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US Fighter Pilot Ejected From Aircraft In Southwest Iran



Washington: A US fighter pilot ejected from an aircraft in southwest Iran, news agency AP reported, quoting Iranian media. This is the first known loss of a US jet inside the country since the war began on February 28. An anchor on a local Iranian channel read out an announcement saying, "Military forces have launched a search operation to find the American fighter pilot who was hit earlier today. Dear and honourable people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, if you capture the enemy pilot or pilots alive and hand them over to the police and military forces, you will receive a valuable reward and bonus." Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is an intensely rural and mountainous region that spans over 15,500 square kilometres (5,900 square miles). Iranian authorities also urged the public to search in neighbouring Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province. A separate on-screen crawl urged the public to "shoot them if you see them." Iran's state broadcaster IRIB also posted on X that crowds of civilians had driven out in private cars towards the crash site. "Many people in southwestern Iran have gone to the area around the crash site of the American fighter jet in private cars to capture the American pilot. The Iranian armed forces have called on the people NOT TO LET anyone mistreat the pilot," it wrote. Follow Iran war live updates here. AUS official told news agency Reuters that a search operation is underway for the crew of a US fighter jet that was shot down.

Iran Claims F-35 And F-15 Shot Down

Iranian media claimed that an F-35 stealth fighter had been brought down over central Iran by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran's Tasnim news agency published images of what it described as the wreckage of an American jet, adding that the chances of the pilot surviving were low. IRIB also claimed separately that an F-15E Strike Eagle belonging to the 494th Fighter Squadron, based at RAF Lakenheath in the United Kingdom, had been shot down. "Debris of the tail fin confirms the downing. The fate of the pilots is currently unclear," it posted on X. This is the third time Iran has claimed to have downed an F-35 since the conflict began on 28 February. Tehran made similar claims on 23 March and 2 April. Both earlier claims were dismissed by the US Central Command. Responding to one such Iranian video, relating to a reported crash near Qeshm Island, CENTCOM's official X account wrote, "All US fighter aircraft are accounted for. Iran's IRGC has made the same false claim at least half a dozen times." As of the time of writing, there has been no official response from the US Central Command, the Pentagon or the White House regarding the latest Iranian claims.

PM Modi Holds Puducherry Roadshow As Triangular Contest Heats Up

Puducherry: As Puducherry heads to polls on April 9, the election battle has intensified with Prime Minister Narendra Modi holding a high-voltage roadshow in the Union Territory, joined by Chief Minister N Rangasamy. The show of strength comes amid signs of strain within the ruling alliance even as all sides gear up for a keen contest. This election is shaping into a triangular fight, with actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) making its electoral debut, adding a new dimension to Puducherry's political landscape.



'We Will Bring Uniform Civil Code, Infiltrators Won't Be Able To Marry 4 Times': Amit Shah

Dudhnoi (Assam): Addressing an election rally in Dudhnoi in Assam's Goalpara district on Friday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would ensure infiltrators would not be able to marry four times. The minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma have prepared a comprehensive roadmap for tribal development, asserting that its full implementation hinges on the BJP returning to power in the state. "A roadmap has been prepared by the Prime Minister and the Assam chief minister for the development of tribals. Vote for the BJP to ensure it is taken forward and implemented," he said. Highlighting the BJP's outreach to tribal communities, Shah said it was under Modi's leadership that the country got its first tribal woman President.



Aridhaman is not just a word, it is a force: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

From Our Staff Reporter Visakhapatnam, April 3: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described Aridhaman as not merely a word, but a force. On Friday in Visakhapatnam, he inducted India's third indigenous nuclear ballistic missile submarine, INS Aridhaman, into the Navy. Speaking on the occasion, Rajnath Singh said that Aridhaman is India's third indigenous nuclear submarine. He expressed confidence that this will further strengthen India's sea-based nuclear deterrence capability. During the visit, the Defence Minister also toured the Naval Science and Technology Laboratory (NSTL), which operates under the Defence Research and Development Organisation. He also laid the foundation stone for a caviation tunnel there. Following INS Arihant in 2016 and INS Arighat in August 2024, INS Aridhaman has now joined the fleet. With this addition, India has entered the exclusive group of nations—such as the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China—that can independently build and operate nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines. These submarines can remain underwater for months without being detected by enemies. In case of a nuclear attack from adversaries, they can deliver a strong retaliatory strike from beneath the sea. (Full details on pg 5)



