrestha told *AFP*, saying that Oli appeared remotely, while Lekhak was in court.

The Supreme Court is due on Monday to consider a petition for Oli's release, court spokesman Arjun Prasad Koirala said. Police said Oli has heart and kidney issues. *AFP* reporters saw him being taken to a hospital

POLICE ARREST FORMER ENERGY MIN. KHADKA

Kathmandu, March 29: Nepal police on Sunday arrested former energy minister and Nepali Congress leader Deepak Khadka in connection with a money laundering case, local media reported.

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police took Khadka into custody on Sunday morning. The Himalayan quoted CIB spokesman Shiva Kumar Shrestha as saying.

The police detained Khadka for investigation after receiving a request from the department of money laundering investigation, *The Kathmandu Post* reported. — *PTI*

on Saturday after his arrest, surrounded by a heavy police guard.

The arrests of Oli and Lekhak came after a probe panel recommended that the four-time ex-PM and other officials be prosecuted for failing to stop security forces from firing on demonstrators. — *AFP*

GETTING | PHYSICAL Proportion of residents aged 65 or more to exceed 21%

Singapore's seniors turn to parkour

Singapore, March 29: In a corner of suburban Singapore, Betty Boon vaults a guardrail, crawls underneath a slide, executes forward shoulder rolls and scales a steep slope, finishing the course to applause. "Good job!" the 69-year-old's coach cheers.

This is "geriatric parkour", where around 20 retirees learned to tackle a series of relatively demanding exercises, building their agility and enjoying

a sense of camaraderie. Boon, an upbeat grandmother, said learning parkour has aided her confidence and independence as she ages. "When you're weak, you will be dependent on someone," she said after sweating it out with her parkour classmates in suburban Toa Payoh, under the shadow of government-built apartment blocks. "I feel more alive, it's a whole new world."

The discipline has gained a devoted following of senior citizens in the city-state, which is among the world's fastest-ageing countries. Singapore is projected to become a "super-aged" nation this year, meaning the proportion of residents aged 65 and above exceeds 21 per cent.

By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 and above, according to the health ministry.

As the society greys, various activities and indus-

tries have mushroomed up to cater to the needs of senior citizens, including social activities and group exercise classes.

Coach Tan Shie Boon, 33, said he was initially met with scepticism when he offered parkour classes for older students in 2017, especially due to the risk of injury. But his idea was to share manoeuvres that could help seniors with their balance, stamina and coordination. — *AFP*



Elders taking part in a parkour training session in Singapore. — *AFP*

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Sensex | 73,583.22 | -2.25 |
| Nifty 50 | 22,819.60 | -2.09 |
| S&P 500* | 6,368.85 | -1.67 |
| Dollar (₹) | 94.81 | 0.88 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 126.12 | 0.50 |
| Euro (₹) | 109.20 | 0.15 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 144,500.218 | 0.15 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 114.57 | 1.78 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.932 | 0.84 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 4.428 | -0.12 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

CMS acquires FSS managed services biz

CMS Info Systems on Sunday announced the acquisition of Financial Software and Systems' (FSS) managed services business for ₹115 crore to strengthen its position in the end-to-end ATM management space. The transaction involves the transfer of operating assets and novation of customer contracts, and is expected to close in Q1 FY27, according to a statement. It will add 8,000 automated teller machines (ATMs).



TVS Holdings invests ₹526.7 cr in subsidiary

TVS Holdings on Sunday said that it has invested ₹526.79 cr in its subsidiary Home Credit India Finance through subscription of additional equity shares. The investment will be used for supporting the subsidiary's growth and maintaining optimal capital adequacy levels. The company was allotted over 22.91 crore equity shares at a price of ₹22.99 per share, taking its shareholding in subsidiary to 80.39 per cent.

Fortis Hospitals gets I-T demand notice for ₹117 cr

Fortis Healthcare said its arm Fortis Hospitals has received a demand notice of ₹117.04 crore from the income tax authority. Fortis Hospitals is in receipt of an income tax order dated March 27, 2026, for AY 2024-25 and a demand of ₹117.04 crore has been raised, it said. The company is evaluating all options, including filing an appeal and rectification application against the said order, the Fortis Healthcare added.

Meta plans to debut 2 Ray-Ban smart glasses

Meta Platforms plans to debut two new Ray-Ban smart glasses models next week intended for prescription wearers. While the company's glasses have long supported prescription lenses, this will mark the first time the companies are introducing Ray-Bans designed specifically for that cohort. The new models, which will come in rectangular and rounded styles, are expected to be sold through prescription eyewear channels.

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Costlier inputs, supply issues to singe growth

Market direction likely to stay closely linked to energy price movements

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

Sensing that the crisis in the West Asia war may prolong further, the Centre may step in with some more measures soon to give relief for the vulnerable segments of the Indian economy. These include incentive packages for MSMEs, fertilisers stock for farmers and sufficient fuel availability for common man to keep inflation under check, said sources.

Meanwhile, India sees the Iran war weighing on growth and possibly widening its fiscal deficit as energy and shipping disruptions shortages ripple across sectors.

"The near-term outlook remains uncertain as higher input costs and supply constraints pose downside risks to economic expansion," said the finance ministry in its monthly economic review for March released on Saturday.

Higher petroleum import bills, rising logistics costs and weaker exports to the West Asia could squeeze current accounts, it said. Early signs of a moderation in economic activity have already emerged: India's current account deficit widened to 1.3 per cent of gross domestic product in the third quarter of fiscal 2026 from 1.1 per cent the year earlier.

