

Governor extends greetings on the occasion of 'Mahavir Jayanti'



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Mumbai, Date 30: Governor Jishnu Dev Verma has extended his greetings on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti. Mahavir Jayanti commemorates the life and work of Tirthankara Lord Mahavir as well as his teachings of non-violence, sacrifice,

forgiveness, kindness and multi-facetedness. The impact of his ideal thoughts is still visible on the Indian public. The thoughts of Lord Mahavir are most relevant today. The Governor has said in his message that he wishes everyone on the occasion of Mahavir

The function of government and police is to serve the people - CM Fadnavis

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Nagpur, Date 29: The British wanted to rule India, so they brought criminal laws in the role of rulers. However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, these laws were changed and criminal laws were prepared to serve the people. Due to this, there is harmony in the police system and criminal justice system in the country and the people are getting fast and proper justice. All the states have started implementing these laws well and this highlights that the function of the government and the police is to serve the people, asserted Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis here today. The 69th All India Police Duty Meet organized at the Shivaji Stadium located at the Police Headquarters was inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. He was



speaking at the time. Minister of State for Finance and Planning Adv. Ashish Jaiswal, MP Shyamkumar Barve, Director General of Police Sadanand Date, Nagpur Police Commissioner Dr. Ravindra Singhal and others were present on the occasion. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, law and order is of utmost importance in the development of the country. The police department has made a valuable contribution in maintaining law and order by responding

promptly and first in the face of major challenges faced by the country. Maharashtra and Nagpur have been awarded the post of organizer of the 69th All India Police Duty Meet. It is also a matter of satisfaction that this meet was organized for the first time in the country in Nagpur. Discussions, seminars and competitions will be held on topics such as professional skills in crime detection, forensic science, computer systems and dog training. Good working practices from

different states will be exchanged. It is believed that this will bring more clarity and speed to the work of providing justice to the common people. The Maharashtra Police Department has also made many important changes to effectively deal with the changing challenges of crime and has earned the reputation of being the largest, modern, professional police force in the country. The state police force has the best cyber lab in the country. The state has taken the lead in crime

investigation by using artificial intelligence and other modern technologies. Through this duty fair, other states will know about the good practices being implemented in Maharashtra and good practices in other states will also be recognized. He expressed his hope that everyone participating in this fair will put their skills to good use and give a good performance, expressing his best wishes. Director General of Police Sadanand Date made the introduction while Nagpur Police Commissioner Dr. Ravindra Singhal expressed his gratitude. 1,327 police officers and personnel from 29 states and union territories as well as central security forces, as well as 146 dogs, have participated in this duty meet, which will continue till April 3. Earlier, Andhra Pradesh, Assam Rifles, Arunachal Pradesh,

Andaman and Nicobar, Bihar, Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Indo-Tibetan Border Force, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Odisha, Rajasthan, Railway Protection Force, Special Security Group, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra states and union territories as well as central security forces took part in a disciplined march. The All India Police Sports Controller Board and the Andhra Pradesh State Police Development Planning Council have given the post of organizer of this year's All India Duty Meet to Maharashtra and it is being organized in Nagpur. This meet started in Nagpur in 1959.

Two more Indian ships safely leave the Strait of Hormuz; India's LPG stockpile adds a day to its tally!



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New Delhi: Two Indian-flagged LPG tankers have safely left the 'Strait of Hormuz'. These ships carry approximately one day's worth of cooking gas for the country and are expected to reach the Indian coast in the next two days. The two LPG carriers 'BW TYR' and 'BW ELM' have safely completed their journey through the dangerous area with a total of 94,000 tonnes of LPG and are now heading towards the Indian coast, a

government release said. The ship 'BW TYR' has left for Mumbai and is expected to reach by tomorrow (March 31). The ship 'BW ELM' is heading towards New Mangalore and will arrive at the port by April 1. The 'Strait of Hormuz' is a very narrow and important sea route for oil and gas exports from the Gulf countries to the world. However, Iran has allowed ships of a friendly country to pass through this waterway last week. Earlier, four LPG tankers carrying Indian flags had

passed through this strait. India has to depend on imports from the Gulf countries for up to 60 percent of its cooking gas requirements. In such a situation, the arrival of these ships will be a big relief for India, which has been facing a severe LPG shortage in the last few decades. India used 33.15 million tonnes of LPG last year, in which imports accounted for about 60 percent. Notably, 90 percent of these imports were from West Asia.

The lottery for pensioners has started! The 'fitment factor' of the Eighth Pay Commission has been decided; Now will you get a pension of more than 25 thousand directly?

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There is great news for central government employees and pensioners. The proposed Eighth Pay Commission is likely to increase the minimum pension by a huge margin, and the current pension of Rs 9,000 can go directly to around Rs 25,000 to Rs 25,740. This has raised the expectations of about 1.2 crore employees and pensioners in the country. After the implementation of the Eighth Pay Commission, the 'fitment factor' will be revised. On the basis of this factor, the salary and pension increase is decided. This change may lead to a big jump in the minimum pension. The existing central



government employees and pensioners will directly benefit from this change. This increase will be especially comforting for retired employees who depend on a fixed income. Although the government has approved the establishment of the Eighth Pay Commission, the exact date of its implementation has not been decided yet. However, a

concrete decision is likely to be taken soon. This decision will be applicable to central government employees across the country, and pensioners from all states will benefit from it. Considering the rising inflation and prices of essential commodities, it is considered necessary to increase the pension. In the current situation, this reform will be important to

maintain the financial balance of retired employees. The fitment factor is the most important factor in this. In the Seventh Pay Commission, a factor of 2.57 was implemented, due to which the minimum salary increased from Rs 7,000 to Rs 18,000. Now in the Eighth Pay Commission, this factor is likely to be between 2.5 and 2.86. If the 2.86 factor is implemented, the

minimum pension can reach Rs 25,740. Along with these reforms, the government is also considering implementing the 'Unified Pension Scheme'. Under this scheme, employees who have completed 25 years of service can get a pension of 50 percent of their average basic pay of the last 12 months. Also, employees who have served for at least 10 years can be guaranteed a minimum pension of Rs 10,000. Overall, the possible increase in pension through the Eighth Pay Commission will not only provide financial relief but will also improve the living standards of retired employees. Now, everyone's attention is on when and how these recommendations are implemented.

Tribal community stands with new vigor after getting a large number of opportunities - CM Devendra Fadnavis

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Nagpur, Date 29:- 'A large number of opportunities are being provided to tribal brothers in the field of education and employment. Due to this, this community has now stood with new vigor and now this community will not look back', Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed his belief here today. Chief Minister Shri. Fadnavis also appealed to Mayatai Ivanate to seize the opportunity and do work that will remain in the memory of the community forever. Mayatai Chintamanrao Ivanate Satkar Samiti felicitated newly elected Rajya Sabha MP Mayatai Ivanate. Dr. The

felicitations ceremony held at Vasant Rao Deshpande Hall was attended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Tribal Development Minister Ashok Uike, MLA Krishna Khopde, former MLA Devrao Holi, former MLA Sudhakar Rao Deshmukh, and Mayor Nita Thackeray. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, Mayatai, who was born in a very ordinary family, has made her political career by struggling a lot. Through her social work, she has earned the trust of the people. She has done a lot of work on the issues of tribal brothers. She has solved their numerous issues by

traveling even at the national level. That is why she has got the opportunity to represent the country's highest house, the Rajya Sabha. This is a matter of great pride for us. Her career as a corporator, mayor, and member of the Central Tribal Commission has been very spotless. She was not discouraged by the unfortunate incident that happened in her family, but she has continued her social work and proven her leadership skills. Extensive work is being done in the state to bring tribal brothers into the flow of development. Education facilities are being provided for tribal children. The government has also made provisions for their education abroad. They have



shown through their various skills that tribal children seize the opportunity if given the opportunity. Chief Minister Fadnavis drew attention to this. Society progresses through education only - Union Minister Nitin Gadkari When knowledge is spread in the society, only then does society progress in the true

sense. The situation of the tribal society is changing rapidly. When the entire society participates in this journey of development, leadership like Mayatai will have to give direction to that society. The society looks up to her with great hope today, said Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari,

speaking on the occasion, mentioning that Mayatai's life was spent in very difficult circumstances and struggles. Gadkari said, he has used every responsibility that has come to him for the welfare of the society. He also expressed his hope that under his leadership, the society will move towards economic,

educational and social progress. On this occasion, Tribal Development Minister Ashok Uike also expressed his feelings. This honor is for all my tribal brothers - Mayatai Ivanate. We have seen the suffering of the tribal community closely. There is a lot to do for the society. As their representative in Parliament, I want to raise their questions. While the country is changing, my tribal brothers will have a big share in these changes, Mayatai Ivanate expressed these feelings while responding to the felicitation. On this occasion, Mayatai Ivanate was felicitated by various organizations including Adivasi Vikas Yuva Sangh, Tribal Institute and Multipurpose

Education Society, Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad, Samyukta Adivasi Kirti Samiti, Adivasi Udan Bahudeshiya Sanstha, Indigenous Tribal Women Forum and other organizations. The office bearers of these organizations, Akash Madavi, Mahendra Uike, Rajendra Maraskolhe, Vivek Nagbhire, Prashant Kumre, Vinod Masram, Dinesh Sheram, Sadaram Gate, Asha Tumdam, along with a large number of tribal brothers, were present at the program. The program began with the lighting of the lamp. Shyamal Deshmukh conducted the program. Mahendra Uike proposed the vote of thanks.

