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## PM Modi Discusses Current Situation In Middle East In Call With Bahrain King



**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday discussed the current situation in West Asia with Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa and condemned the attacks on the energy and civilian infrastructure in the region. In the telephonic conversation, PM Modi conveyed Eid greetings to King Hamad and thanked him for his continued support for the well-being of the Indian community in Bahrain. In a statement shared on X, PM Modi said: "Had a fruitful discussion with the King of Bahrain, His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Conveyed warm greetings on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr to him and the people of Bahrain. We discussed the current situation in the West Asian region. Condemned attacks on the energy and civilian infrastructure in the region, underscoring their adverse impact on global food, fuel and fertiliser security." "Reiterated the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation and keeping shipping lines open and secure. Thanked His Majesty for his continued support for the well-being of the Indian community in Bahrain," he added.

## Inside the \$2 million price tag for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz



**Hormuz:** In a significant development, Iran, which had closed the Strait of Hormuz to pressure Israel and the West to end the war, has now established a 'safe shipping corridor' to allow the secure passage of vessels through its territorial waters. However, the corridor is not unconditional and comes with prerequisites that must be met. Under the current arrangement, ships must undergo a vetting process before entering the corridor. Additionally, shipping operators are required to share detailed information, including vessel ownership, cargo, and destination, in advance through intermediaries. The arrangement is being overseen by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which is in the process of setting up a formal clearance and registration system for vessels seeking to use the corridor. As part of this effort, multiple countries, including India, Pakistan, Iraq, Malaysia, and China, are engaging with Tehran to facilitate and coordinate the safe movement of their ships through the region. This move comes amid

emerging reports that Iran has allegedly charged a private oil tanker operator around \$2 million (approximately Rs 18 crore) in exchange for permitting safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial maritime route that has become a high-risk zone due to intensifying tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Israel, as reported by Moneycontrol and other outlets citing Lloyd's List. However, no official announcement or confirmation of mandatory or universal fees has been made by Iranian authorities, and it remains unclear if payments were involved in other transits. This development also follows the broader disruption from the Strait's restricted status, which has trig-

gered a global oil price surge. **Impact of this development** Iran didn't reopen the Strait of Hormuz; it monetized it. By creating a "safe corridor" with vetting requirements, Iran has transformed a public waterway into a toll booth under military control. Ships now need IRGC approval, advance cargo disclosure, and, allegedly, \$2 million payments to pass through. This isn't about facilitating trade. It's about extracting tribute while maintaining leverage. **The toll of the conflict** Now in its 21st day, the war involving Iran, the United States, and Israel has caused widespread destruction across the region. Iran has

borne the brunt of the conflict, with over 2,300 people killed, including more than 1,300 civilians, nearly 200 of them children under the age of 12. The war began on February 28, following a joint strike by Israel and the United States on Iranian territory, which killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several senior officials. In response, Iran launched missile and drone strikes on US military installations and strategic sites across West Asia, including Iraq, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Iranian authorities have since signaled that they would suspend strikes on neighboring countries as long as their territories are not used for attacks against Iran.

## Jalukbari: How Himanta Biswa Sarma's 25-Year Fortress Stays Unshakeable



**Guwahati:** As elections draw closer, Jalukbari is not just another constituency going to the polls. It is a political landscape shaped by power, layered with contradictions, and textured by lived realities. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's dominance here is rooted in a long and steady political journey. He first contested from Jalukbari in 1996 and lost to Asom Gana Parishad leader Bhriku Kumar Phukan. Phukan was one of the tallest political leaders during those days. Five years later, in 2001, he returned to win the seat and has not lost it since. He has been representing Jalukbari for 25 years.

## We will support farmers affected by unseasonal rains: CM

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March, 20:** Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, stated that the government will support farmers whose crops were damaged due to unseasonal rains. He urged farmers not to lose hope and assured them of full support. The Chief Minister conducted a review meeting here on Friday via video conference from his camp office with district collectors and senior officials regarding crop losses caused by unseasonal rains. For the second consecutive day, the Chief Minister reviewed the crop damage caused by



unseasonal rains. He gathered details about crops damaged due to strong winds, unseasonal rains, and hailstorms. Officials reported that in 12 districts, across 42 mandals, crops were damaged in: 4,840 hectares of maize, 1,534

hectares of paddy, 310 hectares of black gram. The total loss is estimated at Rs.40 crore. Additionally, in 9 districts across 48 mandals, horticulture crops such as banana, papaya, chili, vegetables, mango, orange, and lemon were damaged over 1,301 hectares. The loss to horticulture crops is estimated at rs.22.68 crore. **CM reviews LPG supply** The Chief Minister also held a review meeting on LPG supply. He instructed officials to strengthen the system to avoid future shortages of gas cylinders. He suggested focusing on alternative solutions like in-

duction stoves, PNG, and electric vehicles. He also warned officials to stay alert before global supply chains are affected due to the Iran-Israel conflict. He directed them to coordinate with the central government to prevent shortages of fertilizers, petrol, and diesel. He emphasized prioritizing LPG supply to rural and tribal areas, educational institutions, and temples. **Sabka representatives thank CM Chandrababu** Representatives of Sabka expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister. They appreciated that, as an Ugadi gift, payments were released to micro, small, and

medium contractors in an unexpected manner. They welcomed the release of pending bills from 2021 for contractors who worked in various municipalities. They also noted that payments were made to those involved in road works, DMF, SDMF, and works in various states. Despite financial challenges, they thanked the Chief Minister, ministers, and officials for releasing funds during the Ugadi festival. They requested that pending payments for other contractors also be cleared within the current financial year. The representatives concluded by thanking the Chief Minister for the Ugadi gift.