On the fiscal side, higher subsidy requirements for fertilizers and fuel and potential revenue shortfalls may widen the fiscal deficit. "If demand moderates in response to higher prices, the central bank will be more inclined to treat the inflationary impact as a supply shock. Otherwise, it may be compelled to watch for second-round effects of higher import costs on inflation," the report said.

The report underscored the need for calibrated policy responses and structural reforms to sustain growth, while noting that "persistent monitoring and targeted policy interventions remain critical to mitigating near-term risks and preserving macroeconomic stability."

The report also called for re-prioritisation of spending and targeted relief for the most affected and vulnerable businesses and households. "The latest data reflect that the recent shocks are being transmitted through higher input costs, supply constraints, and pressures across sectors, with early indications of some moderation in economic activity," the report said.

Last week, the government slashed the excise duty on petrol to ₹3 a litre and exempted diesel from the duty to protect consumers from the impact of rising global crude prices amid the ongoing war in the West Asia.

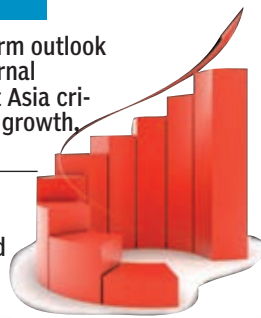
Duties are back on the export of diesel and ATF to improve domestic availability. The government also intervened to keep India's supply chains resilient, protect MSME exporters, prevent order cancellations and safeguard jobs in the export sector.

GROWTH RISKS

INDIA'S ECONOMY'S near-term outlook remains uncertain, with external shocks, particularly the West Asia crisis, posing downside risks to growth, said finance ministry report.

FINANCE ministry called for re-prioritisation of spending and targeted relief for most affected businesses and households. GOVT underlines strategies for different sectors to keep pace with Indian economy.

Earlier, govt announced slew of measures including cutting excise duty on petrol and diesel.



Sensex down 9.47% in March so far mainly on impacts of US-Israel war on Iran.

TWO LPG carriers carrying a combined LPG cargo of about 94,000 tonnes are moving towards Indian shores.



Two LPG carriers to reach India

FC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 29

While stressing that there is an adequate stock of petrol and diesel, the government on Sunday said that two more LPG carriers with about 94,000 MT cargo are moving towards Indian shores.

In an official statement, the government said that two LPG carriers — BW TYR and BW ELM — carrying a combined LPG cargo of about 94,000 tonnes, have safely transited the region and are moving towards Indian shores.

BW TYR is proceeding towards Mumbai and is likely to arrive on March 31. BW ELM is en route to New Mangalore and is likely to arrive on April 1, it said.

The government said that port operations across India remain normal, with no congestion



reported.

While urging the public not to believe rumours the government asserted there is steady supply to urea plants at 70-75 per cent of last six-month average and additional LNG and RLNG is being sourced to maintain supplies. The government is closely monitoring the situation in Gulf and West Asia; safety and welfare of the Indian community remains the priority," it added.

Previously, four Indian-flagged LPG tankers had safely sailed through the strait. Pine Gas and Jag Vasant, carrying 92,612 tonnes of LPG, reached Indian ports between March 26 and March 28. Prior to that, MT Shivalki and MT Nanda Devi, carrying about 92,712 tonnes of LPG, had reached Mundra port in Gujarat on March 16 and Kandla port in the state on the March 17, respectively.

Stock markets likely to stay volatile as war intensifies

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MARCH 29

Markets are likely to remain volatile on Monday as the US-Israel War on Iran has expanded to the Red Sea region and engulfed another vital shipping corridor of Babel-Mandeb controlled by Iran supporters Houthi located in Yemen as per reports. Saudi Arabia's crude oil being transported through the pipeline through the red sea stands threatened now, which could lead to crude oil price moving up further.

Last week, the market came under severe pres-



sure as Brent crude futures rose above \$110 per barrel and Indian currency weakened to ₹94.8 per US dollar leading to foreign portfolio investors selling. Market direction is likely to remain closely linked to geopolitical developments and energy price movements, said experts. "FPIs were net sellers on all trading days in March,

CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRY TALKING TO STATES ON VAT

New Delhi, March 29: The civil aviation ministry is exploring multiple options to minimise the impact of the West Asia conflict on airlines, including engaging with state governments to cut taxes on jet fuel.

Indian airlines' operational costs are spiralling due to surging oil prices and airspace curbs in the wake of West Asia turmoil.

Civil aviation ministry has initiated discussions with state governments on the possibility of reducing taxes on jet fuel, the source said.

Jet fuel accounts for 40 per cent of an airline's operational costs. The VAT on ATF varies from state to state. For instance, it is 25 per cent in Delhi and one per cent in UP.

Airspace restrictions are forcing carriers to take longer routes, using more fuel. —PTI

NSE PLANS DATED BRENT CRUDE OIL FUTURES CONTRACTS

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MARCH 29

NSE will launch Dated Brent crude oil futures contracts on April 13, to offer a hedging tool based on S&P Global Energy (Platts) assessments. The contracts will be settled in cash with no physical delivery of crude oil.

The cash-settled contracts of 100-barrel units with maximum order size of 10,000 barrels will provide Indian market participants, refiners and importers, a direct way to hedge against global Brent price volatility.

"The base price limit shall be 6 per cent. In case the daily price limit of 6 per cent is breached, then after a cooling off period of 15 minutes, the daily price limit will be relaxed up to 9 per cent," the exchange said.

