

THE CITIZEN TIMES

Delhi Weather

Min 20°C Max 30°C



Everybody says same line: Suryakumar responds to Santner's 'silence home crowd' remark

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Ridhi Dogra says authenticity is her 'only strategy' in 'The 50'

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Pink-ball Test: Hamilton, Sutherland star as India stare at huge loss against Australia

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In Brief

Ram Rahim acquitted in journalist murder case

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Saturday acquitted Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2002 murder case of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati, dealing a setback to the CBI. The bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagi and Justice Vikram Aggarwal upheld life sentences of three others—Kuldeep, Nirmal and Krishan Lal. A CBI court had convicted all four in 2019. Chhatrapati was shot outside his home after his newspaper reported.

CBSE postpones Middle East board exams

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has postponed Class 12 board exams scheduled for March 9, 10 and 11 in several Middle East countries due to the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict. According to Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj, exams in Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE will be rescheduled later. Earlier exams on March 2, 5 and 7 were also postponed. Class 10 exams in the region have been cancelled till March 11. The board will review the situation on March 10.

Modi defends Birla before opposition motion

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi defended Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla amid an Opposition move to remove him, calling him committed to the Constitution and parliamentary values. Speaking at an event in Kota, Modi said the Speaker rises above party lines and handles members patiently. The Opposition has accused Birla of a partisan approach. Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party issued a whip directing its MPs to attend Parliament on March 9 and 10.

India ranks third in billionaire count

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) India now has 308 billionaires, up by 24 from last year, ranking third globally after the United States and China, according to the Hurun Research Institute's Hurun Global Rich List 2026. The combined wealth of Indian billionaires rose 10 percent to Rs112.6 trillion. Mumbai remains India's top billionaire hub with 95 billionaires, though Shenzhen leads in Asia.

ROZA TIME TABLE
 IFTAR (8 March) 05.56 PM
 SEHRI (9 March) 04.41 AM

Speedeaters
 66 K-ROAD, BISTUPUR.

'Surya' Uday: Plucky NZ stand in the way of India's date with history

India look to defend the T20 World Cup against New Zealand in the final

Ahmedabad, March 7 (IANS) An insantly talented and incredibly consistent Indian cricket team will carry the weight of a nation's hopes in its pursuit of history when it goes up against a tenacious New Zealand in a classic David versus Goliath final of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday. On November 19, 2023, the expansive amphitheatre called the Narendra Modi Stadium witnessed a teary-eyed and emotionally spent Rohit Sharma drag himself

up the dressing-room stairs after Australia had silenced India in the ODI World Cup final. The shortest format team will now look to become the first side ever to defend the crown under Suryakumar Yadav and also the first to win the coveted trophy three times. To win a final, one needs a lot of pluck but also can't do without a slice of luck. It need not be a perfect game but right things need to happen at the right time.



India literally won the semifinal of the ongoing showpiece when Harry Brook dropped Sanju Samson. The 'Men In Blue' wouldn't mind such bloopers from opposition on Sunday. If they win, it will be a job well done and nothing more. If they lose, all hell might break loose. As skipper, Suryakumar not only has the chance to become the first among equals to defend a World Championship.

He has led the side impressively for last two years even though he has hardly walked the talk as a batter himself, especially on big days and against big nations. He can change it all on Sunday in what will be the most defining moment of his entire career. His every failure will be summarily forgotten should he click on what is expected to be a warm evening. But at Motera, India's one-stop destination for all big cricketing events, India

will have one of the most "loved" cricketing nations standing in its way. On a given day, a Finn Allen, a Lockie Ferguson or a Matt Henry know how to punch way above their weights. This New Zealand team has an air of familiarity about it but the most genial assortment of players in global cricket can never be viewed with contempt. A Mitchell Santner or a Glenn Phillips know how to play the hard way without ever being ugly.

Domestic LPG costlier by Rs 60, Jamshedpur price Rs 952.5

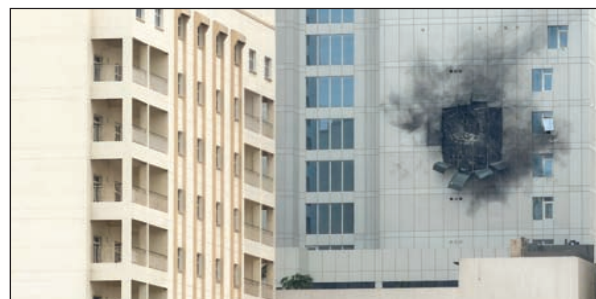


New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) State-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Saturday raised the prices of domestic and commercial LPG cylinders, with household cooking gas becoming costlier by Rs 60 and commercial cylinders by Rs 114.5, amid rising global energy prices linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. According to the Indian Oil Corporation, the price of non-subsidised domestic LPG used by most households has been increased to Rs 913 per 14.2-kg cylinder in New Delhi - up from Rs 853 earlier. This marks the second price hike in less than a year for domestic LPG cylinders. Commercial LPG cylinders - typically used by hotels, restaurants and other businesses - have also seen an increase of Rs 114.5 per unit. According to industry officials, the recent surge in global energy prices follows the escalation of military tensions in the Middle East.

Trump vows 'very hard' strikes; Iran says will not surrender

No more attacks on neighbouring countries, says Iran's President

Washington/Tehran, March 7 (IANS) President Donald Trump announced plans to launch yet more strikes against Iran on Saturday, escalating his threats as the conflict with Iran enters its second week. "Today Iran will be hit very hard!" he wrote on Truth Social Saturday morning. "Under serious consideration for complete destruction and certain death, because of Iran's bad behavior, are areas and groups of people that were not considered for targeting up until this moment in time." Trump's threat came after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian labeled the president's earlier call for Tehran's "unconditional



surrender" a "dream that they should take to their grave" in a speech broadcast on state television Saturday. Pezeshkian also said his country would no longer strike its neighbors in the Middle East - so long as attacks against Iran weren't being launched from those countries. Trump took credit for the

new policy, writing on Truth Social that it "was only made because of the relentless U.S. and Israeli attack." "It is the first time that Iran has ever lost, in thousands of years, to surrounding Middle Eastern Countries," he said. "They have said, 'Thank you President Trump.' I have said, 'You're welcome!' Iran

Conflict enters eighth day, aerial exchanges continue across Gulf

Tel Aviv/Tehran, March 7 (IANS) As tensions sharply escalated between the United States, Israel and Iran, the conflict entered its eighth day, with Israel carrying out a fresh round of strikes while explosions were reported at one of Tehran's main commercial airports. The confrontation, which began on February 28 with a strike in Tehran, has steadily widened in scope. What initially appeared to be a series of aerial exchanges has now expanded into a broader theatre of conflict, including drone attacks taking place across the Gulf region. Meanwhile, Kuwait's military reported that its air defence systems had intercepted multiple incoming threats. According to the Kuwaiti authorities, a total of 12 Iranian drones, along with 14 ballistic or cruise missiles, were neutralised in several waves of attacks beginning at dawn.

is no longer the 'Bully of the Middle East,' they are, instead, 'THE LOSER OF THE MIDDLE EAST,' and will be for many decades until they surrender or, more likely, completely collapse!"

Ex-rapper Balendra Shah defeats 4-time Nepal PM Oli



Kathmandu, March 7 (IANS) Rashtriya Swatantrata Party leader and rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah 'Balen' defeated four-time prime minister K P Sharma Oli by a huge margin of about 50,000 votes in Nepal's

Jhapa-5 constituency, the Election Commission said here. The RSP leader and former Kathmandu Mayor, popularly known only as Balen is his party's prime ministerial candidate. As of 6 pm, the RSP had

India committed to working closely with new Nepal govt: PM Modi

New Delhi/Kathmandu, March 7 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated the people and government of Nepal on the successful and peaceful conduct of elections in the country, stating that, as a close friend and neighbour, India remains steadfast in its commitment to working closely with the people and the new government in the country. "I warmly congratulate the people and Government of Nepal on the successful and peaceful conduct of elections. It is heartening to see my Nepali sisters and brothers exercise their democratic rights so vibrantly," PM Modi posted on X. won 62 seats from among the 78 for which results have been declared and leading in 60 seats. Balen, 35, secured 68,348 votes against 74-year-old Oli's 18,734, the Election Commission (EC) said. The Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) -- CPN-UML had projected Oli as the party's Prime Ministerial candidate.

Jharkhand gets new JD(U) chief

Ranchi, March 7: Khiru Mahto was on Saturday elected unopposed as the president of the Jharkhand unit of the Janata Dal (United) for the third consecutive term, a party official said. Shrawan Kumar, the state election officer appointed to



conduct the organisational elections, presented the certificate to Mahto. In addition, presidents in 14 Jharkhand districts and two Mahanagars -- Ranchi and Jamshepur -- were also appointed on the occasion, according to a party statement.

Rahul Gandhi alleges Indian data 'handed over' to US

Thiruvananthapuram, March 7 (IANS): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday alleged that India's data resources have effectively been handed over to the United States following a trade deal between the two countries. He said critical issues like data ownership and protection are not receiving enough attention, while public debates are focused on less important matters. During an interaction with members of the Information Technology (IT) fraternity at Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also called for a broader discussion on subsidies and "freebies," questioning why assistance to the poor is criticised while benefits given to large corporate groups go largely unquestioned. Responding to queries on

data protection, Gandhi referred to the Indo-US trade deal, which he has earlier criticised. He argued that India failed to leverage the value of its data during negotiations. "I mean, if in that deal, India turned around and said, listen, this is all fine, but our data is the most valuable data in the world, I can guarantee you there will be no taxes on agriculture.

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Crossed all limits : PM slams Mamata govt for 'insulting tribal President'

(Dharamvir) New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched an offensive against the West Bengal government over the controversy surrounding the venue change for the 9th International Santal Conference, where President Droupadi Murmu was the chief guest. He called the incident "shameful and unprecedented". Taking to the social media platform X, the Prime Minister said the development had deeply hurt people

who believe in democratic values and the empowerment of tribal communities. "This is shameful and unprecedented. Everyone who believes in democracy and the empowerment of tribal communities is disheartened. The pain and anguish expressed by Rashtrapati Ji, who herself hails from a tribal community, has caused immense sadness in the minds of the people of India," PM Modi wrote. The Prime Minister directly blamed the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal for the



controversy and said the state administration was responsible for the disrespect shown to the President. The Prime Minister's remarks came after President Droupadi Murmu expressed displeasure over the last-minute change in the venue of the Santal

Conference in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The event was originally scheduled to be held at Phansidewa, but the organisers were compelled to shift it to a smaller venue at Gossaipur after the state administration allegedly denied permission for the programme at the original location, citing security concerns. During the event, President Murmu expressed concern over the sudden change of venue and the inconvenience caused to participants.

Prez urges Santal youth to embrace education, preserve language and traditions

Kolkata, March 7 (IANS): President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday said the contributions of the Santal community to India's freedom struggle have not received due recognition, asserting that several legendary figures were "not deliberately included in history." Speaking at the ninth International Santal Conference in West Bengal's Siliguri, she recalled, "It is a matter of pride for the Santal community that our ancestor, Tilka Majhi, raised the banner of revolt against exploitation nearly 240 years ago. Nearly 60 years after his revolt, the brave brothers Sido-Kanhu and Chand-Bhairav, along with the brave sisters Phoolo-Jhano, led the Santal Hul in 1855."

India to continue importing Russian oil

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) An Indian government source said Saturday that New Delhi was pushing ahead with imports of Russian oil, after a temporary US waiver to import crude from Moscow due to the war in the Middle East. But India insists it did not need Washington's permission to do so, the source added. The US-Israel campaign against Iran and Tehran's retaliatory attacks across the Gulf region have upended the world's energy and transport sectors, causing a surge in global oil prices.

Women's health crisis

Women's health is emerging as a major public health concern across the world, with breast cancer becoming one of the most serious threats. Over the past few decades, the number of cases has increased dramatically, particularly in developing countries. This alarming rise highlights not only the growing burden of disease but also the gaps that exist in healthcare awareness, early detection and access to treatment.

A recent study conducted by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington paints a troubling picture. According to the study, more than two lakh new cancer cases were reported in India in 2023. When compared with 1990, this represents a staggering increase of about 477 percent. Equally concerning is the fact that more than one lakh deaths were recorded among those affected. These figures underline the urgent need to address the rising burden of breast cancer with seriousness and urgency.

For women diagnosed with breast cancer, the struggle is not limited to physical illness. The disease often has deep emotional and psychological consequences, affecting their confidence, family life and social participation. In many cases, fear and stigma surrounding cancer further complicate the situation. Despite advances in medical science and the availability of treatment options, many women still hesitate to seek medical help at the early stages.