## No shortage of gas : Minister Nadendla Manohar

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March, 20:** Nadendla Manohar, the Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, clarified that there is no shortage of gas in the state. He held a video conference with representatives of oil companies, joint collectors, and senior officials regarding gas supply, and instructed them to take steps to prevent public misconceptions and panic. The minister stated that there is no shortage of domestic cooking gas anywhere. He said that oil companies have also confirmed that sufficient gas stocks are available. However, he directed officials to act strictly against the diversion of gas and its illegal use



for commercial purposes. He instructed joint collectors to continuously monitor bookings, deliveries, and pending issues at gas agencies and distributors in the districts. He warned that immediate action should be taken if any suspicious transactions or irregularities in supply are detected.

The minister added that the government is fully focused on the issue of gas availability. He said they are coordinating with the central government and exploring alternative options as well. He revealed that a gas shipment originally expected on the 21st of this month will now arrive on the 25th, as informed by the central authorities.

## Avinash's press meet at 'Oscar' level: B.Tech Ravi's sarcasm

**From Our Staff Reporter Kadapa, March, 20:** B. Tech Ravi, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in-charge of Pulivendula, expressed strong anger against Kadapa MP Y. S. Avinash Reddy. He mocked that Avinash Reddy's press meet was of a level worthy of receiving an "Oscar award." Speaking to the media on Friday at the TDP office in Kadapa district, B.Tech Ravi said it was strange that Avinash Reddy was commenting on the murder case of former minister Y. S.



statement that Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Sunitha Reddy was supporting Chief Minister Nara

Chandrababu Naidu. **"Avinash's statements are strange"** B. Tech Ravi said that if Sunitha had interest in politics, Avinash Reddy would not have become the Kadapa MP; instead, she would have held that position. He criticized Avinash Reddy's remarks on the Viveka murder case as bizarre and made sharp comments. He alleged: "You identified the spot, you went to the spot, and it was Avinash Reddy who got the evidence at the spot cleaned up." B. Tech Ravi asserted that Avinash Reddy cannot escape punishment in the Vivekananda Reddy murder case.

## Advertisements claiming 'protection of Hindu dharma' are laughable: Minister fires at Jagan

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March, 20:** Minister Kolu Parthasarathy strongly criticized former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking to the media on Friday, he remarked that "those who undermine Hindu dharma giving advertisements in Sakshi newspaper claiming 'protection of Hindu dharma' is laughable." He alleged that instead of wishing well for all people during festivals, the YSRCP only wishes for Jagan's well-being. The minister accused the previous government of not respecting Hindu traditions over the past five years. He also alleged that devotees' sentiments were hurt due to the preparation of laddus using adulterated ghee. He further criticized

Jagan, saying it has become a habit for him to avoid visiting temples and instead perform staged rituals at home. He added that great personalities like A. P. J. Abdul Kalam respected traditions and made declarations, whereas Jagan never did so. He also criticized the previous government for neglecting students' futures and youth employment. He claimed that during the YSRCP regime, graduate unemployment reached 24%, ranking highest in the country. The minister stated that in the past 20 months, Andhra Pradesh has created 6,28,347 job opportunities, setting a national record. He said that a job calendar will be released every Ugadi

and that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, travel will be provided for differently-abled persons in city and rural buses, and a 50% concession in other buses. He added that the TDP government increased pensions for differently-abled persons from Rs.3,000 to Rs.6,000. On the occasion of Ramzan, the minister said that 745 crore has been immediately credited to the accounts of imams. He also explained that under the R&R package for Polavaram Project displaced people, Rs.1,943 crore has been paid so far in three phases to 26,149 beneficiaries. Conveying Ramzan greetings to Muslim brothers, Minister Parthasarathy wished that, with Allah's blessings, happiness spreads in everyone's lives.

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## EDITORIAL

## Telangana tops in financial management

It is noteworthy that Telangana has further strengthened its position as one of the best states in the country in public finance management. Social and economic reports confirm this. Telangana has shown excellent progress in the latest Fiscal Health Index report released by NITI Aayog. In the 'Fiscal Health Index 2026' report released by NITI Aayog based on data for the financial year 2023-24, Telangana has risen from 8th to 7th position, standing as one of the best fiscally managed states in the country. At the same time, it has also maintained its 'front runner' status. It has further strengthened its position at the national level, reflecting sustainable economic growth. According to this report, the states of Odisha, Goa and Jharkhand have topped the 'Top Achievers' category. These states have demonstrated strong fiscal discipline, own tax revenue, low fiscal deficit and improved debt management. The states of Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are in the 'lowest aspirational' category.

