

Aryan Age

PRGI No.- MHENG/25/A0943 | VOL - 1 | ISSUE 274 | 8 PAGES | ₹ 3.00



Six-Vehicle Crash
Snarls NH-48

PG.3



Saiee M. Manjrekar
prepares for pre-
Independence period
drama

PG.6



Kohli sets the tone as
RCB prepare for IPL
title defence

PG.7



Dr Reddy's launches
generic diabetic
injection semaglutide

PG.8

As the war winds down, Indian firms looking to buy Iran oil

New Delhi : In the dying moments of the Iran-US war, Indian refiners are believed to be looking at buying Iranian oil through a combination of rupee payments, partial deferred accounting and even barter which could later help rebuild Iran's civilian infrastructure now that the US administration has given a 30-day sanctions waiver for the purchase of Iranian oil already at sea.

Top sources in Indian refining firms said they were looking at "quick purchases" of Iranian crude, much of which is on the high seas in ships who are idling in the Indian Ocean.

"We have a long tradition since the 1990s of buying Iranian oil... its natural that we should be among the first to try and corner stores from there," said Sandeep Johri, a commodities trader.

At its peak, Iran supplied roughly 10 to 15 percent of India's crude. The appeal was not merely geopolitical or price-wise, it was geological. "Iranian crude grades suit Indian refineries," averred Johri.

According to estimates about 130-170 million barrels of Iranian crude are at sea, mostly in the Indian Ocean, but also in the Med-



iterranean and South China Sea.

The American waiver announced Friday applies to oil loaded on or before March 20, on ships, including sanctioned tankers. They must however be offloaded at the receiving port by April 19.

When Western sanctions against Teheran tightened between 2010 and 2012, targeting

Iran's financial arteries, the problem for India was not access to crude but the means to pay for it.

"So we invented ways including Rupee purchases which were used by the Iranians to pay for rice, tea and other food stocks and machinery which they bought from us," said top commerce ministry officials.

At that time, India devised a

split-payment mechanism, Indian refiners deposited roughly 45 per cent of their dues in rupees into accounts held by Iranian banks within India, most notably through UCO Bank, state-run lender with minimal exposure to the American financial system and, therefore, less vulnerable to secondary sanctions. This was the money that was used for purchas-

es from India.

The remainder 55 per cent was deferred and held in escrow accounts. When geopolitics allowed it, this money was converted into hard currencies like dollars or Euros and taken by Iran, with the payments routed through third countries such as UAE or Turkey.

The two countries even formalized a new rupee-based payment framework in late 2018, once again relying on UCO Bank as the conduit.

"An expanded rupee-based system, perhaps broader in scope, tied to a wider basket of Indian exports will probably be the way forward for refineries like Reliance or Indian Oil if they go for such deals to look at," said Johri.

Officials hinted barter could also be considered in the longer run by paying for oil through Indian project spending in repairing oil and port infrastructure.

"Civilian infrastructure which has been devastated in both Iran and Gulf countries will have to be rebuilt. We want to encourage Indian project exporters and engineering companies to be ready for work once peace returns," they said.

Damania seeks non-political appointments to Women's Commission post



Mumbai : Social activist Anjali Damania on Saturday demanded that the post of Chairperson of the State Women's Commission be entrusted to retired IPS officers or judges instead of political appointees, saying only then can women receive "true justice."

Her remarks come amid the controversy surrounding self-styled godman Captain Ashok Kharat, following which former State Women's Commission Chairperson Rupali Chakankar submitted her resignation to Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar.

Damania criticised Chakankar's conduct during her resignation, alleging that there was no visible remorse or accountabil-

ity. She said the response lacked humility and instead reflected "arrogance," adding that the former chairperson should introspect.

The activist also expressed disappointment with Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, stating that as the state's first woman Deputy Chief Minister, she was expected to act swiftly on issues concerning women.

However, she allegedly failed to act for three days after the Kharat case surfaced and accusations were made against Chakankar. Damania claimed that it was only after widespread criticism and directives from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis that the resignation was finally accepted.

Iran strikes Diego Garcia as conflict with US-Israel enters new phase

New Delhi/ Tehran : Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday warned that the ongoing US-Israel attacks on Iran could have far-reaching global consequences as Tehran expanded the theatre of conflict with ballistic missile strikes on a critical US-UK military base deep in the Indian Ocean.

The President cautioned that the conflict may "burn many other countries" if it continues unchecked.

In a post on X, Pezeshkian described Israel as "terrorist in nature" and said US actions against Iran, including the assassination of the Leader, had set a dangerous precedent in international disputes that could erode global norms.

"If the international community does not stand firmly against the aggression, the flame of this fire ignited by the US and Israel will burn many others," he said.

He accused the United States and Israel of launching an "unprovoked war of aggression" on Iran which he said resulted in the killing of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, along with senior military commanders and civilians.

Meanwhile, Iran fired two intermediate-range ballistic missiles at Diego Garcia, a strategic US-UK military base in the Indian Ocean.

The strike on the base, located about 4,000 km from Iran, demonstrates Tehran's long-range missile

capability and its ability to target distant military installations.

The development comes after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer allowed the United States to use Diego Garcia and other UK bases for what were described as "defensive" operations against Iranian missile sites.

Diego Garcia serves as a critical hub for US long-range bombers and naval assets, and targeting it could disrupt key logistics and strike operations across Asia. The widening of the conflict into the Indian Ocean as the war entered its fourth week may force the United States to redeploy advanced missile defence systems to distant locations.

In an effort to calm

volatile global markets, TRUMP administration granted Iran a temporary licence to sell around 140 million barrels of crude oil, even as fighting intensified and spread across new regions.

The waiver, issued late Friday, allows Tehran to offload oil stored on tankers, equivalent to roughly a day and a half of global demand, according to the US Energy Information Administration, in a bid to ease supply concerns triggered by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

But Trump also hinted for a possible de-escalation, saying the United States was considering "winding down" military operations in the Middle East, though there has been no visible reduction in ac-

tivity on the ground.

Tensions remain high across the Gulf, where several countries have intercepted incoming missiles and drones in recent days.

The Strait of Hormuz, a critical artery for global oil shipments, remained to be a focal point of the crisis.

Iran has also issued fresh warnings to regional rivals, including the United Arab Emirates, while Kuwait and Saudi Arabia reported intercepting missile and drone attacks, highlighting the widening scope of the conflict.

The strike on Diego Garcia opened a new dimension to the war in the Indian Ocean, raising concerns that the conflict could broaden further even as diplomatic efforts struggle to contain it.

IMD predicts 3-4 days of rain, hailstorms in Maharashtra

Pune : According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Maharashtra is likely to witness continued spells of rain accompanied by hailstorms over the next three to four days.

Between March 21 and March 25, several parts of the state are expected to receive light to moderate rainfall along with thunderstorms and lightning.

Regions including North Maharashtra, Central Maharashtra, Marathwada, and Vidarbha have been put on alert for rainfall activity.

In Vidarbha, certain districts may experience unseasonal rain along with hailstorms. Some areas have already reported scattered showers, leading to cloudy weather conditions.

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Nagpur has predicted that the intensity of unseasonal rain will persist in Vidarbha for the next two days, with chances of hailstorms in isolated locations.

Districts such as Gondia, Chandrapur,



Nagpur, Bhandara, Latur, and Dharashiv are also likely to witness thunderstorms accompanied by rain. These areas are expected to experience continued rainfall activity over the next one to two days.

Meanwhile, the ongoing unseasonal rains are likely to severely impact farmers. Crops have already suffered significant damage due to rainfall over the past two to three days, raising concerns among the farming community.

Built in India, ready for the world: 'Taragiri' to guard Blue frontiers



New Delhi : In a significant boost to India's maritime capabilities, the Indian Navy is set to commission its latest stealth frigate Taragiri (F41) on April 3, marking a major milestone in the country's quest for self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

The commissioning ceremony, to be held in Visakhapatnam, will be presided over by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and is expected to underscore India's growing naval capabilities and indigenous shipbuilding prowess. Positioned as a new vanguard of the seas, Taragiri is set to enhance the Navy's frontline combat strength while reinforcing the nation's maritime sovereignty.

In a statement issued here today, a Naval spokesperson stated that as the fourth potent platform of the Project 17A class, Taragiri is not merely a ship; it is a 6,670-tonne embodiment of the 'Make in India' spirit and the sophisticated engineering capabilities of our indigenous shipyards.

Built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, this Frigate represents a generational leap over earlier designs, offering a sleeker form and a significantly reduced Radar Cross-Section that allows it to operate with lethal stealth. With indigenous content exceeding 75 percent, the ship highlights the maturity of a domestic industrial ecosystem that

now spans over 200 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Driven by a Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion plant, Taragiri is designed for 'High-Speed - High Endurance' versatility and multi-dimensional maritime operations. The ship's weapon suite is world-class, featuring supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles, and a specialised Anti-Submarine Warfare suite.

These systems are seamlessly integrated through a state-of-the-art Combat Management System, ensuring that the crew can respond to threats with split-second precision.

Beyond its role as a

premier hunter of the seas, Taragiri is built for the complexities of modern diplomacy and humanitarian crises. Its flexible mission profile makes it ideal for everything from high-intensity combat to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

The Indian Navy continues to grow as a combat-ready, cohesive, credible, Aatmanirbhar force, safeguarding the seas for a Viksit, Samridhha Bharat guarded by ships designed by Indians, built by Indians and operated by Indians. Taragiri stands ready for a promising future as a beacon of rising maritime power and an ironclad guardian of our blue frontiers, the spokesperson added.

Uddhav Thackeray demands action against 'fake babas' and their followers

Mumbai : Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction) chief Uddhav Thackeray launched a sharp attack on the ruling government over the fake godman Captain Ashok Kharat case, stating that strict action must be taken not only against fraudulent babas but also against their followers.

Thackeray pointed out that Maharashtra already has an anti-superstition law, and if even those expected to uphold the law are falling prey to such godmen, then action should also be taken

against the devotees.

"Only then can Maharashtra be called truly modern," he said. He added that while efforts are being made to move the state forward through sectors like logistics, some leaders are indulging in superstitious practices, which he criticized strongly.

Questioning the government, Thackeray asked how much further Maharashtra would be pushed into decline. He also cautioned against diverting attention from the so-called "Epstein

file" controversy that has surfaced in the state, stressing that existing laws must be implemented strictly.

He further alleged that several political leaders' names and photos are emerging in connection with such practices, claiming that ineffective leaders with no real achievements often resort to such means. Those who lack capability and cannot succeed on their own are the ones drawn to such fraudulent godmen, he remarked.

In a sarcastic swipe,

Thackeray said that attempts are being made to cover up everyone's wrongdoings and suggested that the Chief Minister should take responsibility for exposing the truth. He mockingly proposed creating a "cover-up department" under the Chief Minister to deal with such issues.

He concluded by demanding strict action against fraudulent godmen operating across villages as well as against leaders from any political party who associate with them.

Trump again attacks NATO, calls them 'cowards', 'paper tiger' without US

New Delhi : Continuing his tirade against NATO, US President Donald Trump called the military alliance 'cowards' and 'paper tiger' without the United States and warned that the US will 'remember.' "NATO IS A PAPER TIGER! They didn't want to join the fight to stop a nuclear-powered Iran," Trump said on his social media platform.

He said that now that the fight against Iran is militarily won, with very little danger for them (NATO), they complain about the



high oil prices they are forced to pay, but don't want to help open the Strait of Hormuz.

Opening of the Strait of Hormuz is a simple military

manoeuvre that is the single reason for the high oil prices, he added.

"So easy for them to do, with so little risk. COWARDS, and we will RE-

MEMBER," he added.

The latest salvo against NATO comes three days after Trump called them 'absolute fools' for not helping him in opening the Strait of Hormuz. Trump trained his guns on NATO because the military alliance refused to meet his demand of sending warships to the area to free the strategic Strait from Iranian control.

The remarks by Donald Trump are likely to further strain ties between Washington and the NATO amid escalating geopolitical tensions.

Yogi calls for collective action on forest conservation amid climate crisis

Lucknow: Highlighting the growing global concerns over climate change and environmental degradation, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday stressed the need for collective responsibility in conserving forests, saying ecological balance is central to sustaining life and development.

Speaking at the inauguration of the National Forestry Dialogue on the occasion of the International Day of Forests, he said the increasing impact of global warming and environmental imbalance calls for urgent introspection and renewed commitment to protect nature.

He said that the consequences of climate change compels for an introspection as to where the efforts have fallen short.

Invoking India's Vedic traditions, the Chief Minister said nature has always been accorded the highest respect, quoting ancient texts to underline the importance of trees and forests in sustaining life. "Forests are the basis of life. If there are forests, there is water; if there is water, there is air; and if there is air, there is life," he said.

"Our sages, thousands of years ago, conveyed the message that the earth is our mother and we are her children - 'Mata Bhumi Putroham Prithivyah'. This is our responsibility to protect our mother nature and follow the precautions to protect and preserve it," he said.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister released a coffee table book, honoured several individuals, and also visited the exhibition organized by the Forest Department.

Chief Minister said, "India's sage tradition has always stated, 'Dashakoopasama Vaapi, Dashavaipisamo Hradah. Dashahradasamah Putro, Dashaputrasamo Drumah'. Its meaning is: One stepwell is equal to ten wells, one pond is equal to ten stepwells, one son is equal to ten ponds, and one tree is equal to ten sons. The importance of trees in nature has been considered supreme. Forests are the basis of life and an important dimension of ecological balance. If there are forests, there is water; if there is water, there are forests; if there are forests, there is air; and if there is air, there is life. Life cannot be imagined without these". He further added, "Keeping the global perspective in mind, this year's theme has been set as 'Forest



and Economics", which reflects the need to maintain ecological balance while also creating plans for economic development through forests and human welfare.

He expressed satisfaction that under the guidance of Narendra Modi, the state has succeeded in increasing forest cover over the past 9 years. He emphasized that success came when it was turned into a people's movement. Whenever any campaign becomes a people's movement, success is achieved because then society leads it while the government and departments remain behind. When the government and departments are ahead and the public is behind, results do not come. The successes achieved over the past 9 years are based on this principle.

Chief Minister also said, during Van Mahotsav in earlier years, only 5.5 crore saplings could be planted, and even that required support from private nurseries. In contrast, last year, 37 crore saplings were planted across the state in a single day, with 50 crore saplings available. This year, a target of 35 crore has been set, which may increase to 40 to 45 crore.

He further informed, over the past few years, Uttar Pradesh has ensured capital expenditure of around ₹2 lakh crore on infrastructure. Despite this, the increase in forest cover is a matter of satisfaction. In the last 9 years, 242 crore saplings have been planted, and forest cover has increased to around 10 percent. The forest cover in the state should correspond to its share in the country's population, meaning efforts are needed to raise it to 16 to 17 percent.

He added, in 2017, there was

only one Ramsar site in the state, which has now increased to 11, and the effort is to take it to 100. Ramsar sites are important from the perspective of tourism, wildlife, and birds, and they also play a role in water conservation. Declaring Ramsar sites helps protect these areas from land encroachment and enables conservation programs to be implemented effectively.

"Initiatives such as Atal, Eklavya, Triveni, Oxy and Smriti Van are part of this effort. Large-scale plantation drives are being carried out along the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarayu rivers. Plantation programmes are also being undertaken along both sides of expressways and highways. Additionally, restoration work on one river in each district has been taken up," he said.

The Chief Minister said Uttar Pradesh is the first state in the country where funds have been distributed to farmers for carbon credits under a carbon finance project. Steps have also been taken to promote ecotourism in Dudhwa National Park, along with improved connectivity.