A major reason behind this problem is the lack of effective awareness at the grassroots level. Governments and health organizations frequently conduct campaigns encouraging early detection and regular screening. However, the reach of these campaigns often remains limited, especially in rural and economically weaker communities. As a result, many women remain unaware of the symptoms, risk factors and importance of timely diagnosis.

Women in low- and lower-middle-income countries are particularly vulnerable to this crisis. Limited healthcare infrastructure, financial constraints and social barriers often prevent them from accessing timely medical care. In contrast, high-income countries have better screening systems and stronger health education programs, which help detect the disease earlier and improve survival rates.

In India, the situation reflects a complex mix of social, cultural and economic challenges. Women frequently prioritize the needs of their families over their own health. Many delay medical consultations due to financial concerns or hesitation about visiting doctors. By the time they finally seek treatment, the disease may have already reached an advanced stage, making recovery much more difficult.

Addressing this growing crisis requires a comprehensive approach. Governments must invest more resources in strengthening public healthcare infrastructure and expanding affordable cancer screening facilities. Regular check-ups, mammography programs and community-level awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in early detection.

At the same time, society must encourage women to take their health seriously and overcome the stigma associated with medical examinations. Education, awareness and supportive healthcare systems are essential for reducing the burden of breast cancer.

Ultimately, protecting women's health is not just a medical necessity—it is a social imperative. Healthy women form the backbone of families and communities. Ensuring their well-being means investing in a healthier and more resilient society for the future.

Womanhood in the Indian context: Not just equality, but the soul of civilization

International Women's Day



Dr. Kalyani Kabir

Today, the global stage engages in discussions on women's rights, equality, and empowerment. From international forums to national policy drafts, a rigorous discourse shapes the status and role of women. Yet, amid this debate, a fundamental question arises: Are we viewing womanhood through the narrow lens of rights and opportunities, or do we perceive it through the expansive vision that Indian civilization established millennia ago?

In Indian thought, the "woman question" transcends simple social justice; it anchors the core philosophy of our civilization. Here, we do not view a woman merely as an individual or a citizen, but as the axis of power (Shakti), creation, and cultural values (Sanskrit). Indian tradition elevated the woman to the status of a deity. This is no mere religious symbol; it is the fruit of a cultural perspective that recognizes woman as the primary inspiration of life itself. Indian scriptures declare

with absolute clarity:

"Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devata." (Where women are honoured, divinity resides.)

This maxim reveals the fundamental consciousness of Indian society. It asserts that honouring women is not just a moral ideal, but a mandatory condition for social prosperity and balance.

A Legacy of Intellect and Leadership

History confirms that Indian civilization consistently accorded women prestigious positions in the realms of knowledge, thought, and leadership. During the Vedic period, scholars like Gargi and Maitreyi dominated philosophical dialogues and engaged in profound discourse on Brahman (supreme knowledge). This historical reality shatters the myth that ancient society confined women to domestic roles. In truth, the original form of Indian tradition was far more liberal and balanced.

The role of women in Indian society never stopped at the personal or familial level; they acted as the architects of societal character. A mother does not merely give birth; she provides a vision for life. This is why Indian culture identifies the mother as the first Guru. If a society

possesses strong values today, it owes that strength to the pivotal role of women within the family unit.

From Inspiration to Power

History further illustrates that whenever society faced a crisis, women displayed extraordinary courage and leadership. Their indelible impact and participation in the Freedom Struggle serve as a definitive example. They didn't just join the fight; they awakened the masses and built powerful organizations. This proves that a woman is not just a source of inspiration, but the very force of transformation.

Admittedly, social distortions emerged over time. Certain regressive customs and narrow mindsets weakened the status of women in various periods. However, these shadows do not represent the core of Indian thought; they represent a deviation from the original ideal that viewed womanhood as a symbol of strength and dignity.

The Modern Challenge: Empowerment vs. Consumerism

Today, as women achieve remarkable milestones in education, science, administration, politics, and industry, they prove that they can attain

excellence in any field when given the opportunity. But progress requires more than just opportunity; it demands a shift in the collective psyche of society.

Our greatest contemporary challenge lies in a dual reality: While we champion empowerment, a consumerist culture often reduces the image of a woman to a mere object of attraction or consumption. Advertisements, entertainment, and digital media frequently mould female dignity to serve market interests. This trend threatens not only the honour of women but the moral foundation of our entire society.

If society views women through the lens of the marketplace, it betrays the cultural vision that defines them as sources of power. We must ensure that as we embrace modernity, we keep our cultural vision alive.

The Path Forward

True empowerment does not end with enacting laws or announcing policies. It means creating a social ecosystem where women find respect, security, and opportunity in equal measure. The family, the community, and the government must work in unison to achieve this.

The hallmark of Indian

thought is that it does not view women through a checklist of rights, but as a shared responsibility and a collective power. We recognize women as both Shakti (Power) and Karuna (Compassion). She is the foundation of creation and the protector of social equilibrium.

As India marches toward a new era of economic growth and global prestige, we must strengthen our moral and cultural values. The role of women remains central to this process. If a woman is educated, self-reliant, and respected, the family grows stronger, society finds balance, and the nation's future brightens. Conversely, if we neglect the dignity and safety of women, no amount of economic progress can deliver permanent prosperity.

Ultimately, we must understand that in Indian thought, womanhood is not a subject of social reform—it is a question of the soul of our civilization. We must accept women's honour and empowerment not as a mere policy program, but as a fundamental principle of nation-building.

A society truly earns the right to be called civilized, balanced, and prosperous only when it secures the honour of its women.

(Author is Senior Academician & Litterateur, State President, Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat (Jharkhand))

Daughters of Bharat : A deprived section of the society



Prabhat Kishore

In the Indian context, just providing facilities is not enough to educate everyone. There is a need to focus on backward states and remove gender and regional disparities, increase enrolment, retention and providing quality based leaning.

The work done by girls is usually not visible as it is confined to the home. In rural areas, girls take care of their brothers and sisters, cook food, clean, fetch fuel and wood and help in sowing, ploughing, harvesting etc. in the fields. Even in urban areas, girls do household chores as well as earning money outside the home. Although there is no effective method available for measuring or financially evaluating household work; according to a 1981 estimate, a rural girl would have done work worth more than Rs 39,600 by the time she becomes an adult.

The curse of child marriage

Child marriage is a curse for both boys and girls. But for girls the consequences are graver since, for them, marriage means the end of education, taking over responsibilities inside and outside the home, and restrictions on movement in and outside the home. Early marriage prolongs the fertility of girls. Due to early and repeated pregnancies, they become physically weak. As a result, child marriage reduces the productivity of adult women. Mean age at marriage by education level is 21.8 in Rural area and 23.2 in urban area.

Measures for elimination

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (replaced by the Child Marriage Prohibition Act 2006) does not seem to be implemented anywhere.



Two efforts are required to eradicate child marriage. First, to awaken the community and secondly, to overcome poverty, the root cause of child marriage. On an average, 1,00,00,000 marriages take place every year in Bharat, out of which 30 percent of girls are of the age of 15-19 years. A clear impact of education is seen on the age of marriage. The average age difference between a graduate and an illiterate girl at the time of marriage is four and a half years. Sometimes they are married before they even reach puberty. 90 percent of them become mothers within the first one or two years.

According to the data collected by N.N.M.B. (1980) during the year 1975-78, girls in the age group of 13-18 years get less iron than the recommended amount as compared to boys. Young girls become anaemic as a result of menopause due to deficiency of iron in the diet. Low birth weight and basic delivery related complications are more common among teenage mothers

Girls/women who give birth to their first child at an early age are at risk of birth complications. After the first menstruation around the age of 14, they have to endure the pain of intercourse. Their bodies

and reproductive systems are immature. Apart from the requirements of tissue maintenance and foetal development, they also have to meet the nutritional demands for their own growth.

Adverse effects

Due to their gender, girls are more susceptible to the adverse effects of adverse circumstances than boys. Children living in difficult circumstances can be classified into many categories such as :- working children, street children, neglected and exploited children, children associated with institutions, children affected by the consequences of war, children of prostitutes, children involved in sexual relations in childhood, children who are victims of physical abuse. Poor families in areas adjacent to big cities, deprived families living in rural areas, prostitutes, gamblers, alcoholics, prisoners are at the highest risk of sexual abuse.

Incidents of rape of minor girls

Incidents of rape of minor children are increasing. 25 percent of rape cases are of minor girls. At some places, sexual abuse is also done in the name of religion, which is popular as "Devdasi" in Bharat. According to Oxfam India's 2011-12 report, 29 percent women

in the labour sector, 23 percent in domestic maid service and 16 percent in small scale industrial units have complained of sexual exploitation.

Political will and actions are needed to ensure equal opportunities and status for girls in the decade of 2030. This is only possible with the joint efforts of the government, international organisations and private institutions. Political, legal and developmental policies should be made to eliminate gender discrimination and bias in childhood.

The main points suggested by experts regarding girls are as follows:-

- (1) Religious, legal, social, economic and anthropological evidence should be collected and such information should be used in policy making and programme based interventions to improve the situation.
- (2) Concrete steps should be taken by setting targets and preparing a time table related to the basic health, nutrition, education and social status of girls.
- (3) A time-bound process should be set at the community and national levels to ensure survival and development programmes.
- (4) The negative image of girls prevalent through

Women of Steel: The quiet revolution in Jamshedpur



Tanya Ranjan

Every year on International Women's Day, we share inspiring quotes, celebrate achievements, and talk about empowering women. But if you walk through the streets of Jamshedpur - from Sakhi market to Telco Colony, from Kadma to Bistupur - you will realise that women here have long been quietly reshaping the city's story.

Jamshedpur has always been called the Steel City. Yet beneath its industrial identity lies another, less acknowledged truth: it is also a city built on the resilience, labour, and ambition of its women.

For decades, the city's economic and social life has been sustained by women whose work rarely appears in official narratives. They run small businesses in bustling markets, manage households where multiple generations live under one roof, teach in schools that shape the next generation, and increasingly occupy spaces in offices, factories, and civic life.

Historically, Jamshedpur was shaped by the vision of industrial modernity. Planned townships, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities emerged around the steel plant. This created opportunities for women earlier than many other industrial cities in India. Schools, nursing colleges, and professional spaces allowed many women to enter public life.

Yet progress has never been straightforward.

Even today, many women in the city negotiate deeply rooted social expectations. Careers are often balanced with the invisible labour of caregiving. Ambition is encouraged, but only within carefully drawn boundaries. The idea of a "successful woman" is still quietly measured by how well she performs multiple



roles without disrupting the social order. But the change is unmistakable.

Young women in Jamshedpur today are lawyers, entrepreneurs, designers, journalists, engineers, therapists, and activists. They are building startups, running social initiatives, and shaping conversations about gender, mental health, and identity. Social media, education, and exposure to wider networks have allowed them to imagine futures beyond traditional scripts.

Importantly, the city's largest employer has also begun acknowledging this shift. Tata Steel has announced a goal of achieving 25% women representation in its workforce by 2030. In an industry historically dominated by men, this commitment signals a significant cultural and structural shift within one of India's oldest industrial institutions.

But the impact of such a vision should not remain confined within the walls of a single corporation.

Jamshedpur's industrial ecosystem is vast. Hundreds of ancillary units, vendors, service providers, contractors, and logistics companies operate in the shadow of the steel plant. If the city truly wants to move toward a more inclusive future, these dependent industries must also follow the same path - by actively hiring women, investing in safe workplaces, and creating leadership opportunities for them.

Representation cannot remain symbolic. It must translate into systemic change across the entire industrial chain that sustains the city's economy.

At the same time, the city's grassroots women's movements remain deeply important. Self-help

groups in surrounding areas, community educators, and women-led initiatives are transforming lives quietly but powerfully. They remind us that empowerment is not only about boardrooms and leadership positions; it is also about financial independence, dignity, and the ability to make choices.

Yet challenges remain. Gender-based violence, unequal pay, limited representation in leadership, and persistent cultural stereotypes still shape many women's lives. Safety in public spaces remains a concern. Conversations around mental health, sexuality, and autonomy are still often silenced.

International Women's Day, therefore, should not only be a celebration. It should also be a moment of reflection for cities like Jamshedpur.

If this city prides itself on being progressive and forward-looking, then the measure of that progress must include the freedom, safety, and opportunity available to its women - not just the visible few, but all women, from factory floors to classrooms, from corporate offices to informal labour markets.

The women of Jamshedpur are already doing the work of transformation. They are raising children who question inequality, building communities that value empathy, and creating new possibilities for themselves and others. Perhaps the real question for the city is not whether women are ready to lead.

It is whether the city - and the industries that power it - are ready to recognise that they already are.