NITI Aayog has classified the states in the country into four broad categories to assess their economic performance. It has reviewed them in four categories: Achievers (top tier), Front Runners, Performers, and Aspirational. The Front Runner category refers to states that are generally in a good financial position. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana are in the Front Runner category. 'Over time, Telangana's financial management has improved. Higher growth rate than the national average, increase in own tax revenue, and balance of welfare and development schemes are the reasons for the rise in Telangana's economic index. The state has shown steady progress in improving its own sources of income and balancing subsidy payments. However, experts suggest that the revenue deficit needs to be controlled and expenses should be met through own sources of income rather than through debt. Telangana rose from 8th to 7th position in the Fiscal Health Index with a score of 44.3 points, while Andhra Pradesh was ranked 17th with a score of 23.1 points. The index also examines how efficiently states are spending public money. Telangana achieved the 'Achiever Category' with a score of 57.1 points as it was found to be spending efficiently on development works and capital expenditure. Telangana also emerged as the front runner in debt management with a score of 53.5 points. It has maintained a proper balance between revenue and debt in terms of low interest rates and EVM pressure. It is noteworthy that Telangana scored 20.0 points in this index, while Andhra Pradesh could achieve only 4.2 points. The report suggests that there is scope to improve the long-term sustainability of government finances in both states. The Telangana government is taking steps towards comprehensive development by giving top priority to poverty alleviation, social welfare schemes and infrastructure development while overcoming fiscal challenges. Capital expenditure, which was Rs. 16,860 crore in the financial year 2019-20, has increased to Rs. 43,918 crore by 2023, registering a growth of over 160 percent in five years. Experts believe that this significant increase will promote asset creation and long-term economic growth in the state. While giving priority to welfare schemes, it is allocating huge funds for infrastructure projects like Hyderabad Metro expansion and Regional Ring Road expansion. Despite such huge expenditure, the Telangana government is said to have maintained its fiscal discipline and kept the borrowing limits under control under the FRBM Act. The debt-GSDP ratio is being maintained at less than 30%, i.e. around 27.28 percent. Infrastructure development for better amenities in areas like Uppal and LB Nagar, world-class road construction in Hyderabad at a cost of Rs. 60,799 crore, and strengthening sports infrastructure are all strengthening the government's initiative on asset creation and infrastructure development in the state. Investments in industries, IT sector expansion, and municipal departments are the mainstays for long-term economic growth. After the formation of the Telangana state, there has been steady progress in economic development. The per capita income of the state has increased significantly to Rs. 3.87 lakh. This is the highest compared to the major states in the country. It is implementing comprehensive policies with tourism, industries, sports, and social inclusion. Efficient financial management, use of digital technology in tax collection, and giving due priority to industrial and agricultural sectors are all giving impetus to the goal of making the state a golden Telangana.

## Is Chinese And Russian Intel Helping Iran 'Behind The Scenes'?

Earlier this month, Donald Trump described the United States and Israel's ongoing war with Iran as a "little excursion" that he said would finish pretty quickly. "We took a little excursion because we felt we had to do that to get rid of some evil," Trump told Republican lawmakers in Florida. But the war has already gone into its third week, with Iran appearing to be setting its tone, course and even duration. There is no doubt that Iran has suffered significant losses. Its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was assassinated, along with over 40 senior officials, on the first day of the war. The National Security Advisor, Ali Larjani, was killed on Monday, and the Intelligence Minister, Ismail Khatib, a day later, in Israel's policy of decapitating Iran's regime with the aim of inciting an uprising. Khamenei's son and the new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba, has not been seen in public since his appointment amid reports that he has been seriously injured. Relentless American and Israeli attacks have destroyed a large part, if not most, of Iran's military infrastructure. Israel has also inflicted major damage on Iran's oil and gas facilities in an attempt to cripple its economy.

**Iran Is Undeterred**

But these setbacks have not deterred Iran, which has escalated the war with attacks not only on Israel and US diplomatic and military installations but also on civilian targets across the Gulf, including airports, hotels, and energy infrastructure. Trump now says he is surprised by Iran's retaliation, despite his military commanders' warning him beforehand of the exact scenario. On Tuesday, Trump's top counterterrorism official, Joe Kent, resigned over the war, urging the president to "reverse course." He claimed that Trump "started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."

**The Russia And China Hand**

If you look at their public statements, Moscow and Beijing have only provided diplomatic support to Iran, condemned the invasion and the killing of its head of state, the Supreme Leader Khamenei. They have also called for de-escalation and even criticised Iran for attacking Gulf countries. But their support for Tehran runs much deeper. US media have been reporting that Russia has been providing intelligence to Iran about military targets. Last week, Trump said that Russian President Vladimir Putin might be helping Iran "a bit". But Iran's successful hit-

ting of US military bases and energy infrastructure in the Gulf suggests that Russian help is much more than what Trump described as "a bit". Russia is reported to have provided Iran with the precise locations of US warships and aircraft operating in the Middle East. Russia's Kanopus-V satellite gives Iran round-the-clock images of American assets and other targets in the region. An important target reportedly provided by Moscow to Tehran was the precise location of a US military base in Kuwait, after which an Iranian drone killed six American soldiers. Moscow is attempting to replicate what the US has done over the past four years in the Ukraine conflict. The Ukrainian military has successfully targeted precise Russian positions and killed thousands of its soldiers after intelligence provided by the United States. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told a US broadcaster, MS NOW, on Sunday that both Russia and China are helping Iran militarily. "We have had close cooperation in the past, which still continues, and that includes military cooperation as well," said Araghchi.