A total of 2,467 forest-based green economy model industries have been established in the state. "People visit national parks to see tigers, and their conservation is our responsibility. Uttar Pradesh is the first state to categorise human-wildlife conflict as a disaster," he said.

He added that a tiger does not attack suddenly. He shared that near his birthplace, the forest began just 50 meters away, and they used to see tigers but never disturbed them, and the tigers never harmed them or their livestock. However, if we interfere

with their safety, they will naturally become aggressive.

Chief Minister also informed, if there are forests, there are tigers; if there are tigers, there is biodiversity; if there is biodiversity, there is life; and if there is life, there is human civilization. Therefore, forest conservation is not only important for humans but for all living beings. As humans are considered the best creation of God, it is our moral responsibility to take ownership and work towards forest conservation at every level.

He stated that the forest department budget has been significantly increased this year. Certain sectors, such as security and forests, are never constrained by budget limitations. For social forestry, ₹800 crore has been allocated, ₹220 crore for gaushala management, ₹10 crore for forest modernization, ₹50 crore corpus fund for Ranipur Tiger Reserve, ₹194 crore for clean air management, and ₹50 crore for a forestry university.

Before 2017, the Gangetic dolphin had almost disappeared. With the inspiration of the Prime Minister and after the Namami Gange project, the species has been revived. Earlier, the total number of dolphins was 23, which has now increased to 6,327, with 2,397 in Uttar Pradesh alone. A Jatayu Conservation Center has also been established in Gorakhpur.

Chief Minister said, "To achieve the carbon net zero target, the state has implemented an Electric Vehicle Policy and is among the leading states in this sector. An electric vehicle manufacturing unit has already been established in Lucknow. Metro services are operational in seven cities, and the country's first rapid rail is also running in the state. More than 700 electric buses are operational, and Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of e-rickshaws".

Ayodhya is being developed as a solar city, and work is underway to develop 17 other municipal corporations as solar cities. Under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, more than 4 lakh rooftop solar systems with a capacity of over 1,400 megawatts have been installed. Additionally, a target has been set to develop 22,000 megawatts of renewable energy in the next 5 years. Under the Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy 2024, funds have been arranged for two centers of excellence.

Odisha logs 558 square km increase in forest covers in two years

Bhubaneswar: Odisha has recorded an increase of 558 square kilometres in forest and tree cover in the last two years emerging as a frontrunner in forest protection and green cover creation in India, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi claimed on Saturday.

The State's success in forest protection has been made possible due to improved forest management practices, large-scale plantation drives, and public awareness initiatives, Majhi said while addressing the state-level World Forest Day-2026 function here today. Currently, State's forest and tree cover constitute 37.63% of the state's total geographical area, covering 58,597 square kilometres.

Highlighting plantation efforts, he noted that under the Prime Minister's campaign 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam', Odisha planted 14.9 million saplings in a single day and over 80 million saplings within a year.

The Chief Minister



stressed the need to strike a balance between environmental conservation and industrial development, stating that with modern science and technology, sustainable industrialisation is achievable without harming the environment.

Referring to this year's theme, "Forests and Economy," he underlined that forests are not only vital for ecology but also play a crucial role in economic development. He reiterated the government's focus on transforming forests into a major source of livelihood while ensuring their protection.

Majhi also urged officials to intensify efforts to prevent forest fires and reduce human-wildlife conflict. He directed strict action against those responsible for man-made forest fires.

Forest, Environment and

Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia highlighted the importance of the day and reiterated the government's commitment to improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, especially in tribal-dominated districts.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg outlined the state's long-term vision for 2036 and 2047, stating that Odisha aims for significant economic growth and employment generation.

She noted that the tourism sector alone has the potential to create 2.5 million jobs, with forests playing a key role. She stressed the need to view forests not only as ecological contributors but also as economic assets, promoting a "Green Economy" alongside the Blue Economy.

Among others, Principal Secretary of the department Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force Dr. K. Murugesan also graced the occasion.

Man arrested in Thoothukudi girl student rape and murder case

Chennai: After nearly ten days of protest, Special teams probing the brutal rape and murder of a 17-year-old 12th Standard girl student at Vilathikulam in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, Special teams formed to nab the culprit, arrested a 38-year-old man on Friday.

Following the arrest, the family members and relatives, who were on protest ever since the girl's body was found in a scrub forest area on March 11 and refused to take possession of the, they called off their stir.

The girl went missing the previous evening when she visited the forest area to attend the nature's call and despite the parents approaching the police, cases were not registered initially.

They also finally accepted the body of the victim last evening from the Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital, where it was kept after post mortem. During the agitation, they also demanded action against errant policemen for failing to register a case initially by accepting their complaint soon after the girl went missing.

The arrested M Dharma Muniswaram alias Maveeran, is a native of Sayalkudi in Ramanathapuram district. After preliminary interrogations, he was produced before a POCOS Court on Friday evening and remanded in judicial custody. On the same day after the girl did not return home, her parents visited the Kulathur police station around 9.30 p.m. to lodge a complaint. Since the girl was a minor, her parents were asked to lodge the complaint at the Vilathikulam All-Women Police Station.

However, the cops got a breakthrough when a local mobile phone photograph of a motorcycle with a Ramnad-series number plate, taken near the forest area, was found leading to the arrest of the accused. According to police he was already involved in nearly 30 criminal cases. He was awarded life term in 2020 rape-cum-murder case involving an elderly woman from Ettayapuram, but was out on bail when the student murder took place.

During interrogation, Dharmamuniswaran admitted that on the day of the incident he was hiding in the forest area, lying in wait for women going to field work.

According to the police, he said that when the girl walked past, he raped her, and when she began shouting, he panicked that someone might arrive. He then killed her by pressing his foot on her neck and garroting her with a dupatta.

He further claimed he remained hidden in the forest

that night, and escaped the next morning on a motorcycle to Thoothukudi.

Earlier a local resident, Solaippan, had taken a photo of a motorcycle with a Ramnad-series number plate near the scene. Initially unaware of its importance, he later shared it with police who traced the number to Dharmamuniswaran's two-wheeler, and subsequent checks led to his arrest.

Thoothukudi District Superintendent of Police C. Madhan said evidence that led to Muneeswaran's arrest was gathered purely through scientific investigation. More than 450 individuals from the district were interrogated both directly and through digital methods. As the case is still under investigation, further details cannot be disclosed at this time, he said. Inspector-General of Police (IG) Vijayendra Bidari appreciated the meticulous investigation by the special teams in cracking a "blind" case. "In this case, there was no clue. No one had seen the accused either before or after the crime. He was a total stranger to the scene of the crime, which is an interior village," he said.

Mr. Bidari said the accused had been signing the register in the court as part of his bail conditions every day even after committing the crime. With no CCTV cameras available in the vicinity of the scene of crime, the police had gone through hours of video footage from those located in the surrounding areas, in far-off places, and on roads leading to the village. The IG said the police would take all efforts to expeditiously prosecute him in the current case.

that night, and escaped the next morning on a motorcycle to Thoothukudi.

Earlier a local resident, Solaippan, had taken a photo of a motorcycle with a Ramnad-series number plate near the scene. Initially unaware of its importance, he later shared it with police who traced the number to Dharmamuniswaran's two-wheeler, and subsequent checks led to his arrest.

Thoothukudi District Superintendent of Police C. Madhan said evidence that led to Muneeswaran's arrest was gathered purely through scientific investigation. More than 450 individuals from the district were interrogated both directly and through digital methods. As the case is still under investigation, further details cannot be disclosed at this time, he said. Inspector-General of Police (IG) Vijayendra Bidari appreciated the meticulous investigation by the special teams in cracking a "blind" case. "In this case, there was no clue. No one had seen the accused either before or after the crime. He was a total stranger to the scene of the crime, which is an interior village," he said.

Mr. Bidari said the accused had been signing the register in the court as part of his bail conditions every day even after committing the crime. With no CCTV cameras available in the vicinity of the scene of crime, the police had gone through hours of video footage from those located in the surrounding areas, in far-off places, and on roads leading to the village. The IG said the police would take all efforts to expeditiously prosecute him in the current case.

Mr. Bidari said the accused had been signing the register in the court as part of his bail conditions every day even after committing the crime. With no CCTV cameras available in the vicinity of the scene of crime, the police had gone through hours of video footage from those located in the surrounding areas, in far-off places, and on roads leading to the village. The IG said the police would take all efforts to expeditiously prosecute him in the current case.

Mr. Bidari said the accused had been signing the register in the court as part of his bail conditions every day even after committing the crime. With no CCTV cameras available in the vicinity of the scene of crime, the police had gone through hours of video footage from those located in the surrounding areas, in far-off places, and on roads leading to the village. The IG said the police would take all efforts to expeditiously prosecute him in the current case.

UP CM felicitates brave children

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday felicitated brave children on the occasion of the International Day of Forests.

Chief Minister encouraged the children who saved themselves and their families from leopard attacks and described them as an inspiration for society.

He also honoured employees of the forest department and social organizations for their outstanding work in the fields of forestry and wildlife.

Additionally, cheques were distributed to two beneficiary farmers under the Carbon Credit Project.

Chief Minister honoured 10-year-old Achche Lal from Bahraich and Tanu Singh

(18) from Prayagraj.

On December 6, 2025, around 7 pm, Achche Lal was returning home from the fields with his father on a bicycle when a leopard suddenly attacked from a sugarcane field. Displaying courage, he fought back and managed to save himself, forcing the leopard to retreat.

Similarly, Tanu Singh was honoured for her bravery. On January 8, 2026, a leopard entered a house in village Chhivaiya in the Jhansi area.

Present in the room, Tanu showed remarkable courage and presence of mind. She safely escorted two children out of the room and locked the leopard inside, enabling its safe rescue without any loss of life.

BRS to introduce Private Member bill in Assembly on Cong 'Six Guarantees'

Hyderabad: KT Rama Rao, Working President of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi, on Saturday announced that the party plans to introduce a Private Member Bill in the State Legislature to push for the implementation of the six guarantees promised by the Indian National Congress.

KTR stated that the move is aimed at holding the Congress government accountable for its pre-election commitments, which he claimed have not been fulfilled even after a considerable period in power.

Recalling the initial developments after the Congress assumed office, he said Chief Minister A Revanth

Reddy had signed the file related to the six guarantees soon after taking charge.

He further noted that these promises were formally highlighted when the Governor addressed the joint session of the Assembly shortly thereafter, reinforcing their importance in the government's agenda.

However, KTR alleged that despite these early assurances, there has been little to no tangible progress in implementing the guarantees on the ground.

"Even after 800 days, there has been no progress in implementing these guarantees," he said, expressing dissatisfaction with the pace

of execution.

According to him, the introduction of a Private Member Bill is a strategic step to bring the issue back into legislative focus and compel the government to respond.

KTR emphasized that the bill would serve as a tool to exert pressure on the ruling dispensation.

And ensure that the promises made to the people are not overlooked.

He added that the party would formally approach the Speaker of the Assembly as well as the Chairman of the Legislative Council to seek permission for introducing the Bill.

Mamata, Abhishek set for dual campaign blitz ahead of Bengal Polls

Kolkata: With barely a month left before voters head to the polls for the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly Election 2026 on April 23, the ruling All India Trinamool Congress has begun preparations for an aggressive and expansive statewide campaign.

The campaign will be spearheaded by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee along with the party's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, signalling a high-intensity political battle in the weeks leading up to polling. According to party sources, Mamata Banerjee is set to kick off her North Bengal campaign on March 24. Her itinerary includes rallies in key locations such as Matigara, Moynaguri, and Alipuduar.

A major highlight of her campaign launch will be a large public meeting at Ali-puduar Parade Ground, which is expected to draw significant crowds and set the tone for the party's out-

reach in the region. In addition to the main rally, two more public meetings are likely to be held on the same day, reflecting the party's intent to maximise



voter engagement right from the beginning of the campaign. Before heading to North Bengal, Mamata Banerjee is expected to begin her campaign from her home turf in Bhabanipur, where she will address a workers' meeting to energise party cadres.

North Bengal holds strategic importance in this elec-

tion, as all its constituencies will go to polls in the first phase on April 23. The region has traditionally been considered a stronghold of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Meanwhile, Abhishek Banerjee will simultaneously lead the campaign in South Bengal, ensuring that the party maintains a strong presence across both regions.

He is scheduled to begin his campaign on March 24 with a public meeting in Patharpratima, marking the start of an intensive outreach programme.

His campaign trail will cover districts such as East and West Midnapore, with rallies planned in Daspur, Keshiary, and Narayangarh.

Abhishek Banerjee is also expected to hold a workers' meeting in Nandigram, a constituency that remains politically sensitive and highly contested.

Nandigram is set to witness a high-voltage contest, with Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari facing Trinamool candidate Pabitra Kar, who was once considered a close aide of Adhikari before switching sides.

Karnataka Minister Zameer threatens resignation, rocks Davanagere South bypoll

Bengaluru: The Indian National Congress in Karnataka is facing mounting internal pressure ahead of the Davanagere South assembly by-election, as senior leader and minister Zameer Ahmed Khan has reportedly threatened to resign if a Muslim candidate is not given the party ticket.

Zameer Ahmed Khan's stance has intensified the political atmosphere within the party, bringing community representation to the forefront of the candidate selection process. His reported ultimatum has added urgency to an already delicate decision.

The development has amplified demands from sections of the Muslim community in the constituency, underlining the growing electoral influence of the community in Davanagere South.

The by-election was necessitated following the demise of veteran leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa, making the seat both politically significant and emotionally sensitive for the party.

Muslim organisations, including the Anjuman-e-Islam Society, have urged the Congress leadership to ensure fair representation by fielding a candidate from the community.

Party insiders suggest that Zameer's insistence is rooted in both electoral strategy and the need to address community expectations, making the candi-

date selection process more complex.

The leadership now finds itself balancing competing demands—community representation on one side and broader electoral calculations on the other.

In response to the growing pressure, Karnataka Congress in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala has stepped in to manage the situation and maintain party cohesion.

Surjewala has stressed that the party will not succumb to pressure from any one group and will instead select a candidate based on merit and winnability.

He also reiterated that all communities would be taken into consideration, and the final decision would reflect the party's larger interests in the constituency.

Adding another layer of complexity are internal dynamics within the party, particularly involving senior leader and minister SS Mallikarjun.

Mallikarjun has reportedly advocated for rewarding long-serving party workers, arguing that loyalty and grassroots work should be key factors in candidate selection.

At the same time, his son Samarth Shamanur, grandson of Shamanur Shivashankarappa, has already filed his nomination even before the official announcement of the party candidate.

This move has sparked criticism from sections of the Muslim leadership, who view it as undermining the demand for fair representation.

The premature nomination filing has also drawn concern from the party high command, prompting Surjewala to caution against such steps before an official decision is made.

With multiple stakeholders asserting their claims, the Congress faces a challenging task in finalising a candidate who can balance community expectations, internal party dynamics, and electoral viability.

As the by-election approaches, the situation in Davanagere South highlights the intricate interplay of identity, strategy, and leadership within the Congress, making it a closely watched political contest.

The Indian National Congress in Karnataka is facing mounting internal pressure ahead of the Davanagere South assembly by-election, as senior leader and minister Zameer Ahmed Khan has reportedly threatened to resign if a Muslim candidate is not given the party ticket.

Zameer Ahmed Khan's stance has intensified the political atmosphere within the party, bringing community representation to the forefront of the candidate selection process.