The whole country follows one path... YSRCP follows another: CM

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April 2: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said that granting legal status to Amaravati is a victory for the people. Speaking to the media on Friday, he stated that while the YSR Congress Party tried to destroy Amaravati, his government ensured legal backing through legislation. He said that Amaravati receiving legal recognition in both Houses of Parliament is a people's victory. Around 35 MPs spoke in support of Amaravati in both Houses. Chandrababu thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on behalf of 50 million people. He criticized the YSRCP, saying that while the whole country follows one path, they chose a different one, driven by selfish politics even at the cost of the state and nation. "Not against Telangana" Chandrababu clarified that he is not against Telangana, calling it his "brainchild," as he founded the Telugu Desam Party there. He recalled that he had said he would take oath as Chief Minister only after seven mandals were merged into Andhra Pradesh for the Polavaram Project. He stated that with his experience and central support, those seven mandals were merged, which was essential for the project's completion. "YSRCP supported it earlier"

The CM said that based on the Sivaramakrishnan Committee report, it was widely agreed that the capital should be located between Guntur and Vijayawada. He explained that the region was chosen due to its central location, political and cultural importance, availability of water, and fertile land. He recalled that even YSRCP had supported Amaravati as the capital in the Assembly earlier, and that Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had suggested at least 30,000 acres for the capital. "Farmers gave land without taking a rupee" Chandrababu said, "I had no money, but I had the determination to build a new capital." He recalled that after announcing the land pooling scheme, farmers voluntarily gave 34,000 acres without taking even a single rupee, purely out of trust. He added that within 11 months, the Secretariat, Assembly, and High Court were constructed. He criticized YSRCP for creating controversy even over the "transit Secretariat." He said Amaravati has spiritual significance, as soil and water were brought from sacred temples across the country.



Amaravati to Get a PIN Code Soon

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April 3: It is known that the bill introduced in Parliament to grant legal status to the capital Amaravati has been approved. With the signature of President Droupadi Murmu, the bill is expected to be published as a Gazette within a day or two. In this context, the Department of Posts will soon issue a new PIN code for the new capital Amaravati. With this, Amaravati will receive official recognition as the sole capital of Andhra Pradesh by the India Post. Responding on Friday to a complaint filed by advocate and social activist V. Ramesh Chandra Varma, the postal department stated that land has already been acquired for constructing a General Post Office (GPO) in the capital region. It added that a new PIN code will be assigned after the completion of the GPO, with approval from the circle office. The postal department also clarified that it will consider the suggestions made by Ramesh Chandra Varma regarding Aadhaar, passport services, and a dedicated PIN code. Until then, these services will continue through the existing sub-offices. Ramesh Chandra Varma stated that, in the context of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, this development is a crucial step in the ongoing efforts for farmers' welfare and administrative convenience.

Minister Nimmala Serious About Irrigation Department Officials

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, April 3: Andhra Pradesh Irrigation Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu expressed serious concern over the functioning of irrigation department officials. He showed anger over their negligence in discharging duties. The minister conducted a review meeting via video conference with officials regarding the preparation of estimates for works such as weed removal, clearing wild growth, and desilting of canals constituency-wise. During the meeting, he criticized irrigation officials for their delay and negligence in preparing these estimates. He questioned the Chief Engineers (CEs), asking when they would prepare estimates for works that are supposed to be carried out in April and May. He remarked that in the past, approvals for works scheduled in April-May were given only in June, and warned that such practices from the previous government would not be tolerated now. He advised irrigation officials to change their approach immediately. The minister directed all Chief Engineers to submit the estimates by Sunday evening. He warned that those who fail to meet the deadline would have to appear at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Monday and provide an explanation. He expressed concern that due to lack of proper canal maintenance—such as removal of silt, weeds, and obstructions—farmers suffered greatly over the past five years due to inadequate irrigation water supply. Minister Nimmala stated that after the coalition government came to power, funds have been allocated under emergency works to ensure irrigation water reaches every last acre. He added that canal repair works have been initiated under the directions of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.