**The Chinese Military Assistance**

China's military support for Iran is also significant, although more discreet, as it seeks to keep good relations with other Gulf states. Over the past decade, Beijing has enhanced its collaboration with Iran in missile technology, satellite and space programmes, intelligence exchange, cybersecurity, and electronic warfare. In the days leading up to the current war, several reports indicated that China was engaged in direct arms sales to Iran of offensive drones. It finalised a deal to sell supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran, though the two sides had not agreed on a delivery date. Some reports say the missiles were delivered, though they have not been confirmed. During the first week of the war, two state-owned Iranian vessels left China's Gaolan Port for Iran and are believed to be transporting sodium perchlorate, a key precursor used in solid rocket fuel for missiles, according to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. In 2021, China granted Iran full military access to its BeiDou satellite navigation system, according to the commission that monitors Chinese activities and reports to the US Congress. It is not clear, however, the extent to which Iran uses BeiDou.

**Cyber Warfare and Oil**

Beijing has also helped Iran in developing its cyberwar capabilities, which could pose a



serious threat to Israel and the United States. Israel has been aware of that and has managed to infiltrate some of the Iranian networks and kill dozens of cyber experts and other scientists. But it is not possible to destroy Iran's entire cyber network. China, Iran's biggest trading partner, which purchases over 80% of Iran's oil, has also helped Iran bypass US sanctions and supplied dual-use equipment, similar to its sales to Russia, to support its conflict with Ukraine. China is the first country in the current conflict whose oil tankers Iran has allowed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

**Long-term Partnerships**

Moscow has been Iran's defence partners for over 30 years. Russia started selling its Soviet-era defence and civil nuclear technologies in the 1990s to Iran, which needed to rebuild its defence and economy after the devastating Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988. Russia sold aircraft and air defence systems, though in 2010, it decided not to deliver the S-300 long-range air defence system after US pressure. But Russia didn't stop the military supplies to Iran entirely and even developed a strong partnership with the Assad regime, along with Iran, in Syria after the 2015 civil war. Russia and China also helped Iran to build ballistic missiles. Tehran supplied a large number of these missiles to its proxies, like Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthis, to be used against Israel. China has also played a significant role in Iran's ballistic missile programme. In February 2025, Beijing supplied Tehran with 1,000 tonnes of sodium perchlorate, a solid rocket fuel component. That

was sufficient to power between 200 and 300 Haj Qasem and Kheibar Shekan missiles, according to experts.

**Shahed Drones**

Iran has developed its powerful Shahed drones over the past ten years, using raw materials supplied by China. Thousands of these drones were sold by Iran to Russia, which used them successfully against Ukraine. Subsequently, Russia improved the design and began mass production. These drones have been so effective that the US-supplied air defence system in Ukraine has struggled to shoot them down. Even the United States has copied the Iranian design and is now producing similar drones. Iran has been using these drones and missiles to hit US, Israeli, and Gulf targets in the current war. Israel and the US claim that 90% of Iran's missile stockpile has been destroyed or used up. However, Iran's retaliatory missile strikes on Saudi and Qatari energy installations on Wednesday demonstrated that Iran still possesses a substantial number of missiles. Iran's drone manufacturing facilities are reportedly still operating at secret locations. Russia and China are pleased to see America's anti-missile systems and other military equipment being depleted. The US has moved its military assets from the Indo-Pacific to the Gulf, which benefits China. Moscow may also be glad that the US is engaged in the Middle East and cannot send air defence and other arms to Ukraine, at least for now. The war has also allowed Moscow to profit financially, as oil prices have risen and the US has been forced to lift sanctions on Russian oil sales to increase global

supplies.

**The Long Game**

Both Beijing and Moscow would perhaps like the war to continue for longer, which would force the US to remain engaged in the Middle East rather than deal with any Russian or Chinese threat. America's Asia-Pacific partners and Ukraine are watching the events in the Gulf with frustration. Its European allies are also unhappy, as they would like Trump to focus on Ukraine. China's military planners are monitoring the conflict closely, as they have done in Ukraine over the past four years. They are watching how the US military is fighting Iran and what lessons can be learned for a potential future confrontation with the US over Taiwan.

**The Iranian Regime Looks Dug In**

China is watching the war for another reason. Beijing would not want to see the current Iranian regime collapse and a pro-US government stepping in. Israel's targeting of top leaders could eventually lead to chaos in Iran, which could affect China's energy supplies. A weaker Iran after the war, on the other hand, will suit Beijing and Moscow, as Tehran would be more dependent on them. The course of the war so far suggests that the Iranian regime is unlikely to collapse anytime soon. Tehran has not only endured the massive US and Israeli bombing campaign but has also managed to escalate and harm its enemies. Trump is no longer describing the war as a "little excursion", although he still wants to end it soon. Moscow and Beijing have ensured that Iran can sustain the conflict for much longer than the US President had anticipated.

## Three 'Fatal' Assumptions That Have Derailed Trump's Iran War

The unending war against Iran is now being seen as a turning point in world order. How did the US get it so wrong? The US made three big assumptions before pulling the trigger on February 28.

