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"Political Vultures": PM Modi Slams Congress Over Response To Iran War



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a blistering attack on the Congress today at an event in Gujarat's Vav Tharad, accusing the Opposition party of "political vulture-ism" and conspiring to incite chaos amid the global instability triggered by the situation in West Asia. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister highlighted the

severe global crisis regarding diesel, petrol, and gas. He noted that while the world is struggling, India has maintained a level of stability that has eluded many other nations. "In difficult times, we must all stand together," PM Modi said. "The situation in West Asia has created immense difficulties across the entire world. However, even in

such times, India has kept the situation under control."

Panic and Conspiracy

He, however, expressed deep concern over the domestic political response to these global challenges, and specifically targeted the Congress for allegedly prioritising "bread-and-butter" politics over national unity.

"Look at the misfortune of the country," he remarked. "Certain national parties in our nation are busy playing 'bread-and-butter' politics with these issues. Leading them is the Congress. Congress leaders are intent on dividing the nation."

He also alleged that the Opposition is actively working to undermine

public confidence. "Today, when the country needs trust, the Congress is spreading fear and rumors. They are busy instigating people. Like political vultures, the Congress is trying to take advantage of this situation. The Congress is creating an atmosphere of fear in the country, hoping people will line up and chaos will spread," he said.

AI Summit incident

PM Modi suggested that the Opposition's behaviour stems from a loss of power, noting that while the AI Summit in Delhi received international acclaim, Congress members were "tearing their own clothes" in frustration. "Being out of power has left the Congress party in a state of panic," he added.

US Award-Winning Journalist Shelly Kittleson Kidnapped In Baghdad

Baghdad: Shelly Kittleson, a US award-winning freelance journalist, was kidnapped by unidentified people in Baghdad on Tuesday. According to a report by AI-Monitor, sources from the Trump administration were aware of the threat against her and had advised her not to travel to Iraq. Iraq's Interior Ministry has confirmed that a foreign journalist has been kidnapped in Iraq, however, it did not provide any further details about the identity of the reporter.

"The Ministry of the Interior announces that, in the evening of this day, a foreign journalist encountered an incident of kidnapping by unknown people, and immediately the specialized security forces dis-

patched their duties to pursue the criminals, according to accurate intelligence information and an intensive field effort to track the path of the kidnappers", the Ministry said in a post on social media.

The ministry stated that while the security forces were pursuing the vehicle belonging to the kidnappers, it overturned. However, the forces were able to arrest one of the accused and seized the vehicles used in the abduction.

"Investigations are still ongoing to fully uncover the circumstances of the incident," read the statement. Two Iraqi security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak pub-



licly about the case, said the kidnapped journalist was a woman with US citizenship. They said that two cars were involved in the kidnapping, one of which crashed and was apprehended, while a second car fled the scene with the journalist, heading toward the south of Baghdad, reported Associated Press. A video aired by the Al Arabiya channel, whose authenticity could not be independently verified, shows the initial moments of the kidnapping incident. The clip shows armed men stopping her car on a busy street, pulling her out and fleeing.

It was not immediately clear if the kidnapping was related to the ongoing regional war, but Iran-backed

militias in Iraq have launched regular attacks on US facilities in the country since the beginning of the US-Israeli war on Iran. Since the start of the war, the US embassy has warned of kidnapping risks and urged citizens in the country to leave. Iraqi militias had also kidnapped foreigners before the war. Elizabeth Tsurkov, a Princeton graduate student with Israeli and Russian citizenship, disappeared in Baghdad in 2023. After she was freed and handed over to US authorities in September 2025, she said that she had been held by the Iran-allied Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah. The group never officially claimed responsibility for kidnapping her.

Ahead Of Tamil Nadu Polls, Piyush Goyal Releases 'Chargesheet' Against DMK

Chennai: Union Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tamil Nadu election in-charge Piyush Goyal, alongside State President Nainar Nagenthran, on Tuesday, released a "chargesheet" in Chennai targeting the DMK government ahead of the upcom-

ing Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections. Accompanied by leaders including K Annamalai and Tamilisai Soundararajan, Goyal described the upcoming Assembly election as a "turning point" in the state's history, expressing confidence that it will expose the unholy alliance

of DMK with its partners. While addressing the press conference, Piyush Goyal said, "This election will be a turning point in the history of Tamil Nadu. This election will once and for all expose the unholy UPA alliance of DMK, Congress and their partners as being one of the worst gov-

ernments that Tamil Nadu has ever seen." He also launched a strong attack on the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and its ally Indian National Congress, alleging widespread corruption, rising crime, and failure to deliver on electoral promises in Tamil Nadu.



Centre to introduce Amaravati legal status bill in Lok Sabha

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March 31:

The central government is set to introduce a bill granting legal status to Amaravati as the capital in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The bill is likely to be passed in the Lok Sabha; otherwise, it may be approved by both Houses of Parliament the day after tomorrow (April 2), according to sources.

Officials from the Union Home Ministry have recently included this bill in the Lok Sabha's list of business. The Centre will introduce it under the name of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act Amendment Bill.

The bill proposes amendments to Section 5, Subsection 2 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. In the amendment, the Centre has clarified that Amaravati is designated as the capital of Andhra Pradesh. Officials explained that Amaravati will be developed within the capital region as defined under the AP CRDA Act.