CM Serious about MLA Aravinda Babu

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, April 3: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has expressed serious displeasure over Narasaraopet MLA Aravinda Babu from Palnadu district. He warned that any actions damaging the party's reputation will not be tolerated. Recently, Aravinda Babu created a stir after a person he had recommended was not appointed to a Legal Advisor post. He even staged a protest by sitting inside the Palnadu district SP office. The issue reached the attention of party chief and CM Chandrababu Naidu, who then instructed TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao to speak with the MLA. Following these instructions, Aravinda Babu was summoned today (Friday) to the party's central office in Mangalagiri by Palla Srinivasa Rao. He was asked to explain his protest at the SP office. Palla Srinivasa Rao conveyed that Chandrababu Naidu was unhappy with the incident and made it clear that such behavior is unacceptable. He questioned why the MLA did not bring the issue of the Legal Advisor appointment to the notice of the district party president, regional coordinator, or himself. He also criticized the MLA for acting in a way that tarnished the party's image. The act of staging a protest at the SP office and attempts to damage the party's reputation were strongly condemned. It was clearly stated that strict action would be taken if such incidents are repeated in the future.



EDITORIAL

Naxals are not the end of development

The government's deadline for eliminating Naxalism is March 31, 2026. This marks a historic milestone when the decades-long Maoist movement in the hills and forests of nine states, known as the Red Corridor, is coming to an end. Once a constant battle between the security forces and the Maoists, which once affected more than 120 districts of the country, Naxalism had declined significantly by 2025. It is now confined to a few parts of central and eastern India. Thousands of lives have been lost in the decades of violence. These include civilians and security personnel. However, the elimination of armed Maoists does not mean that the problems have ended. No matter how much the security forces have damaged the Naxal groups, the ideology or root causes behind them still remain in evidence. Even in remote villages in Naxal-affected areas like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, roads have been constructed, telecom networks have been expanded, banking facilities, schools, skill centers have been set up, and security forces have reached the villages and provided security, which has increased public confidence and reduced Naxal activities. Welfare schemes are being implemented. The government has repeatedly said that all this is development. But development is not just about numbers. It is necessary to examine how much human development and living standards have improved. Poverty, social exclusion, broken trust among tribal communities are the main reasons for the rise of Maoism. Some tribal communities are losing their land and forest rights. They are facing exploitation by powerful bosses. In addition to this, the authorities are being negligent. If all these are not resolved, Maoism or other such movements will inevitably arise at the grassroots level. The Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, through the Forest Rights Act and the Panchayat Raj Acts, has provided protection and local self-governance to the tribals in the respective Scheduled Areas. The governors have special powers to not only protect the rights of the people of these areas but also look after their welfare. However, these are failing due to poor implementation, not because of any flaws in the laws. In these circumstances, the governors themselves should be responsible for protecting the interests of the tribes. Also, rehabilitation should not be just one measure. Education, healthcare, jobs, dignity, and proximity to every family are needed. Till March 31, the government mainly focused on security issues and the end of the Maoists.

Now, the government needs to focus on issues that led to the conflict, such as security in tribal lives, employment, jobs, and forest land rights. Although the eradication of left-wing extremism is a good development for the restoration of peace and security in those areas, in the name of corporate powers, crony capitalists, and exploitation of natural resources in tribal areas should not be allowed. Instead, efforts should be made to create the rights that tribals should have and to provide them with participation in parliamentary democracy. Union Home Minister Amit Shah told the Lok Sabha before the deadline of March 30 for the liberation of Naxals that 4839 Maoists have surrendered in the past three years due to intensive paramilitary operations, 2218 have been arrested, and 706 have been neutralized in encounters. He alleged that Naxalism increased exponentially because the previous Congress government showed sympathy for the Naxals.

But in reality, when Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister, he recognized Naxalism as a major challenge to the country's internal security and launched Operation Green Hunt in 2009-10 to eradicate Naxals. At that time, Naxalism was rampant in 180 districts of mineral-rich states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. But the operation was stopped after strong criticism was received that if Naxal prevention measures were taken, it would cost a lot of money to maintain the paramilitary force and many lives would be lost. But now Union Home Minister Amit Shah has adopted a dual policy. On the one hand, he warned that the surrendered Naxals would be rehabilitated through talks, and those who opposed this would be killed. The dissatisfaction of human rights activists and intellectuals who considered the eradication of Naxals as genocide was not taken into account. Moreover, they were labeled as urban Naxals. They propagated among the tribals that the Naxal ideology is opposed to parliamentary democracy and that they do not contribute to development. Overall, they succeeded in ending left-wing terrorism. Now the immediate task is to heal the wounds of war through reconciliation politics.