First, the US believed the world balance of power, while past its unipolar prime, was still favourable, with its main great-power competitors either distracted in other conflicts (Russia in Ukraine) or absorbed in domestic and regional matters (China in East Asia). The ease with which Venezuela fell reinforced the belief in US omnipotence. The window of opportunity to smother an isolated Iran was wide open.

Where A 'Blitzkrieg' Operation Fell Short

Second, the massive use of strategic bombing was seen as sufficient to topple Iran. This was in line with the classic US doctrine of decapitation of a target state's leadership and its command and control nodes. Indeed, this idea of a decisive battle where a blitzkrieg operation shocks an adversary to

quickly back down or capitulate has long been part of the western mythology of warfighting. Domestic societal pressures against land wars and enduring logistical constraints along with the appeal of shock and awe bombing campaigns has profoundly shaped US strategic culture since the Second World War.

Third, the US estimated that its formidable allied network provided it with unique advantages to bear the burden of a brief but intensive war. The US could shuffle around resources and military equipment from other theatres to shore up the war effort in West Asia. America's regional allies were also seen as assets with several dispersed bases across multiple locations to execute an operational campaign that could overwhelm Iran and complicate its responses.

On all three assumptions, the US miscalculation has been laid bare. Iran was not alone and its strategic partnerships have helped accelerate its military preparedness after the 12-day



war in June 2025. While strategic bombing has yielded tactical successes, it has failed to dislodge the political system, vital institutions and the underlying resolve of the Iranian people. econd, the US allied network has actually proven to be a burden rather than an advantage in such a conflict of choice. As Trump himself admitted, the US was shocked at the intensity and

effectiveness of Iran's response in striking US bases across the Persian Gulf and West Asia, which were critical staging grounds for the offensive and defensive operations. According to satellite imagery, 25 locations were struck across seven US bases in five countries, including vital early warning radars, logistical buildings, hangars and fuel storage containers.

The vulnerability of US regional allies and their critical infrastructure to Iranian reprisals has further introduced an element of mutually assured destruction that cannot be defied even by hardliners in the US. This is why Trump quickly backed down after an Israeli strike on Iran's South Pars gas field invited a swift counter response by Iran on energy facilities in the Gulf.

## Railway Development Gains Momentum in Srikakulam: Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu



**Srikakulam, March 20:** Union Civil Aviation Minister inaugurated new train halts at Harishchandrapuram, Mandasa Road, and Pathapatnam railway stations in Srikakulam district on Friday. The new halts are expected to benefit farmers, women, students, and patients by improving connectivity. The minister, along with State Minister, launched services including the Visakhapatnam-

Gunupur Passenger and Berhampur-Visakhapatnam Express. He stated that railway infrastructure in the district is being rapidly expanded, with plans for further development such as warehouses, goods sheds, and container terminals. Naidu emphasized that improved rail connectivity will boost employment opportunities and regional growth, linking key areas like Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, and Gunupur. He also assured that more train services and halts will be introduced in the near future. The minister announced that the long-awaited Visakhapatnam Railway Zone will soon be operational, accelerating development works. He further revealed that efforts are underway to introduce direct train services from Srikakulam to Secunderabad and Tirupati. Highlighting broader development, Naidu said major investments and infrastructure projects, including ports and industrial corridors, will transform the region. He credited the leadership of and for driving growth and attracting investments to Andhra Pradesh.

## Officials Must Attend Monday Grievance Meetings: Collector Dinesh Kumar



**Paderu, March 20:** District Collector A.S. Dinesh Kumar directed that all concerned officials must mandatorily attend the grievance redressal meetings held every Monday at the mandal level, warning of strict action against negligence. At the public grievance meeting held on Friday at the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), 43 petitions were received, while 9 complaints were registered in the Revenue Clinic. The Collector, along with other officials, received petitions and instructed departments to

resolve them promptly within the stipulated time and update them on the grievance portal. He stressed speedy resolution of land issues through special Revenue Clinics, ensuring direct access to officials without intermediaries. Citizens were advised to use the 1100 call center or the official government website to submit complaints. Officials were also instructed to treat complainants courteously and clearly explain reasons for any delays.

## Strict Action Against Artificial LPG Shortage: Joint Collector Nishanthi

**Amalapuram, March 20:** District Joint Collector T. Nishanthi warned of strict action against anyone creating

an artificial shortage of LPG or diverting cylinders to the black market. During a surprise inspection at Sri Rajeswari HP Gas Agency, she reviewed stock and delivery records and directed dealers to ensure transparent and timely supply to domestic consumers. She instructed that cylinders must be delivered within the stipulated time—25 days in urban areas and 30 days in rural areas—strictly based on booking. Emphasizing that there is no need for panic, she assured that adequate stock is being maintained despite international tensions. The Joint Collector also cautioned against illegal storage and misuse of domestic cylinders for commercial purposes. Officials have been directed to continuously monitor distribution, while consumers are urged to report any irregularities.



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continuously monitor distribution, while consumers are urged to report any irregularities.

## Minister G. Sandhya Rani inaugurates 100-bed Area Hospital in Salur



**Vizianagaram, March 20:** Tribal Welfare Minister inaugurated a newly constructed 100-bed Area Hospital in Salur on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, she said the hospital was completed with ₹17 crore, including funds sanctioned with the support of Chief Minister. She highlighted that the upgraded facility will significantly improve healthcare access for tribal communities in remote hill areas, who earlier depended on a 30-bed hospital with

limited services. The minister also directed officials to shift the maternity center to the new hospital to better serve pregnant tribal women. The hospital will function with 96 medical staff, including doctors and nurses, ensuring better treatment locally without unnecessary referrals to district hospitals. Officials were also asked to create awareness among tribal communities about availing modern medical services.