It is worth noting that the Andhra Pradesh Assembly had already passed a unanimous resolution on the Amaravati legal status bill and sent it to the Centre.

Local body elections may be held anytime: Minister Nara Lokesh

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March 31:

TDP National General Secretary and Minister Nara Lokesh cautioned party leaders to be vigilant about leaders migrating from YSRCP to TDP. He stated that just because the party is in power, there is no guarantee that opportunists joining for personal gain will stay loyal. He emphasized that priority should be given to party workers who stood by the party even during difficult times. He advised leaders to carefully evaluate and consult before admitting leaders from YSRCP into the party.

On Tuesday, Lokesh held a meeting with regional coordinators at NTR Bhavan in Amaravati. During the meeting, he said local body elections could be held at any time and instructed party cadres to be prepared accordingly. He urged district party presidents to become active and strengthen unit and booth-level structures.

He directed that meetings should be conducted constituency-wise with MLAs and stressed that hardworking party workers should be given importance. He said MLAs must clearly understand that the party is supreme. He also stated that MLAs should not interfere in revenue matters under any circumstances. He warned that the party will not tolerate involvement of MLAs in illegal sand and gravel transportation or in intimidating investors. He reminded them that they can contest again as MLAs only if the party issues them a B-form.

Lokesh further stated that when there is positive public response towards the welfare and development schemes implemented by



the government, the party leadership, including Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, will not tolerate the behavior of one or two MLAs that harms the party. He instructed that all pending nominated posts should be filled quickly based on priority and assured that hardworking party workers will definitely be recognized.

Having a leader who listens is our fortune: Minister Lokesh

In the "Coffee Kaburlu" program, Lokesh guided cluster in-charges to connect with people and work towards solving their problems. He said they should build TDP as a strong system and described it as fortunate to have a leader like Chandrababu Naidu who listens. He called the participants future leaders of the party and described TDP as a "university." He recalled that the first and second Chief Ministers of Telangana were products of TDP and said the party is like a factory that produces leaders.

He said TDP has continuously evolved and added that grassroots leaders who perform well should be recognized and elevated even to the Politburo. He told cluster in-charges that they would witness such changes in the upcoming

Politburo. He reiterated that Chandrababu is the party leader, everyone else are workers, and he is the commander while they are soldiers.

Lokesh sarcastically remarked that Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is suffering from a "credit disorder (CCD)," accusing him of claiming credit for projects like ArcelorMittal steel plant in Anakapalle, a data center in Visakhapatnam, Kia car manufacturing in Anantapur, Bhogapuram airport, and bulk drug parks. He criticized Jagan's attitude and said he hopes he recovers from this "disease" soon, advising him to focus on solving people's problems. He stated that due to YSRCP's arrogant attitude, their seats reduced drastically (from 151 to 11). He advised party leaders and workers to remain patient and work closely with the people. He noted that by reaching every booth, the party achieved victory in Mangalagiri constituency after 1985. Lokesh humorously said that the party is like a permanent home, while the government is like a rented house. That is why they dedicate more time to the party. He added that their current status is due to the party and the efforts of Chandrababu Naidu, and called upon everyone to work unitedly.

Counter YSRCP's criticism on the capital: CM Chandrababu calls party cadres

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, March 31:

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu called upon party cadres to proudly take to the people the message that the central government is bringing a law to make Amaravati the capital. On Tuesday, he held a teleconference with TDP leaders in Amaravati.

During the meeting, Chandrababu said that the previous rulers, under the pretext of having three capitals, played divisive politics and left the state without a proper capital, criticizing leaders of YSR Congress Party. He added that this uncertainty caused investors to hesitate. He remarked that if they had won again in 2019, Amaravati would have been developed as a model city. He instructed TDP cadres to strongly counter YSRCP's criticism regarding the capital.

He also expressed anger

that YSRCP leaders are creating unnecessary controversy over the Rayalaseema lift irrigation projects. He directed party workers to strongly refute false propaganda by YSRCP at every level. He advised them to remain cautious about individuals with criminal backgrounds and urged public representatives to behave respectfully toward party workers and treat them with warmth. Chandrababu stated that efforts are being made to revive the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant from losses and recalled that the central government has allocated rs. 11,400 crore for it. He mentioned that the foundation stone has also been laid for the Mittal Steel Plant in Nakkapalli. He added that free bus facilities are being provided to persons with disabilities.

He pointed out that Pattiseema project, which was once opposed, is now



supplying water to the Krishna delta, and surplus water is being provided to Rayalaseema. He also mentioned that repairs are being carried out on the gates of the Tungbhadra Dam and that works are underway to fill the plunge pool of the Srisaillam Dam. He said several projects have

been brought in to transform the state into a green hydrogen hub. The Chief Minister emphasized that leadership opportunities will be given to all communities in proportion to population. He also announced free electricity: 200 units for handloom weavers and 500 units for powerloom weavers.

Problems arose due to rumors: Minister Nadendla

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, March 31:

State Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar said that problems arose because of rumors, which led to a sudden surge of five lakh gas bookings at once. He criticized the spread of false propaganda regarding the supply of gas, diesel, and petrol.

On Tuesday, the minister held a meeting with gas and oil dealers along with senior officials. Speaking afterwards, he clarified that there is no shortage in supply anywhere. However, he noted that delays in delivery are occurring from 16 agencies handling domestic gas distribution.