Ambika Devi Temple Restoration Gains Momentum Under 'Aapla Mavla' Campaign ₹5.55 Crore Sanctioned for Bhudargad Fort

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Bhudargad : The restoration of the historic Ambika Devi Temple at Bhudargad Fort has gained significant momentum under the 'Aapla Mavla' conservation campaign, with sustained efforts by MP Nilesh Lanke leading to a major breakthrough. Following continuous follow-up with the Archaeology Department, the Maharashtra government has granted administrative approval for 5.55 crore for conservation and repair works at Bhudargad Fort, providing a much-needed boost to preservation efforts. Over the past year, the 'Aapla Mavla' initiative has been actively engaged in cleaning and conservation drives across several historic forts. During a recent at Bhudargad Fort, volunteers uncovered the severely dilapidated condition of the Ambika Devi Temple. The structure was found without a roof, with collapsed walls, and the idol of the deity exposed to the elements, triggering concern



among devotees. Taking cognisance of the situation, MP Nilesh Lanke had submitted multiple representations to the Archaeology Department, including a formal memorandum on March 20, 2026, urging immediate intervention. He had earlier raised the issue in November 2025, but with no concrete action taken, he renewed his demand. Responding positively, the state's Tourism and Cultural Affairs Department approved substantial funding for restoration works, which is expected to accelerate conservation efforts in the protected zone of the fort. The Ambika Devi Temple holds deep religious significance,

being regarded as a family deity by many devotees from Maharashtra, including Kolhapur, as well as neighbouring Karnataka. The restoration is therefore seen not only as a religious necessity but also as an important step towards preserving cultural heritage. The initiative highlights effective coordination between public representatives and civil society, with the 'Aapla Mavla' campaign playing a key role in safeguarding Maharashtra's historic forts. The sanctioned works are expected to help restore the lost glory of Bhudargad Fort in the coming years.

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Ahilyanagar, March 30: In a significant breakthrough, the Local Crime Branch (LCB) of Ahilyanagar Police has successfully recovered 470 cloth rolls worth ₹78,82,184 that were misappropriated from a transport consignment. The recovery was made during a well-coordinated operation carried out in the state of Rajasthan. According to police sources, the complainant, Amrishkumar Omprakash Gupta (57), a resident of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, had entrusted a consignment of 555 cloth rolls to a container truck (No. GJ-27-5935) for delivery to Bengaluru. However, the driver Sanjay Liladhar Kumar and cleaner Lilu Meena alias Nandlal Meena, allegedly acting in

collusion, diverted 470 rolls from the consignment and misappropriated them for personal financial gain instead of delivering them to the intended destination. The total value of the misappropriated goods is estimated at ₹78.82 lakh. Based on the complaint, a case has been registered at Kotwali Police Station under Crime No. 210/2026, invoking relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Under the guidance of Superintendent of Police Somnath Gharge, Police Inspector Kiran Kumar Kabadi of the Local Crime Branch was directed to trace the accused and recover the stolen property. A special investigation team comprising officers and staff of the LCB was formed to



probe the case. During the investigation, the team gathered intelligence indicating that the accused had initially halted the vehicle at Navapur in Nandurbar district, where the stolen goods were transferred to another vehicle. The police examined CCTV footage and tracked the movement of the suspects over four days, extending the search up to Jaipur, Rajasthan. Further technical and human

intelligence revealed that the stolen goods had been concealed with Mohammad Yunus Salauddin, a resident of Talchhappar in Sujangarh taluka of Churu district, Rajasthan, along with his associates. Acting on this information, the police team reached Rajasthan and detained the 1) Mohammad Yunus Salauddin (49), Talchhappar, Churu, 2) Babulal Jeevanram Jat (32), Randhisar, Churu 3) Mohammad Amir

Sajjad (33), Chudimiyan, Laxmangarh, Sikar. During interrogation, it was revealed that the misappropriated goods had been hidden at Manoharthana in Jhalawar district, Rajasthan. The police subsequently raided the location and successfully recovered all 470 cloth rolls, collectively valued at ₹78.82 lakh. The accused, along with the recovered property, have been produced before Kotwali Police Station for further legal action. Further investigation in the case is underway. The entire operation was carried out under the supervision and guidance of Superintendent of Police Somnath Gharge by the Local Crime Branch team of Ahilyanagar.

Farm Loan Waiver a 'False Promise'; Clear Farmers' Records and Ensure MSP : Harshvardhan Sapkal

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Mumbai / Tuljapur : Congress State President Harshvardhan Sapkal on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Mahayuti government, terming its farm loan waiver announcement as a "false promise" and demanding complete relief for farmers by clearing their land records (7/12 extracts) and ensuring a guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for agricultural produce. Addressing the 'Shetkari Sangharsh Nyay Yatra' from

Suratgaon to Tuljapur in Dharashiv district, Sapkal alleged that farmers are reeling under multiple crises, including unremunerative crop prices, rising debt, and increasing suicides. He further criticised the Centre, claiming that trade agreements with the United States would adversely impact Indian agriculture and push farmers into deeper distress. The yatra, organised by the Congress party, witnessed a strong response with participation from party leaders, workers, women, and farmers in large



numbers. The march concluded with a public meeting at Tuljapur. Sapkal

accused the BJP government of being anti-farmer and said the loan waiver

would only be credible when implemented on the ground. He also raised concerns over rising inflation, unemployment, and fuel shortages, alleging that the government has failed to address key public issues. Taking a broader political stance, Sapkal alleged that there are attempts to undermine constitutional values and impose ideological doctrines. He criticised the state leadership, stating that governance in Maharashtra is deviating from its foundational principles. During the yatra, participants



also highlighted the LPG crisis, drawing attention through symbolic demonstrations involving LPG cylinders mounted on tractors. The march began with tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Tuljapur and concluded with a

ceremonial prayer at the Tulja Bhavani temple. Speaking on the alleged Ashok Kharat 'godman' case in Nashik, Sapkal termed the developments "disturbing and shameful." He alleged that the rise of such incidents reflects the spread of regressive

tendencies in a state known for progressive thought. He demanded a thorough investigation and strict action against all those involved, including public representatives and officials, under the anti-superstition law. He also questioned the delay in action, alleging that authorities had prior information but failed to act in time. Sapkal further called for accountability at the highest level and emphasised the need for a full-time Home Minister in Maharashtra.

Went from Pune to Beed for theft, two die while climbing high-voltage electricity tower

Coffee Table
News Network

Beed: A major incident has come to light from Nandurghat area of

Kej taluka in Beed district. Time has come to an end for a gang that came from Chakan in Pune district to steal a wire from a high-voltage electricity tower. While they were removing the wire from the tower, the iron tower lost its balance and collapsed, killing two youths on the spot. After this incident, the companions of the deceased put their bodies in a car and took them to Parbhani, but as soon as they reached there, they left the bodies and fled. Beed: A major incident has come to light from Nandurghat area of

Kej taluka in Beed district. Time has come to an end for a gang that came from Chakan in Pune district to steal a wire from a high-voltage electricity tower. While they were removing the wire from the tower, the iron tower lost its balance and collapsed, killing two youths on the spot.



After this incident, the companions of the deceased took their bodies to Parbhani in a car, but upon reaching there, they abandoned the bodies and fled. After the accident, the frightened companions tried to make the incident look like an accident instead of informing the police. They put the bodies of the two in an Ertiga car and rushed straight to their native village, Parbhani. After reaching Parbhani, the other companions in the car, Akash Petha, Deepak Bhagat and Vaibhav Aadat, fearing that the situation would escalate, left the bodies in the car and

fled. Finally, the car driver, Suraj Giram, tried to take the bodies to the hospital in an ambulance. However, by then, the relatives of the deceased became suspicious and created a commotion. On receiving this information, the Parbhani police and the local crime branch rushed to the spot and took Suraj Giram into custody. Realizing the seriousness of the matter, Assistant Police Inspector Mahesh Kshirsagar, under the guidance of Swapnil Unawane, Officer-in-Charge of Kej Police Station in Beed district, conducted a

panchnama at the spot. Blood stains, shoes of the deceased and water bottles have been found at the scene. The forensic team from Beed has also visited the scene and collected blood-stained soil and other technical evidence. Police Inspector Bedre of Parbhani Local Crime Branch has also visited the cage and questioned the driver. Who is the mastermind of this gang that came from Pune with the intention of stealing? And who else is involved in this? The police are now investigating this.