(Author is a writing consultant. Views are personal.)

Petrol, diesel prices will not increase, 1st cargo moves from Strait of Hormuz: Govt sources

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) Government sources said on Saturday that petrol and diesel prices will not increase, adding that India's energy stock position is improving and the situation is becoming more stable. According to the sources, the improving energy stock situation has given the government greater confidence in managing fuel supplies.

They added that India has also taken steps to diversify its crude oil imports to reduce dependence on vulnerable routes.

"India has increased its



crude oil imports from sources other than the Strait of Hormuz. Earlier, about 60 per cent of India's crude oil imports came from sources outside the strategic shipping route, but that share has now increased to around 70 per

cent," they stated.

"The first cargo has already started moving through the Strait of Hormuz -- indicating that supply flows are stabilising," they mentioned.

The clarification from

the government came after the opposition political parties alleged that fuel prices could increase.

Responding to the claims, government sources said the allegation was completely baseless.

They said the earlier assurance was specifically related to petrol and diesel prices and was not in reference to LPG.

The sources again reiterated that petrol and diesel prices will not increase.

"This was only said for petrol and diesel. It was not in reference to LPG. Today we again assure that

prices of Petrol and Diesel will not increase," as per the sources.

On the issue of cooking gas, sources said the government is currently working on re-prioritising LPG production to ensure adequate supply.

"The price of a Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinder has increased by about Rs 110 over the past 12 years," they noted.

"The government is closely monitoring the energy situation and taking steps to maintain stability in fuel supplies and prices," according to the sources.

Sensex, Nifty plunge 3 pc in volatile week over Middle East tensions, FII outflows

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Domestic equity benchmarks plummeted nearly 3 per cent this week on a cautious note amid heightened volatility, as persistent foreign fund outflows and escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East kept investors on edge.

The frontline indices saw a fall of 2.9 per cent each. Sensex closed at 78,918.90 against Friday's close of 81,287.19 (February 27), while Nifty settled at 24,450.45 against the previous week's 25,178.65 closing.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers during the week, pulling out over Rs 23,000 crore from Indian markets amid a broader global de-risking trend. However, strong domestic institutional flows helped cushion the downside.

Rising geopolitical tensions and a sharp uptick in crude oil prices, with Brent moving closer to \$86 per barrel.

While broader markets underperformed the headline indices, with the BSE Midcap and BSE Smallcap indices



declined about 3 per cent on a week-on-week basis.

Sectorally, most indices ended in negative territory, except BSE Capital Goods. The worst-performing sectors included BSE Realty, BSE Oil and Gas, BSE Bankex, BSE Auto, and BSE Consumer Durables, which declined by 4.9 per cent, 4.8 per cent, 4.6 per cent, 3.9 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively.

In contrast, BSE Capital Goods managed to close marginally higher with a gain of 0.2 per cent, while defence-related stocks also emerged as notable outperformers, advancing nearly 3 per cent as geopolitical tensions boosted investor interest in defence-linked companies.

We're creating World Wide Web of trade partnerships, India secured best US deal: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said that in all trade deals, the country has protected its national interests, adding that we have secured the best trade deal with the US compared to other nations.

Speaking at the 'Raisina Dialogue 2026' here, the minister said India has emerged as a self-confident nation in the last decade and New Delhi and Washington share a very



powerful relationship.

"US President Donald Trump has always had the best of things to say about India as a country, and about Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi. We have

fantastic relations with our counterparts there," said Goyal. "I think it's a very, very powerful relationship that the US and India share. And we got the best deal amongst all the nations with whom we compete," the minister added.

"We have a large responsibility cast on both our nations. They are the world's largest economy, \$30 trillion economy, nobody can wish them away," he said.

Gola Sizzlers Launches Its 32nd Outlet at Vegas Mall, Dwarka Sector 14

The iconic sizzler brand strengthens its footprint with a landmark opening at one of Dwarka's most vibrant lifestyle hubs

New Delhi : India's beloved sizzler destination, Gola Sizzlers, proudly announces the launch of its 32nd outlet at Vegas Mall, Sector 14, marking another significant milestone in the brand's continued expansion. Located within one of Dwarka's most vibrant lifestyle and retail hubs, the new outlet brings Gola Sizzlers' signature experience of indulgent sizzling platters, diverse multi-cuisine offerings, and warm hospitality to an ever-growing community of diners.



With a strong legacy and loyal customer base, Gola Sizzlers has become synonymous with quality, consistency, and its unmistakable theatrical sizzler presentations. The launch of the Vegas Mall outlet reinforces the brand's commitment to expanding its presence while continuing to deliver the dining experience that guests have cherished for decades. Strategically located at Vegas Mall, Dwarka Sector 14, the new outlet features thoughtfully designed interiors that reflect the brand's contemporary yet welcoming aesthetic.

Motorola launches Edge 70 Fusion with world's first Sony LYTIA 710 camera

Asansol, March 7 : Motorola on March 6 launched the Motorola Edge 70 Fusion, a new mid-premium smartphone featuring the world's first 50MP Sony LYTIA 710 camera sensor, premium fabric-inspired design, and a massive 7000mAh battery, with an effective starting price of Rs 24,999. The company also announced an early bird sale on Flipkart from 12 PM to 4 PM on March 6, while the device will go on open sale from March 12, 2026 across Flipkart, Motorola.in, and leading retail stores.

The smartphone introduces a 50MP Sony LYTIA 710 camera with OIS and motoAI, designed to deliver enhanced low-light performance, improved dynamic range, and Pantone-validated colours and skin tones. It also includes a 13MP ultra-wide plus macro lens and a 32MP front camera, supporting 4K video recording across all lenses. AI-powered features such as adaptive stabilization, horizon lock, and portrait mode further enhance the imaging experience.

Despite its slim 7.99mm design, the device houses a 7000mAh silicon-carbon battery with 68W TurboPower fast charging, which the company claims can deliver a day's power in just 10 minutes.

The smartphone also features moto AI 2.0, integrating tools such as Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Perplexity for enhanced productivity and AI-driven assistance. It runs on Hello UI based on Android 16, with three OS upgrades and five years of security updates.

Blenders Pride launches 'The One And Only' campaign

Kharagpur/Malda, March 7 : Blenders Pride Packaged Drinking Water has unveiled its latest campaign, 'The One And Only,' emphasizing the idea that true success arises from distinction. The campaign features three protagonists-Avanti Nagrath, Kirandeep Chahal, and Mahieka Sharma-each representing unique facets of the brand's ethos. Showcasing charisma, magnetism, and poise, they embody the brand's commitment to aspirational success in modern Indian culture. The integrated campaign spans digital and social platforms, major newspapers, and outdoor advertising, coinciding with the ICC T20 World Cup. CMO Debasree Dasgupta highlighted that the campaign addresses the aspirations of India's youth, who seek not just success, but admiration and influence.

Customer wins Mahindra Electric Car in Havells Diwali lucky draw



Jamshedpur, March 7: Sunil Kumar, a customer who purchased a water heater worth Rs15,000 during the Havells 'Har Ghar Tyohar Diwali Offer,' has won a Mahindra electric car worth Rs 26 lakh in the company's lucky draw. The purchase was made at the Havells Exclusive Store - Om Prakash Agarwal Havells Galaxy Store in Sakchi. Havells is a well-known electrical brand with over 60 years of legacy. It is an Indian multinational company that operates in several countries and is widely recognized for its reliable service and fair pricing. The company launches special promotional offers two to three times a year to reward customers. During the prize announcement, Havells Exclusive Showroom owners Om Prakash Agarwal, Sumit Agarwal and Amit Agarwal, along with Havells staff members, were present at the event.

Gold nears Rs 1.70 lakh, silver eyes Rs 3 lakh amid safe-haven buying this week

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Precious metals - gold and silver - maintained their bullish momentum this week, as escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East spurred safe-haven buying and heightened volatility across the broader commodities basket.

Despite intermittent intra-day pullbacks and profit-taking, the trend structure for precious metals remains decisively bullish.

Gold futures (April 2) on MCX extended their upward trajectory, breaking the Rs 1,65,000 resistance and trading at



Rs 1,69,880. On Friday, they closed on a flat note at Rs 1,61,675, slightly below the

previous close. Silver futures (May 5) on MCX also continued their upward momentum, breaking above Rs 2,85,000 and trading near the Rs 3,00,000 level amid elevated volatility.

According to Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, gold and silver approached record highs before experiencing mild corrections, while crude oil surged sharply due to supply disruption concerns.

Traders have shown increased participation near key breakout levels, though elevated volatility underscores the

need for disciplined risk management, he added. Momentum indicators suggest sustained trend strength, with gold likely to continue toward Rs 1,70,000 if support holds, while a drop below Rs 1,57,000 could extend corrective pressure toward Rs 1,50,000.

The Rs 2,55,000-Rs 2,65,000 range now serves as a strong demand zone for silver, Ponmudi noted. "Price action remains constructive, with the potential to extend toward Rs 3,00,000-Rs 3,05,000, while a drop below Rs 2,60,000 could trigger short-term consolidation."

Bringing easy snack ideas home with Britannia Marie Gold

Durgapur, March 7: When snack time hits at home in Durgapur, this chipotle paneer biscuit sandwich adds a delicious twist to your everyday snack routine-perfect for relaxed evenings, family time, or quick bites enjoyed with friends indoors. Britannia Marie Gold biscuits provide the perfect crunch, while the creamy, spicy chipotle paneer spread made with paneer, cashews, and Kashmiri red chillies turns a simple snack into something exciting. Whether it's for a quick bite or a small get-together, this sandwich brings the right mix of creamy, spicy, and crunchy textures to every moment.

Here's how you can turn Paneer and Marie Gold biscuits into a simple, flavourful snack using easy ingredients and minimal effort, perfect for everyday snack time at home in Durgapur. Spicy & Creamy Chipotle Paneer Sandwich with Britannia Biscuits recipe: Blend 200 g Paneer, 20 soaked cashews, 7 soaked



Kashmiri red chillies, 1 tsp honey, 1 tsp salt, 2 tsp dried oregano, 2 tsp lemon juice, 2 tsp olive oil, 5 ice cubes, and ¼ cup water into a smooth, creamy chipotle spread. Take Britannia Marie Gold Biscuits and generously spread the mixture on one biscuit. Top with another biscuit to form a sandwich. Serve immediately for a spicy, creamy, crunchy bite. Tip: Lightly toast biscuits for extra crunch or garnish with herbs and olive oil.

Row Over Tribal Land Acquisition in Odisha's Sundargarh, Press Conference Held in Delhi

New Delhi : Invite your organization to attend and cover an important press conference concerning the direction for immediate withdrawal of illegal and forceful land acquisition in Kuku-da, Alanda, Kesramal, Jhagarpur and Khatang Gram Panchayats of the Schedule Area of Sundargarh District, Odisha. The press conference will be addressed by National Spokesperson and past President Dr. John Dayal, representatives



of the affected villagers and senior office bearers. They will address serious concerns regarding the alleged illegal acquisition of tribal land for OCL (DCBL) by the Government of Odisha. The affected villages fall under the Fifth Schedule Area, where constitutional safeguards and special protections are guaranteed to safeguard tribal land rights and prevent unlawful transfer or acquisition.

woman empowerment means financial independence and self-reliance for women

New Delhi : Shahnaz Hussain always believed that women are capable of achieving more if given the right tools and a chance, they can excel in whatever they put their heart and mind to. With this I have always advocated for women rights- right to education, skill development and training. With this vision I became the one to provide free beauty training courses for the speech, hearing, and visually impaired, supported acid attack survivors with a vision that every woman deserves financial independence. I have been working closely with government skill development projects that has till date empowered over 40,000 underprivileged women in the beauty and wellness sector. It is all a part of my upbringing where I have been taught that you should be in servitude to the humanity as this is what



you will be remembered by, similar to the recent theme of 'Give to Gain,' where I believe if you give out kindness, humility, positivity and forge

a path of empowering women, you gain gender equality and the society grows in abundance through your actions. It is how you become a tool for the society to forge a path of creating gender equilibrium through your empowered actions that impacts the society as a whole. A queen always helps fix the crown of another queen and uplifts those around her without causing any chaos or unnecessary competition. I have always believed that any action that stems from your core values backed with self-love, confidence and abundance mindset always leads to positivity that you carry with yourself wherever you go. It is the innate capacity of an empowered woman to empower and inspire women around her, providing a platform, giving them tools of growth and empowering them to achieve independence financially.

ICL Fincorp opens regional office, three branches in Patna



Patna, March 7 : ICL Fincorp Ltd. has expanded its presence in Bihar with the inauguration of a regional office and three new branch offices in Patna. The regional office is located on Old Bypass Road near Rajendra Nagar Terminal in Kankarbagh, while the new branches have been opened in Rajendra Nagar, Mainpura and Danapur.