He said clear instructions have been given to resolve

these issues immediately. Cases have been registered under Section 6A against 146 gas agencies involved in black marketing, and more than 4,000 gas cylinders have been seized. He added that the government is in constant contact with three oil companies to ensure there is no gas shortage. From Tuesday, the central government has permitted up to 70% supply for commercial gas usage.

The minister advised the public to book domestic gas cylinders only after 25 days in cities and 45 days in rural areas. He said fuel stock levels in the state have already been reviewed and assured that Andhra Pradesh has sufficient petrol and diesel compared

to other states. The daily requirement is about 7,900 liters of petrol and 20,000 liters of diesel. He noted that after the issue began, diesel consumption increased by 8% and petrol by 2.5%, and assured that even rural areas are being supplied adequately.

He urged people not to rush to gas agencies and warehouses. He clarified that gas delivery will be done only through a one-time password (OTP) after online booking. He added that necessary measures are being taken considering the difficulties caused by war conditions in the Gulf. Commercial gas users were advised to contact Joint Collector offices in their districts.



He stated that priority is being given to hotels, restaurants, and hospitals for commercial gas supply. Currently, there are sufficient gas and oil reserves for up to 17 days without any issues. Continuous monitoring is being done on LPG, petrol, and diesel supplies. The minister also said that daily LPG distribution has increased from 2.30 lakh cylinders to 2.70 lakh cylinders.

EDITORIAL

This is not ideal, it is necessary

Telangana has implemented a historic law for the care of parents. On this occasion, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy himself is telling about the incidents that he has witnessed firsthand, which shows how neglected elderly parents are. 'A person who has risen to the top as a public representative, when his father gets cancer, then he becomes a minister and does not even care about his father. He is in a situation where he cannot take his father to the market and buy fruits. He does not even keep a food box at home and is afraid of his wife. When he dies, all the leaders visit that former minister, but no one knows how his father died.' Such real incidents contributed to the Telangana government bringing the Parents Care Act. The Central Government brought the Parents' Maintenance and Elderly Welfare Act into effect in 2007. But the implementation of this law is limited to papers.

The speciality of this law brought by the Telangana government is that this law is applicable not only to government employees but also to employees of private companies and public representatives like MLAs. 15 percent of the employees' salaries or Rs. 10 thousand, whichever is less, is transferred for the welfare of parents. The Telangana government has taken a step forward by proposing an institutional mechanism to effectively manage this. In our country, which often mentions the ideal of Matrudevbhava and Pitrudevbhava, the action taken by the Telangana government now reflects an urgency. The question arises as to why the Parents' Welfare Act adopted by the Central Government is not being implemented properly. That is, there is a lack of integrity in the implementation mechanism. According to the long-term aging study conducted in the country in 2021, it was found that in 2020, 5.2 percent of the elderly in the country were subjected to verbal harassment by their families.

Such harassment is becoming commonplace. A study has revealed that the number of victims of such verbal harassment in Telangana is up to 2.1 percent. More than half of the elderly victims reported that they were neglected by their families. It is ironic that now that harassment has increased to 68% in Telangana. All this comes to light only when the elderly complain. In fact, there are many incidents where complaints cannot be made, but they do not come to light. The reason for this seems to be the social dharma that the family will be dishonored and the pressure not to speak out. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed concern that it is unfortunate that the law has to interfere in the natural bond between parents and children. There is no need to take the Chief Minister's serious comments that those who neglect their parents will not learn a lesson unless they face social opposition.

The seriousness of this problem cannot be understated. Our Indian civilized culture worships parents and elders on a high pedestal equal to God. However, in complete contrast to this, it is extremely regrettable that many elderly people today are facing emotional abuse. Atrocities are being committed by the children they have raised and raised, keeping their own property in their possession and not giving them even a handful of money, or by not allowing them to stay in their own homes and eventually being sent to a crematorium alive. Will this inhuman and moral crisis be resolved by this law? The question arises. When the Center brought the Parental Care Act into effect in 2021, parental care laws were also implemented in states like Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

But the problem is that wherever the caterpillar is planted, there is a silver lining. However, it is the duty of the governments to strictly implement this law in view of the seriousness of the problem. Wide awareness should be created about this law and support should be given for its smooth implementation. Joint families are breaking up into small limited families as they independently decide who will live on their own and earn a little. There is nothing wrong with these families striving for better development. But parents are not asking for the return of the assets they have distributed. They are asking for their place in the family. We work for a few hours for the employer who pays the salary. But can't we spend even a minute for the parents who give us life? Forcing families to bow their necks in the name of law does not mean that parents are being cared for. A widespread civilizational cultural revival should be born.