66 WTO members adopt e-commerce agreement, moratorium extension

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, MARCH 29

Indicating increasing plurilateral agreements among World Trade Organisation (WTO) members, 66 members of WTO adopted a pathway to implement the world's first baseline set of global digital trade rules. As a part of this agreement, moratorium on imposing customs duties on e-commerce will continue for five more years, despite countries including India seeking lifting of the moratorium at the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial Conference.

"The E-Commerce Agreement adopted at the conference prohibits the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions between a person of one party and a person of another party. This provides businesses the certainty to trade openly in the new global digital economy. Parties may review the Article after five years and consider whether any amendments are appropriate," WTO said in its release on e-commerce agreements entered by 66 countries.

However, WTO had not given any release on a moratorium decision based on the consensus of all members.

After several extensions, the moratorium was due to expire this month. In 1998 when the moratorium decision was taken, the digital economy was at its early days.

At that time, the world

DIGITAL TRADE

MORATORIUM on imposing customs duties on e-commerce will continue for 5 more years.

DIGITAL ECONOMY at its inception when moratorium was approved in 1998.

TARIFFS on digitised goods due to moratorium results in potential tariff revenue loss of \$10 billion per annum to developing countries.

The e-commerce agreement adopted at the conference prohibits the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions between a person of one party and a person of another party. — WTO



wide web was only starting to be used by the general public. There was no clarity regarding how the economy would be transformed by digital advancements.

However, the digital economy has grown rapidly and has given rise to multinational giants like Amazon, Google, Netflix and Microsoft. New technologies like 3D printing, Big Data Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence are transforming the global economy.

Three economies — the US, China and the EU — account for 80 per cent of the cross-border e-commerce in the world.

The loss of the use of tariffs for the digitised goods due to the moratorium results in potential tariff revenue loss of \$10 billion per annum to

developing countries. Tariff revenue loss to WTO LDCs is estimated at \$1.5 billion while for Sub-Saharan African countries the loss is around US\$ 2.6 billion, India's commerce ministry said in its joint submission.

India and the US had maintained opposing views on the subject, with the United States pushing for the permanent moratorium.

Among the 166 members, 66 adopted a clear and immediate pathway to implement the global digital trade rules.

According to WTO, if implemented by all WTO members, the e-commerce agreement would boost global gross domestic product (GDP) by \$8.7 trillion by 2040, benefiting low and lower middle-income economies.

Steel, engg exports to EU may face setbacks

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, MARCH 29

India's steel and engineering exports to the European Union (EU) face a sharp setback as the bloc prepares to cut tariff-free import quotas by 47 per cent and double duties on out-of-quota shipments to 50 per cent, a move that could significantly squeeze shipments from India. The revised safeguard regime, expected to replace the existing tariff-rate quota (TRQ) system after June 2026, will cover about 20 steel and related items, including pipes, with higher tariffs kicking in once quotas are breached.

According to Pankaj Chadha, chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council, the quota

reduction is part of the EU's effort to protect domestic industry, amid fears of trade diversion following higher US tariffs under Section 232. While the measure is not country-specific, India is likely to be "collateral damage," as restrictions aimed largely at China apply uniformly to all exporters. Though India has negotiated its

quota levels under the proposed trade deal, the extent of relief remains unclear.

The tightening of quotas comes alongside the implementation of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, whose financial implications will be felt from 2027, when importers will start paying carbon-linked duties based on verified emissions data.

Uday Kotak suggests RBI to bring back FCNR(B) scheme

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, MARCH 29

Veteran banker Uday Kotak on Sunday warned that if global instability worsens in the light of the West Asia crisis, policy-makers must be prepared for unconventional measures to shield the falling rupee.

Drawing parallel to the 1998 Asian financial crisis, when then-RBI governor Bimal Jalan imposed

strict measures to protect the rupee, Kotak suggested that similar "emergency-style" steps may be needed again.

He hinted that the central bank could look at reintroducing the Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) scheme to help strengthen the depreciating rupee.

The Indian rupee has fallen by more than 11 per cent in the current financial year. —PTI

CHIP | BOOM

Demand for GPUs skyrocketed after massive demand for AI across world

AMD set to deploy Helios this year

New Delhi, March 29: Computer chipset firm AMD expects the deployment of its latest GPU-based high-performance computing platform Helios to begin in the second half of this year across several countries, including India, a company official said.

The company aims to capitalise on demand for AI and proposed data centre capacity ramp-up by global technology giants.

AMD, senior director for data centre GPU product marketing, Mahesh Balasubramanian, said

that a single Helios rack integrates 72 interconnected MI455X (AMD GPUs) accelerators, delivering up to 2.9 exaflops of FP4 (number format used in AI) compute performance per rack.

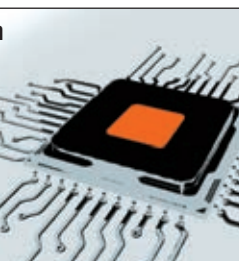
The expected deployment timeline refers to global customer deployments of Helios systems, including India. Initial deployments are expected to begin in the second half of 2026, Balasubramanian said.

The demand for graphics processing units (GPUs) has skyrocketed after the

COMPANY aims to capitalise on demand for AI.

EXPECTED deployment timeline refers to global customer deployments of Helios systems, including India.

AMD recently partnered with TCS to co-develop rack-scale AI infrastructure design.



massive demand for AI across the world, and US chip company Nvidia dominates the market with over 80 per cent share. AMD recently partnered

with TCS to co-develop a rack-scale AI infrastructure design based on the AMD Helios platform in support of India's national AI initiatives.