Office boy Neeraj Jadhav did not come to me on his own; Ashok Kharat makes a different claim during face-to-face interrogation

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Nashik: New revelations are being made every day in the case of atrocities against women related to scam artist Ashok Kharat, and Kharat's deeds are being revealed through the investigation. Ashok Kharat and Neeraj Jadhav, who worked as an office boy for him, have been interrogated face-to-face by the Special Police Investigation Team formed in this case, and it is understood that Kharat has made a sensational claim about Neeraj Jadhav. This new claim by Kharat is likely to give the investigation of the entire case a different direction. The SIT is conducting a thorough investigation into the scam case, which is currently being discussed not only in Nashik but also in the entire state. The SIT is currently investigating many matters such as sexual abuse of women, fraud cases, and Kharat's property that have been registered so far. In this regard, it is



known that the main suspect Ashok Kharat and office boy Neeraj Jadhav were interrogated face to face. During this time, Kharat made a sensational claim during the interrogation. "Someone has planned a pre-planned conspiracy and sent Neeraj Jadhav to me as an office boy. He did not come on his own," Ashok Kharat claimed before the police officers. Ashok Kharat's different claim during the interrogation According to sources, due to this claim by Ashok Kharat, the scope of this case is likely to increase. Neeraj Jadhav had started working in

Kharat's office at a very low salary through an advertisement in a newspaper. Neeraj Jadhav worked for Kharat from 2019 to 2024. Looking at all the facts in the Ashok Kharat case, it does not seem that anyone is trying to implicate him in this case, but social activists are demanding that the Kharat case and other scammers should also be investigated. On the other hand, the Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti has jumped into this. The office bearers of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti have said that Kharat's claim is a fabrication. Annis has expressed

suspicion that Kharat may have fabricated this fabrication to divert the direction of the investigation. Raising the question, "Why did the 10 office boys who worked here before Neeraj Jadhav quit?" Annis has demanded a thorough investigation of all those old 10 employees as well. Meanwhile, is this sensational claim made by Kharat about Neeraj Jadhav during the SIT investigation being investigated by the SIT? And was there really a pre-planned conspiracy behind Jadhav working for Ashok Kharat? It will also be important to see.

Speeding truck hits MP Prashant Padole on way to airport, MP Prashant Padole has a serious accident

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Bhandara/Gondiya: Congress party MP from Bhandara-Gondiya Lok Sabha constituency Dr. Prashant Padole's car has met with a serious accident. Information has come to light that the accident took place early Monday morning. The accident took place when Prashant Padole was leaving for Delhi for the ongoing budget session of Parliament in Delhi. Dr. Prashant Padole's vehicle, which was heading to Nagpur Airport to go to Delhi, was hit by a truck. The impact was so strong that the front part of Prashant Padole's car was completely smashed. However, fortunately, Prashant Padole narrowly escaped the accident. According to the information received, MP Prashant Padole was leaving for Nagpur Airport in the morning along with his security guard and driver. At that time, a truck hit his vehicle in front of Haldiram in



Nagpur district. Fortunately, Prashant Padole narrowly escaped the accident. However, he was slightly injured in the accident. After sustaining minor injuries, MP Prashant Padole stopped a two-wheeler rider and rode on his vehicle to Nagpur. After receiving first aid there, he reached Nagpur Airport and left for Delhi. Earlier, MP Prashant Padole's vehicle had met with a serious accident in Nagpur a few months ago. He was also slightly injured in that one. This is the second accident involving the MP's vehicle. How exactly did this accident happen? The details are not yet

known. Meanwhile, a chemical tanker overturned at Bhoste Ghat in Ratnagiri on Sunday night. This chemical tanker overturned at Bhoste Ghat in Khed taluka on the Mumbai-Goa highway. It is being said that this tanker belongs to a company in Lote MIDC. Since it is a chemical, the police have made strict arrangements at the scene for security reasons. Also, a fire brigade team has immediately reached the scene and efforts are being made to bring the situation under control. There is no information about any loss of life at present, but the administration is fully alert.

Kharat used to force officers to have relations with each other's wives; Vadettiwar's serious allegation

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Nagpur: The political atmosphere in the state has become even more heated due to the Ashok Kharat case, and Congress leader Vijay Vadettiwar has targeted the ruling party by making very serious allegations. Vadettiwar claimed that a new and shocking fact has come to light in this case and that Kharat was also sharing the families of many senior officers. This is such a low and dirty case that is bringing down the honor of Maharashtra, but the rulers do not feel the

slightest shame. What could be more unfortunate than this," criticized Vadettiwar. Vijay Vadettiwar further said that, "This case is tarnishing the image of the state and the sensitivity expected from the rulers is not seen even on such serious matters. "What could be more unfortunate than the fact that the ruling party is silent despite knowing how dirty this matter is," he asked. Vijay Vadettiwar had earlier alleged that the names of many MLAs, officers, as well as IAS and IPS officers were recorded in code form in this case. He also demanded once again



that this entire matter should be thoroughly investigated and strict action should be taken against all those involved. Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule has reacted to the allegations made against government officials in the Ashok Kharat case. "It is not

right to publicly accuse officials or their families in this way. Speaking incorrectly about any official or their family affects their credibility and family relationships," Bawankule said. Bawankule further said, "If Vadettiwar has any concrete and confidential

information, he should submit it to the government. "We should avoid damaging the credibility of the administration by making such allegations in a public forum," he also said. The system is doing its job. Those who need to be called for investigation will be called. The investigation should not be hindered by unnecessary discussions on this matter, if they have information, they should give it to the Chief Minister and the Revenue Department to me, Bawankule also said.

Amrita Pujari wins the Women's Maharashtra Kesari 2026 title

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Solapur: In the thrilling final match of the fourth Women's Maharashtra Wrestling Championship, Amrita Pujari of Kolhapur defeated Vedika Sasane to become Maharashtra Kesari. The final match of the Women's Maharashtra Kesari Championship was held on Sunday evening at the Haribhai Devkar School ground in Solapur, jointly organized by the Maharashtra State Wrestling Association and Nirzara

Foundation, between Amrita Pujari and Vedika Sasane. From the beginning, Amrita played an aggressive move and kept Vedika in control. She took the lead by scoring two points in the first one and a half minutes. Then she scored three points again and took a five-nil lead in the first session. In the second session, Vedika played an aggressive move but Amrita showed patience and scored two more points and secured the victory. Amrita defended and held Vedika back in the last two minutes. Amrita defeated



Vedika by a margin of 7-0 and won the Maharashtra Kesari title. Guardian Minister Jayakumar Gore presented Maharashtra Kesari Amrita Pujari with a silver mace, Rs 51,000 in cash, a memento and a key to a Sonet car. While the

runner-up Vedika Sasane was given a cash prize of Rs 25,000, a memento and a bullet prize. After Amrita Pujari defeated Vedika Sasane, the supporting female wrestlers took Amrita Pujari and coach Dadaso Lovete on their shoulders

and took them out of the wrestling ground in a procession with loud cheers. A huge firework display was performed on this occasion. The state government provides a fund of Rs 1 crore for the men's wrestling competition. But there is no provision for women's wrestling. Guardian Minister Jayakumar Gore said in his speech that the state government should provide Rs 50 lakh for the women's wrestling competition from next year. He will submit a proposal to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis.

Three workers die on the spot in AC explosion



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Wada: Three workers who came to repair the air conditioning system of a company in Abitghar (Abhanpada) village of Wada taluka died in an explosion of the same system. This incident that took place on Friday night has once again brought to the fore the negligence in the factory. A company named Vistar Metal in Abitghar (Abhanpada) village has started again from January after eight years. On Friday, due to some malfunctioning in the air conditioning system in the company, some workers who came

from outside were repairing it. At that time, a sudden massive explosion occurred around 11 pm. In this, three workers, Mohammad Ali Ansari (32, Kurla), Akhilesh Kumar Motilal Jaiswal (45, Uttar Pradesh) and Kisan Bhiwa Nikam (55, Shiv), died on the spot. 'We had given a contract for the repair of the air conditioning system. There is no reason for us to be at fault in this. We provide security to all the workers in the company. But they are not using it,' said the company's manager Dinesh Mittal, who has shrugged off the responsibility. Accidental deaths have

been registered in this case and further action will be taken after the inspection report of the factory inspector comes, Wada police clarified. There is a large industrial area in Wada taluka and there are many factories. Since no one is in control of them, many destructive factories are emitting pollution, and the number of accidents in factories has also increased drastically. Due to this, there has been a clamor for the safety of workers. Against this backdrop, there is a demand that the case at Abitghar be taken seriously and strict action be taken against the culprits.

Anger over broken love affair; 25-year-old girl brutally murdered by boyfriend

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Pune: A young woman was strangled to death with a rope after a constant argument over her refusal to have an immoral relationship took place in the Naveen Katraj Tunnel area on the Pune-Bengaluru bypass. The accused youth, who fled after the murder, has been arrested by the Ambegaon police. The name of the murdered young woman is Manisha Khamm Damai (age 25, currently residing in Narhe). Prakash Arjun Tikhatri (age 30, currently residing in

Hinjewadi) was arrested in this case. Kishan Bharat Parihar (age 35, currently residing in Narhe) has filed a complaint in this regard at the Ambegaon police station. Manisha had an immoral relationship with the accused Prakash. Kishan, Manisha and Prakash are originally from Nepal. They work as caretakers. Manisha and Prakash had an extramarital affair. Prakash had refused to continue the immoral relationship. Since then, an argument started between them. Prakash was irritated by her troubles. On



March 18, the accused called Manisha to meet him in the Narhe area. Speaking sweetly, he took her to a dense forest behind a hotel near the Katraj tunnel. There, the two had an argument. Following this argument, the accused

strangled her with a rope and fled from there. Meanwhile, a few days later, the body of a young woman was found in a dense forest, creating a stir in the area. On receiving information about the incident, Deputy Commissioner

of Police of Zone 2 Milind Mohite and Assistant Commissioner of Police Rahul Aware visited the spot. Police Inspector Gajanan Chormale of the Crime Branch of Ambegaon Police Station started an investigation and identified the deceased girl. After that, the accused was taken into custody based on the information received. During interrogation, he confessed to the murder. A case of murder has been registered in this case at Ambegaon Police Station.