Pakistan, And The One Big Difference Between 'Broker' And 'Mediator'

In the shifting geopolitics of West Asia, crises often produce unlikely intermediaries. The latest round of confrontation - sparked by US and Israeli strikes on Iran last month - has once again underscored this pattern. As the conflict stretches into its second month, raising the spectre of a wider regional conflagration, Pakistan has emerged as an improbable diplomatic conduit between Washington and Tehran. This development is neither accidental nor entirely surprising; it reflects a convergence of geography, necessity, and ambition that has long shaped Islamabad's external engagements. Acting as a back-channel facilitator, Islamabad has transmitted messages between the United States and Iran, reportedly conveying a detailed American proposal aimed at de-escalation. Simultaneously, its leadership - Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir - has engaged in calibrated shuttle diplomacy, maintaining parallel lines of communication with US President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's public acknowledgement of Pakistan's intermediary role, alongside coordination with key regional actors such as Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, signals a deliberate attempt to position the country at the centre of ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Geographical Concerns
At one level, Pakistan's activism is rooted in geography. Sharing a nearly 1,000-kilometre border with Iran, it occupies a space that no Gulf intermediary can replicate. While states like Oman and Qatar have historically played facilitative roles, their own vulnerability in the present conflict constrains their utility. Pakistan, by contrast, combines proximity with a degree of insulation, enabling it to sustain discreet engagement channels. This geographic reality is rein-

forced by security concerns in Balochistan, a province that straddles the Iran-Pakistan



border and remains susceptible to insurgent activity. Any prolonged instability across the border risks exacerbating militancy and triggering refugee inflows - outcomes Islamabad can ill afford.

Balancing US And Iran
Yet geography alone does not explain Pakistan's emergence as a mediator. Equally significant is its ability to maintain working relationships with competing actors. Islamabad's ties with Washington have witnessed a modest revival under the Trump administration, facilitated by economic cooperation and a renewed strategic dialogue. At the same time, Pakistan's engagement with Tehran has remained steady, underpinned by pragmatic border management and mutual sensitivities. Its close defence partnership with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies - exemplified by recent security arrangements - further enhances its regional relevance. Crucially, Pakistan's lack of diplomatic relations with Israel, shaped by its longstanding position on Palestine, renders it a more acceptable interlocutor in Iranian eyes. This combination of relationships, while not unique, provides Islamabad with a degree of diplomatic flexibility that few others currently possess.

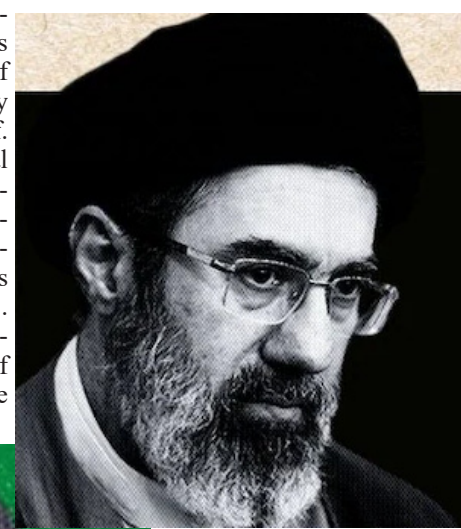
Concerns At Home

The imperative to mediate is also driven by hard economic and domestic considerations. Pakistan's dependence on energy imports routed through the Strait of Hormuz exposes it acutely to disruptions in the Gulf. The recent spike in global oil prices, already translating into significant domestic cost increases, underscores the fragility of its economic situation. Equally critical are remittance flows from millions of Pakistani workers in the



Gulf, which constitute a vital pillar of the national economy. A protracted conflict threatens both energy security and financial stability, raising the risk of internal unrest. Domestic socio-political dynamics add another layer of urgency. Pakistan's sizable Shia population maintains deep cultural and religious ties with Iran, making developments there resonate internally. Reports of unrest following the killing of Iran's

Supreme Leader illustrate the potential for sectarian tensions to intensify. In this context, mediation is less an exercise in al-



truism than a strategy of damage limitation - an attempt to insulate the domestic arena from external shocks.

Obstacles Remain
However, the constraints are formidable. The structural mistrust between the United States and Iran remains the single greatest impediment to meaningful progress. Public denials from Tehran regarding the scope of engagement, coupled with Washington's shifting positions, highlight the fragility of the process. Israel's opposition to any arrangement perceived as insufficiently restrictive of Iran's capabilities further complicates the diplomatic landscape. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's own strategic calculations, reportedly favouring sustained pressure on Tehran, introduce tensions into Pakistan's balancing act, given their close security ties. Pakistan's domestic limitations cannot be overlooked either. Economic fragility, political contestation, and ongoing security challenges along its western frontier constrain its ability to sustain prolonged diplomatic en-

agement. Moreover, its leverage is inherently limited; lacking the economic incentives or coercive instruments available to major powers, Islamabad must rely primarily on persuasion and access. The indirect nature of the current talks, conducted through intermediated channels rather than direct negotiations, further reduces the prospects for rapid breakthroughs.

Just A Broker?

Pakistan's current role should be better understood not as that of a trusted mediator shaping outcomes, but as a transactional broker managing communication. The distinction is critical. A genuine mediator commands confidence, can nudge compromise, and helps define the contours of a settlement. A broker, by contrast, merely transmits messages, facilitating contact without fundamentally influencing intent. Islamabad, for all its access, remains closer to the latter. Neither Washington nor Tehran appears willing to invest Pakistan with the political capital required for deeper mediation. The United States continues to rely on its own strategic calculus, while Iran's intermittent denials of engagement underscore its reluctance to legitimise any external intermediary. Key regional actors, particularly Israel and Saudi Arabia, are not aligned behind Pakistan's efforts, further limiting its credibility as a consensus-builder. In such a fractured environment, access does not translate into authority. Pakistan's leverage, therefore, is procedural rather than substantive. It can keep channels open, reduce misperceptions, and perhaps prevent inadvertent escalation. But it lacks the capacity to shape red lines or bridge the ideological and strategic divide between the protagonists. Its involvement is driven as much by compulsion as by choice, an exercise in crisis management rather than conflict resolution, and is unlikely to yield any long-term strategic dividends to Pakistan.