The launch event was held at Taj City Centre, Buddh Marg, where Union Minister for MSME Jitan Ram Manjhi inaugurated the ceremony as chief guest. The function was chaired by Adv. K. G. Anil Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director of ICL Fincorp and Goodwill Ambassador of LACTC.

Smt. Uma Anil Kumar, Vice Chairman and CEO, led the ceremonial lamp lighting. Dr. Rajashree Ajith delivered the welcome address, while AGM Sathishan K. P. proposed the vote of thanks.

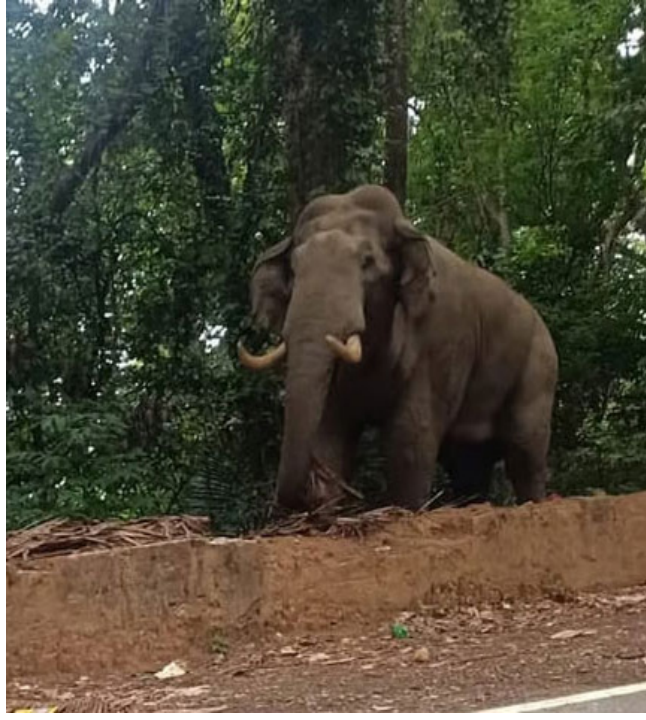
The Patna regional office will serve as the operational hub for the company's activities across Bihar.

Karnataka govt sanctions elephant task force for Dakshina Kannada district

Sullia, Mar 5: The state government has issued an order sanctioning an Elephant Task Force for the Mangaluru forest division in Dakshina Kannada (DK) district.

In recent years, incidents of wild elephant menace have increased in the Uppinangady, Sullia, Beltangady, Puttur, Panja and Subrahmanya ranges under the Mangaluru division. Crop damage cases and incidents of human fatalities have been reported annually. Whenever elephants strayed into human habitation areas, the task force had to be summoned from the Madikeri division, resulting in delays in driving the animals back to the forest.

Considering the situation, the principal chief conservator of forests had submitted a proposal to constitute a separate Elephant Task Force for Dakshina Kannada district under the Mangaluru division. After examining the proposal, the govern-



ment has now approved the formation of the task force and issued formal orders.

The task force will comprise a total of 28 members, including one deputy range forest officer, two forest guards, and 25 vehicle

drivers or equivalent staff on a contract basis. The headquarters of the Elephant Task Force will be at Sullia. The team will function under the direction of the deputy conservator of forests of the Mangaluru division.

Kerala to get Rs 360 crore under capital investment scheme

Thiruvananthapuram, March 5 (GNS) Kerala has secured approval from the union Finance Ministry for special assistance of Rs 360 crore under the Compliance Reduction & Deregulation (Phase-I) component of the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme.

The approval reflects the Government of India's acknowledgement of Kerala's systematic approach towards reducing regulatory burdens and strengthening the state's investment ecosystem through structured compliance reforms.

The amount will be released in a single instalment. The Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC), being the nodal agency, had coordinated the state-level implementation of the Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Programme for the past nine months.

This marked a major reform initiative that simplified procedures and enabled enterprises, particularly MSMEs, to utilise resources such as land, labour, plant and machinery, and infrastructure without being constrained by complex regulatory processes. The reform process in the state was steered under the leadership of the Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala, with a focus on enabling enterprise growth, enhancing regulatory efficiency, and strengthening Kerala's overall economic competitiveness.

For the State of Kerala, Dr. Manoj Govil, (Secretary, Coordination, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India) as the Task Force Member was responsible for advancing the Compliance Reduction and Deregulation programme. A P M

Mohammed Hanish, Additional Chief Secretary (Industries and Commerce), was instrumental in implementing the reforms by way of periodic assessment and review of the progress made by various Departments in association with the Central Cabinet Secretariat.

The special assistance will support 13 capital investment projects, being implemented by key state agencies including the Kerala Road Fund Board (KRFB), Kerala Water Authority (KWA), Roads and Bridges Development Corporation of Kerala (RBDCK), and Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL). These projects are expected to further strengthen the state's infrastructure and investment readiness.

The sanction acknowledges the progress made by Kerala in undertaking regulatory reforms, including relaxations in building rules, streamlining of master plan protocols, establishment of industrial land banks, and simplified building and occupancy approval processes, which have collectively contributed to improving the state's regulatory environment for businesses and investors.

The Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Programme focuses on five priority areas— land, labour, building & construction, utilities, and permissions.

These areas are further structured into 23 sub-areas spanning 11 departments, with the objective of rationalising regulations, eliminating redundant procedures, and ensuring faster and more transparent approvals for enterprises. The systematic simplification of regulatory frameworks helps reduce compliance costs, promotes innovation, improves operational efficiency,

Ktk govt diverted SC/ST funds for guarantees, alleges Bellad



Bengaluru, Mar 5 (GNS)Karnataka Legislative Assembly Deputy Leader of the Opposition Arvind Bellad on Thursday accused the Siddaramaiah government of diverting funds meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to finance its guarantee schemes, alleging that it amounted to "cheating Dalits".

Addressing the media, Bellad claimed that the Congress government had used Rs 38,859 crore from the SCP/TSP funds over the past three years for the implementation of its guarantee programmes instead of utilising the money for Dalit welfare.

He said that Rs 11,144 crore was used in 2023-24, Rs 14,282 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 13,433 crore in 2025-26 for the guarantees. The BJP leader demanded that the state government return the money taken from funds meant for Dalits in the upcoming state budget and also allocate fresh funds for their welfare. He also urged the government to allocate at least Rs 1,000 crore to SC/ST corporations in the budget.

Bellad further demanded the removal of Section 7C to prevent misuse of funds and sought an assurance from the government that funds meant for Dalits would not be diverted for guarantee schemes. He said rules mandate that departments spend funds in proportion to the Dalit population and prioritise empowerment of Dalits and Adivasis through initiatives related to drinking water, health, education and welfare schemes. However, he alleged that the government had instead used these funds for its guarantees. Questioning the move, Bellad said money meant exclusively for Dalits was allegedly being used for other communities, including upper castes and minorities. He also criticised Dalit legislators within the Congress, saying they had remained silent despite the alleged diversion of funds and even after protests by Dalit groups.

Govt to decide on internal reservation framework amid new quota demand

Bengaluru, March 5 (GNS) Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said there is a demand to provide a separate one per cent quota for nomadic communities within the Scheduled Caste internal reservation framework. The issue is set to be discussed in the state

Cabinet meeting later in the day. Speaking in Bengaluru, Parameshwara said the government has already agreed in principle to provide internal reservation for Scheduled Castes but certain issues have emerged regarding how the quota should be distributed among different communities.

Karnataka heading for bankruptcy due to Congress guarantees: Vijayendra

Hubballi, March 5 (UNI) Vijayendra Yediyurappa on Thursday alleged that the Congress government in the state was facing a severe financial crisis as it was unable to mobilise resources to fulfil its

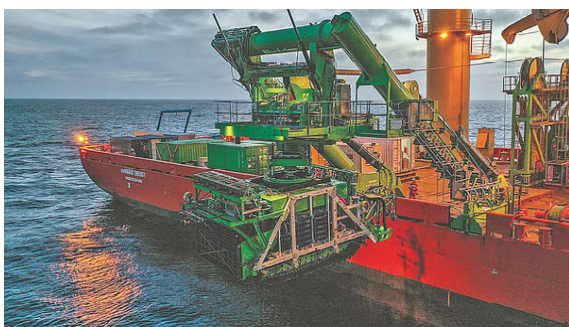
poll promises, particularly the five guarantee schemes.

Targeting the government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Vijayendra said the repeated increase in prices of fuel, essential commodities

and electricity showed the government's financial strain.

"The Congress government headed by CM Siddaramaiah is unable to raise the resources to fulfil its promises, that is, the five guarantees.

TN unveils policy to build maritime manufacturing ecosystem



can acquire and lease back key infrastructure assets such as dry docks, jetties, cranes and slipways required for shipbuilding. Shipyards will also be eligible for interest subvention on loans and additional incentives for green shipbuilding technologies.

The push comes as India's shipbuilding sector remains a marginal player in a highly concentrated global industry. The global shipbuilding market is estimated at around \$155-170 billion, with nearly 94 per cent of production dominated by China, South Korea and Japan. India's share is estimated at 0.06 per cent.

Shipyards setting up under the policy will be eligible for capital subsidies ranging from 10 to 25 per cent of eligible fixed assets, depending on investment size. Beyond shipyards, the policy also emphasises

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu has introduced a dedicated shipbuilding policy aimed at attracting large shipyard investments and building a broader maritime manufacturing ecosystem around them. The Tamil Nadu Shipbuilding Policy 2026 outlines incentives and financing support for projects ranging from ship construction and repair to recycling yards and marine equipment manufacturing.

A dedicated special-purpose vehicle called NSHIPN will operate under the SPCOT. The entity is intended to facil-

itate shipyard projects by developing infrastructure, partnering with private shipbuilders and helping mobilise investment for large projects.

Shipyard projects seeking incentives under the policy must bring in a minimum investment of Rs 1,000 crore and generate at least 1,000 jobs. Higher investment categories extend to projects exceeding Rs 12,000 crore.

The State government will take equity stakes of up to 49% in the ventures and also proposes a model where the government

Land revenue records to be issued soon, says Tiruchy Collector



TIRUCHY: The district administration will ensure the farmers get the adangal certificate, a land revenue record, soon, facilitating a smooth procurement process, assured the Tiruchy District Collector here on Wednesday.

After the farmers' grievances redressal meeting, District Collector V Saravanan, officials and farmers maintained one-minute silence in honour of the late CPI veteran leader R Nallakannu.

After this, farmers submitted their demands, including mandating MSP of Rs 2,400/quintal

of maize for traders. "The District Collector should recommend to the government to ensure the MSP announced for maize has been followed and initiate steps for the crop insurance," said R Raja Chidambaram, State Secretary Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam.

While Ayilai Siva Sooriyan, secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, appealed for the on-time distribution of adangal certificates as the samba harvest was at its peak and the procurement had started to pick up.



The candidates who are contesting the Rajya Sabha elections filed their nomination papers with the Returning Officer and Additional Secretary, Legislative Assembly in the presence of the Honble Chief Minister

TVK says its rise reshaped alliance equations of the DMK-led SPA

CHENNAI: The Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) on Thursday said the party's growing political presence has reshaped alliance dynamics of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance, with party's administrative committee chief coordinator K A Sengottaiyan asserting that the party's entry into the electoral arena has indirectly benefited several political formations.

Speaking to reporters at the Chennai airport, Sengottaiyan said the developments surrounding alliance negotiations involving the Congress should be viewed in the broader context of the shifting political landscape. "Our party's emergence has resulted in benefits for many. Because of us, the Congress party has received additional opportunities (RS berth) and seats. Even our political rivals have gained certain advantages due to our presence," he said.



Responding to questions on the next course of action for the TVK, Sengottaiyan said all key political decisions would be taken by the party chief.

"Our leader Vijay is personally supervising the preparation of the party's election manifesto. The document is being carefully examined and will be released soon," he said.

On political realignments in the State, Sengottaiyan described the decision of former

Chief Minister O Panneerselvam to join the DMK as painful.

Asked about the emergence of new political outfits launched by leaders such as V K Sasikala and Pugazhendhi after breaking away from the AIADMK, he said forming a new party was a matter of individual choice. When queried about whether TVK had finalised candidates for the upcoming Assembly elections, Sengottaiyan dismissed the speculation. "Many parties have not even finalised their alliances yet. Why ask us if our candidates have been finalised?" he said.

On the possibility of new parties joining the TVK-led front, Sengottaiyan said: "Wait and see." He added that the venue for the party's next public outreach meeting had not yet been decided.