The company is pushing for the deployment of open architecture in building up data centres instead of those getting locked by the proprietary system of its competitors.

AMD, corporate vice president of global enterprise sales, Archana Vemulapalli, said that as AI moves from pilots into operational deployment, India's competitive advantage is increasingly defined by the depth and scalability of its talent ecosystem, alongside growing AI-ready infrastructure. —PTI

INDIAN TOP 10

NON-FICTION

- 1 **INDIA'S FORESTS**
Ed. Arupiyoti Saikia, Penguin, ₹999
- 2 **AN ACCIDENTAL LAWYER**
K.K. Venugopal, Penguin, ₹799
- 3 **THE HUMAYUNNAMA**
Gulbadan Begum, Juggernaut, ₹899
- 4 **MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME**
Arundhati Roy, Penguin, ₹899
- 5 **SHATTERED LANDS**
Sam Dalrymple, HarperCollins, ₹799
- 6 **WILD CAPITAL**
Neha Sinha, HarperCollins, ₹799
- 7 **AFTER NATIONS**
Rana Dasgupta, Penguin, ₹999
- 8 **A STATESMAN AND A SEEKER**
Harbans Singh, Speaking Tiger, ₹999
- 9 **SMARTER THAN THE STORM**
Amitabh Kant & Siddharth Sinha, HC, ₹799
- 10 **CLASSIC INDIAN RECIPES**
Pushpesh Pant, Phaidon, ₹3,995

FICTION

- 1 **THIS IS WHERE THE SERPENT LIVES**
Daniyal Mueenuddin, Penguin, ₹799
- 2 **HOOKED**
Asako Yuzuki, 4th Estate, ₹699
- 3 **STRANGE BUILDINGS**
Uketsu, Pushkin Vertigo, ₹599
- 4 **REBEL ENGLISH ACADEMY**
Mohammed Hanif, Penguin, ₹799
- 5 **THE CORRESPONDENT**
Virginia Evans, Penguin, ₹899
- 6 **GHOST-EYE**
Amitav Ghosh, HarperCollins, ₹799
- 7 **THE DIRECTOR**
Daniel Kehlmann, Hachette, ₹799
- 8 **TAIWAN TRAVELOGUE**
Yang Shuang-Zi, Pan Macmillan, ₹599
- 9 **THE LONELINESS OF SONIA AND SUNNY**
Kiran Desai, Penguin, ₹999
- 10 **FLESH**
David Szalay, Penguin, ₹899

Bahrisons Booksellers, New Delhi

In familiar rooms, fresh wonders



Varun Andhare

review

Seventeen years ago, Pakistani-American writer Daniyal Mueenuddin's debut short-story collection, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, confirmed his place instantly in the firmament of Pakistani writing in English. Restrained, granular, yoked awedly to the realism of the Russian writers he so adores, Mueenuddin's stories drew the social and sexual lives of numerous characters living around a feudal estate in South Punjab — of drivers, cooks, maids and waiters, as well as the newer generation of westernised *sahibs* perched guiltily atop this violent table — with an acuity that is rare to find in most South Asian fiction.

Little was heard of his newer work in the years since, save for a story excerpted tantalisingly in *The New Yorker*, which duly appears

here, in his first novel: a loosely connected set of interlocking novellas set between the seventies and the 2010s. The author himself was educated abroad and divides his time between Oslo and his family's estate in rural Pakistan; much of the stories in both his works draw from his own life and history. On this evidence, it might not be long until we come to regard this period — Pakistan's long feudal twilight — as positively Mueenuddinian.

His greatest trick here is in being able to unearth fresh psychological insight out of the otherwise familiar tangle of scheming *munshis*, ambitious servants and complacent Pakistani scions that populate his work. Characters bleed over from one story into the other. Most memorable is Yazid, an orphan off the streets of Rawalpindi who grows up through the ferment of the early Bhutto years to become a hulking

chauffeur to an army colonel. Mueenuddin draws him as a portrait of tightly coiled desire and unyielding loyalty within a cast of characters who play fast and loose with both. His is the pulse of this novel, his shadow playing even across the pages when he disappears for long stretches of the story. Later in the novel, Yazid will go on to mentor a sharp young servant-boy called Saqib, who charms his way into his employers' graces before growing gradually covetous of the lives unfolding before him.

Mueenuddin handles his rich and poor characters with an equal delicacy, though finds more room to work with, new layers of meaning within this psychodrama of repressed Pakistani masculinity, when it comes to the elite. In 'Muscle', a young man not unlike the author himself returns from abroad with ambitions to benevolently preside over his family's estate until fate forces him to reckon with a rapidly changing balance

of power, sharks circling round.

The sentences in this novel are crafted with a surgeon's hand. In some stretches, its bloodless proficiency reminded me of watching a football team coached by Pep Guardiola; I came to treasure the moments he allows himself some mischief.

Yet above all, *This is Where the Serpent Lives* confirms the excitement that has followed its publication: an immensely readable novel of un sentimental brilliance, consistently simmering with danger and narrative possibility, which marks a distinctive stylistic standard in South Asian fiction. Another novel, reported to have been shelved after a decade of work, is rumoured to be in revival. We pray he makes haste.