Zagros To Dasht-e-Lut, Why Iran's Terrain Could Be A Challenge For US Ground Troops

The war in Iran has been ongoing for a month and is showing no signs of ending. On the contrary, with every passing day and newer military engagements, the escalation ladder only seems to be moving up. The US-Israeli combo, which had initiated this war through pre-emptive strikes into Iran on February 28 are finding the going difficult as Iran is proving to be more resilient and stronger than what was initially projected. Despite the killing of its Supreme Leader in a targeted strike on Day One as well as the continuing losses and damages to key infrastructure thereafter, Iran is hitting back hard, forcing the US and Israel to think of newer options to ensure the achievement of their objectives as well as an early end to the war.

What The US Is Aiming For
Among one such options is the possibility of inserting a few thousand ground troops into Iran. Reports already indicate that an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 troops have been mobilised and dispatched and are likely to be fully assembled by April 6-7 for the launch of the offensive. This deployment includes the 82nd Airborne Division with about 2,500 paratroopers as well as American naval ships, USS Tripoli, an America-class amphibious assault ship carrying 2,500 Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and USS Boxer with 2,200 Marines of the 11th MEU. The likely objectives

of this ground offensive could vary from taking control over strategically located islands in the Persian Gulf, to the launch of special forces to recover the 460-odd kilograms of highly enriched Uranium (enriched up to 60%) hidden somewhere in Iran, or the capture of strategically located ports and airports. In addition to how Iran may counter any such move, one of the major factors in planning and the success of such an operation is the terrain. In fact, in the planning of any military operation, it is the terrain analysis that precedes any operational planning, and, therefore, a brief overview of the formidable terrain that Iran presents to any invading force is very important to analyse.

The Two Mountain Shields
Iran is a huge country, measuring almost 1,650 km North to South and 1,800 km East to West. It is the 17th-largest by size in the world, almost twice the size of Iraq and about 75-80 times the size of Israel. It is often called the 'Fortress Iran' owing to its formidable mountain ranges, which virtually form a wall to its North, West and South. The diverse landscape also includes deserts in the centre, a 750-km coastline along the Caspian Sea in the North and a 2,250-km coastline in the South along the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea. The high-lights of Iran's topography are the two major mountain ranges: the Zagros Mountains in the North-west and the Alborz

Mountains in the north. The Zagros Mountain range forms a virtual wall stretching over 1,500 kilometres from the north-west to the southeast of the country, protecting Iran from any foreign forces attempting to invade from Iraq and Turkey. In fact, this mountain range extends well into the southern coastline, up to Bandar Abbas, adding a layer of defence to the coastline. The Alborz Mountain range in the North runs parallel to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, adding a layer of formidable obstacles along with the Caspian Sea. It also has Iran's highest peak, Mount Damavand, with a height of 5,610 meters. These mountain ranges form a natural defensive shield and are an integral part of Iran's defence strategy. From the rugged terrain of the Zagros and Alborz mountains to the expansive deserts of Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e-Lut, Iran's physical geography makes ground operations, especially manoeuvre warfare, a very expensive option, both in terms of troops, equipment and time.

The Three Groups Of Islands

For ground operations, the primary target currently being discussed is the Kharg Island. A 20 sq. km piece of land in the Persian Gulf formed by coral reef and limestone rocks, the island is strategically located close to Iran, merely 25 km off the coastline in the northern Persian Gulf. Its importance

comes from the fact that it is a major export terminal and has deep-water ports that allow ships to dock and load crude oil and other products. It exports almost 2 million barrels of crude oil per day, which is pumped into it through pipelines from the mainland. About 8 km long and 4-5 km wide, it is located in the Northwestern end of the Persian Gulf, almost 500 km away from the Strait of Hormuz and very near the coast of Kuwait. The terrain in it is flat with an average elevation of 10 metres, the highest being 70 metres at Kuh-e Dideh Bani. As a result, it is easy for an amphibious landing to take place, and in a military engagement, it offers unobstructed fields of fire and very little natural concealment, giving a clear advantage to the defender. Its close proximity to the Iranian coast makes it easy for Iranian defence to engage invading forces with not only missiles and drones but also field artillery. Any capture of Kharg island will thus necessitate the capture and domination of the coastline to prevent direct interdiction by Iran. The next set of islands is the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. They are located near the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, closer to the UAE coast. Iran claims that the islands were historically part of Persian territories. After British forces withdrew in 1971, Iran took con-

trol of the three islands, considering them an integral part of its territory. However, according to the UAE, the islands belonged to the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah until Iran seized them by force just days before the UAE's independence from Britain in 1971. Though the size of these islands is very small, the strategic importance of these islands is that due to the greater depth of sea, large oil tankers and ships pass between Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb islands. The islands are located 40-60 km from Iran's coast, and with heavy fortification and deployment, they offer good options to control the flow of tankers towards the Strait of Hormuz. The landing of helicopter troops launched from the UAE offers a viable option. However, with the Iranian coast nearby and a total lack of natural cover, holding on to positions once troops have landed could be a challenge. The third set of islands is the Hormuz islands, consisting of Qeshm Island, Hormuz Island, and Larak Island, which are located near or within the Strait of Hormuz. These are the gateway or 'toll gate' of the Strait of Hormuz, and anyone who controls them has significant leverage over keeping the Strait open or closed. With very strong fortifications, close proximity to Iran's coastline and lack of natural cover, any sustained operations on it are likely to be met with stiff resistance.