## Alluri District to be Developed as Tourism Hub

**Paderu, March 20:** District Collector A.S. Dinesh Kumar has directed officials to prepare comprehensive plans to develop Alluri Sitarama Raju district into a major tourism hub. During a review meeting held at the Paderu camp office with forest and tourism officials, he emphasized development works across Araku, Paderu, and Lambasingi clusters. The Collector proposed prioritizing 122 km of cross-cluster connectivity, improving trekking infrastructure, and developing core trail systems with proper signage and difficulty classification. He also stressed eco-friendly camping zones, GIS-based trail mapping, digital monitoring, and mandatory online registration with visitor limits for safety. Plans include coffee experience centers in Araku, an astro observatory at Galikonda, basic amenities, and coffee kiosks along trails. Community tourism initiatives such as open-air theatres, community kitchens, and handicraft workshops were also suggested to boost local employment. Additionally, weather monitoring units, central monitoring systems, and caravan parks will be set up. The Collector highlighted the importance of environmental



protection and waste management, stating that these initiatives will enhance tourism recognition and livelihood opportunities in the district.

## Golden Satagopam Offered to Vadapalli Venkateswara Swamy



**Amalapuram, March 20:** Devotees offered a valuable golden Satagopam to Lord Venkateswara Swamy at Vadapalli, popularly known as Konaseema Tirumala. On behalf of Uddaraju Satyavatamma from Bhimavaram, her sons Raghavaraju and Suryanarayana Raju donated the Satagopam weighing 108 grams, worth ₹17 lakh. The offering was presented in the presence of

Kothapeta MLA Bandaru Satyananda Rao and handed over to Temple Deputy Commissioner Nallam Surya Chakradhar Rao. Temple authorities stated that such donations reflect the deep devotion of devotees and contribute to the temple's development and spiritual grandeur. Several dignitaries and devotees attended the event.

## Heavy Security Arrangements in Anakapalli for AM/NS Steel Plant Groundbreaking



**Anakapalli, March 20:** Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place in Anakapalli district for the groundbreaking ceremony of the prestigious (AM/NS) plant, scheduled on March 23 at Thammayyapeta near Chandanada village in Nakkapalli mandal. Visakhapatnam Range IG Gopinath Jatti and District SP Tuhin Sinha reviewed the arrangements on Friday, inspecting the venue, helipad, barricading, and parking facilities. With Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, along

with other central and state ministers expected to attend, Z+ category security will be implemented. Authorities have also planned special traffic management to avoid inconvenience on the national highway. Surveillance will include drones, CCTV cameras, and intelligence coordination to prevent any untoward incidents. The project is considered a major milestone for industrial development in the state, expected to bring significant investment, employment opportunities, and regional growth.

## TDP Releases Job Calendar, 10,060 Posts to be Filled Job Calendar a Historic Moment for Youth, Says Guravareddy

**Nayudupeta march 20 S:** Naidupeta: The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) released a job calendar on Wednesday, announcing 10,060 government job vacancies. TDP state spokesperson and Chittoor district library corporation chairman, Reddivari Guravareddy, addressed a press conference at the party office, hailing the move as a historic moment for the youth.

**Job Calendar Details.** The job calendar includes vacancies in various departments, including:  
- Higher Education: 1500 posts (notification date: May 15, 2026)  
- Group 1: 91 posts (notification date: August 15, 2026)  
- Group 2: 750 posts (notification date: September 15, 2026)  
- School/Inter Education: 3004 posts (notification date: October 15, 2026)  
**Guravareddy Praises Government's Efforts.** Guravareddy praised the TDP-led government's efforts to provide employment opportunities to the youth. He said that the job calendar was a fulfillment of the party's promise to provide jobs to the youth and criticized the previous YSRCP government for fail-



ing to do so. **Youth Express Gratitude.** Youth and unemployed individuals expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Education Minister Nara Lokesh for releasing the job calendar. They also held rallies and celebrations, thanking the government for the move.

## Barcelona hits seven as Champions League quarterfinal line-up takes shape



**London:** Barcelona scored seven and Liverpool revived its season with four goals to turn tight Champions League games on Wednesday into big wins, sending them to the quarterfinals. Atletico Madrid survived a pulsating Tottenham fightback to make it Spain 3, England 0 in round-of-16 clashes this week.

Bayern Munich had it easiest of all, pushing aside Atalanta 4-1 on Wednesday and 10-2 on aggregate to set up a blockbuster quarterfinal against Real Madrid. Another Champions League goals rush was sparked by Barcelona tearing apart Newcastle in the second half of a thrilling 7-2 win after the teams went toe-to-toe before the break. Tied 1-1 after the first leg in Newcastle, Barcelona surged to victory after Lamine Yamal's momentum-shifting penalty kick in first-half stoppage time made the score 3-2.