Tamil Nadu: Tasmac unions plan state-wide indefinite strike

TIRUCHY: The Tasmac staff union's state general body meeting held here on Thursday decided to stage an indefinite strike with the support of as many as 20 employees' unions for the regularisation of employment and pension.

The meeting was held in Tiruchy, chaired by P Muruganandam, the state vice-president of the Tasmac Employees Union in the presence of State General Secretary Kothandam. During the meeting, it was discussed that there are around 24,000 employees on roll in Tasmac for the past 23



years, and the union has been fighting for its rights for the past 20 years.

"Our major demands are regularisation of employment, time scale wages and pension, and the government had promised to fulfil the demands but failed to do so. We continued a protest for the past few months, and the officials who held talks with us assured us to fulfil the demands within four months, but it has not been fulfilled so far," said Muruganandam.

He also said that the union has decided to hold talks with the other government employees' union and stage an indefinite strike until the demands are fulfilled.

Iran leadership sites targeted by US and Israel as Tehran retaliates with strikes across region

Keir Starmer says that British planes "are in the sky today" in the Middle East "as part of co-ordinated regional defensive operations to protect our people, our interests and our values". We're seeing a televised statement by the prime minister and we'll bring you more from him shortly. The Israeli military says it has "completed a broad strike" on the Iranian regime. "One of the strikes was directed toward an advanced SA-65 aerial defense system located in the Kermanshah area in western Iran," the IDF says in a statement. The statement adds: "These strikes were conducted in order to establish and enhance the Israeli Air Force's freedom of operation over Iranian aerial territory, in order to degrade the IRGC's capabilities and to thwart threats toward the home front of the State of Israel." Congressional leaders are beginning to issue statements after the US and



Israel launched joint strikes on Iran overnight in the US. The US Senate's Majority Leader, John Thune, says Iran's nuclear programme and missile inventory have posed a threat to the US over the years. "Despite the dogged efforts of the president and his administration, the Iranian regime has refused the diplomatic off-ramps that would peacefully resolve these national security concerns" Thune says in a statement. "I look forward to administration officials briefing all senators about these military operations." President Trump warned in his speech about the potential for US casualties, well aware that American public opinion has a low tolerance for any military operation that will bring their boys home in body-bags. Some 30,000 to 40,000 American

troops are normally deployed at 13 US military bases throughout the region, around a quarter of them here in Qatar at Al-Udeid, the headquarters for US Central Command. The massive American military deployment to the Gulf included extra air defense units, but nothing like Israel's comprehensive Iron Dome. It looks as if the US got as many assets out of the

direct line of fire as possible: in recent days there have been reports that hundreds of troops were moved out of Al-Udeid [military base]. We've also seen satellite images showing empty airfields at the base, as well as the departure of ships from the US Fifth Fleet base in Bahrain. The US and Israel have launched joint strikes across Iran prompting retaliatory strikes from Tehran. Numerous explosions have been heard in cities across Iran including in the capital, where the office of the supreme leader and the presidential office were reportedly targeted. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has said its strikes in Tehran targeted locations where senior political and security figures were gathered. "The hour of your freedom is at hand," US President Donald Trump told the people of Iran as footage from Tehran showed huge plumes of black smoke rising above a busy residen-

tial area. Trump said "major combat operations" have started and "the lives of courageous American heroes may be lost". Further explosions, sirens and columns of smoke have been reported across the Gulf as Iran promised a "crushing response" to the US-Israeli attacks. Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan all say they are intercepting missiles fired from Iran at US military bases on their territory. Iran's state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported 53 people have been killed after a strike on a girls' school while the UAE says a civilian was killed by falling debris after a strike "involving Iranian ballistic missiles". Sirens also continue to ring across Israel as defensive systems try to intercept barrages of missiles from Iran. The scale of the damage across the region and the scale of casualties still remains unclear.

reach a broader agreement for a complete end to hostilities, with both sides blaming each other for not engaging seriously with talks. The Taliban said a "retaliatory operation" had been launched at around 20:00 local time (15:30 GMT) on Thursday. It said it had captured 19 Pakistani military posts and two bases, adding that 55 Pakistani soldiers had been killed. The BBC has not been able to verify these claims. Pakistan quickly retaliated, saying the Taliban had "miscalculated and opened unprovoked fire on multiple locations" across the border in its north-western province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pakistan defence minister says country in 'open war' with Afghanistan after strikes



Pakistan's defence minister has said the country is in "open war" with Afghanistan, after Islamabad launched airstrikes on Kabul as part of a wave of attacks across the country. "Our patience has now run out," said Khawaja Muhammad Asif following the attacks. The strikes came after the Afghan Taliban announced a major offensive against Pakistani military posts near the border on Thursday night. The latest attacks follow months of clashes between the two neighbouring nations, despite agreeing to a fragile ceasefire in October. Last year's negotiations failed to

reach a broader agreement for a complete end to hostilities, with both sides blaming each other for not engaging seriously with talks. The Taliban said a "retaliatory operation" had been launched at around 20:00 local time (15:30 GMT) on Thursday. It said it had captured 19 Pakistani military posts and two bases, adding that 55 Pakistani soldiers had been killed. The BBC has not been able to verify these claims. Pakistan quickly retaliated, saying the Taliban had "miscalculated and opened unprovoked fire on multiple locations" across the border in its north-western province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

DOJ charges 30 more people in Minnesota anti-ICE church protest



The US Department of Justice announced Friday that 30 more people are being charged for their roles in an anti-ICE protest staged last month at a church in Minnesota. Attorney General Pam Bondi wrote on social media that 25 of the 30 defendants named in a newly unsealed indictment had been arrested by federal agents, with "more to come". The protest is the same one that led to the arrest of former CNN anchor Don Lemon, who along with nine others was charged after entering the Cities Church in St Paul with protesters who claimed a pastor was an immigration-enforcement official. Lemon and the others initially arrested have pleaded not guilty to civil rights violations. "YOU CANNOT ATTACK A HOUSE OF WORSHIP. If you do so, you cannot hide from us — we will find you, arrest you, and prosecute you," Bondi wrote on social media Friday. "This Department of Justice STANDS for Christians and all Americans of faith." All 39 people arrested are charged with conspiracy against religious freedom at a place of worship and injuring, intimi-

dating and interfering with the exercise of the right of religious freedom at a place of worship. "A group of approximately 40 agitators, including all of the defendants named in this indictment, entered the Church in a coordinated takeover-style attack and engaged in acts of oppression, intimidation, threats, interference, and physical obstruction alleged herein," the indictment says. In the 18 January incident, protesters interrupted a service in the church by chanting "ICE out" and "Justice for Renee Good", the mother of three who was fatally shot by a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer last month in Minneapolis. Footage showed a chaotic scene unfolding inside the church, which belongs to the Southern Baptist Convention, as protesters and members of the congregation shout at each other. Lemon was live-streaming the incident when it happened, and he has defended his decision to enter the church, saying he was simply carrying out his duty as an independent journalist covering a protest.

BIRMINGHAM FLIGHT TO DOHA DIVERTED AMID AIR STRIKES

A flight from Birmingham to Qatar has been diverted amid ongoing US and Israeli air strikes on Iran. The delayed Qatar Airways flight was due to take off at 08:14 GMT and head to Doha, but flew as far as France before turning back to Birmingham where it landed at about 11:20, a flight tracking platform has shown. The airline has confirmed it has suspended all flights to the Qatar capital due to the closure of Qatari airspace on Saturday. The BBC have contacted Birmingham Airport for comment. Qatar Airways said it is working with the relevant authorities to support impacted passengers and plans to resume operations when the airspace reopens. A spokesperson

added: "The safety of our passengers and crew is always our highest priority and we apologise for any inconvenience caused." Emirates, which flies to Dubai from the Solihull-based airport, has also suspended flights to and from the United Arab Emirates city. More than 200 passengers on British Airways' 20:00 flight to Doha on Friday found themselves back at Heathrow, after it was ordered to turn around about a third of the way through the journey. Explosions have been heard across multiple Iranian cities including the capital, Tehran, on Saturday, after negotiations to limit Iran's nuclear programme ended without an agreement this week.

At least 20 killed after military plane carrying banknotes crashes in Bolivia

At least 20 people have been killed and others injured after a Bolivian air force cargo plane crashed in the western city of El Alto, the country's authorities say. The incident happened at 18:15 local time (22:15 GMT) on Friday as the plane was arriving at El Alto's airport from the city of Santa Cruz, aviation officials said. It reportedly skidded off the runway and hit nearby vehicles. The defence ministry later confirmed its C-130 Hercules was involved and that it had been transporting banknotes to the Central Bank of Bolivia. There were eight people aboard the plane, the air force commander said. Police fired tear gas to disperse crowds allegedly trying to take the



scattered banknotes. Firefighters had given an earlier death toll of at least 15. Video footage showed the plane on the ground and badly damaged vehicles. In other videos, people could be seen running away from the tear gas and police officers, some holding shields, forming a line. Some in the crowds are seen throwing rocks.

"While news crews were covering the accident, individuals attempting to steal the transported money attacked the press with unusual violence," the National Association of Journalists of Bolivia said in a statement. It said a mobile TV unit was "directly targeted", while other journalists "were attacked with stones, suffering seri-

ous injuries while carrying out their work". The government-run Bolivian News Agency reported that at least a dozen people were arrested for stealing banknotes. "I want to make it clear to those who are trying to take money from the plane involved in this tragedy that this money has no legal value since it has not been issued by the Central Bank and does not have a serial number, and that attempting to use this money is a crime," the Minister of Defence, Marcelo Salinas, said. "We also ask all those who are engaging in acts of vandalism in this area to refrain from doing so and to respect the mourning and grief we are experiencing at this difficult time."

TRAM DERAILS IN MILAN, LEAVING TWO DEAD AND DOZENS INJURED

At least two people have been killed and up to 40 others are reported to have been injured, after a tram derailed in the northern Italian city of Milan. The crowded tram was travelling on the line 9 route along Milan's Viale Vittorio Veneto at about 16:00 local time (15:00 GMT) when it left the track and crashed into a building. One of the people who died, a 60-year-old man, is thought to have been a pedestrian hit by the tram, while the other fatality and most of the injured were passengers. Numerous ambulances went to the scene as reports emerged of people trapped in the



wreckage. Passengers described hearing a noise underneath the tram, after which it veered off its track, gathered speed and went into the side of a building. "I thought it was an earthquake. I was sitting down and I fell on the floor, along with the other passengers," one man told

Ansa news agency. "It was terrible." As it left the track, the tram apparently first hit a traffic light before smashing the window of a restaurant. A delivery rider waiting at the traffic light and a young man on a pavement narrowly escaped injury, La

Repubblica website reported. "I got on at the first stop, [Piazza della Repubblica]," one female passenger told Corriere della Sera. "I was standing next to the driver, and they all crashed into me." "I just heard an enormous bang," said 27-year-old Anna, who was in an office nearby, quoted by AFP. "I saw a bit of the tram had gone into a shop." Civil protection teams set up a tent at the scene to help the injured. It is not clear what caused the derailment, although media reports suggested the tram had taken a sharp corner too quickly, as it turned out of Viale Vittorio Veneto.

Aid groups in Gaza and West Bank thrown lifeline as Israel court pauses ban threat



Israel's High Court has temporarily halted a ban on international aid groups from working in the occupied Palestinian territories unless they meet strict new rules. The injunction came ahead of an Israeli deadline for 37 well-known organisations to stop work, something the groups warn will remove a lifeline for vulnerable people and cause "irreparable harm". Four months into a fragile ceasefire in war-torn Gaza, most of the more than two million population relies on aid — for food, medical care and water. In the West Bank, humanitarian organisations have been helping Palestinians who have been forced off their land by rapid Israeli settlement expansion and settler violence. In December, Israel told organisations — including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, Save the Children, ActionAid and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) — that their registrations had expired. They were given 60 days to renew them — by complying with new rules — or cease operations by 1 March. This week, a group of 17 NGOs jointly petitioned the High Court to suspend the new measures,

arguing that Israel has obligations as an occupying power under international humanitarian law. Responding on Friday, Judge Dafna Barak-Erez said there was "a real legal dispute" which would require more time to work through. The right-wing government of Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has taken a tough stance against international and Palestinian NGOs as well as UN agencies, some of which have operated in the region for decades, citing security reasons. It has also passed legislation banning the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Unrwa, from operating in Israel, impacting its work in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has claimed that Unrwa — and other organisations, including MSF — have been infiltrated by members of Palestinian armed groups or have ties to them. The humanitarian groups strongly deny that. Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism says its "clear transparency requirements" mean all NGOs and humanitarian organisations must now give full details of their staff, funding sources and operational structures.