Disgusting incident in Pune; Conductor misbehaves with minor girl in PMP bus

Coffee Table
News Network

Pune: The issue of safety of minor girls has come to the fore in the PMP bus, a system that people rely on for their daily commute in Pune city. Two different incidents that have come to light in the city have increased both anger and anxiety among the citizens. The first incident took place in a bus running from Katraj to Swargate. It is alleged that the conductor of the bus misbehaved with a minor girl traveling in this bus. The accused has been arrested by Sahakarnagar police in this case. According to the information received, during the journey, the conductor of the PMP bus tried to talk to the girl and

insisted on giving her mobile number. However, even after the girl refused, he did not improve his behavior. On the contrary, it is alleged that he molested her by touching her inappropriately. The girl, frightened by this incident, screamed loudly. Hearing her voice, the passengers in the bus immediately came forward. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, they stopped the bus and caught the accused. After taking information from the girl, the whole situation became clear and the angry passengers handed over the accused to the police. In this case, the girl's mother has filed a complaint and a case has been registered against the accused

under the POCSO Act. Further investigation is underway. Another incident in the city is also expressing anger. A 66-year-old man has been accused of misbehaving with a 10-year-old girl in the Sinhadag Road area. This incident came to light after the girl told her mother and the mother immediately went to the police station and filed a complaint. A case has been registered under the POCSO Act in this case and the police are investigating. Meanwhile, these incidents are generating angry reactions from the citizens and the demand for the administration to take strict steps is gaining momentum.

Coffee Table
News Network

Kolhapur: A family dispute over the division of land that had been going on for many years in Kolhapur has turned into a double murder. In Hingangaon in Hatkanangale taluka of Kolhapur, elder brother Sambhaji Maruti Kundle (aged 47) attacked his father Maruti Bandu Kundle (aged 72) and younger brother Sheetal Maruti Kundle (aged 45) with an axe and a knife. Both died on the spot, and Sambhaji himself appeared at the Hatkanangale police station and confessed to the crime. Sambhaji's son Vivek was injured in this and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital. The Kundle family in Hingangaon has a three-acre farm in their name. Of these, two acres were owned by Sheetal Kundle and his father Maruti



Bandu Kundle, while the remaining one acre was owned by Sambhaji. There had been constant arguments between the brothers over this division for the past few years. There was always a tense atmosphere in the house. A complaint regarding this land dispute was filed at Hatkanangale police station four days ago. However, the villagers feel that if it had been taken into account in time, this unfortunate incident

could have been avoided. It has also been reported that Sambhaji injured his father by hitting him on the head with an iron bar a few days ago. Yesterday, Sunday afternoon, while his father Maruti and brother Sheetal were busy working in the field in group number 484 near Hingangaon, Sambhaji came there. A verbal clash broke out over the division of the land and in a fit of anger,

he inflicted severe injuries on both of their heads with an axe and a crowbar. The bodies were found near the well behind the deceased's house. The police have seized weapons from the scene and are investigating the possibility of Sambhaji's son Vivek's involvement in the crime. As soon as the information about the incident spread, there was a stir in Hingangaon and Kumbhoj areas.

A large number of villagers gathered at the scene. Police Sub-Inspector Sharad Memane, Assistant PI Yadav and Sub-Divisional Officer Amol Thakur visited the scene and conducted a panchnama. The forensic team has collected evidence. The body was taken to Hatkanangle Rural Hospital for autopsy. The process of registering a case was going on till late at night. Sambhaji, who himself appeared at the police station in this regard, has been detained, and Vivek will be questioned after treatment. The police have deployed heavy security in the area. Meanwhile, the villagers have accused the police administration of late action and made an emotional appeal for justice. This incident has spread grief among the family and villagers.

Editorial...

Widening gulf over Iran war

Coffee Table

News Network

There is growing unease among the GCC States over costs of the US's unclear Iran strategy and the effectiveness of its security guarantees. As the war in West Asia enters its fifth week, with the Trump administration deploying thousands of American troops to the region for possible ground operations, the potential for fissures between Washington and the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — has only increased. This remains a distinct possibility if the war expands and gets prolonged, notwithstanding Saudi Arabia and the UAE remaining open to the possibility of joining the conflict against Iran. Though Saudi Arabia's leadership reportedly egged on US President Donald Trump to continue his military campaign against Iran, serious questions have been raised in the GCC States about the effectiveness of the security umbrella provided by the US in the face of Iran's attacks on energy and other infrastructure. There are also concerns about whether the security guarantees provided by hosting US military bases in the Gulf States have been overhyped as these facilities have been targeted with some success by Iran, with civilian infrastructure being impacted as collateral damage. Iran has warned of broadening its targets if the war continues. The leadership of Oman has even questioned the decision by Israel and the US to launch military strikes at a time when significant progress was reportedly made in talks brokered by Muscat between

Washington and Tehran. This has not only sparked distrust about the US's unclear strategy but also shattered a decades-old system of balance that the Gulf States managed to create with Iran that served their interests and even those of the US. Iran's firm grip on the Strait of Hormuz has also had a devastating impact on most GCC States, dealing a crushing blow to their hydrocarbon-dependent economies as energy shipments — their most important export — have virtually come to a halt. The conflict has also exposed the fragility of efforts by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to position themselves as stable centres of economic growth and investment as part of efforts to diversify from their dependence on oil revenues. The dynamics that served as ballast for the close security partnership between the US and the Gulf States have been changed by the current conflict, and the fallout of this will be felt for many years even if the war were to end in the near future. This system now lies in tatters and leaves the GCC States more vulnerable than ever, whatever the outcome of the war. The conflict has also exposed the fragility of efforts by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to position themselves as stable centres of economic growth and investment as part of efforts to diversify from their dependence on oil revenues. The dynamics that served as ballast for the close security partnership between the US and the Gulf States have been changed by the current conflict, and the fallout of this will be felt for many years even if the war were to end in the near future. This system now lies in tatters and leaves the GCC States more vulnerable than ever, whatever the outcome of the war.

Hatching of hope for the Indian bustard

Coffee Table

News Network

The first Great Indian Bustard (GIB) chick hatched in the wild in Gujarat is welcome news for the bird's conservation. Dwindling numbers — 150-200 at present from close to 1,000 in the 1970s — have not only earned it an IUCN classification of "critically endangered", but also have put the very survival of the species under question in recent years. The chick was hatched from a fertilised egg brought from Rajasthan and placed in the nest of one of the three birds (all females) reported in Gujarat. Given the three birds were laying eggs that had no chance of fertilisation with no males around, this experiment was crucial to studying the efficacy of translocation of eggs. The successful hatching in the wild is important for several reasons. For a long time, wildlife experts have argued for expansion of the bird population outside Rajasthan, which hosts the largest GIB

population within the country. A raft of development imperatives in the areas of the state that the bird inhabits are in conflict with conservation essentials. As a ground-dwelling, highly territorial bird, the GIB faces significant vulnerabilities from the shrinking of its habitat, including predation by animals that live in and around human settlements, such as dogs. This is compounded by the fact that it is a slow breeder, laying only one egg per breeding season. Its survival, therefore, depends critically on expansive, protected grasslands that afford enough genetic diversity through lower chances of inter-breeding. To that end, not just Gujarat, but a handful of other states where the bird has been reported need to be explored for habitat expansion potential. With the Gujarat experiment reporting initial success — the chick's continued survival and thriving needs to be closely watched — there may be hope yet for the bird.

India and countries like Pakistan are inactive and active for safety of their citizens and economies

Middle East Meditations

Coffee Table

News Network

Domestic discourse on the latest Gulf War took a puzzling turn this past week. Has Islamabad re-established its strategic weight? Should India have taken on the role of peacemaker and mediator? The questions are silly and reductionist. They flow from an all-weather obsession with Pakistan. They also mis-appreciate the primary purpose of foreign policy: sheltering one's own citizens and economy. This is what all countries troubled by the conflict are attempting to do. Even mediation is only resorted to if it serves this objective, not otherwise. For Narendra Modi, managing India's immediate energy security and preventing Indians assets from being targeted in any military escalation are key priorities. In this, at least so far, GoI's diplomacy has met reasonable success. The good luck may not last. But it will not be for want of effort. Pakistan is trying to achieve the same goals for its people. So are several other affected countries across Asia and the Indo-Pacific, from the gates of Europe to the Philippines and Australia. Structural disruptions in energy and fertiliser supplies, inflation surges and

an incalculable growth shock are widespread fears. Collectively, these will take a toll on the 2026-27 business year. Further down, rebuilding regional and global economies might well take us into the early

modernisation programme. It has shaken an economic model focused on urbanisation and connectivity, innovation, technology, financial services, and a welcoming tourism

perhaps a longer-term occupation, even if eventually under a multinational rubric. How would this square with Trump's 'stay home' commitment to his MAGA base? To be fair, it is not as if Gulf

Iranian capabilities more intact than Gulf states would want. Their imperatives, too, would appear legitimate. These three countries have among the most professional militaries in the Muslim world. They are wary of being drawn into an expanding unrest. Pakistan, for example, has a security pact with Saudi Arabia. Understandably, it does not want this invoked. Or to get into war with Iran on somebody else's behalf. An Iran that's fragmented, or where the theocratic government doesn't hold, is also a concern. This will likely lead to Kurdish and Baloch insurgencies that could spill over to Türkiye and Pakistan respectively. Further, Islamabad, Ankara and Cairo — as well as Tehran — are all potential losers should GCC-centric geo-economic and connectivity mega-projects advance. India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a challenge to all of them, and the setback it has suffered has been noted. To that end, any continued pressure that constricts Gulf economies' ambitions stands cancelled. When, and at which point, on the graph the X axis of Iran's military degradation (on Gulf states' wish list) will meet the Y

axis of Iran's political destabilisation (mediator states' nightmare) will determine the region's course. Finally, there's Israel. Will it stop fighting even if the others do? Notwithstanding a busy and industrious bilateral corridor, India's and Israel's regional strategies are diverging. Trade, multi-modal connectivity endeavours and a calibrated economic normalisation that fineses politics: Israel is not buying into this template. It has doubled down on containment. Given its moves in Lebanon and Syria, its exploring territorial expansionism as a security buffer. The likelihood — or risk — of a new political map in West Asia is at its highest in decades. Given all this, India needs to protect its flanks, be mindful of its strategic equities in Gulf states, and its working relationships with almost all stakeholders. Modi has wisely recognised this is a time for caution and, to the extent possible, for shielding the national economy. It is not a moment for adventurism. Masterly inactivity is a storied diplomatic tradition. It has its merits today. The author is partner, The Asia Group, and chair of its India practice.