In Tamil Nadu, Vijay Attempts A Hostile Takeover Of AIADMK's Very Soul

Around 100 seconds into the election campaign song unveiled by the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) on April 1 come the images of CN Annadurai and MG Ramachandran, the two biggest icons of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). They are immediately followed by the image of Vijay. It is no oversight or the work of an enthusiastic video editor. It is increasingly clear that the unsubtle message being driven home is that Vijay is the natural political successor to Anna and MGR. Analyse the moves made by Vijay on Tamil Nadu's political chessboard, and it is very obvious that demolition of the AIADMK dream of a comeback to power is on the agenda before he battles MK Stalin on April 23. What is being undertaken is a less-than-hostile takeover of the AIADMK template, fundamentally replacing the party founded by MGR in the mindspace of the anti-DMK voter. Elections in Tamil Nadu have always revolved around the two-pole narrative. Vijaykanth, popularly referred to as 'Karuppu MGR' ("dark-complexioned MGR") was the last one to try to break the hegemony of the two fronts, but did not quite succeed. Vijaykanth's rugged appear-

ance resonated with the rural masses and the working classes in Tamil Nadu, pitching him as the MGR of the dark-skinned Tamilian. But the 2006 election saw him not being able to go beyond 8% of the vote, which, though impressive, failed to translate into more than one seat. After Vijaykanth, the likes of Kamal Haasan faltered by trying to be the third player - an alternative to the two Dravidian majors - and failed miserably. Now, Vijaykanth's namesake is attempting the invocation of the MGR legacy. By repeatedly stating that the contest is between the TVK and the DMK, he is attempting to render the AIADMK as a spent force and make the two leaves wilt on the EVM. The bid to appropriate the foundational icons of the AIADMK started last year, when an AI-generated video used a deepfake of Annadurai saying "Thambi vaa, thalaimai thaanga vaa" ("Come brother, come to lead"), as if Vijay was being encouraged to lead the way. The TVK messaging was that the Palaniswami-led AIADMK, which has lost many of its leaders to other parties, is no longer the AIADMK of MGR and Jayalalithaa and that Vijay is now the real political successor to the AIADMK political stalwarts.

By calling the BJP his "ideological enemy", Vijay has also indirectly accused EPS of diluting and compromising his Dravidian roots by allying with the saffron party. By fighting all the 234 constituencies sans an alliance partner, Vijay wants to send across the message that he is the secular alternative to the DMK.

Vijay's leadership style has also taken a leaf out of Jayalalithaa's book. Like the late AIADMK supremo, he remains inaccessible, lending a mystique to his persona. Like the former chief minister, the women votebank is the key demographic for Vijay. His public interactions are limited to his speeches at public meetings, and just like AIADMK was Amma during Jayalalithaa's time, TVK today is Vijay. The image of the Supreme leader is a 'Ctrl-C-Ctrl-V' copy of the Jayalalithaa template. Vijay's decision to contest from two constituencies (Perambur and Trichy East) is also following in Jayalalithaa's footsteps. Jayalalithaa in 1991 had contested from Bargur and Kangayam.

After Jayalalithaa's demise in 2016, the AIADMK's strength - monolithic leadership - was replaced by regional satraps. Though Palaniswami over the years has managed to get rid of his rivals in the party, he still



has to prove himself as someone acceptable to all regions and caste groups and not be seen only as a Kongu belt Gounder leader. In contrast, Vijay offers the moniker alternative of the 'Thalapathy' (commander) who reigns supreme.

But it won't be so easy to peel away at the AIADMK stronghold votebank in rural Tamil Nadu, particularly in western (Coimbatore-Salem) and southern (Madurai) regions. These belts are dominated by the Gounder and Thevar communities, respectively, and were the backbone of the party during Jayalalithaa's innings.

That will be Vijay's challenge, and if he can woo much of the anti-incumbency vote towards himself, the AIADMK may find itself struggling, particularly in the urban pockets.