BILL CLINTON ASKED ABOUT HOT TUB PHOTO AND TESTIFIES HE KNEW 'NOTHING' OF EPSTEIN CRIMES

Former President Bill Clinton told a congressional panel he "saw nothing," and "did nothing wrong" in relation to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The all-day hearing behind closed doors in New York featured the former president being asked about his inclusion in newly released files related to the financier, including in a photo with an unidentified person in a hot tub. His testimony came one day after his wife, ex-US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, told the committee she also "had no idea" of Epstein's crimes. Appearing in the files is not an indication of wrongdoing, and neither Clinton has been accused of misconduct by Epstein survivors who have come forward so far. Clinton

said that he would have cut off ties to Epstein and never would have flown on his plane if he "had any inkling of what he was doing". "I would have turned him in myself," he said in his opening statement released to the public ahead of his testimony. After his testimony in New York, he posted a video that largely repeated his opening statement, saying he did not know of Epstein's crimes "no matter how many photos they show of me". "When the video of my testimony today is released, I hope it will motivate everyone to go in front of Congress to say what they know," Clinton said. "I hope it will motivate the justice department to finally release all the files and to ensure that this



never happens again. The survivors deserve that." Both he and his wife had resisted subpoenas from the panel, dismissing them as politically motivated, before agreeing to testify before the House Oversight Committee as potential contempt-of-Congress proceedings loomed against them. When questioned about the photo-

graph showing the former president lounging in a hot tub with the person who appeared to be a woman — whose face is blacked out to protect her identity — Bill Clinton told lawmakers that he did not know her. When asked if he had sex with the woman, he said he did not, a source told the BBC. Unlike his wife, Clinton did not

come out and speak to reporters after his deposition wrapped up. James Comer, the Republican chairman of the House Oversight Committee, called the hours-long interview "a very productive deposition." "President Clinton answered every question, or attempted to answer every question," he said, adding that video of his testimony and a full transcript would be released in the coming days. He also called the Clintons' depositions "historic" and said they are the two highest-ranking officials to ever be deposed by Congress. President Gerald Ford voluntarily appeared before a congressional committee in 1974 to explain his pardon of former President Richard Nixon. "This is a

serious investigation," Comer said. "We will continue to try and get the truth to the American people and justice to the victims." Among the topics that arose during Bill Clinton's testimony was President Donald Trump's relationship with Epstein. House Democrats said his testimony brought up "additional information" about Trump that warranted renewed calls to bring the current president in for questioning. Robert Garcia, the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, said Clinton brought up "additional information about some discussions with President Trump". Garcia, like other Democrats, repeated his demand for Trump to testify before the committee.

District-level programme marks International Women's Day International FIDE Rapid Chess meet on March 15

Agency

Seraikela, March 7: A district-level programme was organised at the collectorate auditorium to celebrate International Women's Day, highlighting the importance of women's empowerment and social awareness.

The event was attended by Member of Parliament from the Singhbhum Lok Sabha constituency, Joba Majhi, as the chief guest. The programme was inaugurated with the ceremonial lighting of a lamp by Joba Majhi, Deputy Development Commissioner Reena Hansda, MLA representative Sanand Acharya, District Social Welfare Officer Satya Thakur and Assistant Director of Social Security Nivedita Rai, along with women workers.



Welcoming the guests, Satya Thakur emphasised that International Women's Day is an important occasion to promote awareness about women's rights, dignity and equal participation in society. She highlighted the need for effective implementation of

schemes related to women's empowerment, girl child education, nutrition, safety and prevention of child marriage.

Addressing the gathering, Reena Hansda thanked the MP for her presence and said women are playing a vital role alongside men

in nation-building and social development. She stressed the importance of collective efforts to ensure equal rights and respect for women.

In her address, Joba Majhi extended greetings on the occasion and underscored the need to strengthen women's participation in social and national development. She expressed concern over the issue of Child Marriage, stating that early marriage deprives girls of education and negatively affects maternal and child health.

On the occasion, the MP administered a pledge to the participants to work towards building a child marriage-free society. Several anganwadi workers and the administrator of the Sakhi One Stop Centre were also honoured with certificates for their outstanding work. (w-nkm)

Agency

Chaibasa, March 7: The 6th Naveen Kumar Sinha Memorial International FIDE Rapid Rating Chess Tournament will be organised on March 15, 2026, at Khirwal Banquet Hall, Chaibasa under the aegis of the West Singhbhum District Chess Association and sponsored by Griha Lakshmi Sales and Marketing.

According to tournament sponsor and association patron Nitin Prakash, around 200 players from various states have already registered, while participation is expected to reach nearly 300 players. Last year, the tournament saw the participation of 245 players. This year, the competition will offer a total prize pool of Rs 2,00,000 along with trophies.

Association general secretary Basant Khandelwal said the tournament will follow a rapid format of 10 minutes plus 5 seconds increment and will consist of nine rounds. The prize distribution cere-

mony is scheduled to take place at 6 p.m. on the same day after the completion of the rounds.

So far, six International Masters, one Woman International Master and one FIDE Master have registered for the tournament. The chief arbiter for the event will be International Arbitrator Vishal Kumar Minj.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top 30 players and winners in various categories. The first prize carries Rs 40,000 and a trophy, followed by Rs 25,000 for second place, Rs 15,000 for third place and Rs 10,000 for fourth place. In total, 49 cash prizes and 31 trophies will be distributed.

Association president and industrialist Mukund Rungta congratulated the organising committee, stating that such international rating tournaments provide local players valuable opportunities to improve their ratings. Arpit Khirwal has been appointed as the convener of the tournament, while Anant Lal Vishwakarma will serve as co-convener. (w-nkm)

Man injured after bike skids

Agency

Gamharia, March 7: A man was seriously injured after his motorcycle lost control and skidded on the road near Gopidih on the Seraikela-Kandra Road on Saturday evening.



The injured person has been identified as Bhisma Nayak, a resident of Tirildih. According to reports, he was returning home on his bike after completing his duty at a company in Gamharia.

While passing through Gopidih, his motorcycle suddenly went out of control and he fell onto the road, sustaining serious injuries. Passersby immediately rushed to help and informed the ambulance service. With the help of the ambulance, the injured man was taken to Seraikela Sadar Hospital for treatment. Further details about his condition were not immediately available. (w-nkm)

HWT helps cart pullers become owners in Ramadan initiative

Agency



Agency

Jamshedpur, March 7: In a heart-warming gesture during the holy month of Ramadan, the Human Welfare Trust (HWT) took a significant step toward empowering underprivileged workers by distributing handcart rickshaws to labourers who previously worked as hired cart pullers. The distribution programme was organised on May 7, 2026, near Sasa Inn on Old Purulia Road in Jamshedpur. The initiative aimed to

help daily wage workers become self-reliant by providing them with their own means of livelihood.

The event was attended by several distinguished guests. Naveen Kumar from the Jyoti Bhavishya Jyoti Trust participated as the chief guest, while Nasir Khan of Ahsin International School joined as the guest of honour. Other notable attendees included Mohammad Shafi Ahmad, Kazi Swad Alam and Rizwan Ahmad. The guests handed over the handcart rickshaws to the beneficiaries during the programme. At the beginning of the event, Matinul Haq Ansari, president of the Human Welfare Trust, welcomed the guests and participants. The beneficiaries then received the carts, enabling them to operate independently and improve their earnings.

Speaking on the occasion, trust secretary Mukhtar Alam Khan said the organisation's primary goal is to help poor and needy individuals by providing them with sustainable sources of livelihood. He emphasised that supporting economically weaker sections and enabling them to live with dignity remains a key priority for the trust. He also assured that similar social initiatives would continue in the future to benefit more people. Among those present at the event were Tahir Hussain, director of Hind ITI; Shahid Parvez; Ayub Ali; and Aftab Alam, along with several dignitaries and local residents.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Nadir Khan. (w-nkm)

BJP leader Bharat Singh celebrates birthday with workers



Jamshedpur, March 7: BJP leader and state executive committee member Bharat Singh celebrated his birthday with enthusiasm at his office in Sakhi on Saturday. The celebration was organised in the presence of party workers and members of the Bharat Singh Fans Club, where Singh serves as the chief patron.

On the occasion, Bharat Singh cut a cake and shared the celebrations with supporters and party workers. Expressing gratitude, he said the love and trust of the workers remain his greatest strength.

He also reaffirmed his commitment to social service and said that the fans club will continue to remain active in activities related to public welfare. Several supporters and local workers joined the event and extended their wishes to the BJP leader. (w-nkm)

BJP's 'Parivartan Yatra' gains momentum in Bengal

Kolkata, March 7 (IANS) The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Parivartan Yatra is continuing to receive a strong response from people in West Bengal, as party leaders accuse the Trinamool Congress government of corruption, misgovernance and administrative failures.

At a Parivartan Yatra programme in the Midnapore division of West Midnapore district, BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya addressed the gathering and sharply criticised the state government.

He stated that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had once promised to remove the fear created during the CPI-M regime, but claimed that people in West Bengal are once again living in an atmosphere of insecurity.

Four donors contribute SDP platelets for cancer patients

Agency



Seraikela, March 7: Four members of Shri Shani Dev Bhakt Mandali Trust donated Single Donor Platelets (SDP) on Saturday as part of the organisation's ongoing efforts to support patients suffering from serious illnesses such as Cancer.

The donors—Milan Bera, Ayushman Garg, Milan Kanti Santra and Sushil Kumar Mahato—came forward to donate SDP blood to help patients in critical need of platelets.

Sharing the information, the trust's founder and patron Debobroto Ghosh said that Milan Bera completed his 50th blood do-

nation during the drive, marking a significant milestone in voluntary blood donation. He praised the commitment of the donors, noting that the organisation has been continuously working in the field of SDP platelet donation to assist patients battling life-threatening diseases.

The trust expressed gratitude to the four donors for their humanitarian gesture and dedication to social service.

Members of the organisation also prayed for their good health and hoped that they would continue to extend their support to those in need. (w-nkm)

20th annual festival of Shri Jeen Mata Parivar on March 17

Jamshedpur, March 7: The 20th Annual Festival of Shri Jeen Mata Parivar Jamshedpur will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 17, at the Sakhi Dhalbhum Club Ground (in front of Agrasen Bhawan).

Preparations for the grand event were in full swing with the participation of members of the organization. Artisans from Kolkata will decorate the court of Mata with floral arrangements.

The program will feature the recitation of the Maha Mangal Path of Ma Bhavani Jeen Shakti in the afternoon, followed by a devotional evening of bhajans. More than 1,500 women were expected to participate in the Maha Mangal Path. Coupons for participation were being distributed on a



group from Kolkata, and the event will be hosted by local artist Mahavir Agarwal.

The festival's main attractions will include the Jeen Shakti Mangal Path, Akhand Jyoti, Jeen Rasoi and hymns dedicated to Ma Jeen Mata. The entire program will also be broadcast live on YouTube. Organization President Tulsi Khemka, Founder Shambhu Khanna, Bajrang Agarwal, Vinod Khanna, Sunil Debuka, Rajkumar Ringasia, Lalit Agarwal, Shankar Lal Agarwal (Mamaji), Lakan Moonka, Jagdish Khemka, Bajrang Chaudhary, Gopal Agarwal, Manish Khanna, Ashish Khanna and several other members were working to ensure the success of the annual festival. (w/gsd)

Dealers oppose ATM-based ration distribution, submit memorandum



Agency

Seraikela, March 7: Members of the Seraikela-Kharsawan District Fair Price Shop Dealers Association on Saturday submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner addressed to Jharkhand's Food and Civil Supplies Minister Irfan Ansari, opposing the proposed system of distributing ration through bank ATMs. The association members gathered at the district col-

lectorate and urged the government to reconsider the plan. Before proceeding to submit the memorandum, former district president Phoolkant Jha paid heartfelt tribute to the organisation's state president, late Omkar Nath Jha. Dealers offered floral tributes to his photograph and remembered his contributions to the organisation.

Later, representatives of the association, along with women members of Self-Help Groups, reached the

Deputy Commissioner's office and formally handed over the memorandum. They expressed concerns that the government is planning to introduce an ATM-based ration distribution system in three districts of Jharkhand—Ranchi (Rural), Dumka and Seraikela-Kharsawan—which could create several practical difficulties.

According to the dealers, under the current Public Distribution System, women from most beneficiary families usually visit fair price shops to collect ration. They argued that the introduction of an ATM-based system could create technical and operational challenges, potentially making it difficult for more than 50 percent of beneficiaries to access their ration.