2030s. With its multiple crises, from the pandemic onwards, future historians could interpret the 2020s as a lost decade for the world economy. That is the enormity of what we face. In the circumstances, India and Pakistan are hardly each other's problem. Where is the conflict situated? Nobody is certain of the floor. There are countervailing interests and, therefore, pressures on Donald Trump. Making moves Gulf states have become frontline targets. A reckless US-Israel intervention has jeopardised Gulf countries'

and expat experience. It has left Iran more relevant as a coercive actor. Any post-conflict scenario will require greater military and internal security spending by Gulf states. They will also be vulnerable to different types of Iranian influence operations. Bahrain, for instance, is a Shia country with a Sunni monarch. Along with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, it is urging Trump to 'finish what you started'. In real terms this means freeing the Strait of Hormuz from an Iranian chokehold. This, in turn, would involve not just a US assault on one or more islands off Iran's southern coast, but

states are blind to Iran's enhanced importance. This is a reality. Nuance value is the ultimate leverage in global politics. As regional economies are reconstructed, accommodation and incentivisation of Iran is inevitable. Gulf states would only want more cards in their hands when this process begins. Other countries are nudging Trump differently. Pakistan, Türkiye, Egypt and Saudi Arabia — with the first hosting the other three in a 2-day foreign ministerial talks in Islamabad to de-escalate the US-Israel war on Iran — are working towards a frozen outcome, with

Sanjay Malhotra's Baptism by Fire

Coffee Table

News Network

"Maybe, it won't come to that." A perverse logic pervades most forecasts on the war's economic consequences. The unstated refrain is that some solution, not a neat resolution, but a cold peace, the kind of hostile truce one can imagine between racists and fanatics, would emerge. After a while, the intensity of conflict would diminish, though not go away, and another stretch of West Asia would become a troubled zone while the rest of the world gets on with life. It's a quiet hope for many strategists even as the turbulence turns murkier. They are unable to predict beyond April, assess how inflation would behave — a number that's not just a function of oil, but several product prices pushed up by longer voyages. No one is sure when higher intermediate product prices would creep into wholesale prices and how fast

consumer prices would catch up. They are caught in a more complex world where calculations must factor in commodity prices as well as quantities and availability. It could take months for trade to normalise even after the Strait of Hormuz fully opens. It's futile to borrow from the Russia-Ukraine war which today looks like a simplistic template. And, how the war would impact the FY26 numbers, and how much would spill over to FY27 can only be a guess. In a world like this, Sanjay Malhotra will announce the financial year's first monetary policy on April 8. It will be his acid test. Many governors have had baptism by fire. Lehman collapsed less than a fortnight after Duvvuri Subbarao took charge in September 2008. Raghuram Rajan walked into the winds of taper tantrum in 2015. Like his predecessor Shaktikanta Das, who faced Covid a year after taking

charge, Malhotra must deal with the war volatility and disruptions, which would dampen growth and stoke inflation. Like banks and bond houses it regulates, RBI faces a challenge. In the April and October policies, RBI forecasts crude and exchange rate over the next 2 years. The estimates go into its model and policy. But with oil and markets tossed between Trump's tweets, that exercise is now a shot in the dark. Still, if Malhotra has his way and the rupee does not come under a fresh fierce attack, he could prefer a 'lower for longer' approach to rates, avoid an April hike which would betray a sense of panic and view the turmoil as a transitory supply shock. A resistance to hike amid growth headwinds stems from Das' playbook to avoid local measures that amplify global shocks. So, RBI intervened in forex and bought gilts to prevent shooting bond yields that would have sparked

higher mark-to-market losses and sell-off of bank stocks. But as inflation hardens, Malhotra must take a call on raising rates while balancing the probability of downside to growth. An inflation above 4.5% would be within RBI's target band, but an unchanged policy rate of 5.25% would go against the preferred real rate of 1% or slightly higher. Monetary policy can take sudden turns, particularly when the guv is not a hard-boiled economist and is more receptive to views. Das, who held rates at the onset of the Ukraine war in February 2022, began a surprise tightening from early May, soon after IMF meeting. A few things favour RBI. Unlike in Covid or the financial meltdown, no one today expects the central bank to be the first line of defence. And, with GoI partly absorbing inflationary pressures by avoiding fuel price rise, RBI can focus more on growth.

However, firefighting war-induced uncertainties may stretch longer than feared. Who would mediate? What would the US project as a win? What would Iran get in return? There are no answers as the world has forgotten the price it paid for the lack of humility of victors in modern history — something that weighed heavily on 20th century's economic policymakers. Today, central banks and policymakers confront new odds — as narratives eclipse facts, the victor and the vanquished can't be distinguished. Someday, the madness would ebb. Still, the problem that dogs India would remain: a deficit BoP, with more dollars flowing out than coming in. It may worsen after the war. Amid foreign equity outflows and low direct investments, GoI and RBI must use every ammunition to increase dollar supply and back INR. Not just emergency measures like

slashing banks' forex speculative book after the rupee breached 94. Or, possible steps like making exporters sell dollars sooner; holding variable reverse repo auctions to raise short-term rates and make betting against the INR costlier; lowering individual overseas remittance limit; announcing a special NRI deposit scheme through SBI amid fears that remittances from the Gulf may be hit. Much more must be done to deepen the dollar pool: fast track clearance of FDI proposals, relaxing rules to attract FDI from China and Hong Kong as far as politically acceptable; stop misuse of overseas direct investments and push GoI bonds in more global indices — after all, foreign investment in bonds has been stickier than FPI equity bets. Till BoP stays red, Malhotra and his army would continue defending the rate and rupee long after the war is over.

Suspended Jharkhand IAS officer Vinay Chaubey gets default bail in disproportionate assets case

Coffee Table
News Network

RANCHI: In a major relief to suspended IAS officer Vinay Chaubey, an Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) court has granted him bail in a disproportionate assets case. Chaubey was granted relief as the chargesheet was not filed within the stipulated time. The court accepted his plea seeking default bail. The ACB had taken him into judicial custody on January 28. The investigating agency was required to file the chargesheet by March 29, but failed to do so. The ACB had registered FIR against IAS officer Vinay Chaubey and seven other accused persons, including his relatives and close associate, Vinay Singh. The FIR alleges large-scale corruption, fraudulent transactions and amassing disproportionate



assets through family members and associates. Besides Vinay Chaubey, his wife Swapna Sanchita, Vinay Singh, a trusted friend and investor in illegal assets, and his wife Snigdha Singh have been named as accused in the FIR. Vinay Chaubey's brother-in-law, Shipij Trivedi, his wife, Priyanka Trivedi and Chaubey's father-in-law, SN Trivedi, have also been named in the FIR as accused persons. The ACB investigation had revealed that Vinay Chaubey has income and assets that exceed his known sources of income. He has earned Rs 2.20 crore through

his current employment. However, the investigation revealed that Rs 3.47 crore were deposited into his accounts and in the accounts belonging to his relatives and associates, controlled by him. This reflected approximately Rs 1.27 crore of unexplained assets, nearly 53 per cent higher than his legal income. According to ACB, Vinay Chaubey systematically used the accounts of his wife, brother-in-law, father-in-law, friend and friend's wife to create a network. These funds were routed through cash deposits, RTGS transfers, loan

payments, real estate registrations and private company transactions to mask their origins. Investigators also revealed that Vinay Singh played the role of a "receiver and operator" of the illegal proceeds, with numerous suspicious transactions found in his accounts. His wife was also allegedly a key participant in the money laundering network. The ACB, investigating Vinay Chaubey's corruption, had also found that he committed financial irregularities wherever he had been posted. While serving as Deputy Commissioner in Hazaribagh, he committed a land scam, and while in Ranchi, he was engaged in a liquor scam. The ACB has received information about scams from every position he held, which is under investigation

West Asia conflict: Indian national killed in Iranian strikes in Kuwait

Coffee Table
News Network

DUBAI: An Indian national has been killed in Kuwait in Iranian strikes on a power and water desalination plant, the Indian Embassy said on Monday. The number of Indian nationals killed in the ongoing West Asia conflict has risen to eight, with the latest casualty reported from Kuwait. Expressing its "deepest condolences" at the tragic demise of the Indian national in the attack on Sunday, the embassy in a social media post said it was closely coordinating with the Kuwaiti authorities to render all possible support and assistance. Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said a service building at one of its power and water distillation plants was damaged during the attack, according

to the state-run KUNA news agency. Officials described it as a "brutal attack". The

aftermath in line with the ministry's approved emergency plan, she added. Hayat said

the UAE when debris of missiles intercepted by the country's air defence system fell



plant where the attack occurred wasn't identified. Ministry spokesperson Fatima Jawhar Hayat said the strike resulted in the death of a worker of Indian nationality, Gulf News reported. Technical and emergency response teams were immediately deployed to the site to contain the situation and manage the

specialised teams are working to secure the damaged facilities while coordinating closely with security authorities and other relevant agencies. The ministry said that operational efficiency across the electricity and water network in the country remains intact. Recently, an Indian national was among two killed in

on a street. The fatalities have been reported across multiple locations, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and in maritime incidents involving commercial vessels. Iran's retaliation after the joint US and Israel strikes on Tehran on February 28 has escalated the war to the entire Gulf region.