MUMBAI

Aryan Age | 03

Six-Vehicle Crash Snarls NH-48

Vasai-Virar : A major collision involving six vehicles on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway near Sasupada caused severe traffic congestion on Saturday, disrupting movement along one of the region's busiest corridors.

Visuals from the accident site revealed heavily damaged vehicles, highlighting the intensity of the crash. The incident led to long traffic snarls, leaving commuters stranded for extended periods as authorities worked to manage the situation and clear the road.

While the exact cause of the accident is yet to be officially determined, reports have pointed towards possible negligence linked to ongoing and incomplete service road work in the Sasupada area. Residents and commuters have raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of the stretch, which has seen frequent disruptions.

The NH-48 corridor, passing through localities such as Sasunavghar, Maljipada, Sasupada, Bobat Pada, and Patharpada, has



increasingly become difficult to navigate due to potholes, rising traffic volume, and poor management. What was once a smooth route has now turned into a challenging commute, often stretching short journeys into hours.

Authorities have not yet confirmed whether the crash resulted in any fatalities or injuries. Investigations are ongoing to determine the sequence of events that led to the multi-vehicle collision.

In a separate but recent

tragedy, three IIT Powai students lost their lives in a road accident on the Mumbai-Pune route while returning from Lonavala after a late-night outing. A complaint has been registered, and officials are probing that incident as well. A major road accident involving six vehicles on the busy Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway caused massive traffic disruption on Saturday, severely affecting movement along the National Highway 48 corridor. The collision

occurred near Sasupada, a stretch that has increasingly come under scrutiny due to poor road conditions and ongoing infrastructure work.

Eyewitness visuals from the scene showed multiple vehicles badly damaged, indicating the intensity of the crash. The impact led to immediate traffic congestion, with long queues of vehicles forming on both sides of the highway. Commuters reported being stranded for extended periods as authorities struggled to manage the

situation.

Police and local administration teams rushed to the spot to regulate traffic and initiate clearance operations.

Cranes and recovery vehicles were deployed to remove the damaged vehicles from the road.

The accident site quickly turned into a bottleneck, affecting thousands of daily commuters using the route.

While the exact cause of the collision has not yet been officially confirmed, preliminary reports suggest possible negligence. Concerns have been raised about incomplete service road work in the Sasupada area contributing to unsafe driving conditions. Residents of nearby localities have long complained about poor maintenance and lack of proper traffic management. Frequent potholes and uneven road surfaces have made the stretch increasingly hazardous for motorists.

Areas along the corridor, including Sasunavghar, Maljipada, Sasupada, Bobat Pada, and Patharpada, have witnessed repeated disruptions.

Wadala Man Held for Wife's Death

Mumbai : A 34-year-old man has been arrested in Wadala for allegedly killing his wife after a violent argument reportedly triggered by his drinking habit.

The accused, identified as Mahesh Wad, is said to have assaulted his 29-year-old wife, Kavita Lodi, at their residence on the afternoon of March 13. According to police, the altercation escalated quickly, leading to a brutal assault. During the assault, the man allegedly kicked and punched his wife repeatedly and even hurled a mobile phone at her face, causing serious injuries. Despite her worsening condition, he reportedly failed to arrange any medical assistance.

Kavita remained without treatment for several days as her health deteriorated, eventually succumbing to her injuries on March 16. The case came to light after her brother filed a complaint with the police.

Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered under

Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which pertains to murder. Police have taken the man into custody and are continuing their investigation.

Officials are also examining whether there was a prior history of domestic violence in the household, as they gather more details about the circumstances leading to the fatal incident.

A 34-year-old man has been arrested in Wadala for allegedly killing his wife following a violent domestic dispute, in a case that has raised serious concerns about domestic violence in the city.

The accused, identified as Mahesh Wad, was taken into custody after police registered a case based on a complaint filed by the victim's family.

According to investigators, the incident took place on the afternoon of March 13 at the couple's residence in Wadala.

Police said the argument

between the husband and wife was reportedly triggered by the man's drinking habit, which had been a source of tension in the household.

During the altercation the situation escalated rapidly into physical violence, leading to severe injuries for the victim.

Authorities allege that the man assaulted his 29-year-old wife, Kavita Lodi, in a sustained act of violence inside their home.

The assault reportedly involved repeated physical attacks, leaving the victim in a critically injured state.

Investigators further stated that an object was also thrown at her during the incident, contributing to her injuries.

Despite the seriousness of her condition, the accused allegedly did not arrange timely medical assistance.

Police believe that the lack of immediate treatment worsened her condition over the following days.

Rapid Recovery After Bariatric Surgery

Mira-Bhayandar : In a remarkable case highlighting advancements in medical science, a woman weighing 127 kg began walking just two hours after undergoing bariatric surgery at a hospital in Mira Road.

The patient, who had a Body Mass Index of 57, underwent a minimally invasive laparoscopic procedure performed by a specialist surgeon along with a multidisciplinary medical team. The surgery was conducted using advanced techniques aimed at minimizing trauma and accelerating recovery.

Severe obesity is known to impact multiple aspects of health, often leading to conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, and joint problems.

Doctors emphasize that bariatric surgery offers a long-term solution for such patients when combined with proper care.

In this instance, the medical team followed the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocol, which focuses on reducing surgical stress and promoting faster healing.

As a result, the patient

did not require ICU admission, tubes, or catheters.

She was able to start walking within two hours and began consuming clear liquids shortly thereafter. The patient was discharged within 48 hours, demonstrating the effectiveness of modern surgical approaches. Doctors noted that such outcomes reflect significant progress in healthcare, where patients can now expect reduced pain, shorter hospital stays, and quicker return to normal life following major procedures.

In a significant example of modern medical advancement, a woman weighing 127 kg showed rapid recovery by walking just two hours after undergoing bariatric surgery at a hospital in Mira Road.

The patient, who had a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 57, was classified under severe obesity, a condition that often requires medical intervention beyond conventional weight loss methods.

The surgery was performed using a minimally invasive laparoscopic technique, which involves smaller incisions and results

in reduced trauma to the body.

A specialist surgeon, along with a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, carried out the procedure with a focus on precision and safety.

Doctors highlighted that such advanced techniques play a crucial role in improving recovery outcomes for patients undergoing major procedures.

Severe obesity is widely associated with multiple health complications, including diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, and joint-related disorders.

Medical experts often recommend bariatric surgery as a long-term solution for patients who do not respond effectively to lifestyle and dietary changes.

In this case, the hospital followed the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocol, a globally recognised approach aimed at accelerating post-operative recovery.

The ERAS protocol focuses on reducing surgical stress, maintaining normal body function, and enabling early mobility.

As a result, the patient did not require intensive care unit admission following the surgery.

She also did not need the use of tubes or catheters, which are often associated with traditional post-surgical care.

Within just two hours of the procedure, the patient was able to stand and begin walking with assistance.

Shortly after, she was able to start consuming clear liquids, marking another milestone in her recovery.

Doctors noted that early mobility is a key factor in preventing complications such as blood clots and muscle weakness.

The patient's condition remained stable throughout the recovery process, allowing for a smooth and complication-free healing period.

She was discharged from the hospital within 48 hours, which is significantly shorter than traditional recovery timelines.

Healthcare professionals described the outcome as a reflection of how far surgical science has progressed in recent years.

Imtiaz Ali Thanks Mumbai Police

Mumbai : Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali expressed gratitude towards Mumbai Police after they helped him recover a bag he had accidentally left behind at the airport.

The director found himself in a difficult situation after exiting the airport, as he was unable to re-enter to retrieve the misplaced bag. Seeking assistance, he reached out to the police for help. An officer reportedly went out of his way to assist in recovering the belongings, ensuring that the situation was resolved quickly. The filmmaker later shared his appreciation through social media, acknowledging the timely support.

He described the help as a major relief during an unexpected moment of and thanked the officer for his efforts.

On the professional front, the director is preparing for the release of his upcoming film, which features a star-studded cast and is expected to hit theatres in June.

The incident once again highlighted the responsiveness of Mumbai Police in



assisting citizens beyond routine duties, reinforcing public confidence in their support system.

Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali recently expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the Mumbai Police after they helped him recover a bag he had accidentally left behind at the airport.

The incident occurred shortly after the director exited the airport premises, only to realise that he had misplaced one of his belongings inside.

Due to security protocols, re-entry into the airport was not permitted, leaving him in a difficult situation.

Faced with limited options, Imtiaz Ali sought assistance from the Mumbai Police to help retrieve the bag.

Responding promptly, a police officer stepped in and took the initiative to assist in locating the missing item.

The officer reportedly coordinated with airport authorities and staff to track down the bag.

Thanks to the swift action and coordination, the misplaced belongings were recovered without delay.

The timely intervention brought significant relief to the filmmaker, who was otherwise unable to resolve the issue on his own.

Imtiaz Ali later took to social media to publicly acknowledge and thank the officer for the support.

He described the assistance as a major relief during an unexpected and stressful moment.

Police Spread Eid Cheer in Mumbra

Thane : In a heartwarming gesture during Eid celebrations, police personnel in Mumbra marked the occasion by distributing roses and extending greetings to citizens, promoting a message of unity and harmony.

Officers were seen interacting warmly with people across age groups, offering flowers and exchanging festive wishes. The initiative aimed to strengthen the bond between the police and the community while celebrating the spirit of togetherness associated with Eid.

Visuals shared by authorities showed personnel engaging with residents, including children, and even sharing embraces, reflecting a sense of trust and goodwill.

According to officials, the gesture was intended to convey a broader message of brotherhood and social harmony. By participating in community celebrations, the police sought to go beyond their traditional role and build stronger relationships with citizens.

Such initiatives highlight the evolving approach of law enforcement agencies, focusing not only on maintaining order but also on fostering positive community engagement.

In a warm and uplifting gesture during the festive occasion of Eid, police personnel in Mumbra reached out to citizens by distributing roses and extending heartfelt greetings. The initiative, led by



the Thane Police, aimed to promote a message of unity, peace, and communal harmony among residents.

Officers were seen interacting with people from all walks of life, including elders, youth, and children, creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

By offering flowers and exchanging festive wishes, the police sought to make the celebrations more inclusive and meaningful. Residents responded positively to the gesture, appreciating the effort taken by the police to connect with the community.

Visuals from the event showed officers sharing smiles, handshakes, and even warm embraces with citizens.

Children, in particular, appeared delighted by the unexpected interaction, adding to the cheerful environment.

Officials stated that the initiative was designed to strengthen trust between law enforcement and the public. Such outreach programs are part of a broader effort

to build lasting relationships beyond routine policing duties.

The gesture also reflected the spirit of Eid, which emphasizes compassion, generosity, and togetherness.

By actively participating in the celebrations, the police demonstrated their commitment to social harmony. Authorities highlighted that maintaining peace is not just about enforcement but also about engagement and understanding.

The event served as a reminder that small acts of kindness can have a significant impact on public perception.

Community members noted that such initiatives help reduce barriers and foster mutual respect.

The police presence during festivals also reassures citizens about safety while encouraging positive interaction.

Officials reiterated that they aim to continue similar activities during other cultural and religious occasions.

Ganja Bust on Highway

Navi Mumbai : In a late-evening operation, the Navi Mumbai Police seized over 10 kg of ganja valued at more than ₹12 lakh from a vehicle on the Sion-Panvel Highway, detaining a minor while the main suspect managed to escape.

The unfolded on March 19 around 8:30 pm when a crime detection unit patrolling the Mumbai-bound stretch near the Vashi Plaza bridge noticed a suspiciously parked Maruti T-permit car close to a commercial outlet. As officers approached, a 22-year-old man sitting in the driver's seat fled into the darkness, leaving behind a minor who was immediately taken into custody.

A detailed inspection of the car led to the discovery of a purple bag placed on the rear seat, containing 10 packets wrapped in khaki tape. These packets were found to contain 10.130 kilograms of ganja, estimated to be worth ₹12,66,450. Along with the narcotics, police seized the vehicle valued at ₹5 lakh and two mobile phones, taking the total recovery to nearly ₹17.96 lakh.

Investigators believe the contraband was being transported for illegal sale. Officials stated that the alertness of the patrol team led to the interception and seizure, while efforts are ongoing to locate the absconding, identified as Akshay.

A case has been registered at Vashi Police Station

under relevant provisions of the NDPS Act, including Sections 20(b), 29, and 8(c). Senior officers confirmed that special teams have been deployed to track down the main accused and uncover any wider network involved in the operation.

The was conducted under the supervision of senior officials including the Police Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Assistant Commissioner, with the on-ground execution carried out by the local police team.

In a late-evening crackdown, the Navi Mumbai Police seized over 10 kilograms of ganja worth more than ₹12 lakh from a vehicle on the Sion-Panvel Highway, detaining a minor while the main managed to escape.

The operation took place on March 19 at around 8:30 pm during a routine patrol by a crime detection unit monitoring the Mumbai-bound stretch.

Police officials noticed a suspiciously parked Maruti T-permit car near the Vashi Plaza bridge, close to a commercial establishment.

Sensing irregular activity, officers approached the vehicle to conduct a preliminary check.

At that moment, a 22-year-old man seated in the driver's position suddenly fled the spot, taking advantage of the darkness.

The team acted swiftly and secured the minor who was present inside the vehicle.

₹2 Crore Drug Haul at Airport

Mumbai : A major drug smuggling attempt was foiled at Mumbai's international airport after security personnel seized hydroponic weed worth nearly ₹2 crore from an airport staffer.

The incident took place when the, a loader working within the airport premises, was intercepted during routine screening while exiting the terminal with a backpack. Suspicious contents flagged during X-ray scanning prompted a detailed check.

Upon inspection, officials discovered around 2 kilograms of hydroponic weed concealed inside the bag. The high-grade narcotic is estimated to have a significant market value, indicating a well-planned smuggling attempt.

Security personnel immediately handed over the individual and the seized contraband to Customs authorities for further investigation and legal proceedings.

Officials said the individual was carrying a backpack that raised suspicion during standard screening procedures.

An X-ray scan of the bag revealed unusual contents, prompting authorities to carry out a detailed inspection. Upon opening the bag, security personnel discovered approximately 2 kilograms of hydroponic weed concealed inside. The seized substance is considered a high-grade narcotic with significant market value, indicating a potentially organised smuggling operation. Following the discov-



agencies. A major drug smuggling attempt was foiled at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport after security personnel seized hydroponic weed worth nearly ₹2 crore from an airport staffer.

The accused, identified as a loader working within the airport premises, was intercepted during routine security checks while exiting the terminal.

Officials said the individual was carrying a backpack that raised suspicion during standard screening procedures.

An X-ray scan of the bag revealed unusual contents, prompting authorities to carry out a detailed inspection.

Upon opening the bag, security personnel discovered approximately 2 kilograms of hydroponic weed concealed inside.

The seized substance is considered a high-grade narcotic with significant market value, indicating a potentially organised smuggling operation.

Following the discov-

ery, the accused was immediately detained and handed over to the Customs Department for further investigation.

Authorities have registered a case and initiated legal proceedings under relevant narcotics laws.

Preliminary findings suggest that the use of an airport insider may have been a deliberate strategy to bypass security layers.

Investigators suspect that the case could be linked to a larger drug trafficking network operating through international routes.

Officials are now working to trace possible connections and identify other individuals involved in the operation.

The incident has once again raised concerns about insider threats within high-security zones like airports.

Authorities are likely to review and strengthen internal monitoring systems to prevent such breaches.

Data from enforcement agencies highlights the growing scale of the problem at the airport.