The association also warned that if the new system is implemented, nearly 25,000 fair price shop dealers across the state may face a serious threat to their livelihood. (w-nkm)

Seraikela civic chief reviews power supply

Agency

Seraikela, March 7: Newly elected chairman of Seraikela Nagar Panchayat, Manoj Kumar Chaudhary, held a meeting with officials of the electricity department to review measures for ensuring uninterrupted power supply in the town.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer, Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer of the power department. During the discussion, Chaudhary issued several directives aimed at improving the electricity infrastructure and maintaining regular supply.

He instructed officials to complete trimming and cutting of trees along the main and service lines within 30 days. Directions were also given to clean power sub-station centres (PSS), replace breakers at the PSS, install trays under existing open 11,000/33,000-



volt main and service lines and install transformers in each locality according to the load requirement.

The chairman further asked officials to install AB switches within 15 days and relocate electric poles that submerge in rivers during the monsoon. He also stressed the need for timely meter readings, proper maintenance of transformer sites, removal of unused wires hanging from electric poles and repair of faulty street lights.

Maintaining the electricity lines connecting Ulijhari and Kharsawan was also highlighted as a priority.

Following the meeting, Chaudhary inspected the PSS along with departmental engineers.

Among those present were Jharkhand Mukti Morcha district vice-president Bhola Mohanti, town president Shambhu Acharya and members Saurabh Sahu, Umesh Bhol, Manoj Singh and Suraj Singh. (w-nkm)

Ration dealers oppose ATM-based distribution system

Agency

Gamharia, March 7: Members of the Fair Price Shop Dealers Association submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner in the name of Jharkhand Food and Civil Supplies Minister Irfan Ansari, expressing concern over the proposed ration distribution system through rural bank ATMs. The memorandum was submitted under the leadership of district president Phoolkant Jha. According to the association, the proposed system is being considered in three districts—Ranchi (Rural), Dumka and Seraikela-Kharsawan.

Dealers said that more than 50 percent of beneficiaries may face difficulties in accessing ration if the ATM-based system is implemented. They pointed out that women from most households usually collect ration from fair price shops and operating ATM-based machines may not be practical for them.

The association also warned that nearly 25,000 Public Distribution System dealers in the state could face unemployment if the system is introduced. Several association members and women from self-help groups were present during the submission of the memorandum. (w-nkm)

Chaibasa Chamber delegation meets FSO, seeks awareness seminar before action

Agency

Chaibasa, March 7: A delegation of Chaibasa Chamber of Commerce and Industries met Dhaneshwar Hembrom, Food Safety Officer, at his office to discuss concerns regarding recent inspections and notices issued to small business establishments in the city.

During the meeting, the chamber representatives expressed concern that while small traders play a vital role in the city's economic activities, many of them are not fully aware of all the rules and provisions related to food safety. In such circumstances, the delegation suggested that instead of directly issuing notices or initiating punitive action, authorities should first provide traders with an opportunity to understand and comply with the regu-



lations. The chamber requested the Food Safety Officer to organize an awareness seminar for small business owners. They said such a program would help traders learn about impor-

tant food safety regulations, licensing requirements, hygiene standards and other compliance measures. With proper awareness, traders would be able to implement necessary arrangements in their establishments and avoid

future violations. The delegation also assured full cooperation from the chamber in organizing the seminar so that a large number of traders could participate and gain accurate information about food safety norms.

Food Safety Officer Dhaneshwar Hembrom welcomed the suggestion, stating that the department's objective is not to harass traders but to ensure food quality and consumer safety. He assured that the department would seriously consider organizing an awareness program.

The delegation included chamber president Sanjay Chaubey, former president Madhusudan Agrawal, vice president Durgesh Khatri, secretary Neeraj Sandhwar, joint secretary Govinda Khetan and treasurer CA Mukesh Poddar. (w-nkm)

Gaddar State Film Awards for 2025: Naga Chaitanya wins Best Actor, Rashmika Mandanna wins Best Actress

Hyderabad, March 7 (IANS) The Telangana government on Saturday announced that actor Naga Chaitanya had been chosen as the Best Actor for 2025 for his performance in 'Thandel', while actress Rashmika Mandanna had been chosen as the Best Actress for her performance in 'The Girlfriend'.

It may be recalled that Naga Chaitanya had delivered a captivating performance as the captain of a shipping vessel in director Chandoo Mondeti's 'Thandel', while Rashmika had powerfully portrayed a girl breaking free from a toxic relationship in director Rahul Ravindran's 'The Girlfriend'.

On Saturday, the Telangana

government announced the list of winners of the prestigious Gaddar State Film Awards for 2025. Telangana Film Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju announced the award winners for 2025 at a press conference.

'Thandel', which fetched Naga Chaitanya the award for Best Actor, also won the award for Best Film on National Integrity. Anil Ravipudi's popular blockbuster film 'Sankranthiki Vasthunam' won the Award for Best Entertainment Film.

The award for Best Film went to 'Raju Weds Rambhai', while 'Dhadora' and 'The Pre Wedding Show' won the awards for the second and third best films respectively.



The Best Debut Feature Film award went to the superhit film 'Little Hearts' while the Teja Sajja-starrer 'Mirai' won awards for Best Special Effects, Best Editor (Sreekar Prasad) and Best Cinematography (Karthik Ghattamneni).

superhit as well, was adjudged the Best Social Message Film. Actor Shivaji has been chosen for the Award of Best Supporting Actor, while actress Bhumika has been chosen as the Best Supporting Actress.

The Best Actor (Jury) award went to Chaitu Jonnalagadda for his performance in 'Raju Weds Rambhai' while the Best Actress (Jury) award went to Ananthika for her performance in '8 Vasanthalu'.

The Special Jury Hero award went to Roshan Meka for his performance in the period drama 'Champion'. 'Champion' also won awards for Best Art Direction (Thota Tharani), Best Action Choreography (Peter Hein),

Best Dance Choreography (Aata Sandeep) and Best Costume Design (Chandrakant Sonawane and Ajay Kumar Nambala).

A list of eight special awards were also announced on the occasion. Megastar Chiranjeevi won the NTR National Award while Ashwini Dutt won the Nagireddy - Chakrapani Award.

Actor, director, producer and politician Kamal Haasan is to be presented the Paidi Jairaj Award while veteran actress Jayasudha is to be honoured with the Akkineni Award.

Suddala Ashok Teja will be presented the C. Narayana Reddy (CINARE) Award and R Narayana Murthy, the Kantha Rao Award.

Munmun Dutta begins her workday with cuddles from a 'curious' rescue kitten



Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Television actress and ardent animal lover Munmun Dutta shared an adorable glimpse of her morning routine as she introduced her newest rescue kitten, which seemed eager to be cuddled while she got ready for work.

Taking to her Instagram stories section, the 'Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah' actress posted a clip showing the tiny kitten sitting on her lap as she began her make-up routine. The curious little kitty kept looking around and observing every move.

In the video, the actress is heard talking to the kitten. She is heard saying: "Yes betu, are you curious about what bachcha... Lets start our makeup... This is our new rescue... Apane khaana abhi... You gonna do makeup... Curious cat..."

The actress, who frequently uses her platform to highlight animal welfare and the importance of caring for strays, captioned the clip: "New rescue littlest cutie kitty. Wants to be cuddled while I start my day at work."

Munmun is best known for her portrayal of Babita Iyer in the Hindi sitcom Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah.

Ridhi Dogra says authenticity is her 'only strategy' in 'The 50'

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Actress Ridhi Dogra has opened up about her approach to the game in the reality show 'The 50', saying that staying authentic is the only strategy she believes in while navigating a house full of players.

Ridhi took to Instagram to share her thoughts about being part of the show, hinting at the intense dynamics inside the house. The actress said that instead of playing by a set formula, she is relying purely on her instincts.

She shared a string of images from the show and captioned the post: "In a house full of players, being authentic is my only strategy. No scripts. Just instincts. #keepingitsimple



#the50."

Talking about the actress, before Ridhi entered the television industry, she was a dancer in the Shiamak Dawar Dance Institute. Her first job in the industry was as a co-producer for a channel.

The actress has also hosted many televised events and travel based shows. In 2013, she participated in Nach Baliye 6. She also played Savitri in Savitri, Aditi in Diya Aur Baati Hum, and Nisha in Woh Apna Sa. She was seen as a lead in The Married Woman, which helped her gain major stardom.

The Married Woman also stars Monica Dogra, Suhaas Ahuja, and Imaad Shah.

Hina Khan treats herself to 'maska pav and chai for a change'

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Television superstar Hina Khan, on Friday, treated herself to a classic local Indian snack, and shared a glimpse of her food indulgence on social media.

The actress revealed that she decided to enjoy a simple snack meal as she opted for "Maska Pao aur Chai for a change."

Taking to her social media account, Hina Khan shared a picture of the popular street-style food combination and captioned it as, "Maska Pao aur Chai For a change."

The picture shared by Hina features a plate of freshly baked pav buns placed on butter paper, with a generous serving of creamy yellow butter kept aside in a container with a spoon. A cup of hot chai can also be seen placed beside the plate. Hina often shares a sneak peek of her daily life with fans on social media, from fitness routines to food moments.



Ram Charan wishes newly weds Allu Sirish, Nayanika Reddy a 'blessed journey together'

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) superstar Ram Charan has extended warm wishes to actor Allu Sirish wedding and new life journey with wife Nayanika Reddy.

Ram Charan took to his social media account on the 6th of March and shared a picture from the wedding ceremony.

He wrote, "Congratulations dearest brother @allusirish & @nayanika_reddy Have a blessed journey together."

Re-sharing the post on his social media account, Allu Sirish responded with a heartfelt note that read, "Thank you swami."

The picture shows the newlyweds Allu Sirish and Nayanika pose with



family members against a grand decorated backdrop at the wedding venue. The groom Allu Sirish is seen dressed in traditional attire, while his bride Nayanika Reddy stunning in a silk saree paired with traditional jewellery.

Ram Charan looks handsome in a traditional black outfit and his wife Upasana is seen looking gorgeous in her golden ensemble.

For the uninitiated, Allu Sirish's wedding took place on the same date as the wedding anniversary of his elder brother and superstar Allu Arjun and his wife Sneha Reddy, who got married exactly 15 years ago, on the same date.

On the 2nd of March, the couple had hosted a lavish pre-wedding bash for the members of the Telugu film industry.

This pre-wedding celebration took place at the prestigious Allu Studios.

Earlier this week, sharing the latest update about his wedding plans on social media, Allu Sirish had written the update on his X (Earlier known as Twitter) handle.

He wrote, "Nayanika & I are having an intimate wedding with family & friends on 6th March. But we're excited to celebrate our Pre-Wedding Reception with the Telugu film industry prestigiously at Allu Studios on the 2nd March. (sic)"

For the uninitiated, Allu Sirish and Allu Arjun's father, producer Allu Aravind, along with his wife and Sirish, had visited several prominent members of the industry to extend wedding invitations personally.

Priyanka Chopra on the difference between Indian, American film industries

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Global head-turner Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who has tasted success in both Hollywood and Bollywood, has discussed the differences between the two industries, noting that the pace of production varies across the world.

The 43-year-old star, who made her Bollywood debut in 2003 with the spy thriller The Hero: Love Story of a Spy and stepped into Hollywood with the 2015 thriller series Quantico, shared that America is specific about when and how to shoot.

"In America, we are very specific about when we shoot what and how. You have to make the day on most productions, and you have a shot breakdown of how many shots you have to take. So there's a lot more stress in making sure that you make the day," Priyanka told The Hollywood Reporter, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said that when it comes to Indian films, the pace tends to be a bit more relaxed.

"On Indian films, it's a little bit more languid. If we don't make the day, it's fine. We'll get it tomorrow. We'll also shoot one set piece, and then we'll take a break for 10 or 20 days. Then we'll come back for the next set piece, and that is why we can do multiple movies at the same time.

The actress went on to add: "In Hollywood, you take three months to shoot everything together. I don't know how it logistically makes sense, but it works. Both industries have their own ways that work."

The actress, who has been feted with a National Award and a Padma Shri, also appreciates that her Indian fans have



continued to support her after she moved to America.

The actress, who is married to singer Nick Jonas, said: "I have really been blessed with incredible supporters and well-wishers when it comes to audiences who've liked my movies over the last 25 years. They have also supported me in very dark times, and they will take up fights for me and defend me."

Ankita Lokhande's husband Vicky Jain undergoes surgery for the second time in six months

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) Television superstar Ankita Lokhande's husband and businessman Vicky Jain recently gave fans a health update after undergoing surgery.

He shared a glimpse of his bandaged hand on social media, and revealed that the procedure had been completed and that he was now focusing on recovery.

Sharing the update on his social media account, Vicky wrote, "Surgery done. Now time to heal and pretend I'm not accident prone."

The picture posted by Vicky shows his hand heavily wrapped in a thick medical bandage. The background of the shared picture features a hospital room setting, with a blanket and part of the hospital bed visible.