BJD chief Naveen slams Nishikant Dubey over 'CIA link' barb, says he needs 'mental doctor's attention'

Coffee Table
News Network

BHUBANESWAR: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Leader of Opposition in the Odisha Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, on Monday strongly condemned BJD MP Nishikant Dubey for his controversial remarks alleging links between former Odisha Chief Minister Biju Patnaik and the CIA. Reacting strongly, Naveen Patnaik dismissed the allegation as "outlandish" and historically unfounded. In a pointed rebuttal, he said, "I was just 13 years old at that time, and I clearly remember the circumstances. Such statements are completely baseless." Taking a further swipe at Dubey, the BJD supreme remarked that the BJD MP



"needs a mental doctor's attention" for making such claims against a leader of Biju Patnaik's stature. Recalling historical context, Naveen emphasised his father's crucial role during the Sino-Indian War of 1962. He noted that then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had entrusted Biju Patnaik with key responsibilities during the war, even setting up an office for him close to the Prime Minister's to assist in critical operations. The controversy stems from Dubey's remarks alleging that Biju

Patnaik acted as a "link" between the US government, the CIA, and Nehru during the 1962 war, which sparked widespread outrage across Odisha. The BJD strongly rejected the allegations, calling them baseless and an insult to the legacy of a revered leader. Amid escalating tensions, BJD leaders also took symbolic protest measures. Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra resigned from a parliamentary committee chaired by Dubey, stating he could not continue under someone who

had made "disrespectful" remarks about Biju Patnaik. Making a strong protest in Rajya Sabha on Monday, Patra condemned the comments as an insult to Odisha's pride and identity, asserting that disrespecting Biju Babu amounts to insulting the entire state. They demanded an immediate apology from Dubey and the BJD, and later staged a walkout from the House. The BJD warned that the protest would intensify if an apology is not issued soon. The BJD said that Biju Patnaik's contributions to India's freedom struggle and nation-building are well-documented and cannot be distorted by what they termed as "irresponsible comments."

NDA, Congress spar in Lok Sabha over Centre's push to eliminate Naxalism

Coffee Table
News Network

NEW DELHI: BJP and NDA members in the Lok Sabha on Monday launched a scathing attack on the previous UPA government, accusing it of failing to contain Naxalism, while the Congress said it made several efforts to curb left-wing extremism and lost several of its top leaders to red terrorism. Initiating the discussion on "efforts to free the country from left-wing extremism (LWE)", Shiv Sena member Shrikant Shinde said under BJP rule, the "red corridor" has shrunk significantly and has been replaced by a growth corridor. He said had the earlier governments timely intervened, the



situation would have been different. He alleged that it happened because the government was not 'mazboot' (strong) but 'majboor' (helpless). "A lack of political will to fight naxalism and policy paralysis were your (Congress) shortcomings. Efforts were on to weaken the country from inside; foreign conspiracies were working, and Congress compromised with national security

when it was in power," he said. Citing data, Shinde claimed that last year, 317 Naxalites were killed, 862 were arrested, and 1,900 of them surrendered. "In 2024 and 25, at least 28 Naxal leaders were killed, including six members of the central committee. In 2026 so far, 630 cadres have shunned the path of violence and these statistics show that we have covered the

distance from bullet to ballot," he said. TDP MP Byreddy Shabari told the House that she lost her family to left-wing extremism (LWE). "There were highest number of Naxal attacks during the Congress rule, but thanks to the policy of PM Narendra Modi and relentless efforts by Home Minister Amit Shah, Naxalism is now on its way out," she said. Saptagiri Ulaka of Congress hit back, saying that the UPA government had launched Operation Green Hunt and had created the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) to deal with the Naxal threat.

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Supreme Court Warns Gujarat Govt Of Contempt Proceedings Over Delay In Deciding Remission Pleas

Coffee Table

News Network

The Supreme Court recently warned the State of Gujarat of strict penal consequences, including possible suo motu contempt proceedings, for failing to decide applications for premature release of convicts within the timelines prescribed under its policy. "It is further clarified that in future, if the above stipulation as per the policy itself is not implemented in its entirety and mandatorily, the same shall entail strict penal orders from this Court, including, but not limited to, initiation of suo motu contempt against all the persons who do not act in terms of the policy or if the final order does not come latest by the day on which the convict completes 14 years of actual incarceration", the Court stated.

bench of Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice R. Mahadevan was dealing with the case of a life convict whose premature release had not been decided despite completion of the required period of incarceration under the State policy. The Court noted that as on December 12, 2025, the petitioner had already completed the minimum period required for consideration under the premature release policy. Despite this, and despite more than three months' time granted on that date, no final decision had been taken. On March 16, 2026, the State informed the Court that the competent committee meets only four times a year and that the petitioner's case was under process and would be placed before it. The Court found

this stand "absolutely unacceptable". Referring to the State's circular dated July 9, 1992 issued under Section 432 of the CrPC, the Court noted that the process for premature release must begin three months before completion of 14 years of imprisonment so that a final decision is taken when the convict becomes eligible. The Court held that once a prisoner completes the prescribed period, a final order must be passed on that very day, since the policy itself requires advance processing. It observed that although premature release is not a fundamental right, it is a vested right once the State frames a policy. In matters concerning life and liberty, continued incarceration beyond the legally

prescribed period would amount to illegal custody. We need not reiterate the fact that the right for premature release is not a fundamental right, but it does take the nature of a vested right in a prisoner, once the State Government exercises its discretion and

period which in law has been prescribed, and in the present case, a statutory law relating to the period of incarceration, the person would be considered to be in illegal custody and rightly so, the Government had directed that the process be started

initiated proceedings against all responsible officials but refrained from doing so at this stage. The Court listed the matter on April 7, 2026 directing that the order be communicated to the Chief Secretary of Gujarat for

Secretary or Secretary of the Home Department, and the Inspector General of Prisons, Gujarat, shall remain personally present to show cause why proceedings should not be initiated against them. The Gujarat High Court in 2023 had upheld the petitioner's conviction under Sections 302 and 498A of the IPC and the sentence of life imprisonment imposed by the trial court. The conviction relates to a December 9, 2011 incident in Ahmedabad where the accused was found to have assaulted his wife with a hammer, causing fatal head injuries. At the time of the High Court judgment, the appellant had already undergone sentence of over 11 years. The Supreme Court has repeatedly flagged delays by state authorities in deciding remission and premature

release. In March 2025, the Court issued a contempt notice to the Delhi Home Secretary for not deciding a remission case despite earlier assurances, observing that authorities act only when faced with contempt. In February 2025, the Court directed States to consider premature release of convicts as soon as they become eligible, even without requiring a formal application, stressing that eligible prisoners should not remain in custody due to administrative delay. In November 2025, the Court expressed displeasure over failure of several States to implement remission and premature release policies and directed High Courts to monitor compliance through suo motu proceedings.



frames a policy. However, in matters which relate to life and liberty of a person, the Constitutional Principles have to be invoked, for the reason that every day beyond the

three months before the date on which the prisoner would be completing the 14 years of actual incarceration", the Court observed. The Court stated that it could have

compliance across the State. The Court also warned that if a final decision is not placed on record by the next date, the Chief Secretary, the Additional Chief

Electricity Act | Regulatory Commission Can Take Into Account Govt Grant While Determining Tariff