Editorial

Unseasonal crisis and the threat of El Niño

The cycles of nature are now caught in a vortex of uncertainty in the face of changing climate. The predictable schedule of rainfall has collapsed, and unseasonal rains coupled with hailstorms have emerged as the new reality. Recent torrential downpours and hailstorms across various parts of the country have inflicted massive damage upon agriculture, dashing the hopes of farmers. As the influence of climate change and global factors—such as 'El Niño'—intensifies as the driving force behind this irregularity, signs indicate that the situation is likely to become even more critical in the near future. Over the past few years, the issue of nature's capriciousness and the changing climate has ceased to be merely a topic of discussion; it has now evolved into an existential crisis. The old adage, "The monsoon arrives invariably on schedule," has become obsolete; in its place, a terrifying new reality has emerged: "Unseasonal rain arrives invariably on schedule." The unseasonal rains and destructive hailstorms that have lashed various parts of Delhi, Haryana, and Maharashtra over the last five to six days stand as living proof of this disrupted natural cycle. Just as farmers are harvesting their *Rabi* crops and dreaming of a bountiful harvest, this very wrath of nature is snatching the food right out of their mouths. This year's hailstorms have literally battered 11 districts across Maharashtra—including Ahilyanagar, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Latur, Nanded, Dharampur, Yavatmal, Solapur, Pune, Satara, and Kolhapur. Specifically, in the Ahilyanagar district, crops across 3,558 hectares have been damaged, while standing crops across approximately 6,913 hectares spread across 30 *talukas* (administrative blocks) throughout the state have been flattened. Occurring precisely when cash crops such as wheat and chickpeas were ready for harvest, this rainfall has proven to be a devastating blow that has broken the backs of the farmers. This untimely calamity has not only damaged grain crops but has also wreaked havoc upon fruit orchards. Crops such as onions, maize, and sorghum—along with fruits like mangoes, bananas, watermelons, muskmelons, sugarcane, papayas, grapes, pomegranates, lemons, sweet limes, and oranges—have borne the brunt of severe hailstorms. Vegetable crops, in particular, have been damaged to such an extent that they are now barely recognizable. While such climatic fluctuations are not entirely new to humanity, their increasing frequency and intensity are undoubtedly a cause for grave concern. In the past, hailstorms were a rare occurrence; consequently, a shower of hail was often viewed as a symbol of joy. Today, however, hailstorms have become synonymous with destruction. There are equally compelling scientific reasons underlying this climatic shift. An atmospheric trough formed over parts of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and North India—coupled with a low-pressure area situated between Vidarbha, Marathwada, and North Karnataka—has cast the ominous shadow of untimely rainfall over a vast expanse of the country. Beyond Maharashtra, hailstorms have also unleashed devastation across the states of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Karnataka, thereby underscoring the national scope of this crisis. The current situation is truly paradoxical. On one hand, we are enduring the scorching heat of a harsh summer, with water scarcity assuming alarming proportions everywhere—from remote hamlets to urban residential complexes. While it is only natural for a shower of rain to feel like a welcome relief during such times, untimely rainfall ultimately brings far more long-term distress than fleeting comfort. When such disruptions occur within the natural ecosystem, their repercussions extend beyond agriculture alone, impacting the entire ecological balance of the environment. Last year, the country witnessed robust rainfall and an intense winter; however, the subsequent spate of unseasonal calamities serves as a testament to the capricious nature of the weather. Against this backdrop, the 'El Niño' forecast issued by the World Meteorological Organization appears all the more alarming. The influence of 'La Niña'—the cold ocean current in the Pacific—is now waning, and there is a projected 40 to 70 percent probability that El Niño will intensify after July. El Niño is a phenomenon that exerts an extremely adverse impact on the Indian monsoon. When the sea surface temperature of the Pacific Ocean rises, it draws moisture-laden winds toward itself, resulting in diminished rainfall across the Indian subcontinent. During the years 2023–2024, rainfall levels remained below average due to El Niño, and 2024 emerged as a year of record-breaking heat. Although La Niña initially brought bountiful rainfall in 2025, a neutral phase has been developing within the ocean since April. The months of August and September—marking the second phase of the monsoon—are considered absolutely critical for both agriculture and the provision of drinking water. Should El Niño intensify during this specific period, the nation could face the looming threat of drought or severe water scarcity. Given that the Indian economy remains heavily dependent on the monsoon, this potential crisis could disrupt the economic stability not merely of farmers, but of the entire nation. The common citizen is already reeling under the strain of global geopolitical conflicts, fuel and gas shortages, and skyrocketing inflation. Amidst this turmoil, there is a palpable fear that this adverse turn of nature could prove to be the proverbial "thirteenth month of misery during a drought." It must now be acknowledged that this climatic imbalance is not merely a natural occurrence, but rather a direct consequence of environmental degradation caused by human intervention. Nowadways, witnessing a hailstorm evokes not a sense of delight, but rather a deep sense of dread—for behind it lie the tears of farmers and a looming question mark over the nation's food security. With the natural seasonal cycle of the monsoon, winter, and summer having completely collapsed, every stage of the agricultural process—from sowing to harvesting—has been plunged into uncertainty. At such a juncture, merely providing temporary relief will not suffice; rather, there is an absolute necessity for long-term and scientifically grounded planning to effectively combat this crisis. Both the government and society must now brace themselves to adapt to the changing facets of nature. In accordance with meteorological forecasts, it has become imperative to alter agricultural schedules, increase the use of hail-protection nets, and adopt both traditional and modern methods of water conservation. Given the potential threats of water and fodder scarcity posed by the El Niño phenomenon, emphasis must be placed on stockpiling and strategic planning starting right now. When nature shifts its course, humanity must adjust its policies accordingly. In light of the climatic winds looming on the horizon, we must not fall short in any aspect of pre-crisis planning. Ultimately, true prudence lies not in battling against nature, but in recognizing its changing nature and taking measures to safeguard ourselves. To protect our agriculture and economy, we must construct a robust protective shield capable of withstanding this seasonal imbalance. The current crisis of unseasonal weather is not merely a temporary phenomenon; it serves as a harbinger of far greater climatic challenges to come. Therefore, simply announcing relief packages will not be enough; instead, science-based agriculture, water conservation, and climate-responsive policy reforms have become the need of the hour. One cannot rule out the possibility that this crisis, looming under the shadow of El Niño, may intensify further in the days ahead.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Shri J. P. Nadda addressed the convocation ceremony of Teerthanker Mahaveer University in Moradabad today. Congratulating the graduating students, Shri Nadda described the convocation as a defining milestone in the lives of students—one that reflects years of dedication, perseverance, discipline and academic commitment.

Addressing the gathering, the Union Health Minister noted that a convocation marks not only the completion of an academic journey but also the beginning of a new chapter of responsibility



wider access to education. He noted that the institution has extended scholarships

ty and service. He encouraged the graduating students to move forward with strong values and a commitment to contribute meaningfully to the nation and society. "You are privileged to be entering the professional world during the second phase of India's Amrit Kaal, as the country moves towards the vision of a developed India by 2047. This period presents both an opportunity and a responsibility simultaneously for young professionals to shape the future of the nation," Shri Nadda said. Commending the efforts of Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Union Health Minister Shri J. P. Nadda highlighted the institution's notable contribution to advancing education in the medical and allied health sectors. He observed that of the nearly 150 academic programmes offered by the university, close to 60 percent are dedicated to medical and allied health disciplines, reflecting the university's strong emphasis on building a competent and skilled healthcare workforce for the country.

Shri Nadda also acknowledged the university's commitment to ensuring

amounting to around ₹75 crore to support students from diverse backgrounds, enabling them to pursue higher education and achieve their academic goals. Such initiatives, he remarked, demonstrate the university's dedication to promoting inclusive education, academic excellence and the development of skilled professionals who can contribute meaningfully to India's growing healthcare sector.

Highlighting the transformative changes in India's healthcare sector over the past decade, Shri Nadda said that the Government has made sustained efforts to expand healthcare infrastructure, strengthen medical education and improve access to affordable and quality healthcare across the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"In the last eleven years, India has witnessed a significant expansion of premier medical institutions. The number of All India Institute of Medical Sciences has increased from 6 earlier to 23 today, strengthening tertiary healthcare services and creating new opportunities for high-quality medical educa-

Chintan Shivir on strengthening India's Medical Devices export ecosystem

A Chintan Shivir on "Strengthening India's Medical Devices Export Ecosystem" was organized by the Department of Commerce in collaboration with the Department of Pharmaceuticals and the Export Promotion Council for Medical Devices (EPCMD) at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi today. The event brought together policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, exporters and sector experts to deliberate on strategies for strengthening India's global competitiveness in the MedTech sector.

The discussions were held under the theme "Achieving 30@2030 – USD 30 Billion Market Size by 2030." The event witnessed participation of over 150 participants from government, industry, regulatory bodies and the broader medical devices ecosystem. The Chintan Shivir served as a platform for structured engagement between the Government and industry stakeholders to identify key policy priorities, address regulatory and infrastructure bottlenecks, and explore emerging opportunities for strengthening India's medical devices manufacturing ecosystem and export capabilities. India's medical devices sector has emerged as a critical component of the country's healthcare and manufacturing landscape. With growing global demand for affordable and high-quality medical technologies, India is increasingly positioning itself as a reliable manufacturing

and export hub.

In the inaugural session, Forum Coordinator, AiMed, Shri Rajiv Nath shared the industry perspective and emphasized the need for continued government-industry collaboration to address global regulatory challenges and scale domestic manufacturing.

Addressing the gathering, Joint Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Shri Aman Sharma highlighted the importance of focusing on the quality of medical devices manufacturing in the country and emphasized that both industry and regulators need to work together towards this objective.

Delivering the special address, Additional Secretary and Director General, Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Shri Lav Aggarwal emphasized the need to grow faster by addressing structural issues. He highlighted the role of trade policy measures and export promotion initiatives in expanding India's presence in global medical devices markets. The Chintan Shivir was formally inaugurated by Secretary, Department of Commerce, Shri Rajesh Agarwal. In his inaugural address, he emphasized that India must move beyond its identity as the "Pharmacy of the World" to emerge as a global MedTech manufacturing hub. Noting that India's medical device exports have crossed USD 4 billion in FY25, Shri Agarwal highlighted the need to signifi-

India's Amrit Kaal



tion and research across the country," he stated.

He noted that India has recorded substantial progress in improving maternal and child health outcomes. Citing global estimates, he stated that India's Maternal Mortality Ratio has declined by about 86 percent, compared to a global reduction of around 48 percent, reflecting the impact of sustained public health interventions.

Speaking about India's efforts to eliminate Tuberculosis, he highlighted that India has achieved a 21 percent decline in TB incidence, which is significantly higher than the global decline of 12 percent, as reported by the World Health Organization.

Shri Nadda further emphasized that the Government has been working consistently to reduce the financial burden of health-

making healthcare more affordable and accessible to the people.

Highlighting India's progress in strengthening access to timely treatment, Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda cited findings from The Lancet, noting that around 90 percent of cancer patients in India begin their treatment within 20 days, reflecting improvements in early diagnosis and treat-

coverage scheme, which provides health coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Shri Nadda stated that the scheme has significantly expanded financial protection in healthcare and has benefited over 71 crore people, enabling millions of families to access quality treatment without financial hardship.

Addressing the graduat-



care on citizens. He noted that out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) on healthcare has significantly declined from 62.6 percent to 39.4 percent, reflecting the Government's commitment to

ment pathways across the healthcare system. He also highlighted the transformative impact of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, describing it as the world's largest health

ing students, the Union Health Minister reminded them that their academic achievements are the result of the collective efforts of parents, teachers, mentors, university staff and institu-

MSME Ministry Completes 364 MSE-CDP Projects

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises continues to strengthen the backbone of India's economy through targeted schemes aimed at boosting productivity and competitiveness among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). These initiatives focus on cluster-based development, digital transformation, and improved market access, ensuring holistic growth across sectors.

A key component of this effort is the Micro and Small Enterprises-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP), which facilitates the establishment of Common Facility Centers (CFCs) and the creation or upgradation of Infrastructure Development (ID) projects. These interventions are designed to support enterprises within existing clusters by providing shared resources and modern infrastructure.

Since its inception, the MSE-CDP has approved a total of 606 projects. Out of these, 364 projects have already been completed, reflecting steady progress, while 242 projects are currently ongoing and expected to further enhance industrial capabilities across the country. The scheme plays a crucial role in addressing infrastructural gaps and improving the overall efficiency of MSE clusters. By enabling access to advanced tools, testing facilities, and production support, it significantly boosts the competitiveness of small-scale in-

dustries.

Parallel to this, the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) has emerged as a major initiative for revitalizing traditional sectors. Launched to promote cluster-based development, SFURTI focuses on strengthening rural livelihoods and preserving India's rich artisanal heritage.

Since 2015-16, a total of 513 clusters have been approved under SFURTI, with a committed financial assistance of ₹1,332.95 crore from the Government of India. This reflects the government's strong commitment to supporting traditional industries and artisans.

These clusters are expected to benefit approximately 3.03 lakh artisans engaged in diverse sectors such as handicrafts, handloom, agro-processing, coir, and honey production. The initiative not only provides employment but also enhances skill development and income generation at the grassroots level.

Out of the total approved clusters, 378 are currently functional, contributing actively to local economies. Meanwhile, 135 clusters are under various stages of implementation, indicating ongoing expansion and future growth potential.

SFURTI clusters focus on improving infrastructure, enabling skill upgradation, fostering value addition, and strengthening market linkages. This integrated ap-

proach ensures that traditional industries remain competitive in a modern economic environment.

In recent years, India's industrial landscape has also witnessed a surge in digitalization, significantly impacting MSME operations. Digital tools and technologies have enhanced efficiency, streamlined processes, and opened new avenues for value creation.

MSMEs are increasingly adopting digital payments, engaging in e-commerce transactions, and utilizing IoT-enabled production tools along with AI-based technologies. These advancements are helping enterprises improve productivity and remain competitive in both domestic and global markets.

To support this digital transformation, the government has introduced several initiatives through various ministries. Platforms such as DigiLocker and IndiaAI Datasets Platform are empowering MSMEs with access to digital resources and data-driven solutions.

Additionally, connectivity initiatives like BharatNet and PM-WANI are ensuring affordable internet access and last-mile connectivity, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

The Ministry is also promoting digital empowerment through Udyam registration, training programs in technology centres, and incubation support under the MSME Innovative Scheme.

Similarly, the 2023–24 academic session recorded 155 medal recipients, comprising 103 girls and 52 boys, reflecting strong and consistent academic performance by female students across disciplines. For the 2024–25 academic session, the university conferred 3,464 degrees, including 36 PhD degrees (19 women and 17 men), 832 postgraduate degrees, 2,490 undergraduate degrees, and 106 diploma certificates. For the 2023–24 academic session, 2,577 degrees were awarded, including 1,056 female students and 1,521 male students.

Shri Brajesh Pathak, Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh; Shri Suresh Kumar Khanna, Minister of Finance and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Uttar Pradesh along with the leadership and Professors from the University were present at the Event.

Arrest of close aide Jadhav could unravel entire network

Mumbai : In a significant development in the case involving self-styled godman "Captain" Ashok Kharat, police have arrested his close aide Neeraj Jadhav. He is expected to be produced before the court soon, and officials believe his interrogation could uncover crucial details about Kharat's alleged illegal activities.

Jadhav, who worked as Kharat's assistant and aide, was constantly by his side and is believed to possess key evidence. Sources indicate that he has access to CCTV footage related to the alleged exploitation of women by Kharat. Additionally, Jadhav is said to have detailed knowledge of Kharat's financial dealings, including land transactions and other monetary activities.