What Vijay is offering is the AIADMK, rebranded. The party was, till 2016, led by charismatic actor-turned-politicians, and Vijay, by chipping away at the AIADMK base, is promising to go back to that era. Interestingly, he is trying to replace the AIADMK in an unconventional way. He is not taking the easy route of poaching leaders from the party. Barring a KA Sengottaiyan, and, to an extent, CT Nirmal Kumar, no senior leader has moved sides to the TVK. Vijay's bold attempt is to take away the voters of the AIADMK instead.

In Tiruchy (East) to file his second nomination on April 2, Vijay garlanded the statue of MGR and delivered his speech with the statue in the background. The significance of Vijay hyphenating his politics with MGR was not lost on anyone from Tiruchy. MGR had described this delta district as the geographical and political heart of Tamil Nadu. Vijay being seen in the same frame as MGR was a tribute to the AIADMK founder's argument that to rule Tamil Nadu, you have to first win over its heart.

450 Missile, 2,000 Drone Attacks Later, Why Is UAE Still Not Fighting Iran?

According to the latest statistics released by the UAE Ministry of Defence, the country's air defences have engaged 457 ballistic missiles, 19 cruise missiles, and 2,038 drones launched by Iran. This makes the UAE the biggest target of Iran since the joint US-Israel war on it began on February 28. In fact, on the very first day, Dubai airport, the city's famed Burj Al-Arab hotel, the landmark Palm Jumeirah, and Jebel Ali port were hit by missiles. Exasperated by these attacks, the UAE, reports say, has asked the US to continue the war in Iran and complete the job there. In the latest update, however, it has ruled out putting boots on the ground in Iran but has signalled its willingness to join any multi-nation endeavour to open up the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping. These developments spotlight a complex relationship between the two neighbouring states that share waterways, communities, and extensive trade links. The UAE is Iran's second-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade amounting to around \$25-27 billion annually. In 2024, Iran imported over \$20 billion worth of goods from the UAE, making it Iran's largest single source of imports. At the same time, Iranian non-oil exports to the UAE were more than \$6 billion. Around half a million Iranians live and work in the UAE, with the community having stayed there for decades, preceding the birth of the Islamic Republic in 1979.

A Tense History

Yet, tensions have persisted - territorially since the UAE's birth in 1971, and ideologically since the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979, spilling over into wider geo-strategic considerations. Territorially, Iran and the UAE are locked in a dispute over three tiny islands - Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. The largest, Abu Musa, has a population of only around 2,000 people. But they occupy an extremely strategic location - sitting as they are at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, whose importance by now needs no further explanation. These islands serve as useful bases to monitor maritime traffic through the Strait



and are critical to Iran's naval defence architecture.

Britain had occupied the islands in 1908. When the UAE gained freedom from the British in 1971, the British withdrew from these islands. Iran, under Shah Reza Pahlavi, occupied the islands, citing old maps, including those by the British. The UAE, however, maintained that they are the rightful owner. Given Iran's size and its military muscle, the UAE has been restrained, relying mostly on diplomatic tools to manage the tensions. The UAE's size - 83,600 sq. km in total - and its population - the local Emirati population is only 1.33 million out of a total population of 11.57 million, comprising expatriates - has shaped its approach towards Iran, as also towards the region as a whole.

The Revolution And The American Turn

The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, which overthrew the Shah and established a Republic, added another layer of complexity to regional politics. All five Gulf Sheikdoms, along with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are hereditary monarchies, with some, like the UAE, also representing a federative union with a constitution, to give it some semblance of a democratic polity. But they all remain absolute monarchies. Furthermore, as Iran began ex-

porting its revolutionary ideology, small sheikdoms sought to hedge themselves and their enormous oil wealth by constituting the Gulf Cooperation Council and investing in American security and defence procurement. Today, all GCC states house US air bases. Of them, the UAE hosts the Al Dhafra Air Base, which hosts American, French, and Emirati air forces, while the Jebel Ali port in Dubai hosts US Navy ships, making the UAE a key logistical hub. There are, besides the US, UK and French military bases as well, all of which have been a cause of tensions between Iran and the UAE. The UAE also closely aligned itself with Saudi Arabia, though that alliance has recently come under strain. Over the years, the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Arab Spring, and the rise of radical Sunni forces both as state power - as seen in Turkey and in Afghanistan with the return of the Taliban there - and through the emergence of non-state actors such as the ISIS in Iraq and Syria, created another set of dynamics in the region.