Coffee Table

News Network

The Supreme Court has observed that although tariff determination lies exclusively within the domain of the State Electricity Regulatory Commission, it is equally bound to consider government policy incentives, including subsidies aimed at enhancing power generation; however, such consideration must not result in a mechanical deduction of the incentive from the tariff in a manner that defeats the very objective of the scheme. Regulatory Commissions have plenary power over tariff determination and there is no unallocated regulatory residue remaining outside its power to determine tariff. The argument that Regulatory Commissions do not have the power to take into account a Grant made by the Central Government under Article 282 is rejected. Tariff determination is the exclusive province of the Regulatory Commissions." However, this regulatory power must be exercised as a collaborative enterprise. It must not be exercised in a manner that ignores the purpose and object of a policy or grant by other stakeholders." A bench of Justices Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Atul S. Chandurkar heard a case where the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) did take the Generation Based Incentive (GBI) into account while fixing tariffs, but passed its benefit on to the DISCOMs, which was

meant for the Respondent-wind power generator company. Also Read - Supreme Court Monthly Roundup: February 2026 While upholding the Commission's power to take the Generation-Based Incentive (GBI) into account in tariff determination, the Court faulted its approach of mechanically deducting the incentive, meant for wind power generators, from the tariff, thereby passing its benefit on to the Appellant DISCOMs. "we hold that the Commission has the last word in determination of tariff, we are in disagreement with its treatment of the GBI while determining tariff in the present case. Regulatory authority cannot be exercised in a manner that nullifies the legislative or policy intent or the intent of the grant, just because power and jurisdiction to determine tariff is exclusively vested in the Regulatory Commission.", the Court observed. Also Read - Land Acquisition | Person Who Accepted S.28A Award Can File Second Application For Enhancement Based On Appeals : Supreme Court Background At the heart of the dispute was the Generation Based Incentive (GBI) scheme introduced by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in 2009 to promote wind energy. The scheme provided wind power generators Rs. 0.50 per unit of electricity fed into the grid, explicitly stating that this incentive was to be "over and above the tariff that may be

approved by the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions." The APERC in its 2015 Tariff Regulations, had framed Regulation 20, which stated that the Commission "shall take into consideration any incentive or subsidy offered by the Central or State Government... if availed by the generating company... while determining the tariff." When APERC subsequently passed tariff orders in 2015 and 2016, it did not factor in the GBI benefit. However, when distribution companies (DISCOMs) later sought amendment of these orders, APERC reversed course and directed that the GBI amount be deducted from the tariff payable by the DISCOMs to generators. The Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) set aside the APERC's order, holding that APERC lacked the power to mandatorily take into account the GBI benefits, prompting the DISCOMs to appeal to the Supreme Court. Dismissing the appeal, the Supreme Court disagreed with the APTEL's view that APERC was not required to mandatorily consider the GBI benefits, while determining tariff, but emphasized that while APERC was right in considering the GBI during tariff determination, it wrongly deducted the incentive from the tariff payable by the Respondent. It said that the APERC was obligated to grant a benefit to the Respondent-power generator, not the Appellant-DISCOMS. "we are of the opinion

that the APERC was obligated to apply GBI in furtherance of the purpose for which it was designed, that is, to incentivise renewable power generators and give the benefit as intended in the scheme.", the court observed. The Court criticized APERC's approach as precisely the kind of mechanical exercise that Regulation 20 did not contemplate. By simply deducting the GBI amount from the tariff without considering the underlying purpose of the scheme, APERC had effectively nullified the very objective the GBI was designed to achieve. "Under Regulation 20, while determining tariff the Regulatory Commission, "shall take into consideration any incentive or subsidy offered by the central or state government". However, the need to "take into account" does not mechanically translate into either a mandatory deduction or automatic pass-through. It requires a contextual and purposive treatment. Factoring in the incentive into tariff cannot be divorced from its underlying objective. The importance of the policy to encourage investment in renewable energy sources has already been explained. If a scheme was not intended as a "consumer subsidy", but as a "generator-focused incentive" and the scheme is integrally linked to realization of national and international policies, the Commission must respect and give effect to it.", the court observed. Accordingly, the appeal was dismissed.

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Ap's fiscal health slips to decade-low, ranks 17th

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VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh's fiscal health has slipped to its lowest point in a decade, with the state scoring 23.1 in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 and ranking 17th among the 18 major states in the country. The score reflects a state struggling to balance ambitious welfare and infrastructure commitments with weak revenue generation and rising debt. The decline marks a sharp fall from Andhra Pradesh's best performance in 2014-15, when it ranked 3rd nationally. Its average ranking slipped to 11th during 2014-17, with a score of 37.9 and further to 15th during 2017-20, with a score of 26.5. According to the recently released NITI Aayog FHI 2026 report for the financial year 2023-24, the pace of debt

accumulation in Andhra Pradesh is raising serious concerns over the state's long-term fiscal sustainability. Based on the FHI report, Andhra Pradesh has been classified as an 'Aspirational' state, indicating significant fiscal stress and structural weaknesses. Although the state has shown some improvement in the quality of expenditure, it continues to remain near the bottom of the national rankings due to high debt and widening deficits. The state's total liabilities rose sharply between 2019-20 and 2023-24, underlining mounting financial pressure. Over the five-year period, liabilities grew by over 50%, with a compound annual growth rate of around 12.7%. Andhra Pradesh's debt stock-to-GSDP ratio stood at 33% in 2023-24, significantly higher

than the average of 28.3% recorded across 18 major states. Its debt burden is also reflected in debt servicing indicators. Interest payments accounted for 16.2% of revenue receipts, exceeding the all-state average of 13.4%. The report also points out that a substantial share of borrowings is being used to finance revenue expenditure rather than capital creation, raising concerns over the long-term productivity of debt. In the Debt Index, Andhra Pradesh ranked 13th with a score of 36.6, placing it in the 'Performer' category. However, its Debt Sustainability score of 4.2 is among the lowest in the country. The State also continues to struggle to meet fiscal consolidation targets under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) framework. In 2023-

24, Andhra Pradesh recorded a revenue deficit of Rs 38,683 crore, amounting to 2.68% of GSDP. Its fiscal deficit widened to Rs 62,720 crore, or 4.35% of GSDP,



breaching the prescribed ceiling of 4%. In the Fiscal Prudence Index, Andhra Pradesh ranked 16th with a score of 9.9, placing it in the 'Aspirational' category. The state also performed poorly in revenue generation. In the Revenue Mobilization Index, Andhra Pradesh ranked 16th with a score of 21.7. However, it fared

better in the Quality of Expenditure Index, where it ranked 12th with a score of 43.1, earning the 'Front Runner' tag. This suggests that despite fiscal stress, the

2023-24, own tax revenue accounted for around 52% of total revenue receipts, registering a 48% increase over five years. Among the major

component, exposing the state to sector-specific risks. Despite these constraints, Andhra Pradesh has maintained a strong focus on developmental expenditure, especially in welfare and infrastructure sectors such as education, health, housing, irrigation and energy. The state's total developmental expenditure rose by nearly 65% over five years, increasing from Rs 1.01 lakh crore in 2019-20 to Rs 1.67 lakh crore in 2023-24. A major structural concern, however, is the weight of committed liabilities. Nearly 48.59% of total revenue expenditure is being absorbed by salaries, pensions and interest payments, leaving limited fiscal space for discretionary and growth-oriented spending. Speaking to TNIE, economist Pentapati Pullarao

said Andhra Pradesh appears to be moving in the right direction in terms of the quality of expenditure, which is particularly significant in the post-bifurcation context. He said Andhra Pradesh had traditionally been fiscally stronger but lost momentum after the 2014 bifurcation. Unlike states such as Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Telangana, which emerged out of long-standing regional aspirations and had stronger urban anchors or pre-existing growth centres, Andhra Pradesh became a residual state without such an advantage. "Andhra Pradesh was not a willing entity in that sense. It had to start over and rebuild its growth model. So the state now has to catch up and find new ways to develop," he said.

Peace key to State's development, says PM Modi in Assam

Coffee Table
News Network

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said Assam witnessed a long span of instability, but things changed in the past decade as the BJP's double-engine government made every effort to ensure peace in the State. Twelve peace agreements were signed by the government with different organisations in the northeast, Modi said while addressing the BJP's booth level workers in poll-bound Assam as part of the 'Mera Booth, Sabse Mazboot Samvaad'. The initiative aimed at giving messages directly to party activists ahead of polls. The prime minister said BJP workers must remind people how the Congress used to make agreements only on paper to create headlines and mislead people. "We have seen the era when Assam was burning in violence. Assam saw a long span of instability, but things have changed in the past decade. But today, we can see a



new confidence as the BJP's double-engine government has made every effort for peace," he said. "Under the Congress, peace agreements were pushed aside and the youth were left to suffer and drift towards unrest", Modi asserted. "No agreement with insurgents and student organisations worked during the Congress rule in Assam. The Congress betrayed the Bodo cause. The BJP worked to establish peace and secure the future of the youth. We are sincerely implementing peace agreements on the

ground. Assam has witnessed how peace has been established through honest efforts in the past decade," he said. Modi said everyone was working hard for the BJP-NDA government's hat-trick in Assam. "I welcome the karyakartas of Assam BJP. I am a karyakarta like you. Whatever responsibility is given to me, I fulfil that duty. Today, at the booth level, I got the opportunity to speak to you. I know you are busy and all of you are filled with the resolve of 'Mera Booth Sabse Mazboot'," he said. "There is a need to remind first-time

voters of previous Congress governments' 'misrule' in Assam and caution them that even the smallest mistake can push the state back," he added. "Peace is the primary requirement for a state's development," the PM underlined. Modi also asked the Assam BJP booth workers to caution people against AI-generated videos in circulation in the state. The elections for the 126-member Assam Assembly will be held on April 9. The BJP-led NDA government has been in power in Assam since 2016.