Varun Andhare teaches critical writing at Ashoka University, Sonapat



THIS IS WHERE THE SERPENT LIVES
By DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN
Penguin
pp. 352; ₹799

Love letter to India's enchanting river of fabric



Rachna Chhabria

review

I had a lot of preconceived notions about Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri's book, *The Sari Eternal — A Tribute*. But luckily for me, Puri knocked all of them out from my head. Through her words, she took my hand and gently guided me into the world of that unstitched river of fabric that winds itself lovingly around a woman's body like a warm embrace or a tender caress.

The book starts with Puri's childhood years in Delhi and Kathmandu, where the sari ruled supreme. Her love for the sari starts as a toddler, using her mother's sari as an invisibility cape/cloak, hiding behind it, sometimes wiping her wet face with it.

Everything most children do with their mother's saris. She absorbed her mother's love for saris, through osmosis, asking for her own sari at a young age. When Puri was fourteen, she wore a sari during her theatre outing to watch the adult movie *Woh Kaun Thi*, to avoid being thrown out of the cinema hall for being a minor.

In the book Puri traces the lineage and history of this 5.50 metres long and 1.15 metres wide unstitched fabric, from the Indus Valley Civilisation 5,000 years back to current times, explaining Gen-Z's fascination with this flowing garment, which can stake a claim to flattering all body shapes, yet retaining its identity and allure. The sari is both a mystery and an enigma, once enchanted, it captures the wearer in its spell, which remains unbroken all their lives. Puri, an Indian diplomat, graced many formal occasions in a sari.

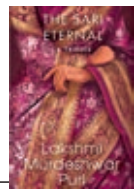
Puri traces the history of the sari from Ganga Devi descending from heavens in a sari, to Lakshmi sitting on a pink lotus in her gold bordered red silk sari, to Saraswati in her white sari fringed with a gold border, to Parvati in her red sari to Raja Ravi Varma's painting *Shakuntala Looking Back* depicting Shakuntala in a saffron sari, to Abanindranath Tagore's paintings portraying Bharat Mata wearing a sari. When a sari is mentioned, how can one forget Lord Krishna saving Draupadi by incarnating as the sari eternal?

Sari and Bollywood heroines have a never-ending love affair, Madhubala's wet georgette sari in *Chalti ka Naam Gaadi*, to Rekha's monotone chiffon and crepe saris in *Silsila*, to

Madhuri Dixit's purple sari embellished with zardozi work in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* and Alia Bhatt's saris with sexy bustier blouses that could be called a bralette in *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, all get a mention. Not to forget the queens, freedom fighters and women politicians who made their unique saris their identity and a trend.

The book is an ode to the sari, which comes in diverse fabrics from different regions of India and is also draped in myriad ways. Saris are an intrinsic part of India's cultural heritage; the warp and weft of its threads are interspersed with mythology and history. They are heirlooms passed down through generation, each capturing the essence of the wearer. Puri makes one fall hopelessly in love with the sari and makes one rush to one's cupboard to pull out one such treasure and drape it around their body.

Rachna Chhabria is a Bengaluru based children's author and a freelance writer



THE SARI ETHERNAL
By LAKSHMI MURDESHWAR PURI
Aleph
pp. 186; ₹499

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Mary plans pro boxing move

New Delhi: Olympic bronze medalist and six-time world champion Indian boxer M. C. Mary Kom on Sunday said she is considering a move into professional boxing.

The 43-year-old, who became the first Indian woman boxer with an Olympic medal when she bronzed in the 2012 London Games, is past the age eligibility to compete on the amateur circuit.

"What can I say about the high points? Winning six World Championships was incredible. Although I reached a stage where age restrictions prevented me from competing further in amateur boxing for the country, a new opportunity has surfaced in Professional Boxing," she said on the sidelines of Sundays on Cycle event.

"I am currently taking some time to consider it. I am working hard and trying to make a comeback to show people what I can still do," she added.

— PTI

Boxers gear up for Asian meet

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: Indian boxers will aim for a good show at the Asian Championships, beginning here on Monday, as they look to make the most of their opportunities in a packed season and secure direct berths for the multi-sport events later this year.

The tournament marks the first major outing in a loaded season that includes the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (July-August), the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (September-October) and the World Boxing Cup Finals in Uzbekistan.

Apart from the medal rush, the championships assume added significance as finalists will earn direct qualification for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, in line with the Boxing Federation of India's selection policy.

The Indian team has been acclimatising in Mongolia for the past 15 days, training in multinational camps and sparring with boxers from Mongolia, China, Jordan and Thailand. — PTI

Saba snaps Miami trophy

Miami, March 29: Aryna Sabalenka won her second straight Miami Open title on Sunday beating Coco Gauff 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 to complete a "Sunshine Double" Indian Wells-Miami sweep.

The world number one from Belarus, fresh off her first triumph in the California desert, became the fifth woman — and the first since Iga Swiatek in 2022 — to win both of the elite early season hard-court WTA 1000 titles.

"It means a lot," Sabalenka said after joining Poland's Swiatek, German great Steffi Graf, Belgian Kim Clijsters and fellow Belarusian Victoria Azarenka on the list of women to win both titles in the same year.

"My goal always been to put my name in the history, and I just did it," she added.

Sabalenka underscored her WTA dominance in a season in which her only defeat to date was her Australian Open finals loss to Elena Rybakina — who she went on to beat in the Indian Wells title match and in the semifinals here.

She handed Gauff her first career defeat in a hardcourt final.

The American had won her first nine, including a triumph over Sabalenka in the 2023 US Open championship match.

Gauff had also beaten the Belarusian for the title on the red clay of Roland Garros last year.

So Sabalenka said she wasn't surprised to see Gauff dig in, even after the Belarusian pocketed the first set with a ruthless display of power and precision.