Robert Lewandowski then scored twice, Fermin Lopez finished a slick move and Raphinha got his second goal as Newcastle's defence collapsed. Liverpool ultimately eased to a 4-0 win over Galatasaray at Anfield, overturning a one-goal loss in Istanbul, despite Mohamed

Salah missing a penalty in first-half stoppage time when the score was 1-0. Still, Salah was key to Liverpool's strong second half with two assists, for Hugo Ekitike and Ryan Gravenberch, and then a trademark goal in a performance that could restart an erratic season for the English champions.

"From start to finish, we played the game I was hoping for, the players were hoping for and the fans were hoping for," said Liverpool coach Arne Slot, who has been under growing pressure. Tottenham showed real character after an embarrassing 5-2 loss in Madrid last week but were resisted by Atletico, despite twice levelling the score in Wednesday's second leg. Xavi Simons' late penalty at least gave Tottenham a 3-2 win on the night. Tottenham and Newcastle joined Manchester City, ousted by Real Madrid on Tuesday 5-1 on aggregate, as Premier League teams eliminated by La Liga's best. England had a record six teams in the competition and all reached the round of 16, but only Arsenal and Liverpool advanced. Chelsea was eliminated on Tuesday by defending champion Paris Saint-Germain. In Munich, fit-again Bayern talisman Harry Kane scored

twice, the second an impressive rising shot after deft footwork, against Atalanta to end Italy's challenge in this Champions League edition.

**Goals galore for Barcelona**  
Barcelona is scoring for fun at Camp Nou this year. It is now eight games at home in the Champions League, La Liga or Copa del Rey and Barcelona has won all eight, getting at least three goals each time.

Seven against Newcastle was the best yet for coach Hansi Flick's team, started by Raphinha's sixth-minute shot, finishing a move where two Newcastle defenders slipped to the turf, then 18-year-old Marc Bernal found space alone in the goalmouth in the 18th minute.

Newcastle soon levelled each time with rare goals from Anthony Elanga. The Sweden winger was goalless in 35 previous games this season in the Premier League or Champions League, yet struck twice in a 13-minute spell. Barcelona got a fast start to the second half when Lopez ran clear on to slick passes from Gerard Martin to Raphinha to score with a well-placed shot and Newcastle's chance was gone. "I saw new, improved confidence in that second-half performance," Flick said.

### Quarterfinals pairings

Real Madrid will play Bayern Munich, in a clash of 15-time and six-time European champions. They still have never met in the final across 71 years of the European Cup and Champions League.

"Every club would live for these games," Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said. "As a neutral, I would watch it."

Liverpool face defending champion PSG with the first leg at Parc des Princes. It is a rematch of their thrilling round-of-16 games last season that Slot reminded on Wednesday: "We were the only team that brought them to extra time and penalties." The second leg at Anfield should be on Tuesday, April 14. Liverpool has not played on April 15 since the Hillsborough Stadium disaster on that date in 1989. Barcelona and Atletico Madrid meet again twice just weeks after they played a two-leg domestic cup semifinal. Then, Atletico won 4-0 at home and lost 3-0 at Camp Nou to reach the Copa del Rey final. Days before the Champions League quarterfinal first leg at Atletico's Metropolitan Stadium on April 7 or 8, they are due to play there yet again in La Liga.

Tuesday's games confirmed Arsenal, the last unbeaten team in the competition, will face Sporting Lisbon. The Portuguese champion, which rallied to eliminate Bodo/Glimt with a 5-0 win on Tuesday, last played at this stage in 1983.

### Europa League

In a good week for home-team comebacks in Portugal, Braga beat Ferencvaros 4-0 on Wednesday to overturn a 2-0 loss from the first leg in Hungary of their round-of-16 clash. Braga will face either Panathinaikos or Real Betis in the quarterfinals. All other round-of-16 pairings meet on Thursday.

## Teja Sajja To Host South India's Biggest Show!

Fresh off a blockbuster phase, Teja Sajja has quickly become one of the most sought-after young heroes in Tollywood. With back-to-back successes and a promising lineup of films in the pipeline, his career is clearly on a steep upward trajectory. Even as he remains busy with the pre-production of his upcoming projects, Teja is now gearing up for something entirely new. In a surprising yet strategic move, Teja Sajja is all set to don the host's hat for the Telugu version of "The Traitors", officially announced by Amazon Prime Video at a grand event in Mumbai. "The Traitors" is a globally acclaimed reality format, known for its gripping gameplay, psychological twists, and massive popularity across international markets. Bringing such a format to Telugu audiences in a large scale is a big step and placing Teja at the center of it makes it even more intriguing. What makes this decision particularly noteworthy is its timing. At the peak of his film career, stepping into the OTT and reality space reflects both confidence and vision. Teja, who already enjoys strong acceptance across different sections of the audience, is now expanding his reach beyond theatres tapping into the ever-growing OTT and



television audience base.

This move not only showcases his versatility but also signals a smart understanding of the evolving entertainment landscape, where visibility across platforms plays a crucial role in building long-term

stardom. From being a promising young actor to emerging as a bankable star and now, a show host on a global format, Teja Sajja is clearly playing the long game, this could very well mark the beginning of a whole new chapter in his career.