Investigators also suspect that Jadhav is aware of Kharat's connections with prominent political leaders and senior officials, as well



as business partnerships and financial connections.

Reports suggest that Kharat allegedly grabbed land in the Shirdi and Nashik regions through intimidation and misuse of political influence.

With Jadhav now in custody, there is a strong possibility that several high-profile individuals could be exposed. Meanwhile, the opposition has intensified its attack over the issue. Sanjay Raut has alleged that as many as nine ministers in the state cabinet had direct links with Kharat—some seeking his guidance and others involved in business partnerships. Vijay Wadetiwar has also criticized the government, demanding strict action against all those involved in the case. The opposition has warned that the issue will be aggressively raised in the state legislature, calling for a thorough probe and accountability for all implicated individuals.

Arrest Rupali Chakankar as co-accused in Ashok Kharat case: Sushma Andhare

Mumbai: Shiv Sena leader Sushma Andhare has demanded the immediate arrest of Rupali Chakankar as a co-accused in the self-styled godman Captain Ashok Kharat case. Andhare stated that Chakankar's resignation as chairperson of the State Women's Commission is not sufficient and that strict legal action must follow. Andhare argued that while the demand for Chakankar's resignation may have had political undertones, the issue itself goes beyond politics. She alleged that Chakankar was aware of the conspiracy in the case but failed to expose it and instead aided the accused. She therefore insisted that Chakankar be arrested and subjected to thorough interrogation. Following mounting criticism from opposition parties in the Kharat case, Chakankar submitted her resignation to Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, citing personal reasons. However, Andhare questioned this justification, asking why "personal reasons" were not cited earlier despite widespread criti-



cism, and only surfaced after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis reportedly directed her to step down. Andhare further alleged that Chakankar enjoyed an unprecedented level of publicity during her tenure. She claimed that no previous chairperson of the commission projected themselves with such prominence, including printing a minister-of-state rank on official letterheads. She also accused Chakankar of influencing government functioning and maintaining a strong presence in the legislature despite not being an elected MLA. According to Andhare, this prominence was due to the backing of NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) state president Sunil Tatkare. She concluded by alleging that despite being aware of Kharat's alleged misconduct, Chakankar failed in her duty as Women's Commission chief and instead supported him. Andhare demanded not only Chakankar's arrest but also a narco analysis test as part of the investigation.

Shiv Sena protests Rs 56 Crore 'Chassis Crack' scam in Solapur civic body

Solapur: Alleging massive corruption and administrative failure in the Solapur Municipal Corporation (SMC), the Shiv Sena (Udhav Balasaheb Thackeray faction) staged a strong protest against the proposed recovery of Rs 56 crore from public funds, over the controversial "chassis crack" bus scam of 2014.

The protest was held near the District Collector's office under the leadership of city chief Mahesh Dharashivkar. Several party leaders and workers participated, raising slogans against the civic administration and demanding strict action against those responsible.

According to the allegations, the SMC had pro-

duced 144 buses from Ashok Leyland in 2014. However, due to a suspicious agreement between officials and the company, as many as 99 buses were later found to have defective chassis. Despite having fitness certificates from the Regional Transport Office (RTO), these buses turned out to be unusable. The Shiv Sena alleged it was a well-planned scam rather than a technical fault.

Following a prolonged legal process, the financial burden of Rs 56 crore is now set to be recovered from the municipal treasury—effectively from taxpayers. This has sparked outrage among citizens and political leaders alike. Questioning the move, Mahesh Dharashivkar said,

"Why should the citizens of Solapur suffer for the mistakes of corrupt officials? The penalty should be recovered from those who approved and accepted substandard buses, not from the public." The party has demanded criminal action against the guilty officials and warned of an intensified agitation if justice is not delivered. "We will not allow public money to be looted due to corruption. This is a fight for the rights of Solapur citizens," Dharashivkar asserted.

Shiv Sena leaders made it clear that the agitation will continue until accountability is fixed and the financial burden is shifted from the public to those responsible for the alleged scam.

Public figures must maintain boundaries, says Chhagan Bhujbal amid Kharat controversy

Mumbai: Senior Maharashtra minister Chhagan Bhujbal has emphasised that individuals in public life must adhere to certain limits and maintain discipline, especially in matters involving public trust and accountability.

Referring to the controversy surrounding self-styled godman Captain Ashok Kharat, Bhujbal said he had consciously chosen to avoid any association despite being advised by some to visit him.

He stressed that public figures must exercise caution in their interactions, particularly when it comes to individuals or organisations that may later attract controversy. Bhujbal also commented on the involvement

of Rupali Chakankar, suggesting that she may have been introduced to Kharat by others rather than seeking him out independently.

He noted that given her frequent engagements and influence in political and social circles, Kharat might have appointed her as a trustee in his organisation.

At the same time, Bhujbal drew a distinction between genuine spiritual leaders and those who exploit faith, urging people to remain vigilant against blind belief and superstition.

He emphasised that while many saints and spiritual figures contribute positively to society, it is important to approach such matters with rationality and awareness.

Following the allegations in the Kharat case, Bhujbal said a decision was taken to accept Chakankar's resignation as Chairperson of the State Women's Commission. He added that this decision was taken after discussions with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The move was led by Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, representing the Nationalist Congress Party faction. Bhujbal clarified that a decision regarding Chakankar's role as the party's state women's president would be taken at an appropriate time. Addressing another aspect of the controversy, Bhujbal spoke about the allocation of 3.9 million litres of water from the Darna Dam to Kharat's Shivanika Trust.

Auto dispute turns violent in Mumbai's Malad, 3 arrested

Mumbai: A disturbing incident has come to light from the Kurar Village area of Malad East in Mumbai, where a dispute over boarding an auto rickshaw escalated into violence involving four girls, leading to tension in the locality. According to information, the altercation began near Malad railway station when the girls were waiting to hire an auto. A verbal argument reportedly broke out with a burqa-clad woman, which later intensified. The victims have alleged that following the argument, the woman called a group of individuals from the Islamapura area near Ramesh Hotel in Kurar Village. Soon after, around 20 boys allegedly reached the spot and assaulted the girls.

The complainants stated that they were forced out of the auto rickshaw and beaten by the group. It is also reported that part of the incident has been captured on CCTV cameras installed in the area.

The incident initially triggered anger among local residents over what they perceived as delayed police action. However, after a formal complaint was registered, Kurar police took action and so far arrested two women and one male accused. Further investigation into the matter is ongoing. Following the incident, Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) leader Sanjay Nirupam, along with hundreds of party workers, visited the spot and participated in a recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa.

Arrest Maharashtra women's panel chief in Godman sexual exploitation case: political leaders

Mumbai: Udhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena leader Sushma Andhare on Friday demanded the arrest of NCP (AP) leader Rupali Chakankar, who is also Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women, for allegedly abetting rape accused godman "Captain" Ashok Kharat.

The godman has been arrested in a serial rape, sexual exploitation and blackmail-for-ransom case.

"Arrest Rupali Chakankar immediately. She must be questioned face-to-face. Chakankar must also be given a narco test. Many women have been sexually exploited by Kharat. She must be removed from the post of Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women, because she could use her position to exert political pressure on survivors and witnesses.

"She has already threatened people who tried to expose the case. Some victims even said that Rupali Chakankar threatened them at 2 am. The Economic Offences Wing (EoW) should investigate the sources of wealth of Kharat and Rupali Chakankar. Kharat has stashed away led abroad as well," Udhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena leader Sushma Andhare said.

"On September 2, 2024, on Somvati Amavasya, Rupali Chakankar cut off her ring finger. A victim said that Chakankar practised Tantra Mantra Vidya," Andhare said, displaying a photograph which showed Rupali Chakankar with her truncated ring finger.

"In this photo, Rupali Chakankar's bandaged ring finger can be seen. A victim told me that Rupali Chakankar got her ring finger cut to practice Tantra Mantra Vidya. The ring finger of the hand is considered very important in Tantra Mantra Vidya, because it is related to the sun (success) and Venus (attraction).

"It is the main centre of energy transmission. This finger is mainly used to increase the effect of mantras, to perform a specific mudra or to influence a person. Energy can be flowed or absorbed into the body through the ring finger," Andhare said, explaining why Rupali Chakankar got her ring finger cut. "Rupali Chakankar and Ashok Kharat have intimate relations. She was present at Godman Kharat's daughter's wedding. Kharat's niece resides in Rupali Chakankar's house. Chakankar did everything, from abetting Kharat's crimes to presenting him with wom-

en. If women like Rupali Chakankar remain in political parties, other women will be afraid of entering politics," Andhare said.

Meanwhile, NCP (AP) leader Rupali Thombre-Patil demanded that Chakankar be expelled from the party as well as her constitutional post and made a co-accused in the Kharat case, since she is a member of the Shri Shivnika Sansthan Trust run by him.

"If Rupali Chakankar had nothing to do with this matter, she would have come and spoken in front of us. Chakankar did everything from abetting Ashok Kharat to presenting him with housewives. If women like Rupali Chakankar remain in the party, then other women will be afraid to enter politics," Thombre-Patil said.

In a related development, senior NCP (AP) leader Praful Patel also demanded strict action against godman Ashok Kharat and those who are with him. "Strict action must be taken against Ashok Kharat and all those who are with him. Similarly, the names of political leaders have come to light. We in the NCP will take appropriate action in this case and it will be seen very soon," sPatel said.

World facing threat of war, dialogue only path to solutions: Vice President

Nagpur: Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Saturday said the world is currently under the looming threat of war, emphasising that dialogue remains the only viable path to lasting solutions.

Addressing participants at the 29th national session of the Indian Youth Parliament held at the RSS' Dr Hedgewar Smruti Mandir complex in Reshimbagh, he underlined the importance of a meaningful conversation in resolving global and domestic challenges.

Highlighting the theme of the four-day Youth Parliament — 'Indian Languages & Developed India-2047' — the Vice President said such platforms play a crucial role in nurturing democratic values among the youth.

"When the world is facing the threat of war, dialogue is the only way forward. The Youth Parliament teaches us the value of



respectful debate, listening to diverse perspectives and arriving at solutions through discussion," he said.

Stressing the significance of linguistic diversity, Radhakrishnan noted that while individuals hold deep affection for their mother tongue, religion and culture, it is equally important to respect those of others.

"Everyone loves their mother, their mother tongue and their religion. But that

does not mean we should not respect another person's. When we speak our mother tongues, we are not being regional, we are being original," he remarked.

He added that each language carries its own heritage and together they form a rich cultural fabric that defines India. Referring to recent initiatives, Radhakrishnan said he had released updated translated versions of the Constitution in Tamil

and Gujarati. He also lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring the Constitution is made accessible in multiple Indian languages. "For the first time, the Constitution is now available in languages such as Dogri and Santhali, among others. The union government is making significant efforts to preserve and promote India's linguistic diversity," he said. Commenting on the ongoing Budget session of Parliament, Radhakrishnan, who also serves as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, expressed satisfaction over the constructive debates taking place. "Differences of opinion are natural, but they should not lead to conflict. The aim is to arrive at conclusions through dialogue. Purposeful debates can help us achieve the vision of a developed India, and this is the duty of every parliamentarian," he asserted.

New controversy erupts regarding Captain Ashok Kharat about diversion of 3.9 million litres of water from Nashik's Darna Dam

Nashik: A latest string of shocking revelation related to the 'self-proclaimed godman' Captain Ashok Kharat has come to light during the 2019-2020 period—specifically the COVID-19 pandemic era, when the common populace was wandering desperately in search of water—the charlatan successfully secured approval for a staggering 3.9 million litres (0.0039 million cubic metres) of water from Nashik's Darna Dam, specifically for his 'Shri Shivnika Sansthan' through manipulation.

This incident serves as a stark illustration of how, under the protective patronage of political power, a mere charlatan was able to wield such influence and command such sway within the hallowed corridors of the

State Secretariat. Pursuant to the Government Resolution dated July 31, 2020, the Water Resources Department sanctioned water for 'non-irrigation' use to Kharat's 'Shri Shivnika Sansthan' located at Mirgaon (Taluka Sinnar).

A Cabinet Sub-committee had granted approval to lift approximately 3.9 million litres of water from the Godavari Right Bank Canal (at the 48 km mark), originating from the Darna Dam. Citing the need for drinking water, this reservation was arbitrarily secured through manipulative means. This 'water favour' granted during the tenure of the Thackeray government—combined with the 'swagger' displayed by the 'Baba' (spiritual guru) during the current BJP regime—

has created a stir in state politics. This is not merely an issue concerning water; it represents a grave instance where a fake godman has held the entire government machinery hostage. This government order was issued under the signature of the then Joint Secretary to the government, Atul Ashok Kapole.

Ashok Kharat did not merely make claims of possessing divine powers; he also hypnotized several IAS officers, ministers, and MLAs using his so-called 'affliction-removal' techniques. According to sources, it was precisely due to pressure exerted by these 'influential' individuals that the files pertaining to this water sanction were fast-tracked through the Mantralaya (Secretariat).

While the Thackeray gov-



ernment provided the 'wind beneath his wings,' it has now come to light that even after the change of power—the cuewren BJP-led government's tenure—the 'Baba' maintained his domineering influence and managed to get bogus works worth crores of rupees sanctioned.

In the drought-prone belt of Sinnar, under whose orders—which MLAs, Ministers, or MPs—was water rightfully belonging to farmers diverted to a

private Sansthan? The residents of Sinnar have raised the pertinent question: will they ever receive answers to these queries? They contend that this government resolution is not merely a piece of paper; rather, it stands as a brazen affront inflicted upon the administrative machinery by a charlatan.

Under the guise of a 'Letter of Support,' Kharat utilized these means to further his own influence and consolidate his position. This document was utilized merely as a pretext. Significantly—and this raises a pertinent question—given the strict regulations imposed by the 'River Basin Agency' regarding the terms under which water is allocated, why was such preferential treatment accorded to a private institution on such a

massive scale?

The diversion of 3,900 million cubic metres of water translates to 3.9 million litres. In terms of Million Liters per Day (MLD), this amounts to approximately 3.2 million litres. To provide a rough estimate: if one considers an Olympic-sized swimming pool—which typically holds about 2.5 million litres of water—this quota of 3.9 million litres is substantial. On what specific criteria was this water quota granted?

Condition No. 8 within the government order is of critical importance. It explicitly states that this reservation serves merely as a 'Letter of Cooperation.' This implies that there is a strong possibility that Kharat, by brandishing this letter, may have misled both the general public

and the Bhalla family. Whether the water is actually supplied or not ultimately depends on the water levels currently available in the dam reservoir.

However, it is understood that Kharat utilized this document primarily as a marketing tool to demonstrate—or claim—that he wields significant influence within the Ministry. Consequently, several questions remain unanswered: Did the institution actually draw and utilize this water? And did they pay the corresponding charges for it? On January 5, 2020, the then-Executive Director of the Godavari-Marathwada Irrigation Development Corporation (based in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar) had put forth a proposal to allocate water to the Mirgaon Institution.