Nitish Kumar likely to quit Bihar Council seat today; BJP eyes new CM

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PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is likely to resign from the Bihar Legislative Council today (March 30). On March 16, Nitish was elected to the Rajya Sabha. As per the Constitution, when a member of a state legislature is elected to Parliament, they must resign within 14 days of the election. "Nitish Kumar was elected to the Rajya Sabha on March 30. Under this law, he will submit his resignation from the Bihar Legislative Council today," a senior JD(U) leader said. BJP national president Nitin Nabin, who was supposed to resign from the state Legislative Assembly on Sunday, is also set to resign today. Though preparations were made at the Assembly for the purpose on Sunday, Nabin had to leave for Delhi due to certain reasons. Both Nitish and Nabin are expected to resign



from the Bihar Legislative Council and the Bihar Legislative Assembly, respectively. Preparations for their resignations have been made at the Assembly secretariat, sources said. March 30 is the last day for submission of their resignations, according to the Prohibition of Simultaneous Membership Rules, 1950 (under Articles 101/190 of the Constitution). This provision applies to all cases where a legislator is elected to Parliament while still holding a state-level position. Last week, JD(U) national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha said he was not aware when Nitish Kumar would

relinquish the post of Chief Minister, but confirmed that he would quit as a member of the Legislative Council on or before the deadline. Meanwhile, political activity has intensified over the formation of a new government in Bihar under a new Chief Minister. Intense lobbying has reportedly begun within the BJP, with indications that the party may have its own Chief Minister for the first time. A top BJP leader said the CM could be from an RSS background. Though the party had attempted to replace Nitish with one of its leaders after the 2020 Assembly elections, circumstances did

not favour the move, resulting in Nitish Kumar continuing as Chief Minister. After the 2025 Assembly elections, in which the NDA registered a landslide victory, Nitish again took oath as CM for a record tenth time. However, he may have to relinquish the post in less than five months. On Saturday, Bihar Assembly Speaker Prem Kumar visited Delhi to attend a function but had to return to Patna the same evening after being informed by BJP state president Sanjay Saraogi that Nitin Nabin intended to resign from the Assembly. The Speaker was reportedly left waiting, as Nabin departed for Delhi for an important meeting. He later returned to his residence after being informed that Nabin would not be submitting his resignation that day due to "unavoidable reasons."

Mamata pitches Bengal polls as battle of identity, says TMC will work to 'capture Delhi' next

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DEBRA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday raised the issue of Bengal identity and reinforced the TMC's long-standing political narrative of Bengal versus Delhi. At the heart of Banerjee's attack was the allegation that the Centre and the Election Commission were working in tandem to weaken the state government and manipulate the electoral process. "The landlords of Delhi have taken away all powers from my hands," she said, using a phrase aimed at reinforcing the

TMC's long-standing political narrative of Bengal versus Delhi. Banerjee repeatedly accused the BJP of being "anti-Bengal" and sought to convert resentment over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls into a political issue. Addressing a rally at Debra in Paschim Medinipur, a politically significant belt where the BJP had made deep inroads in 2021 before the TMC clawed back ground in the Lok Sabha polls, Banerjee framed the election not merely as a contest for power in Bengal, but as a fight against what she described as the

BJP's attempt to control the state politically, culturally and electorally. "After winning in West Bengal, we will unite everyone across the country to capture Delhi," the TMC supreme said, in remarks that underlined her effort to position herself as one of the principal anti-BJP voices nationally even while fighting a high-stakes battle at home. She also raised the issue of deletion of names in SIR of electoral rolls and the TMC's national ambitions during her poll campaign. "You have made people stand in queues. You have humiliated them. The people will



take revenge for this humiliation through the ballot box," she said, in a line clearly aimed at turning alleged voter-list irregularities into a wider anti-BJP sentiment among ordinary voters. With the opposition and the ruling party locked in a bitter fight over alleged deletion of names

from the voters' list, Banerjee claimed that lakhs of genuine voters, particularly women and "Bengali-speaking people", had been removed. "Many names have been deleted. Check online and apply. I will ask (Debra TMC nominee) Rajib Banerjee to look into it. We will provide lawyers," she

said. "There are still 60 lakh names under logistical discrepancies. Even if 50 per cent of those names have been restored, the credit goes to our legal battle. I myself went to the Supreme Court and fought," the CM added. She alleged that BJP leaders had spoken about the deletions even before the EC. By foregrounding the issue, the TMC appeared to be attempting two political calculations -- energising its traditional minority and Bengali-speaking support base, while also reaching out to women voters, a constituency that has repeatedly

backed Banerjee. "They are anti-women. Most of the deleted names are of mothers and sisters," she said, claiming that women faced difficulties during the revision process due to the change of surnames after marriage. She also attempted to stitch together the TMC's social coalition across caste, religion and community lines at a time when the BJP is trying to expand its base among sections of SC, ST and OBCs in south Bengal. "Just as everyone fights for our tribal candidates, we must fight for Hindu candidates, and

where there are Muslim candidates, we must fight for them too. Because we are the ones who will form the government," she said. The formulation reflected the TMC's effort to blunt the BJP's polarisation strategy by projecting itself as the umbrella party of all communities. The choice of Debra was politically significant. Located in Paschim Medinipur, a district where the BJP had emerged as a formidable force in the last assembly election, the region has since seen a fierce battle for tribal, rural and lower-middle-class voters.

Trump threatens to 'completely obliterate' Iran's energy infrastructure if deal is not reached 'shortly'

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US President Donald Trump on Monday said the United States will "completely obliterate" all of Iran's energy resources and other vital infrastructure, if the Strait of Hormuz is not opened "immediately". Trump also said the US will seize Iran's Kharg Island, its main oil terminal in the Persian Gulf. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the US was engaged in what he termed as "serious discussions" with a "new, and more reasonable" leadership in Iran aimed at ending US military operations there. Trump added that the discussions have made "great progress", but if for any reason a "deal is not shortly reached" and if the Strait of Hormuz is not immediately "Open for Business," the US would conclude their "lovely stay" in Iran by "blowing up and completely



obliterating" all of Iran's electric generating plants and oil wells. The US President said the action will be in "retribution" to the US soldiers and others that Iran has "butchered" and killed over 47 years of "reign of terror". On the ground, the war showed no sign of letting up: Tehran struck a key water and electrical plant in Kuwait, and an oil refinery in Israel came under attack. Israel and the US launched a new wave of strikes on Iran. Trump's social media post and

earlier comments in an interview with the Financial Times that suggested American troops could seize the country's Kharg Island export hub highlight how he has repeatedly said that talks with Iran are ongoing — and even going well — though Tehran denies negotiating directly. But at the same time, he has continually ramped up his threats, as thousands more Marines and other US troops pour into the Middle East. "Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don't. We have a

lot of options," Trump told Financial Times. "It would also mean we had to be there (on Kharg Island) for a while." Asked about Iranian defences there, he said: "I don't think they have any defense. We could take it very easily." The US already launched airstrikes once it said targeted military positions on the island. Iran has threatened to launch its own ground invasion of Gulf Arab countries and new attacks if US troops land on its territory.

Iran confirms death of its Revolutionary Guard Navy chief Alireza Tangsiri

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News Network

TEHRAN: Iran confirmed on Monday that an Israeli strike had killed the commander of the naval force of the Revolutionary Guards, who Israel had said was responsible for the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz. A statement carried by the Guards' Sepah News website said Alireza Tangsiri "succumbed to severe injuries" from the attack last week. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz announced on Thursday that an Israeli airstrike had killed Tangsiri, describing him as the "man who was directly responsible for the terrorist operation of mining and blocking the Strait of Hormuz". Since the start of the war now in its second month, Iran has imposed a de facto blockade on the key waterway, sending global energy prices spiralling. The Guards statement said he had been organising coastal defences when he



was killed and vowed "that we will not rest until the enemy is completely destroyed". "Every fighter is a Tangsiri, and we will see what surprises they will bring in the days and months ahead," the statement added. He is the latest top Iranian official to have been confirmed by Tehran to have been killed in the war. Supreme leader Ali Khamenei was killed on the first day of the war on February 28 and the Islamic republic's powerful security chief, Ali Larjani, was killed earlier this month, along with over a dozen other prominent figures. Katz had said

senior officers of the naval command were killed in the strike that killed Tangsiri, without giving further details. Tangsiri had vowed earlier in March to "deliver the harshest blows to the aggressor enemy while maintaining the strategy of closing the Strait of Hormuz". A veteran of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, Tangsiri was one of the longest-serving senior figures in the force and one of its highest-profile faces within the Islamic republic. He had been appointed by Khamenei in 2018 to head the naval branch of the Revolutionary Guards, whose task

is to protect the Islamic republic from internal and external threats. Under his leadership, the Guards' navy had been significantly strengthened. In recent years, it has claimed responsibility for seizing numerous foreign vessels. He was sanctioned by the United States in 2019 in a counter-terrorism related designation. Israel and the United States have said they have dealt a major blow to Iran by killing top officials, but some analysts say the Islamic republic is still showing resilience and capacity to recover from setbacks.

Spain shuts airspace for US planes involved in Iran war

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MADRID: Spain's leftist government has closed Spanish airspace to US planes carrying out missions against Iran, in addition to denying Washington use of its bases, the defence minister said on Monday. "The bases are not authorised, and of course neither is the use of Spanish airspace for actions related to the war in Iran," Margarita Robles told journalists, confirming a report



by El Pais daily. Spain's refusal to cooperate has "complicated" US military operations by forcing bombers to change their routes and logistics on their way to the Middle East, El Pais reported. The transit or landing of planes

is allowed only in case of an emergency, the newspaper said. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has emerged as the highest-profile Western leader to consistently oppose the war, launched by

US-Israeli strikes on February 28 and which has since engulfed the entire Middle East. His stance has infuriated Spain's traditional NATO ally, with US President Donald Trump threatening to cut trade ties in their latest policy clash. Spain had already sparked Trump's anger by refusing to agree to raise NATO defence spending to five percent of member states' GDP as demanded by the US president.

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