## Mumbai Company Creates Hiccups at Gaddar Awards

The Second Edition of Telangana Government's Gaddar Film Awards Presentation concluded the other day. While the entire event went off smoothly, two small incidents emerged as Unnecessary Hiccups there. Rashmika's Personal Bouncer entered into a scuffle with FDC Chairman Dil Raju's Close-Aide. The Bouncer was apparently newly hired and does not know who is who. They had a tiff for a long time before some media personnel interfered and gave some sense to the Bouncer. And then, Writer Vijayendra Prasad was snubbed by the Event Management Company and left the venue angrily. The entire event was handled by a Mumbai-based company and they do not know our celebrities. They mistook Vijayendra Prasad for R Narayana Murthy. When they called him as R



Narayana Murthy, he was snubbed and left the venue. There were some confusions as the Event Management Company struggled to identify the celebrities but largely the event was successful. Megastar Chiranjeevi who received the NTR Lifetime Award praised CM Revanth Reddy and Telangana Government sky

high for the awards and their cooperation to the film industry. The Statement that Andhra Pradesh is a bit backward when compared to Telangana in encouraging the artists will make Revanth Reddy even more happy. Chiranjeevi asked the Andhra Pradesh Government to take a cue from the Telangana Government in this.

## Shubhangi Singh leads India U20 women's team into Asian Cup after 20-year wait

**Thailand:** With just two weeks to go before their opening clash against Japan in Thailand, the Indian U20 women's national team stand on the brink of a long-awaited return. Two decades after their last appearance, India are back at the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup, and leading them out of the tunnel on April 2 will be captain Shubhangi Singh. For Shubhangi, the significance of qualification has already been processed. The celebrations in Myanmar, where India ended their 20-year wait, have given way to a sharper, more immediate focus. "We went there with the mindset to qualify, and we did," she said. "When you already believe something is going to happen, it doesn't come as a surprise." That belief now fuels a squad preparing for what she acknowledges will be a stern test. India will face Japan on April 2 at 18:30 IST, Australia on April 5 at 14:30 IST, and Chinese Taipei on April 8 at 14:30 IST, in Group C. The top two teams in the group and the two best third-placed teams will make it to the quarter-finals. Further, the four quarter-final winners will qualify for the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup Poland 2026. Currently training in Kolkata, the Young Tigresses will depart for Bangkok, Thailand, early on Friday morning (March 20).



deliberate. A month-long preparatory camp in Sweden earlier this year, along with multiple international friendlies at the end of last year against Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, have shaped a team that is no longer unfamiliar with high-intensity football. "We prepared really well," Shubhangi explained. "Spending a month in Sweden and playing against European clubs was a great experience. Those teams were physically taller and stronger than us, so it helped us understand how to handle that." A heavy defeat in their opening game against the senior side of Hammarby IF, one of Sweden's

top clubs, served as a reality check, but also as a turning point. "The first game was the toughest. The 0-6 loss wasn't acceptable, but it was a big learning experience. From the second game onwards, we adapted better. We had a couple of wins, a draw, and a loss before ending the camp with a 5-2 win (against Alvsjö AIK). Overall, it helped us understand European playing styles and prepare for teams like Japan," said the 19-year-old.

Before Sweden, the Young Tigresses had already tested themselves against Central Asian opposition, facing Uzbekistan (1-0 and 4-2 wins)

and Kazakhstan (3-2 win and 1-1 draw) in multiple friendlies. They had also faced Uzbekistan in July, winning 4-1 and drawing 1-1. Uzbekistan also qualified for the Asian Cup, and were, in fact, ranked higher than India, in Pot 3, for the group stage draw.

"We've played Uzbekistan multiple times, before and after the qualifiers, and managed good results, including three wins and a draw," Shubhangi noted. "They are physically strong, so it was valuable to compete against them."

"We had one win and one draw in Kazakhstan. We were the better team in terms of possession, but we initially struggled against physically bigger players. Those matches taught us a lot about handling such opponents."

What perhaps defines this Indian side most is continuity. The core group has spent over a year together, growing not just tactically, but also in understanding and cohesion. Before heading to Sweden and after the mid-season IWL break, the Young Tigresses were training in Bengaluru. Since returning from Scandinavia, they have continued their camp in Kolkata.

"We've been together for over a year now, and that has really helped with bonding and understanding each other on and off the pitch," Shubhangi said. "We've grown a lot as individuals and as a team. "The sessions were focused on our tactics for the Asian Cup campaign, how we want to play and prepare for specific matches, especially the first game," she explained. "The intensity and tempo of sessions were very high."

## All Time Record Views For Trailer, What About Box Office?

One of the most anticipated films from Hollywood and recent times is shaping up in the form of Spider-Man: Brand New Day. The trailer for the film dropped yesterday, and it opened to sensational response. According to the latest reports, the trailer for this new film from the Spider-Man franchise generated nearly 720 million views (Cumulative) on YouTube in 24 hours, which is absolutely sensational. This is the highest number of views recorded for any film trailer in the world in a span of 24 hours and this speaks a lot about the hype surrounding this new outing from the superhero franchise. But the crucial factor for this film here is going to be able to convert this social media hype into box office revenues. Considering the fact that the previous film from this franchise No Way Who had



generated over \$1.9 billion at the global box office, an even bigger number is expected from Brand New Day now.

We have to wait and see if this would be a chance for the Spiderman franchise film to touch the range of \$2 billion globally, which should be reasonably big number for a film of this scale and production value. This film is now scheduled for release on July 31.