A few months ago, Vicky had suggested a major accident where a mirror fell on him leading him to undergo surgery, after tiny glass particles pierced and cut through hi. He had suffered 45 stitches.

Throughout the tough time, Ankita was seen



standing by him, rock solid, and taking care of her ailing husband at home and even at the hospital.

In a photo that had gone viral, Ankita was also seen getting emotional by seeing her husband in pain. Vicky, on the professional front, rose to fame in the entertainment industry after marrying Ankita Lokhande.

Together they participated in TV reality shows like Smart Jodi and Bigg Boss season 17.

Recently, Vicky received great applause from critics and audiences alike, for backing and choosing a strong project like "Haq", as a producer.

The movie starred Yami Gautam and Emraan Hashmi in the lead.

This season enjoy ... Coconut based pr...

Instagram ; Instagram ;

#marketing #sellin... Virgin coconut oil...

T20 WC: Ahmedabad braces for historic showdown as IND-NZ cross swords



New Delhi, March 7 (IANS) Two cricketing giants, one historic final. India stand on the cusp of a record third T20 World Cup title, while New Zealand eye their maiden crown. After a thrilling and unpredictable campaign, both teams have reached the ultimate showdown at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, a venue that promises a grand stage for what's set to be an epic contest.

India's lethal pacers will go head-to-head with New Zealand's explosive openers, Tim Seifert and Finn Allen. Allen, the fastest T20 World Cup centurion, has been in blistering form, boasting the highest strike rate of the tournament. Meanwhile, Seifert has piled up 425 T20I runs against India, the second-best tally for a BlackCaps batter.

But they will face their biggest challenge yet in the form of India's bowling attack. Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh have dominated the powerplay and death overs, with India boasting the best economy rate (7.5) in the first six overs of this campaign.

India's all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been in scintillating form, with 199 runs and eight wickets. He is on

the verge of becoming the first Indian to score 200 runs and take 10 wickets in a single T20 World Cup edition. His all-round brilliance could prove vital in this high-stakes final.

Sanju Samson has been on a roll, delivering match-winning performances against the West Indies and England. With back-to-back Player of the Match awards, he's played a key role in India's run to the final.

However, New Zealand's

Matt Henry will be hoping to stop India's in-form No. 9 with his deadly bowling.

Suryakumar Yadav, India's captain, is one win

'I wouldn't mind breaking a few hearts to lift the trophy,' says Santner

Ahmedabad, March 7 (IANS) New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner said the BlackCaps would not mind playing the role of the villains if it means silencing the home crowd and lifting the trophy in the final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2026 against India to be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

When asked if the team was ready to become the "bad guys" and break a billion Indian hearts by winning the title, Santner said the team is prepared to do whatever it takes to lift the trophy.

"I wouldn't mind winning a trophy. But yeah, I think that's, you know, you look at this group and the groups that have been

in the past, you know, we are pretty consistent in these tournaments because we try not to get, you know, overruled by the situation or opponents. We just go out there and do our thing," he said during the pre-match press conference.

"And as a unit, it's been no different this time. And again, it's going to be obviously a challenge where everyone knows we're probably not the favourites, but we don't mind. We know we can, if we do our little things well and put in a strong team performance, you know, put us in a pretty good position to hopefully lift the trophy. But yeah, I wouldn't mind breaking a few hearts to lift the trophy for once," he added.

Will India drop Varun Chakravarty for final? SKY keeps everyone guessing

Ahmedabad, March 7 (IANS) India captain Suryakumar Yadav backed Varun Chakravarty ahead of the all-important ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final against New Zealand national cricket team on Sunday, March 8, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Chakravarty has not been in good form since the Super 8 stage of the tournament, having taken four wickets in as many matches while conceding runs at an economy rate of over 11.

"There is nothing to worry about. We won the match. It's a team sport, and we focus on collective performances. We don't think about individual performances when we win or lose. There are 11 players in the team. Everybody cannot have their best days together. One or two of them will have tough days. We look to cover for them on those days," Suryakumar Yadav said at the pre-match press conference.

Everybody says same line: Suryakumar responds to Santner's 'silence home crowd' remark

Ahmedabadi, March 7 (IANS): India captain Suryakumar Yadav on Saturday played down Mitchell Santner's remark about silencing the home crowd ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final, saying such statements have become predictable before big matches.

"The goal is to silence the crowd. There are a lot of variables in T20 cricket, and it is fickle at times," the 34-year-old said. "If we go out about our business the same way we can upset another big team. There's obviously a lot of pressure on in there (on India) to win this World Cup at home."

When asked about Santner's remark, Suryakumar Yadav responded with a wry smile, suggesting that such comments from opposition teams have now become predictable before big matches.

"Sab he same line chipka rahe hai. Kuch to naya bolo (Everyone is now saying the same thing. Come up with something new)," Suryakumar Yadav told reporters.

away from defending the title he helped secure in 2024. With 526 runs at an average of 58.44, he has been India's standout batter against New Zealand, and he'll be keen to deliver one more big innings against the team he relishes facing.

On the other hand, New Zealand may look to bring back Ish Sodhi, who has been a key figure in their T20I success against India, with 30 wickets to his name. India have never beaten New Zealand in T20

World Cups, and the recent history of ICC events in Ahmedabad hasn't been kind to the Men in Blue. Can India become the first team to win back-to-back titles? Can they make history by lifting the T20 World Cup on home soil? Or will the BlackCaps end their long wait for a T20 title?

The stage is set for a thrilling final, and Ahmedabad braces for a showdown that promises to be one for the ages.

India vs England semi-final clash sets new record, becomes most streamed T20I match

Mumbai, March 7 (IANS) ICC T20 World Cup 2026 second semi-final between defending champions India and two-time winners England at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday has become the most-streamed match in the history of T20Is, with 619 million views, surpassing the previous record set in the T20 World Cup 2024 Final played between India and South Africa, which generated 533 million views.

India's leading streaming platform JioHotstar recorded an unprecedented 65.2 million peak concurrent viewers during the high-stakes encounter, setting a new world record for



the highest concurrency ever achieved for a live event across any digital platform in the world.

The peak concurrency surpassed the previous global record of 65 million set by an international streaming platform in November 2024, a figure achieved through aggregated viewership across multiple

JioHotstar's record, however, was driven entirely by audiences within a single market. Across linear television and digital platforms, the semi-final delivered a combined reach exceeding 320 million viewers, while watch-time across screens crossed an extraordinary 23 billion minutes, making it the most-watched T20I match ever.

Pink-ball Test: Hamilton, Sutherland star as India stare at huge loss against Australia

Perth, March 7 (IANS) Lucy Hamilton and Annabel Sutherland starred with the ball yet again as Australia tightened their grip on the one-off Pink-ball Test against India, as the visitors closed the second day with 105/6 in 29 overs and trail the hosts by 20 runs at the WACA Ground in Perth on Saturday.

It was a day where Annabel was once again the standout performer - she followed up her fourth Test century with two wickets in the final session to cap a dominant all-round display. Her 129 off 171 balls was a masterclass in patience and control, along with crisp stroke-play and unflappable temperament.

Supported by Ellyse



Perry's composed 76, Annabel carried Australia to 323 in 90.4 overs, as the hosts grabbed a 125-run lead, with India pacer Sayali Satghare picking 4-50 on debut. Just like in the first innings, Lucy made her mark again by producing a decisive spell under lights to pick 3-32, while Darcie

Brown chipped in with one scalp to keep the pressure relentlessly.

India's batting faltered under the weight of scoreboard pressure and disciplined bowling. Loose strokes and poor shot selection undermined their reply, with the top order unable to withstand the probing lines

of Australia's seamers. Only Pratika Rawal offered real resistance by being unbeaten on 43 at stumps, while Sneh Rana was not out on 14.

But with little support from the rest of the lineup, India remain in a precarious position, still trailing by 20 runs with only four wickets in hand. As of now, Australia are on course for a clinical victory that would mark a fitting farewell for their captain Alyssa Healy.

The final session began with Sayali having Alana King caught by covering diving to her left, before Lucy lobbed off her to give mid-wicket a simple catch, as India took only 16 balls to wrap up Australia's first innings.

India's second innings began on a horrendous note as Darcie Brown rattled Smriti Mandhana's middle stump. Lucy then dismissed Shafali Verma, who edged away from her body and gave a regulation catch behind the stumps. Lucy struck again in her next spell as Jemimah Rodrigues' mistimed scoop was caught by leg gully.

Brief scores: India 198 and 105/6 in 29 overs (Pratika Rawal 43 not out, Sneh Rana 14 not out; Lucy Hamilton 3-32, Annabel Sutherland 2-15) trail Australia 323 all out in 90.4 overs (Annabel Sutherland 129, Ellyse Perry 76; Sayali Satghare 4-50, Deepti Sharma 2-67) by 20 runs

Formula 1 2026 season preview: The dawn of a new era

Madrid, March 7 (IANS) Formula 1 has always been about pushing boundaries. Faster, louder, more spectacular. But 2026 feels different. With a complete overhaul of the technical regulations, every team on the grid is starting from roughly the same place, and in a sport where tiny margins separate success from failure, that is an enormously exciting prospect.

This is the season where reputations mean nothing and results mean everything. New champions could emerge, struggling teams could suddenly find themselves competitive, and the established order at the front could be turned completely on its head. Buckle up.

Formula 1 has seen a major overhaul for the 2026 season, with new rules designed to make the cars



faster, safer, greener, and more exciting to watch. Here is what is changing.

Smaller, Lighter Cars: The cars will be 30kg lighter than the previous generation and will also be shorter and narrower. Think of it as going from an SUV to a more sporty hatchback. This means that the new edition will be quicker to react and faster around corners, and definitely more fun to watch

up close.

The New Engine: The power unit has seen a complete redesign. For the first time, there will be a roughly 50-50 split between electric power and the traditional petrol-based engine. The electric side of things is getting three times more powerful than before. In addition, the cars will be running completely on sustainable fuels, meaning that the

sport is taking a major step towards being more green without ditching the traditional combustion engine fully. **Six Engine Suppliers:** The new rules have attracted a record six manufacturers to build engines: Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault, Honda, Audi, and Ford (via Red Bull). More competition at the engine level means more variety and rivalry throughout the grid.

Moving Wings (Active Aerodynamics): Previously, the cars used a system called DRS (Drag Reduction System), which is a flap on the rear wing that opens on straights to reduce drag and help to overtake. In 2026, both the front and rear wings will be able to move, switching between two modes: one optimised for gripping through corners, and one that cuts drag on the straights for higher top speeds. It is a smarter, more dynamic version of what we have today. **New Overtaking Boost:** A new feature called the Manual Override System allows drivers to get an extra surge of electric power when they are within one second of the car in front of them. A similar version of the DRS, some would say. This allows overtaking to be more frequent and the races more exciting.

Indian Wells: Sabalenka powers into Rd 2, Gauff, Osaka advance after tense battles

California, March 7 (IANS) World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka made a confident start to her campaign at the Indian Wells, defeating Japanese qualifier Himeno Sakatsume 6-4, 6-2 in the opener.

The Belarusian, returning to competition after finishing runner-up to Elena Rybakina at the Australian Open, looked sharp despite the break from tournament play. Sabalenka dictated the tempo with her aggressive serving and powerful groundstrokes against the 136th-ranked Sakatsume, who was contesting her first match against a top-20 opponent.

Elsewhere, fourth seed Coco Gauff overcame a stern challenge from Russian qualifier Kamilla Rakhimova to secure a 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) victory. Rakhimova, ranked 88th in the world, threatened to

Sinner, Zverev advance, Fucsovics stuns Musetti in opener

California, March 7 (IANS) World No. 2 Jannik Sinner began his bid for a maiden title at the Indian Wells with a commanding performance in the opener, sweeping aside Czech qualifier Dalibor Svrčina 6-1, 6-1 in just over an hour.

Returning to the California tournament after missing last year's edition due to a drug suspension, the Italian controlled proceedings from start to finish in a 64-minute encounter in which he faced only a single break point.

After Svrčina held serve to level the opening set at 1-1, Sinner took complete control, reeling off nine straight games to leave the qualifier struggling to keep pace. Svrčina briefly halted the run with another hold, but the Italian soon closed out the match.

Sinner's best results at Indian Wells came with semifinal appearances in 2023 and 2024. A title run this year would allow the 24-year-old to complete the set of trophies at all six hard-court ATP Masters 1000 tournaments. Against Svrčina, Sinner dictated play from the baseline, forcing the Czech deep behind the court and opening up chances to approach the net.

push the match to a decider after building a two-break lead in the second set and

servicing for it three times. She even held a set point before the American rallied.