She broke Gauff to open the match and, after Gauff saved three break points in a gritty fifth game, broke the American again in the seventh before serving it out in 37 minutes without facing a break point herself.

In a tense second set, Gauff's first break point chance — from a blistering backhand passing winner in the second game — sparked a jubilant reac-



Aryna Sabalenka smiles as she celebrates with the Butch Buchholz trophy after defeating Coco Gauff of the United States in the Women's Singles Final of the Miami Open at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida (USA). — AFP

tion from the crowd at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins that is just about an hour away from Gauff's Delray Beach home.

But Gauff couldn't convert, slamming a forehand into the net on the next point as Sabalenka held.

It needed another gutsy hold from Gauff to keep it on serve in the fifth game.

Up 40-0, she wasted three game points with a pair of errors off the ground and a double fault then had to save a break point before taking the game.

But Gauff was finding more depth on her returns and broke Sabalenka for the first time to take the second set.

WHAT A MONTH

And the third set, again, was virtually all Sabalenka. She broke to open the final frame and broke again when Gauff sailed a backhand long on Sabalenka's first match point.

"What a month," said Sabalenka, who along with two prestigious titles acquired a new puppy and got engaged to boyfriend

Georgios Frangulis. Gauff was also feeling grateful after a rocky March that saw her withdraw from her third-round match at Indian Wells with a nerve issue that caused "scary" pain in her left arm.

And after considering skipping the event, the 22-year-old was thrilled to reach the final for the first time. "I feel like I'm nowhere near my peak of my tennis, so I think it gives me comfort a little bit playing these tournaments and having great results," she said. — AFP

Jharkhand, HP win 2 golds each at KITG

Raipur, March 29: Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh clinched two gold medals each on the opening day of wrestling competition in Mizoram while Ambikapur bagged a couple of gold medals to wrap up the weightlifting competition on the fifth day of the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026 here on Sunday.

Jharkhand opened their gold medal account with Poonam Oraon winning the women's 50kg final against Geetha K of Telangana 6-3 while Anjit Kumar Munda won the men's 67kg greco roman final beating Gujarat's Mukesh Vasva by technical superiority.

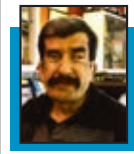
Himachal Pradesh's two gold medals came through Navish Kumar (97kg GR) and Priyanka Chaudhary (women's 62kg) while Mizoram took their gold medals tally to four with Zosanguzali (women's +86kg) and David Zohmingmawia (men's +110 kg) finishing on top of the podium. These golds catapulted Mizoram to fifth place in the overall medals standing.

Karnataka continue to top the overall standings with 15 gold, six silver and four bronze medals while Odisha are second with nine gold, four silver and 10 bronze.

Hosts Chhattisgarh, which won a silver (Rishika Kashyap) and bronze (Lucky Babu Markam) from weightlifting, slipped to ninth in the medal standings.

Weightlifter Sambo Lapung helped Arunachal Pradesh leapfrog Assam to third place when he clinched the men's 100kg gold with a total lift of 299kg. — PTI

Can AI change the course of evolution?



Ranjit Lal

review

This is a remarkable and fascinating read, taking us from the 'discovery' of evolution by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace in 1859 to the future likelihood of human beings turbocharging the evolutionary process and rectifying some of its 'errors' with the help of what Woolfson has termed Artificial Biological Intelligence (ABI), enabling us perhaps to eradicate disease and prolong life. Alongside this narrative Woolfson continually reminds us of our responsibilities to ensure that all such 'tinkering' with natural biological processes is done with the best and noblest of intentions, with the world coming together in this endeavour — something alas, which is difficult to see happening considering the current deranged state of things.

First, Woolfson takes evolution to the cleaners: Darwin and Wallace themselves acknowledged that evolution was just the work of a 'stupid mechanic', that bumbled its way along with no end plan in mind save survival by natural selection. It was what I would like to call biological jugaad; if it works run with it if not, it falls by the wayside. The human spine for example, is a 'design disaster' — and our retinas are designed back to front, which is why we have a blind spot, where the optical nerve comes in its way. All through its 400-million-year existence, it has muddled its way along in a way no engineer would.

As biologists and scientists around the world began probing into, and unravelling, what makes us up and keeps us going — DNA, RNA, proteins, amino-acids, etc., it became obvious that the vast amount of data generated would be impossible to sort and sift through (reading and writing and 'rithmetic') to make sense of, without the capabilities of AI which has a prodigious ap-

petite to digest and make sense of such information. The work of a galaxy of (often Nobel Prize winning) scientists has been referred to, as step by step they unraveled genetic codes and genomes, learnt to read them and now are trying to write and rewrite them... with the help of ABI.

And herein lies the danger: this can be used for good (like for curing cancer and other diseases) and evil: producing amoral, conscienceless monsters (as if we don't have enough of them already!) that could do untold harm to humankind and all life.

This is not a book for the reader with a short attention span: It is full of technicalities



ON THE FUTURE OF SPECIES
By ADRIAN WOOLFSON
Bloomsbury
pp. 453; ₹699

but Woolfson provides a way out via his comprehensive Glossary at the end. Let us get above ourselves, Woolfson reminds us that one of our closest cousins may be sea urchins and sea anemones, not to mention that the genes used to build our brains are very similar to those of worms, jellyfish, and flies! In fact, the brain's neurons are slow, leaky and unreliable, and prone to distortion and dysfunction. And yet capable of "remarkable feats including love, memory and contemplation". Which is what we must cling on to...