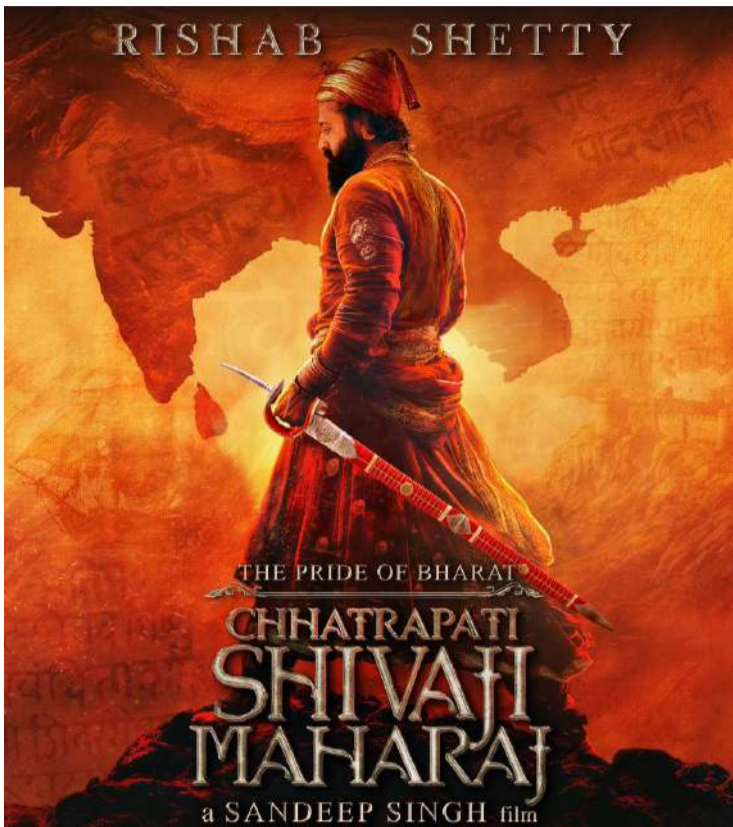
Arjun Rampal boards Rishabh Shetty's 'The Pride of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj'

Mumbai: Arjun Rampal has been roped in for Rishabh Shetty's ambitious historical magnum opus, *The Pride of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*, where he will portray one of the primary antagonists, bringing significant dramatic intensity to the narrative.

The film is being directed by Sandeep Singh and is shaping up to be a grand cinematic spectacle. It will also feature Shefali Shah in the pivotal role of Rajmata Jijabai, the revered mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Production for the film is expected to commence in the second half of the year, with preparations already underway. The makers are aiming to mount the project on a massive scale, ensuring high production values and a visually rich cinematic experience.

The Pride of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is envisioned as an epic saga that will chronicle the life, valor, and strategic brilliance of Shivaji Maharaj. The narrative is expected to highlight his courage, leadership, and enduring legacy in Indian history.

The film will delve into themes of bravery and honour, portraying the legendary warrior's relentless fight against adversaries, including the might of the Mughal Empire, while showcasing his role in shaping a pow-



erful Maratha kingdom.

This project marks Arjun Rampal's first major signing following the

release of *Dhurandhar*, further expanding his diverse filmography with a strong historical role.

Looking ahead, Rampal is also set to appear in *O Saathi Re*, a romantic series directed by Imtiaz Ali. The show will feature him alongside Aditi Rao Hydari and Avinash Tiwary.

In addition to his upcoming projects, several of Rampal's films are awaiting release. These include *3 Monkeys* and *Penthouse*, both directed by Abbas Mustan.

Other pending projects in his lineup include *Punjab 95*, *Blind Game*, and *Battle of Bhima Koregaon*, reflecting a busy slate across genres.

Meanwhile, another major cinematic venture based on Shivaji Maharaj is also in the works. Riteish Deshmukh is directing *Raja Shivaji*, a parallel large-scale project that is generating significant buzz.

Raja Shivaji is slated for release on May 1, 2026, and promises a fresh and unique take on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The film boasts a star-studded ensemble cast, including Genelia Deshmukh, Sanjay Dutt, Abhishek Bachchan, Fardeen Khan, Bhagyashree, and Sachin Khedekar. With multiple high-profile films exploring the legacy of Shivaji Maharaj, audiences can expect grand storytelling, powerful performances, and visually compelling narratives celebrating one of India's greatest historical icons.

Aaron Taylor-Johnson to headline 'Enigma Variations'

Mumbai: The upcoming Netflix series "Enigma Variations" has undergone a significant casting change, with Aaron Taylor-Johnson stepping into the lead role. He replaces Jeremy Allen White, who was previously attached to headline the project and also serve as an executive producer. The development marks a notable shift for the highly anticipated adaptation.

"Enigma Variations" is based on the acclaimed novel by André Aciman, best known for writing *Call Me By Your Name*. The source material has already earned global recognition for its nuanced exploration of love, desire, and identity, setting high expectations for the series adaptation.

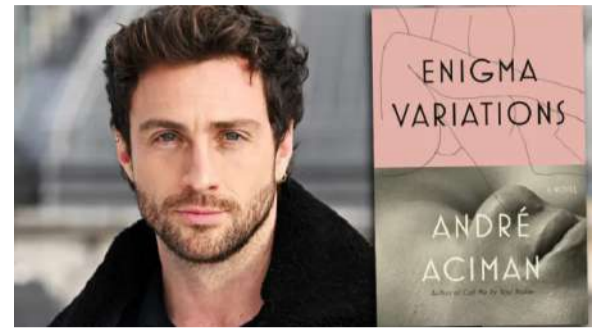
The show is being written by Amanda Kate Shuman, known for her work on *The Wheel of Time*. Shuman also serves as the showrunner, bringing her experience in character-driven storytelling to this emotionally layered narrative.

Direction duties will be handled by Oliver Hermanus, who previously helmed

The History of Sound. His involvement signals a strong visual and artistic approach to the storytelling, aligning with the novel's introspective tone.

introspective character arc.

The narrative spans ten transformative years, offering a sweeping yet intimate look at Paul's emotional and psychological growth. Each



In the series, Aaron Taylor-Johnson will portray Paul, a complex protagonist whose life is shaped by a series of intense romantic relationships over the course of a decade. The character's journey reflects both personal transformation and emotional vulnerability.

Paul is depicted as a man constantly evolving, influenced by the lovers who both inspire and challenge him. His relationships serve as defining moments that shape his identity, creating a deeply

relationship adds a new layer to his understanding of love and selfhood.

A central theme of the series is the exploration of masculinity and sexuality in the modern world. It delves into how societal expectations and personal desires intersect, often creating tension within the protagonist's life.

In keeping with Aciman's original novel, Paul is portrayed as sexually fluid, engaging in meaningful relationships with both men and women.

Anupam Kher to receive 'Icon' award at National Indian Film Festival of Australia 2026

Mumbai: Veteran actor Anupam Kher is set to be honoured with the prestigious 'International Indian Cinema Icon Award' at the National Indian Film Festival of Australia 2026, a prominent global platform dedicated to celebrating the richness and diversity of Indian cinema. The recognition further cements his stature as one of the most respected and enduring figures in the industry.

This honour highlights Anupam Kher's remarkable contribution to Indian cinema over several decades. Known for his versatility and ability to seamlessly adapt to a wide range of roles, he has built a legacy that continues to inspire generations of actors and filmmakers alike.

The award also acknowledges his growing international presence, as Anupam has increasingly been associated with global projects and cross-cultural storytelling.

shared that Australia holds a special place in his heart. He remarked that audiences there show genuine curiosity and appreciation for Indian narratives, making the recognition even more meaningful.

As part of the festival's programming, a special screening of his directorial venture *Tanvi the Great* will be held. The film delves into the sensitive subject of autism, aiming to create awareness and foster empathy through its narrative.

The screening will be further elevated by the presence of the film's lead actress Shubhangi Dutt, who will attend the event. Her participation adds a personal and engaging dimension to the film's international showcase.

This year's edition of the festival places a special emphasis on Punjabi cinema, highlighting its rising global popularity and influence. The focus aims to encourage greater collaboration and cultural exchange between industries. A high-level delegation of filmmakers and industry leaders, led by Raji Shinde, CEO of PTC Network, has arrived in Australia to actively participate in the festival's events and discussions. One of the major highlights of the festival will be the announcement of three Punjabi film co-productions

between India and Australia. This initiative represents a significant step toward strengthening international partnerships in filmmaking.

Additionally, Sameer Modi, CEO of Pocket Films, will conduct a masterclass focusing on short films and micro dramas—formats that are rapidly gaining traction among modern audiences.

To make the festival more inclusive and accessible, a free public screening will be on March 22 at 8 pm at Federation Square in Melbourne. This initiative aims to bring Indian cinema closer to a wider and more diverse audience. The second edition of the festival is being held across 14 cities in Australia, reflecting its maturing and growing influence. It will showcase over 32 films in 18 Indian languages, celebrating the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country. The festival opened on a grand note with the red-carpet premiere of *Boong*, which holds the distinction of being the first Indian (Manipuri) film to win a BAFTA Award, marking a proud moment for Indian cinema. Scheduled to run from March 18 to July 5, the National Indian Film Festival of Australia 2026 promises to be a vibrant and expansive celebration of storytelling, bringing together filmmakers, artists, and audiences from across the globe.

Sandeepa Dhar got a very special advice from Neena Gupta during 'Chumbak' shoot

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Sandeepa Dhar has opened up about a valuable life lesson she learned from veteran star Neena Gupta during the shoot of their upcoming series *Chumbak*. The interaction between the two actors has added a thoughtful dimension to the project even before its release.

Reflecting on her experience, Sandeepa shared that a simple yet profound conversation with Neena left a lasting impression on her. The veteran actor's perspective on work, patience, and destiny resonated deeply with her.

Recalling the moment, Sandeepa revealed how Neena often speaks about the unpredictability of success in the entertainment industry. According to her, no effort ever goes to waste, even if it seems insignificant at the time.

Neena Gupta had shared an anecdote from her own journey, mentioning that a small student film she once did eventually became a stepping stone toward her acclaimed role in *Badhaai Ho*. This example highlighted how unexpected opportunities can arise from even the most modest beginnings.

She emphasized that actors cannot predict which project might change their careers. Instead, their responsibility is to keep working sincerely and consistently, regardless of the scale or visibility of the project.

The advice carried a deeper message about trusting the process rather than chasing immediate results. For Sandeepa, this philosophy stood out as both practical and inspiring.

In an era where instant success and rapid recognition often dominate the entertainment landscape, Neena

Gupta's grounded and thoughtful outlook comes as a refreshing contrast. Her perspective cuts through the noise of quick fame, reminding aspiring artists that true success is often slow, steady, and deeply earned.

Her words resonate strongly in a time when social media and digital platforms frequently create the illusion of overnight stardom. Neena's belief in patience and perseverance offers a more sustainable and realistic approach to building a meaningful career in cinema.

For Sandeepa Dhar, this advice has proven to be both timely and transformative. The young actress shared how this interaction encouraged her to shift her focus away from immediate results and instead invest more deeply in her craft.

Sandeepa emphasized that Neena Gupta's philosophy reinforced her belief in dedication and self-improvement. Rather than chasing validation, she now feels more motivated to grow as an artist with each project she undertakes.

The conversation between the two actors also reflects the wisdom that comes from years of experience. Neena Gupta's journey in the film industry has been anything but easy, yet it stands as a powerful example of resilience. Over the years, Neena has navigated the highs and lows of the industry with determination and grace. Her eventual success underscores the idea that persistence and hard work eventually find their reward, even if the path is not immediate.

For Sandeepa, this realization has been a turning point. She believes that actors must focus on delivering

authentic and meaningful performances rather than worrying about how quickly recognition will follow.

This mindset encourages a deeper connection with the art of acting itself, allowing performers to immerse themselves fully in their roles without the pressure of external expectations.

Sandeepa also spoke about how working alongside Neena Gupta has been an incredibly enriching experience. Beyond the professional collaboration, it has been a journey of learning and personal growth. Their on-set interactions have extended far beyond rehearsals and scene preparations. Conversations about life, career choices, and personal philosophies have added depth to their working relationship. Interestingly, Sandeepa Dhar was recently seen in *Do Deewane Seher Mein*, where she shared screen space with Mrunal Thakur and Siddhant Chaturvedi. Her performance in the film was appreciated for its strength and emotional intensity.

With *Chumbak*, Sandeepa is now set to collaborate with

Neena Gupta for the first time on screen. This project holds special significance for her, given the bond they have developed during its making.



Ram Charan drops the 'Global Star' appellation

Mumbai: In a move that has caught industry attention, Ram Charan has reportedly decided to drop the 'Global Star' tag from his name and revert to his earlier and more familiar appellation 'Mega Star' for his future projects. The decision signals a shift in how the actor wishes to position himself going forward. The change is being

viewed as a subtle but significant move, especially considering how strongly the 'Global Star' image had been promoted during the international campaign of *RRR*. The film's global outreach played a key role in elevating the visibility of its lead actors on the world stage. Directed by SS Rajamouli, "RRR" was positioned as a grand international spectacle, with extensive promotions conducted overseas. Both Ram Charan and Jr NTR actively participated in global events to support the film. According to sources close to the actor, Ram Charan was never entirely comfortable with the 'Global Star' label. While it served a purpose during the promotional phase of "RRR," it did not align with his personal sense of identity. An industry insider explained that the 'Global Star' tag was largely part of a broader marketing strategy to present "RRR" as a globally appealing project.

It was not necessarily a reflection of how the actor viewed his own career trajectory. The source further noted that both Ram Charan and Jr NTR invested personal time and resources into promoting the film internationally. Their efforts contributed significantly to the film's worldwide recognition. However, in the period following "RRR," Ram Charan did not actively

pursue projects or initiatives that reinforced the 'Global Star' positioning. This made the continuation of the label seem less relevant over time. As a result, the actor has now chosen to step away from the title, opting instead for the more grounded and familiar 'Mega Star' identity that resonates strongly with his existing fan base. The decision also reflects a broader understanding within the film industry about the importance of authenticity in branding. Titles and appellations often carry weight, but they must align with an artist's body of work and personal comfort.

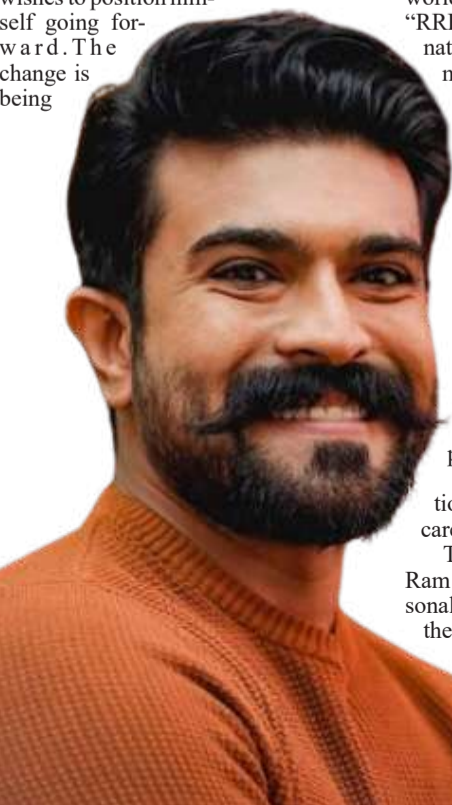
For Ram Charan, the move appears to be less about rejecting global recognition and more about maintaining a consistent and genuine public image. Interestingly, this is not the first time a prominent actor has altered their screen identity. Vijay Deverakonda had earlier dropped the prefix 'THE' from his name, which had been widely used in promotional materials.

Saiee M. Manjrekar prepares for pre-Independence period drama

Mumbai: Actress Saiee M Manjrekar, who made her Bollywood debut in 2019 with *Dabangg 3*, is now gearing up for an exciting new chapter in her career with an untitled pre-independence period drama. The project marks a significant shift from her earlier roles, placing her in a richly layered historical setting. Set in 1905, the film unfolds against the backdrop of love and revolution, offering a compelling narrative rooted in India's pre-independence era. The story is expected to blend emotional depth with historical intensity, making it a unique cinematic experience. In

the film, Saiee essays the role of Sati, a character that demands both emotional nuance and historical authenticity. Her portrayal is expected to bring a fresh perspective to the narrative.