Anti-Drug Drive: Call for Collective Responsibility



Amalapuram, March 31: District Collector R. Mahesh Kumar urged youth to stay away from drugs and protect their future, emphasizing that substance abuse can destroy lives and families. Chairing a district-level anti-drug committee meeting, he called for collective public participation to make Konaseema a drug-free

district. He stressed the need for widespread awareness among youth about the dangers of drugs like ganja and narcotics, and directed officials to strengthen surveillance, especially around schools and colleges. The Collector suggested forming anti-drug clubs in educational institutions and taking strict action against those involved in drug trafficking and sale. He also encouraged parents to closely monitor their children's behavior and guide them positively. Rehabilitation and counseling services are being provided through government hospitals for those affected. District SP Rahul Meena highlighted the role of parents in supporting children emotionally and warned that drug use leads to severe consequences. He advised students to focus on education, sports, and creative activities, and to stay away from illegal online activities and harmful influences. Officials reiterated that strict legal action will be taken against drug-related offenses and urged the public to report suspicious activities through helplines.

Collector Reviews Revenue Issues, Stresses Field-Level Verification

Rajahmendravaram, March 31: District Collector Keerthi Chekuri emphasized that revenue issues must be resolved through field-level inspections and proper verification before issuing orders. She participated in a video conference conducted by CCLA Commissioner G. Jayalakshmi from Amaravati. The Collector, along with Joint Collector Y. Megha Swaroop and other officials, reviewed pending applications related to re-survey, mutations, PGRS, revenue clinics, and land records. She directed Revenue Divisional Officers to conduct field visits two to three times a week and verify records at the village level. Officials were warned of strict action for negligence, including issuance of charge memos. The Collector also stressed the completion of pending tasks such as issuance of pass-



books, Aadhaar updates, mobile number registration, and e-KYC under re-survey.

No Cooking Gas Shortage in NTR District: Officials Urge Public Not to Panic

Vijayawada, March 31: NTR District Joint Collector S. Ilakkiya clarified that there is no shortage of cooking gas in the district and urged people not to panic. Speaking at a media briefing, she said all gas agencies have been assigned special officers to monitor supply. The district has over 8.63 lakh LPG connections and 56 gas agencies. On March 30, while 15,186 bookings were made, 19,440 cylinders were delivered, indicating smooth supply. Officials are continuously monitoring demand and supply, ensuring no disruptions. About 90% of deliveries are being done through OTP verification to prevent black marketing. Strict action will be taken against any illegal activities. A control room has also been set up for complaints. The public is advised to book cylinders only when necessary and rely on home delivery services. Officials also encouraged residents to consider switching to PNG (Piped Natural Gas) for safer and uninterrupted supply.



Committee Formed to Study Namakkal Model for Poultry Development



Rajahmendravaram, March 31: District Collector Keerthi Chekuri has announced the formation of a special committee to study the Namakkal poultry model of Tamil Nadu and explore its implementation in the district. The initiative aims to address challenges in the poultry sector, ensure stable income for farmers, and expand export opportunities. At a review meeting with poultry farmers, the Collector stressed the need for coordination between the gov-

ernment, officials, and farmers. Key issues discussed included rising production costs, market fluctuations, and price instability. Farmers urged the government to provide support prices and take steps to stabilize egg markets. The Collector also highlighted plans to explore new export markets, promote value-added products, and proposed setting up modern diagnostic and toxicology laboratories to strengthen the poultry sector.

Compensation for Atrocity Victims Must Be Ensured on Time: Collector

Bapatla, March 31: District Collector Dr. V. Vinod Kumar directed officials to ensure timely payment of compensation, employment, and special pensions to victims in SC/ST atrocity cases. Reviewing the SC/ST Atrocities Act Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting held at the Collectorate on Tuesday, he assessed the progress on issues raised in the previous meeting. The Collector emphasized speedy resolution of pending cases and noted that pensions have already been sanctioned in some instances, while the remaining cases should be cleared without delay. He also announced that from April, officials will conduct monthly visits to SC/ST areas to address local issues on the spot.

Officials from various departments and committee members, including representatives of voluntary organizations, attended the meeting.



Collector Harendhira Prasad's Services Praised by Minister



Visakhapatnam, March 31 (Pen Power): District In-charge Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy praised the services of District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad, calling his tenure commendable. The Collector was felicitated in a ceremony attended by MLA and BJP Floor Leader Vishnu Kumar Raju and other leaders. The Minister said that during his 20-month tenure, Harendhira Prasad ensured effective governance, promptly addressed public issues, and maintained a peaceful administrative environ-

ment. He added that the Collector brought recognition to the district by successfully organizing national and international-level events. Public representatives lauded his people-friendly approach and efficient administration, stating that he would remain in the hearts of the people. Responding, the Collector thanked the government, public representatives, and officials for their continuous support.

Officials Stress Coordinated Action to Curb Drug Menace in Bapatla

Bapatla, March 31: District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar and SP B. Umamaheshwar chaired a coordination meeting on drug control, emphasizing joint efforts to eliminate ganja and narcotics and make the district drug-free. They launched awareness boards under the "No Drugs - Eagle Clubs" campaign and directed strict surveillance at railway stations, bus stands, and identified hotspots. The Collector also called for forming "Prahaz Clubs" in schools and installing CCTV cameras.