This book is a must read for anyone interested in life!

Ranjit Lal is the author of more than 45 books, whose work often involves birds, bees and their bigger relatives

FORMULA | ONE

Teen Antonelli bags Japan GP

Suzuka (Japan), March 29: Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli vowed to "keep raising the bar" after winning Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix to become the youngest driver in Formula One history to lead the championship standings.

The 19-year-old Italian took advantage of a mid-race safety car to jump into the lead after a dreadful start from pole position, crossing the line ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Antonelli's Suzuka victory came two weeks after the first grand prix win of his career in China, and sent him top of the championship standings after three races, nine points ahead of teammate George Russell.

Mercedes are struggling to contain the excitement building around their young driver, even if Antonelli said he was "not thinking too much about the championship".

"Of course it's great but it's still a long way to go and I need to keep raising the bar, because George is very quick," he said.

"For sure he's going to be back at his usual level and also competitors will eventually get closer."



Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli of Italy kisses the trophy as he celebrates winning the Japanese Grand Prix. — AP

Antonelli led home Piastri by 13.722sec, with Leclerc a further 1.548sec back in third. Russell finished fourth to drop to second in the championship standings on 63 points. Leclerc is third on 49. Russell battled Piastri for the lead over the first half of the race but pitted just before the safety car which dropped him out of contention for the win.

Piastri secured second in his first grand prix start of the season, after crashing on his way to the grid in the opener in Australia and missing the race in China because of a technical problem.

— AFP

SPURS BEAT BUCKS, STRETCH WIN STREAK TO 8 IN NBA

Washington (USA), March 29: Victor Wembanyama had 23 points and 15 rebounds while Stephon Castle added a triple double to lead San Antonio's 127-95 victory at Milwaukee on Saturday, boosting the Spurs' NBA win streak to eight games.

Castle contributed 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Spurs while 22-year-old French star Wembanyama added two steals, six assists and a blocked shot.

San Antonio improved to 56-18, second in the Western Conference and only two games behind league leader Oklahoma City.

The Spurs, who have clinched their first playoff berth since 2019, are an NBA-best 24-2 since February 1 and often winning by big margins.

— AFP

Short take

SRH coach laments poor bowling show

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori labelled his side's bowling display against Royal Challengers Bengaluru as "poor", conceding they allowed Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli far too many scoring opportunities in the IPL opener here.

After raising 201/9 in the season-opener on Saturday, the Hyderabad side could not tackle the marauding Padikkal and Kohli, watching RCB romp home in just 15.4 overs.

"You have to get a good start (with the ball), which we did against (Phil) Salt, but then I just think we weren't at our best with the ball. We weren't as disciplined as we needed to be, and we gave a lot of scoring opportunities to Virat and Padikkal, who played exceptionally well," Vettori said in the post-match press conference.

"We should have been able to maintain a little bit more (discipline) after getting that important wicket of Salt. So, it was a very good batting performance by RCB and one of our poorer bowling performances," he added.

"I think we learned a lot from how RCB bowled and what was effective and what wasn't, but we just weren't able to implement that. You don't want to have a rusty performance because of how important every game is in the IPL, particularly how to start," he said. —PTI

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MIND-BLOWING

Rohit & Ryan's whirlwind knocks hand Mumbai big win

Mumbai, March 29: Mumbai Indians rode on blistering half-centuries from former skipper Rohit Sharma (78) and Ryan Rickelton (81) to comfortably beat Kolkata Knight Riders by six wickets thus breaking the hoodoo of not winning any of their opening games in last 13 editions of the IPL, here on Sunday.

While they had lost each of their first matches of an IPL edition since beating Chennai Super Kings by eight wickets in 2012, five-time winners Mumbai Indians hit full throttle in their chase of 221, replying with 224/4 in 19.1 overs.

Playing his first T20 game since last IPL, former India and Mumbai Indians captain Rohit appeared to have sharpened his game a few notches as he smacked a 38-ball 78 with six sixes and as many fours.

At the other end, Ryan Rickelton made a belligerent 81 off 43 balls with eight sixes and four fours while making the most of two lifelines, helping Mumbai Indians finally collect those elusive two points from the first game.

Rohit was adroit in not just picking the lengths of the ball early or with his movement at the crease, but with some of the shots that he executed to perfection.

Like against the lanky Blessing Muzarabani, the 38-year-old danced down the track to spank a short



Mumbai Indian openers Ryan Rickelton (left) and Rohit Sharma run between the wickets during their IPL match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday. — DEBASISH DEY

ball over extra cover for a six in the fourth over, or when he timed the ball as sweetly as it could be against Varun Chakravarty to send it sailing over the cover for another six in the next.

At the other end, Rickelton blissfully took down KKR's mystery spin duo of Sunil Narine and Chakravarty, targeting the leg-side boundaries to clear the ropes.

Rohit and Rickelton put on 148 off 72 balls to put MI in the driver's seat before falling to Anukul

Roy's brilliance in the outfield. It was the fifth-wicket pair of Hardik Pandya (18 not out) and Naman Dhir (5 not out) that took MI over the line.

Earlier, skipper Ajinkya Rahane (67) and Angkrish Raghuvanshi (51) struck vital half-centuries but Kolkata Knight Riders posted a par score of 220 for 4.

On a placid wicket, Shardul Thakur (3/39) provided Mumbai crucial breakthroughs as their bowlers could not really

impose themselves in their maiden outing.