The pan-India project is produced by Ram Charan and Abhishek Agarwal, while direction is helmed by Ram Vamsi Krishna. The film also features Nikhil Siddharth and veteran actor Anupam Kher in key roles. Taking on a period drama required Saiee to immerse herself in a completely different time period. The role demanded extensive preparation, both mentally and physically, to ensure authenticity. Describing her journey, Saiee revealed that the preparation process was intense and unlike anything she had experienced before. It pushed her boundaries as an actor and challenged her to grow. She shared that the role inspired her to rethink her approach to acting. Instead of relying solely on dialogue delivery, she focused on understanding the deeper context of the character and the era. From studying the social and cultural environment of the early 1900s to adapting her body language, speech patterns,



Kohli sets the tone as RCB prepare for IPL title defence

Bengaluru: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have begun preparations for the new season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) as the defending champions returned to the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium with renewed focus ahead of the 2026 campaign. Addressing the squad during the first training session, star batter Virat Kohli stressed the importance of maintaining the standards that helped the franchise secure last year's title.

"We worked really hard over the last two to three seasons to achieve what we did last year, and it's only going to get tougher because other teams are going to come hard at us."

Emphasising the need to make the most of the preparation period, Kohli added, "We don't waste these days. We stay ahead. So switch on now. Let's not waste even a minute of any session that we are a part of. We must give our 120 per cent for these two and a half months."

The opening session also saw the integration of several new members into the squad. Head coach Andy Flower welcomed the latest additions,



including Venkatesh Iyer, Mangesh Yadav, Jordan Cox, Vicky Ostwal and Satvik Deswal. He also made special mention of Under-19 World Cup winners Kanishk Chou-

han and Vihaan Malhotra.

"We had an interesting auction and I think we've improved our squad, to be quite frank. We've brought in some great new additions.

Integrating them into the RCB way alongside established players led by Virat and Rajat is an exciting part of building this team," Flower said.

"There is one difference this year, we've got a star on our shirt. That's a very proud feeling for all RCB fans. But that season is gone. Now we have a new challenge ahead, and it's an exciting one. We're here to win this year's IPL," he continued.

New recruit and wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma also expressed his enthusiasm about joining the set-up. "Everyone was very excited to meet each other. I was excited to get more batting time. I got a chance to meet all the coaches and train again."

Flower also highlighted the advantage of beginning the campaign at home. "Our first game is here at Chinnaswamy, which is a fantastic opportunity for us to build momentum early and be welcomed by our home fans. The outfield is looking superb, lush, green and beautiful."

RCB will begin their title defence against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 28 at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Jay Shah had no role in my IPL commentary exit: Laxman Sivaramakrishnan

New Delhi: Former Indian cricketer Laxman Sivaramakrishnan has clarified that neither the Board of Control for Cricket in India nor current International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah had any role in his decision to step away from commentary duties ahead of the Indian Premier League 2026.

Addressing the speculation, Sivaramakrishnan emphasized that his concerns were limited to an issue with a specific individual within the system rather than the governing body itself. He made it clear that the matter was personal and should not be linked to the larger administration. "Don't bring the BCCI Administration into the picture. It's a one-on-one with an employee of the BCCI. Jay Shah and Co. have nothing to do with this issue. I am taking control of my life, and I think I am entitled to do it," he stated, underlining his stance. The former leg-spinner had recently announced his decision to

quit his long-standing role as a commentator associated with the BCCI. His exit comes after more than two decades of involvement with the commentary panel.

In a series of social media posts, Sivaramakrishnan alleged that he faced discrimination and did not receive adequate opportunities despite his long tenure. His remarks sparked widespread discussion among cricket fans. He specifically pointed out that he was often overlooked for prominent on-air responsibilities such as toss presentations and post-match segments, which are considered key visibility roles for commentators.

"I am retiring from commentary for BCCI. If I have not been used for tosses and presentations for 23 years, and newcomers are given those roles, what do you think could be the reason?" he wrote, expressing his frustration. Sivaramakrishnan also hinted at deeper issues within broadcast production, suggesting that his

experience reflects a broader pattern. He indicated that more details could emerge in the future.

Adding to the controversy, when a social media user suggested that his skin colour might have played a role, Sivaramakrishnan responded by agreeing with the observation, stating, "You are right. Colour discrimination."

Following these comments, several fans directed criticism toward the BCCI and its administration. However, Sivaramakrishnan later clarified that his intention was not to implicate the board as a whole.

He reiterated that his decision was a personal one, driven by his desire to regain control over his professional life and step away from an environment he found unsatisfactory. By distancing the issue from the BCCI and its leadership, Sivaramakrishnan sought to prevent unnecessary controversy and maintain clarity around his stance.

Another setback for KKR: Akash Deep ruled out of IPL 2026

Kolkata: Merely a week ahead of the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, three-time title-holders Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) suffered another major setback to their pace attack with India fast bowler Akash Deep ruled out of the tournament.

According to sources within the KKR set-up, the 29-year-old Bengal pacer will miss the entire season. Akash, who was bought by the franchise at his base price of Rs 1 crore during last year's mini-auction in Abu Dhabi, has not joined the team's training camp here, which began on March 18.

It is understood that the pacer has been undergoing rehabilitation at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, although the exact nature of his injury has not been disclosed. Reports suggest that the Centre's medical staff have been in communication with the franchise regarding the player's status.

Akash has struggled with injuries throughout his career, which has often limited his availability for both India and his IPL teams. Since making his IPL debut in 2022, he has played only 14 matches across four seasons, taking 10 wickets.

Last season, he was part of Lucknow Super Giants, who had signed him for Rs 8 crore at the 2025 auction before



releasing him after just one season.

With Akash now unavailable, KKR may be forced to look for a replacement. The franchise had earlier been undecided about signing a substitute for Harshit Rana, who was ruled out before the start of the camp after undergoing knee surgery. KKR head coach Abhishek Nayyar had on Friday hinted at the possibility of a replacement signing earlier, likely aware of the uncertainty around Akash's availability.

"Hopefully soon, in a couple of days I think. Obviously Harshit is with the BCCI at the CoE. Once we get an update the medical team will communicate to us. We'll try to evaluate what we are picking before we make the announcement. (We) will take us a few more days, most probably before we leave for

Mumbai," Nayyar said.

Akash Deep's absence has only further compounded KKR's bowling concerns. The franchise had made a significant investment in Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana, signing him for Rs 18 crore, but he is still awaiting a No Objection Certificate from Sri Lanka Cricket. At present, the franchise's Indian pace options include Vaibhav Arora, Umran Malik and Kartik Tyagi. The team management could also rely on Australian all-rounder Cameron Green for a few overs if required.

However, KKR team mentor Dwayne Bravo insisted that it has enough depth to cope with the setbacks. "In any tournament with any team, once you lose some of the key bowling options, these are not things you plan for, but these are things you have to accept," Bravo said on Friday. "The good thing about Indian cricket, especially at the moment, there's a lot of depth. There're the likes of Umran Malik, Kartik Tyagi, Vaibhav Arora... they are young, exciting talents. We lost some key players, but I feel comfortable to know that we have what it takes to replace those guys. From a bowling point of view, I think we will be fine," he said. KKR will begin their IPL 2026 campaign with an away match against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium on March 29.

Iyer, Arshdeep confident as Punjab Kings begin IPL countdown

New Delhi: With the Indian Premier League (IPL) season fast approaching, Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer and fast bowler Arshdeep Singh expressed confidence and excitement about the campaign ahead during the franchise's new jersey unveiling event in Mohali on Friday.

Speaking on the team's preparations during the event, which was also attended by Punjab Kings CEO Satish Menon, Chief Commercial Officer Saurabh Arora, among others, Iyer highlighted the importance of building strong relationships within the squad before the start of the tournament, noting that bonding off the field plays a key role in on-field success.

"This is the period where we live as a family for two months. The more time we spend together, the more we get to know each other. Now is the time to build that camaraderie. We spend most of our time in the game room, playing FIFA and other

games. The planning and plotting for matches usually happens a day or two before the game, but building this bond off the field helps us get better results eventually,"



Shreyas said.

Iyer also reflected on his return to competitive cricket after recovering from an injury that kept him out for a period. "It is always challenging to come back after an injury. I had lost around seven kilos and it took a lot of effort to gain that weight back. But I love challenges. I am glad I overcame that part of my life, and I am back here proudly representing the

team."

Acknowledging the support he has received from Punjab fans, who have affectionately nicknamed him 'Sarpanch Sahab', the cap-

tain said his focus remains firmly on winning the title. "Expectations are high, which is fun. I love the challenge. But the important thing is that whenever we step in, we have to win. My eye is on the trophy," he added.

Arshdeep, one of the franchise's key bowlers and a local favourite, also spoke about the excitement of playing in front of the home

crowd at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur.

"When you feel the pressure, it is a privilege," Arshdeep smiled. "It is a lot of fun when you get so much support from the crowd. When people cheer for you, you feel that 30,000 people are running in with you at that time. We will try our best to win all our home matches this year."

The left-arm quick also looked back at his journey with the franchise and credited the team management for believing in him early in his career. "The journey has been amazing," Arshdeep said.

"When I came here for the first time, they gave me full support and showed me my potential. They trusted me a lot when no other team did. I really appreciate that, and I want to stay here for a long time. I am looking forward to winning a lot of trophies for the team," he added.

5 players from top 100 to feature, record prize purse of US\$ 2.55 million at stake

Gurugram: Five players from the World's Top-100 and another eight who are ranked between 101 and 150 are set to participate at Hero Indian Open (HIO) 2026, which will be held March 26-29, 2026 at DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram.

A total of 13 players in the world's 150 makes the 2026 edition of HIO an extremely strong event on the DP World Tour calendar. Co-sanctioned by the Indian Golf Union, the event carries a record prize purse of US\$ 2.55 million this year.

The world-class field will be led by Akshay Bhatia, winner of a Signature event on the PGA Tour, and Francesco Molinari, a Major winner, along with top Indian golfers.

The five players in the Top-100 are Bhatia (22), Casey Jarvis (69), a two-time winner on DPWT in 2026, Elvis Smylie (74), David Puig (85) and Thriston Lawrence (89).

Three-time winner on the PGA Tour, Bhatia is a Hero MotoCorp Brand Ambassador and recently won the star-studded Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill against the likes of World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler and World No. 2 Rory McIlroy. Ryder Cup star Molinari of Italy is the 2018 winner of the Open and has been a part of the winning European Ryder Cup team three times.

The eight players between 101 and 150 includes the defending champion Eugenio Chacarra, who is currently ranked 143rd. The others are Angel Ayora, Andy

Sullivan, Nacho Elvira, Dan Bradbury, Calum Hill, Martin Couvra and Julien Guerrier.

The international star cast will face tough competition from the home challenge which will be led by Shubhankar Sharma, a two-time DP World Tour winner, Yuvraj Sandhu, winner of the 2025 PGTI Order of Merit, previous PGTI OOM winners, Manu Gandas, Om Prakash Chouhan and Veer Ahlawat, who in 2024 finished runner-up at the Hero Indian Open and Rayhan Thomas.

The local contingent will also include multiple winners on the PGTI like Shaurya Bhattacharya, Sri Lankan N Thangaraja, Honey Baisoya, Khalin Joshi and Saptak Talwar, among others. The field will also see two rising stars of Indian golf - 16-year old Kartik Singh and 21-year old Shubham Jaglan, who have been given sponsor invitations for the tournament.

Rankings apart, the excellent current form of some of the players can also be seen by their recent successes. There are as many six players - Jarvis, Bradbury, Freddy Schott, Elvira and Puig, who have won in the current 2026 season. Jarvis won the Investec South African Open and the Magical Kenya Open in successive weeks.

Another seven players won in 2025 and as many as a dozen players were successful in 2024, making the current gathering as one of the most decorated fields.

Chennaiyin FC eye back-to-back wins against FC Goa

Chennai: Chennaiyin FC will aim to carry forward their winning momentum when they host FC Goa in their first home game of the Indian Super League 2026 on Sunday at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

The Marina Machans secured their first victory of the campaign with a 1-0 win over Kerala, thanks to summer signing Imran Khan's debut goal.

Head coach Clifford Rayes Miranda, speaking on Saturday, emphasized the importance of building on that result against a fourth-

placed FC Goa side that remains unbeaten so far.

Miranda outlined his approach to containing the visitors' attacking threats: "I won't give away the plan, but we try to stop the opponent as a team and as a group. We don't usually go for man-marking. We work collectively and look to nullify the opposition together, rather than focusing on individuals, unless it's a set-piece situation."

He also reflected on the team's offensive development, noting the need for better composure and finishing

in the final third. "We have been creating good moments and generating chances, but we need to be more dominant, especially in the final third. We also need to be a bit calmer on the ball," Miranda said.

Sunday's match will mark Chennaiyin's first home appearance this season after four away games, yielding a win and a draw. "It is so important. We have four games of a five-match home run left, and we need to make the best use of them. We need our fans to be there to support us," the head coach added.

ISL: Punjab FC face winless Kerala Blasters in Kochi

Kochi: Punjab FC will hope to maintain their unbeaten run in the Indian Super League 2025-26 season as they face winless Kerala Blasters FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi on Saturday. The match is scheduled to kick-off at 19:30 IST.

Punjab FC have bounced back from their first-round loss against Jamshedpur FC by being unbeaten in their last three fixtures which included a win against Bengaluru FC and two draws against NorthEast United FC and FC Goa. On the other hand, Kerala Blasters had a terrible start to the season, losing their first four matches, including three at home.

In the last round, Blasters secured their first point of the season after a 1-1 draw against East Bengal courtesy of a stoppage time equaliser

by Muhammad Ajsal. The Shers also drew their previous match 1-1 against FC Goa, with goalscorer Nsungusi Effiong receiving a red card at the start of the second half. The side from Mohali will be missing the services of their top scorer for the next three matches.

Speaking ahead of the match, Kerala Blasters Head Coach David Catala said, "We performed better than in other games in the last match. We showed character and competed, especially in the first half against them. I'm satisfied with the point, but I'm not really satisfied with the situation overall. But this is a way to start, a way to believe. Maybe we expected not to have problems in that situation, but we have to believe in the way we performed the other day and continue believing that the situation is going to get bet-

ter." The Shers are currently eighth in the table with five points from four matches while Blasters are languishing at 13th place in the table with just one point from five



matches.

Speaking about their recent performances, Punjab FC Head Coach Panagiotis Dilmperis said, "During all our games this season, not only the one's we tied, we were better than the oppo-

nents. We did not let them come inside our box and we are creating plenty of chances on the other end. I think for us the most important thing is quicker decision-making and quicker finish-

ing between the teams, Blasters edged Punjab FC 1-0 with Noah Sadaoui scoring the winner in New Delhi. In Kochi, they beat the home side 2-1 which was also Dilmperis' first match in charge of the side.

Both Head Coaches had mutual respect for each other before the crucial fixture. "They are a very difficult team to play against. They are compact in defence and know exactly what they have to do.

When they score, it's very difficult to come back against them," said Kerala Blasters Head Coach David Catala.

Speaking about the opposition, Dilmperis said, "The last two games of Kerala against Chennaiyin and East Bengal showed that Kerala's players have good potential and they deserve better results. I think it's very

important to deal with the excitement that they might have at the beginning of the game."