The SP highlighted intensified efforts under the "Nasha Mukh Bharat" initiative, including awareness drives, monitoring of 74 hotspots, and coordination with key departments to prevent drug trafficking and usage.



Revenue Officials Must Act Responsibly: Collector



Bapatla, March 31: District Collector Dr. V. Vinod Kumar directed revenue officials to strictly follow rules and act responsibly in resolving pending cases related to lands listed under Section 22-A (prohibited properties). Chairing a district-level committee meet-

ing at the Collectorate on Tuesday, he instructed officials to immediately address pending applications and identify lands wrongly included in the prohibited list. Such lands should be removed promptly based on proper evidence, ensuring rightful ownership to landholders.

The Collector noted that 410 applications have been received since June last year, of which 44 cases have been resolved and ownership rights restored. He emphasized the use of advanced systems like e-Bhumi and Webland for thorough verification of land records.

He added that hundreds of acres have already been cleared from the prohibited list as per committee decisions, including long-pending cases from the past five years. Meetings will be held twice a week to expedite the process.

Officials were also instructed to correct outdated district names in records and ensure all entries reflect Bapatla district.

EVM Warehouse Inspected in Paderu

Paderu, March 31: District Collector A.S. Dinesh Kumar, along with representatives of major political parties, conducted an inspection of the EVM warehouse stored in a room at the local degree college. As part of the quarterly inspection, the Collector supervised the opening of the sealed main door, examined the EVMs and storage boxes, and reviewed the overall conditions. He also checked the functioning of CCTV cameras and ensured proper resealing of the warehouse after inspection.

The Collector reviewed the visiting register and signed it, while advising officials and police personnel on maintaining strict security standards.

Representatives from TDP, BJP, and YSRCP, along with Tahsildar B. Arun Chandra, Election Cell officials, revenue staff, and other ?????????? participated in the inspection.



Comprehensive Arrangements Ordered for Governor's Visit



Kakinada, March 31: Joint Collector Apoorna Bharat has directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements for the visit of Andhra Pradesh Governor on April 2. At a coordination meeting held at the Collectorate, officials were instructed to ensure smooth conduct of the Governor's participation in the 12th convocation of . The Governor is scheduled to arrive at Kakinada Police Parade Grounds by helicopter from Vijayawada at 10:45 AM and reach the university by 11 AM. After attending the convocation until 12:20 PM, he will leave at 12:30 PM to visit the . Officials were directed to arrange a helipad, route barricading, convoy movement, security, uninterrupted power supply, medical services, transport, food arrangements, media coordination, sanitation, and drinking water facilities, ensuring strict adherence to protocol.

All Eyes on 'Ramayana' Trailer: Will It Turn the Tables?



Though several tentpole pan-India films with huge box office potential are gearing up for release in the next two years, Bollywood's adaptation of epic Ramayana grabs the highest amount of spotlight because of the massive scale and the ambitious vision with which director Nitesh Tiwari is mounting it. The fact that Ranbir Kapoor and Sai Pallavi are playing the lead roles is another selling point for the hype. Usually, films on the much revered Hindu epics gen-

erate unprecedented buzz prior to their release because audiences of all age groups across the country embrace the retelling of ancient tales of mythology. But, this Ramayana: Part 1, which is billed as the most expensive Indian film till date with a monstrous budget of 4000 earmarked for its overall production, is unable to create significant hype that matches the grandeur and attention with the promotional content so far. As the film's release is just seven months away and given

that staggering money and mammoth expectations riding on it, the team should deliver something fascinating in the coming days to augment the expectations to the next level. Till now, the makers have only unveiled the videos of the title release and a 3 minute glimpse of 'Ramayana: The Introduction', giving a sneak peek into the VFX heavy first look at Ranbir Kapoor as lord Rama and Yash as Ravana. But, nothing concrete on how this visual spectacle will be different from

the earlier adaptations of Ramayana is not yet showcased. Now, the team is gearing up for the launch of first trailer on April 2nd as a treat for Hanuman Jayanti. All eyes are on this glimpse as both audiences and trade circles are eagerly awaiting a magnificent output from Nitesh Tiwari and his team. The response for this video will surely give a bigger picture on how well Ramayana will open at the global box office during the Diwali festival.

Days ahead of the grand launch of the glimpse, the film's team hosted a special event in Los Angeles to kick start the global promotions. Ranbir Kapoor, Nitesh Tiwari and Namit Malhotra attended the event where a select people were shown the glimpse of Rama. The initial reports suggest that the viewers were spellbound with the striking and out-of-the-world visuals in the video. Some have called it breathtaking and amazing.

It remains to be seen if the glimpse turns the tables and generates the much needed buzz on the film or not.

The two part epic boasts cutting-edge visual effects handled by DNEG and music composed by Oscar-winning composers A. R. Rahman and Hans Zimmer. It features an ensemble cast led by Kapoor as Lord Rama, alongside Sai Pallavi as Sita Mata and Yash as Ravana.