Both senior pacers Trent Boult (0/38) and Jasprit Bumrah (0/35) went wicketless but India pace spearhead's 18th and 20th over stopped KKR from getting closer to 250.

Rahane began with a wristy flick over wide long-on with exquisite timing for a six off Boult in the first over; KKR got the impetus when Pandya (1/39) erred throughout the fourth over to give away 26 runs. —PTI

SCOREBOARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Ajinkya Rahane c Pandya b Thakur 67, Finn Allen c Tilak Varma b Thakur 37, Cameron Green c Rutherford b Thakur 18, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Tilak Varma b Pandya 51, Rinku Singh not out 33, Ramandeep Singh not out 4. Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-7) 10. **Total (for 4 wickets in 20 overs) 220.**

Fall of wickets: 1-69, 2-109, 3-145, 4-205.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-38-0, Hardik Pandya 3-0-39-1, AM Ghazanfar 4-0-51-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-35-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-39-3, Mayank Markande 1-0-16-0.

Mumbai Indians: Ryan Rickelton run out 81, Rohit Sharma c Roy b Arora 78, Suryakumar Yadav c Singh b Kartik Tyagi 16, Tilak Varma c sub (MK Pandey) b Narine 20, Hardik Pandya not out 18, Naman Dhir not out 5. Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-3) 6. **Total (for 4 wickets in 19.1 overs) 224.**

Fall of wickets: 1-148, 2-179, 3-184, 4-215.

Bowling: Vaibhav Arora 4-0-52-1, Blessing Muzarabani 3-0-34-0, Varun Chakravarty 4-0-48-0, Kartik Tyagi 4-0-43-1, Sunil Narine 3-0-30-1, Anukul Roy 1-1-0-15-0.

Samson & Jadeja face ex-teams as CSK take on RR

Guwahati, March 29: Sanju Samson is set for an emotional clash against Rajasthan Royals, the side he led and shaped for over a decade, as he turns out for Chennai Super Kings, while Ravindra Jadeja will also face his former franchise, adding a poignant subplot to the IPL match between the two teams here on Monday.

For more than a decade, Samson was synonymous with RR, their batting mainstay, leader and all-time leading run-scorer who guided them to the 2022 final. Much like M. S. Dhoni at CSK, Samson was the Royals' identity, but in a blockbuster swap that sent Jadeja back to RR, the Kerala batter now finds himself in yellow, adding a new dimension to CSK's evolving core.

Samson also arrives in prime form, having played a decisive role in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign.

His hat-trick of 50-plus scores in must-win games against WI, England and New Zealand has made him the star of the nation as the unassuming keeper-batter will come with a renewed self-belief.

He along with skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad, who are set to open also, will also form the core leadership of the team who will miss Dhoni for at least two weeks due to a calf strain. Dhoni has not travelled with the side to Guwahati as his absence

| IPL 2026 Match: 3 | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| March 30, 7:30 pm | |
| ACA Stadium, Guwahati | |
| | |
| Rajasthan Royals | Chennai Super Kings |
| Overall in IPL | |
| 236 Played | 253 |
| 116 Won | 142 |
| 117 Lost | 109 |
| 3 No Result | 2 |
| 242/6 Highest Total | 246/5 |
| Head-to-Head in IPL | |
| Matches Played: 31 | |
| RR won: 15 | CSK Won: 16 |

will put Samson and Gaikwad in the spotlight. Dhoni's absence will also open the door for emerging names like 20-year-old left-arm spin all-rounder Prashant Veer who impressed in domestic T20s and the franchise's big-money (₹14.2-core) uncapped recruit Kartik Sharma, known for his six-hitting exploits in the domestic circuit. For RR, Samson's departure signals the end of an era and the beginning of another under Riyan Parag who will begin his captaincy stint playing at his home ground. —PTI

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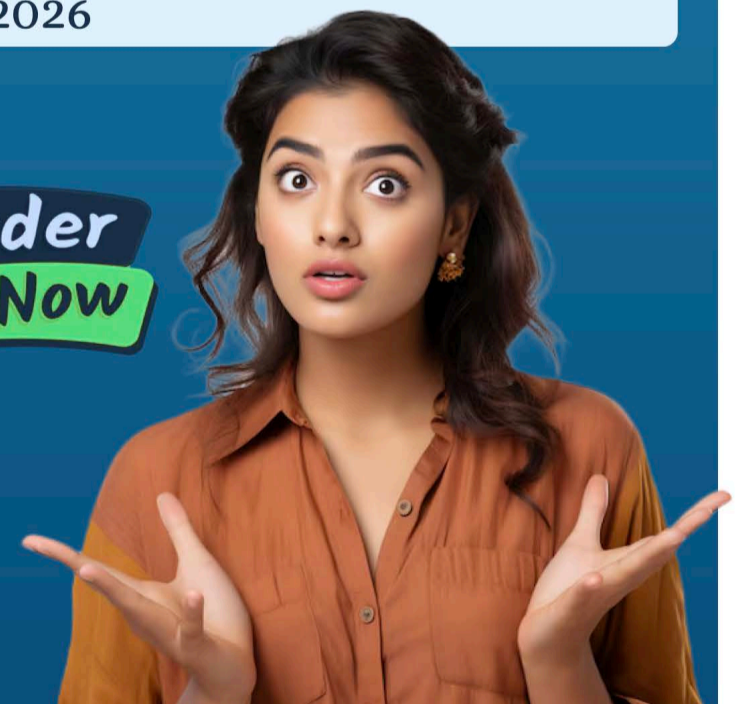
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