Speaking about playing in his home state, Punjab FC defender Muhammad Uwais said, "I'm happy to play in my hometown. And I'm looking forward to playing a good match here. In the camp, we are taking every match one by one. Every match is like a final because it is a short season. We will do our maximum and play well to get the best result."

"We have a clear plan from the coach, and he has explained how we should approach the game. Punjab is strong in attack and good in transitions. We need to stay focused, give our 100 per cent, and try to get the three points," said Kerala Blasters defender Aibon Dohling about the approach for tomorrow's match.

Dr Reddy's launches generic diabetic injection semaglutide

Chennai: Pharmaceutical major Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd on Saturday announced the launch of its injectable semaglutide under the brand name Obeda, a type 1 diabetes drug in India.

Dr. Reddy's has been the first Indian company to receive Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approval for generic semaglutide. This launch underscores the company's Day-1 entry into the segment upon patent expiry, demonstrating its readiness to serve unmet patient needs in India, the company said.

In a head-to-head Phase III clinical study enrolling 312 participants, Dr. Reddy's Obeda established non-inferior efficacy and a safety profile comparable to the innovator drug. It showed similar glycaemic reduction, Dr. Reddy's said.

Additionally, comparable results were observed for fasting glucose control,



post-prandial glucose control, and therapeutic glycaemic response (achieving HbA1c <7.0%) at the end of the study.

No anti-drug antibodies were detected, and the immunogenicity profile was similar to that of the innovator drug.

With both API develop-

ment and manufacturing, as well as formulation development conducted entirely in-house, Obeda reflects Dr. Reddy's strength in complex product development and peptide science.

As part of its future plans for GLP-1 therapies, the company will be looking at a fully integrated API and

formulation approach, encompassing both development and manufacturing in-house.

Erez Israeli, Chief Executive Officer of Dr. Reddy's, said: "Our foray into GLP-1 therapies reflects our capabilities in complex product development and peptide science. It reinforces

our vision to be a trusted partner in healthcare by combining innovation with access, ensuring advanced diabetes treatments are not only available but affordable. As part of phase-1 launch, we aim to introduce generic semaglutide in several countries and, through our 'One Product, One Quality' approach, we are committed to ensure the same high-quality product across all markets."

Dr. Reddy's Obeda injection is available in 2 mg and 4 mg strengths and comes in a pre-filled, disposable pen designed for subcutaneous, once-a-week administration, with robust cold-chain integrity maintained throughout distribution. The company said, each pen of both strengths will deliver a minimum of 4 weekly doses.

The cost to the patient will be Rs. 4,200 per month for both the strengths.

Govt says India has achieved power milestone; sets stage for future energy growth

New Delhi: Marking a significant achievement in its energy journey, India has successfully ensured universal access to electricity across the country, a milestone that now forms the foundation for an ambitious transformation of the power sector, an official statement said on Saturday.

Building on this achievement, the government has outlined a forward-looking roadmap to strengthen the electricity ecosystem, focusing on sustainability, reliability and rising demand.

The initiative, led by the Ministry of Power, aims to align the sector with the broader vision of a developed India by 2047. With electricity now reaching virtually every household, the focus is shifting from access to quality, affordability and uninterrupted supply.

The government is targeting a sharp rise in per capita electricity consumption, projecting it to reach around 2,000 kWh by 2030 and over 4,000 kWh by 2047, driven by industrial



growth, urbanisation and increasing electrification.

India's power sector has also witnessed a strong push towards clean energy, with non-fossil fuel sources accounting for a growing share of installed capacity.

The next phase will see accelerated expansion of renewable energy, supported by battery storage and pumped storage solutions to ensure grid stability.

At the same time, efforts are underway to address structural challenges, particularly in the distribution segment. Reforms aimed at improving the financial health

of utilities, rationalising tariffs and reducing losses are expected to play a crucial role in sustaining growth.

The government is also emphasising modernisation of transmission and distribution infrastructure, adoption of advanced technologies and strengthening of cybersecurity to build a resilient and future-ready power system.

Having achieved near-universal electrification, India is now preparing for the next leap—ensuring not just access, but reliable, affordable and clean power for its rapidly growing economy.

Govt launches Rs 20,000 cr credit guarantee scheme to boost microfinance sector

New Delhi: In a significant push toward strengthening financial inclusion, the Government of India has introduced a revamped credit guarantee framework aimed at boosting the microfinance sector. The initiative is designed to improve access to credit for underserved and low-income segments, which often struggle to secure formal financing.

The scheme, titled Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions (CGSMFI-2.0), has been launched by the Ministry of Finance as part of a broader effort to revitalise lending in the microfinance space.

Under this new framework, the government aims to facilitate loans worth up to ₹20,000 crore. This is expected to benefit nearly 36 lakh borrowers across the country, particularly those in rural and semi-urban regions who rely heavily on microfinance institutions for credit.

The primary objective of the scheme is to encourage banks and financial institutions to increase lending to microfinance institutions (MFIs). By providing a safety net, the government seeks to reduce the perceived risks associated with lending to this segment.

A key feature of CGSMFI-2.0 is the provision of a substantial guarantee cover on loans extended

to MFIs. This backing significantly lowers the risk exposure for lenders, making them more willing to extend credit.

The scheme is particularly beneficial for smaller and mid-sized microfinance institutions, which often face challenges in accessing adequate funding due to limited creditworthiness or higher perceived risk.

By improving access to institutional funding, these MFIs will be better positioned to extend loans to their end borrowers, thereby strengthening the entire microfinance value chain.

Another important aspect of the scheme is its focus on affordability. The framework includes provisions to cap interest rates, ensuring that loans remain accessible and do not become a financial burden for low-income households.

This move is expected to directly benefit small entrepreneurs, self-employed individuals, and women borrowers, who form a significant portion of the microfinance customer base.

The guarantee support under the scheme will be managed by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited, which plays a crucial role in enhancing lender confidence and ensuring smooth implementation.

The involvement of this

institution will also help improve liquidity in the sector, enabling faster and more efficient credit disbursement to MFIs.

The launch of CGSMFI-2.0 comes at a critical time when the microfinance industry has been grappling with funding challenges. Limited access to capital had led to a slowdown in lending activities in recent years.

By addressing these issues, the government aims to revive credit flow in the sector and support income-generating activities at the grassroots level.

The scheme is expected to have a strong impact in rural and semi-urban areas, where access to formal banking services is still limited and microfinance plays a vital role in sustaining livelihoods.

CGSMFI-2.0 will remain operational until June 30, 2026, or until the targeted guarantee amount is fully utilised, whichever occurs earlier.

Overall, the initiative represents a strategic step toward stabilising the microfinance ecosystem while ensuring that affordable credit reaches millions. By doing so, the government aims to promote inclusive economic growth and empower small borrowers across the country.

NTPC Limited eyes global expansion, holds energy talks with Tajikistan

New Delhi: India's largest power utility, NTPC Limited, is looking to expand its global footprint by strengthening its engagement with Central Asian nations, particularly Tajikistan. The development comes as part of India's broader strategy to enhance international cooperation in the energy sector.

In this direction, NTPC's Chairman and Managing Director held high-level discussions with Juma Daler Shafiqir, Minister of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan. The meeting also included senior official Luk-

mon Bobokalonzoda, reflecting the importance both sides are placing on the partnership.

The discussions focused on exploring opportunities for collaboration in power generation and infrastructure development, signalling a mutual interest in long-term cooperation.

Key areas identified for potential joint development include coal-based power, gas-fired energy projects, and floating solar initiatives. These segments are seen as critical to diversifying energy sources and improving

sustainability. The talks underline a growing intent to deepen India-Tajikistan ties in the energy domain, while also enabling NTPC to tap into emerging opportunities in the Central Asian region.

For NTPC, such collaborations are part of its strategy to evolve from a domestic power giant into a global energy player with a diversified portfolio. During the meeting, the Tajik minister appreciated NTPC's efforts in capacity building and skill development. He specifically acknowledged the com-

pany's initiative to host professionals from Tajikistan.

Earlier this year, NTPC hosted 32 professionals from Tajikistan under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, aimed at enhancing technical knowledge and expertise.

This initiative is part of India's broader diplomatic and developmental outreach, focusing on knowledge sharing and strengthening partnerships with friendly nations. The interaction between NTPC and Tajikistan officials took place on the sidelines of the Bharat

Electricity Summit 2026.

The summit is being held at Yashobhoomi from March 19 to 22 under the patronage of the Ministry of Power, bringing together key stakeholders from the energy sector.

The platform provided an opportunity for global and domestic players to engage in discussions on energy transition, infrastructure, and sustainability.

For Tajikistan, collaboration with NTPC offers access to technical expertise and experience in large-scale power generation projects.

Mahagenco Showcases Vision 2035 at Bharat Electricity Summit

New Delhi: The Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Ltd. (Mahagenco) pavilion at the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026, held at Yashobhoomi in New Delhi, is drawing an enthusiastic response from industry stakeholders and visitors. On March 20, the Honorable Minister of State for Energy, Smt. Meghana Deepak Sakore Bordikar, visited the pavilion to closely review the company's showcased initiatives. During her visit, she received a comprehensive briefing on Mahagenco's Vision 2035, a strategic roadmap that is specifically aligned with the national Visions Bharat @2047 goals. This vision outlines the company's commitment to a sustainable energy



transition while effectively meeting the state's rising power demands through innovative and environmentally friendly projects.

The presentation to the Minister highlighted several forward-looking programs designed to reduce the company's carbon footprint. These

initiatives include large-scale solar installations, green hydrogen development, and pumped storage hydroelectric projects.

Furthermore, Mahagenco is implementing advanced infrastructure solutions such as coal pipe conveyor systems and sewage treatment plants (STP). These environmentally conscious projects reflect the company's broader strategy to integrate sustainable practices into its core power generation operations. Minister Bordikar's review of the roadmap underscores the importance of Mahagenco's role in achieving long-term energy security through a diverse portfolio of green energy and innovative engineering solutions.

Gujarat approves deal with Tata Power to restart Mundra Plant

Mumbai: Tata Power has officially announced that the Government of Gujarat has approved a power supply agreement (PPA) to restart its 4-gigawatt Mundra plant. The plant is operated by its subsidiary Coastal Gujarat Power and is a key asset in the company's generation portfolio.

According to the company's statement, the Gujarat cabinet has cleared the supplementary PPA, and a formal government order has already been issued. The agreement will be signed between Tata Power and Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited after obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals.

With this development, Tata Power is set to resume long-term power supply to Gujarat from the Mundra plant. The move is expected to restore a stable supply arrangement that had been disrupted in recent years.

The company has indicated that the Mundra plant will soon operate at full capacity. This restart is also expected to help Tata Power recover losses estimated at around ₹1,000 crore incurred during the shutdown period.



In addition to Gujarat, Tata Power plans to sign similar PPAs with other procuring states, including Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana. These agreements are likely to be finalised in the coming weeks.

Earlier, in February, the company had confirmed that discussions with the Gujarat government had reached a conclusion.

CEO and Managing Director Praveer Sinha had indicated during a post-earnings call that operations could resume soon after agreements were in place.

A key feature of the updated PPA is the provision for cost pass-through related to coal. This has been a critical issue for Tata Power, especially after changes in government policy impacted compensation mechanisms.

The Mundra plant operates on imported low-sulphur coal, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in global fuel prices. The plant was shut down last year after the power ministry withdrew emergency compensation provided under Section 11 of the Electricity Act.

Tata Power primarily sourced coal from Indonesia, but rising costs became a major concern after Indonesia imposed duties on coal exports. This significantly increased the cost of power generation at the plant.

The company attempted to pass on these additional costs to customers. However, several state governments—including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Punjab—opposed the move, citing earlier PPAs that did not allow such cost pass-through.

This disagreement led to prolonged negotiations between Tata Power and the concerned states. The discussions with the Gujarat government alone spanned nearly four years before reaching a resolution.

The latest agreement is expected to resolve these long-standing issues and pave the way for the resumption of operations at the Mundra plant after a shutdown of around eight months.

The Mundra facility holds strategic importance for Tata Power, as it contributes nearly one-fourth of the company's total electricity generation capacity of 16 gigawatts.

Power generated at the plant is supplied to multiple states, including Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Punjab, making it a critical component of regional power distribution.

With the revival of the Mundra plant, Tata Power is not only aiming to stabilise its operations but also strengthen its position in the power sector by ensuring consistent supply and improved financial performance.

Glenmark launches 'GLIPIQ' (Semaglutide) in India, targets affordable GLP-1 Therapy

Hyderabad: Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has announced the launch of GLIPIQ, a semaglutide-based therapy, in India for the management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. The move is aimed at improving affordability and expanding access to advanced GLP-1 therapies for patients across the country.

GLIPIQ introduces a new pricing benchmark in the Indian market, with weekly treatment starting at ₹325. This is expected to address one of the biggest barriers to adoption of injectable diabetes therapies—high cost.

The company highlighted that affordability has long been a challenge for patients requiring advanced treatment options. By lowering the cost significantly, GLIPIQ aims to make effective diabetes management more accessible to a wider population.

The drug has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization following a multicentre, randomised Phase III clinical study conducted in India. The study demonstrated favourable efficacy and safety outcomes.

GLIPIQ is available in both vial and pre-filled pen formats, giving patients and physicians flexibility in choosing the most suitable method of administration.

The vial-based formulation, supported by dose-specific syringes, is designed to allow flexible, physician-guided dosing. It also offers a more cost-effective option, particularly for patients in the early stages of therapy.

The weekly treatment cost using the

vial format ranges between ₹325 and ₹440, making it one of the more affordable GLP-1 therapy options available in India.

In addition to improving affordability, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has introduced a pre-filled pen format for GLIPIQ to enhance convenience for patients. This format is particularly suited for long-term self-administration, making it easier for individuals to follow their treatment regimen consistently. The availability of a user-friendly pen device is expected to significantly improve patient compliance, especially for those who may find traditional injection methods challenging or intimidating.

Both the vial and pre-filled pen formats of GLIPIQ are available in multiple strengths, including 2 mg/1.5 mL, 4 mg/3 mL, and 8 mg/3 mL. These options allow doctors to tailor treatment plans according to individual patient needs.

The flexibility in dosage ensures that therapy can be adjusted over time, depending on how patients respond to the medication and their overall health condition. To further strengthen patient support, Glenmark has launched 'Sankalp', a dedicated programme aimed at helping individuals initiate and continue their treatment journey with confidence. The 'Sankalp' initiative focuses on addressing common concerns associated with injectable therapies, including fear of needles and lack of familiarity with the administration process.

It also aims to improve long-term adherence by providing guidance, edu-

cation, and ongoing support to patients undergoing treatment.

Speaking about the launch, Alok Malik, President and Business Head (India Formulations) at Glenmark, highlighted that affordability remains one of the biggest barriers to starting advanced diabetes therapies in India.

He noted that many patients delay or avoid effective treatment due to high costs, which can lead to complications and worsening health outcomes over time.

According to Malik, GLIPIQ has been developed with the intention of bridging this gap by making modern therapies more accessible to a larger population.

He emphasised that the company's goal is not only to provide an effective drug but also to ensure that patients can sustain their treatment over the long term. The active ingredient in GLIPIQ, Semaglutide, belongs to a class of drugs known as GLP-1 receptor agonists, which are widely used in managing Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. These medications work by improving blood sugar control through mechanisms such as enhancing insulin secretion and reducing appetite.

Beyond glycaemic control, semaglutide offers additional health benefits, making it a valuable option for patients with multiple health concerns. It is particularly beneficial for individuals dealing with conditions like obesity, cardiovascular disease, and chronic kidney disease, which often coexist with diabetes.