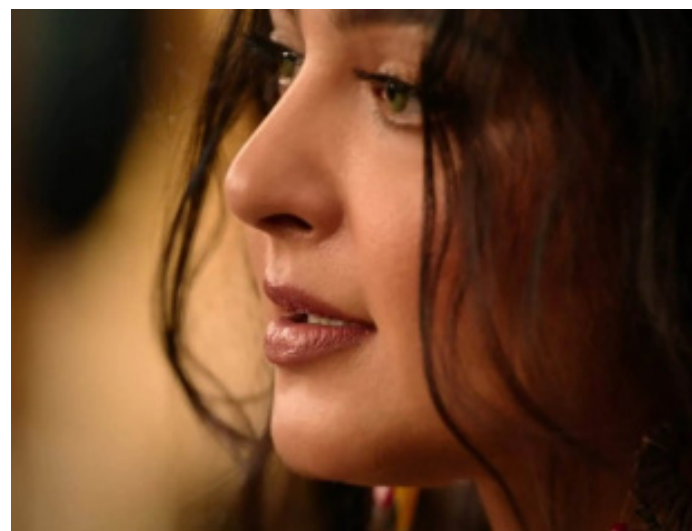
Anu Emmanuel turns heads in a saree



Kathanar Trailer Disappoints Anushka Fans

Anushka Shetty is doing fewer films in her career these days and her last film, Ghaati ended as a massive flop. Now, she is set to captivate audiences with her ambitious new project Kathanar – The Wild Sorcerer, which also marks her debut in Malayalam cinema. The film stars Jayasurya in the lead role alongside her. The trailer, released today, hints at a visually rich fantasy drama filled with mystery and magical elements. Directed by Rojin Thomas, the film promises a grand cinematic experience, backed by Sree Gokulam Movies on a lavish scale. The story appears to revolve around the

life of a powerful magician, blending folklore with fantasy. While the trailer has generated excitement, some Telugu fans feel that Anushka Shetty hasn't been showcased as much as expected. Usually, Anushka commands a strong screen presence irrespective of the genre she chooses. Given the film's grand scale, showcasing her more prominently in the pre-release promotional material could work in the film's favor. Featuring Anushka with better screen time in upcoming promos may help the film connect strongly with the masses, especially in Telugu and other language markets. Kathanar



also features a strong supporting cast including Vineeth, Sandy, Sanoop San, Devika, Harish Uthaman, and Srikanth Murali. Music is composed by Rahul Subramanian, adding to

the film's appeal. Despite Anushka's limited presence in the trailer, the anticipation remains high as Kathanar gears up for a pan-Indian release in multiple languages.

Jana Nayagan To Release Before Election 'Results'?



Speculation is growing around the release plans of Vijay's Jana Nayagan, with fresh reports suggesting a major shift in strategy. Initially, many believed the film would clear censor formalities and arrive only after the election results, avoiding the politically sensitive period. However, the latest buzz indicates otherwise. Sources suggest that the team is likely to receive final censor clearance within this week. If everything goes as planned, the makers are considering a release immediately after polling, targeting April 24. This move, if finalized, would be a bold and strategic decision.

As a backup, April 30 is also being discussed as a potential release date. If the film locks either of these dates, it could impact other movies that have already planned their releases around the same window.

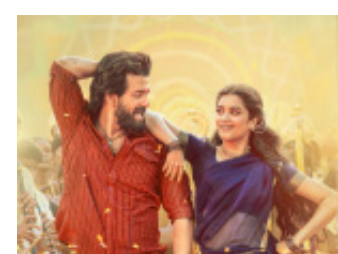
In telugu states, Since a few Telugu films are planning release for that date and Peddi is likely to move to another date, Jana Nayagan may not face a direct impact. However, there could still be an issue with screen sharing if multiple

Telugu releases choose the same date.

At the same time, releasing before the election results could work in the film's favor, as it would avoid any direct

influence or distraction caused by political outcomes. With clarity expected soon, all eyes are now on the makers to see which date they finalize for Jana Nayagan.

Lenin moves ahead with promotions amid date confusion



The team of "Lenin" has kickstarted promotions despite fresh uncertainty surrounding release dates of competing films. Starring Akhil Akkineni and Bhagyashri Borse, the film was initially scheduled to hit theaters on May 1 but was later postponed

to June 26. The makers had cited the need to avoid a box office clash with Ram Charan's "Peddi," which was earlier planned for an April 30 release. Starring Akhil Akkineni and Bhagyashri Borse, the film was initially scheduled to hit theaters on May 1 but was later postponed to June 26. The makers had cited the need to avoid a box office clash with Ram Charan's "Peddi," which was earlier planned for an April 30 release.

Tovino Thomas confirms he is not part of NTR's Dragon

Tovino Thomas has officially put an end to speculation about his involvement in "Dragon," starring NTR, and directed by Prashanth Neel. Rumors had been circulating that Tovino was roped in to play a key role, reportedly as NTR's brother in the film. However, the Malayalam star has now clarified that he is not part of the project. Movie merchandise store Speaking during a recent visit to Hyderabad for film promotions, Tovino revealed that he couldn't allocate dates for the big-budget Telugu film. He explained that committing to such a large-scale project would significantly impact his work in Malayalam cinema. Tovino highlighted the difference in working styles between the two industries. While Malayalam films are typically shot in a single stretch and completed quickly, Telugu big-budget productions often span over a year or more.

According to him, dedicating that much time to one project would mean letting go of multiple Malayalam films. "If I allot dates to one Telugu film for a year, I will have to miss out on four Malayalam projects," he explained.