The UAE's Unique Vulnerability

The UAE, given its territory and population, was particularly vulnerable and sought to counter both Shiite and Sunni radicalism. When it took the

unprecedented step of intervening militarily, together with Saudi Arabia, in the Yemen civil war of 2015, it was as much to prop up the legitimate government of President Abdul Hadi Mansour as it was to push back against Iran, which was liberally training, arming, and financing the Houthi rebels there. The same logic made the UAE support anti-Assad groups during the Syrian Civil War: to contain Iranian influence in the region. But the intervention in Yemen produced only a stalemate, with the Houthis targeting both Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The latter has since withdrawn from Yemen, but it pursued other efforts to counter the twin threats of Sunni and Shiite radicalism. One was to follow policies for increasing tolerance and pluralism in UAE society, such as building temples, restoring churches in post-conflict Iraq, initiating inter-faith dialogues, and easing social activities and norms for expatriates. This is only practical given that almost 80% of the UAE's population comprises expatriates, most of whom belong to different faiths and cultures.

The Deal That Changed Everything

The other was to diversify its strategic partnerships with players like Russia, China, South Korea and India. But the

most pathbreaking step was the normalisation of relations with Israel, through the Abraham Accords. The UAE became the third Arab country and the first GCC member to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, known for its intelligence-gathering and military prowess. This rang alarm bells in Tehran, which had fought a shadow war with Israel for decades by then. Even a moderate like the then-Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, condemned the move in strong terms as a "betrayal" of the Palestinian people. The issue of Palestine has placed the Gulf monarchies in an awkward position. On one hand, they continued their aid and pledges to the Palestinian people, yet, despite their close alignment with the US, they have been unable to find any meaningful resolution. A Palestinian state has never seemed more elusive than now. In contrast, Iran was arming Hamas - even when it is a Sunni group - in Gaza. The Hamas was the only force seen to be countering Israel's occupation and penalising it for its actions against the Palestinians. The GCC states seemed helpless. Amidst this, the Abraham Accords, from Iran's point of view, were another instance of Israel prevailing over the Arabs. Following in the footsteps of the UAE was Bahrain.

Visakhapatnam to be Transformed into an International City

Visakhapatnam, April 03: District Collector and GVMC Special Officer Abhishek Kishore has directed officials to focus on developing Visakhapatnam into an international city with world-class infrastructure. Chairing a review meeting at the GVMC headquarters on Friday, he emphasized strategic planning aligned with global standards. The Collector reviewed the performance of various departments and instructed officials to actively address public issues at the ground level. He stressed increasing GVMC revenue sources to accelerate development works and achieving a 7-star rating along with top rank in Swachh Survekshan. He also called for improved drainage systems, complete digitalization of civic services like birth and death certificates, and better sanitation practices including waste management, composting, and recycling. Special measures such as summer relief camps, drinking water, ORS distribution using CSR funds were suggested. The Collector directed completion of connectivity roads



before the inauguration of Bhogapuram Airport and resolving land-related issues promptly. He also reviewed progress in roads, parks, green belts, smart markets, street lighting, and housing projects. Highlighting that GVMC is the largest municipal corporation in the state, he underlined the need for timely public service delivery and active public participation in city development.

Chennakesava Swamy Kalyana Mahotsavam Celebrated with Devotion in Markapur

Markapur, April 3: The divine Kalyana Mahotsavam of Lord Sri Lakshmi Chennakesava Swamy was celebrated with great devotion and grandeur on Friday as part of the temple's Brahmotsavams in Markapur. Thousands of devotees from nearby areas thronged the temple premises from early morning to witness the celestial wedding ceremony. The temple was beautifully decorated with lights and flowers, while the Kalyana Mandapam looked magnificent with special floral arrangements. District Collector M. Vijaya Sunitha visited the temple and participated in the ????, offering special prayers and seeking blessings. The rituals were conducted traditionally amid Vedic chants by chief priest Appana Acharyulu and scholars, creating a spiritual atmosphere. Devotees enthusiastically participated, chanting "Govinda Govinda." Prominent leaders including Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy, former MLAs KP Kondareddy and Anna Rambabu, and TDP leader Kandula Ramireddy attended



the event and offered prayers for public welfare. Devotees received Theertha Prasadam and prayed for fulfillment of their wishes.

Quality Public Services Must Reach People: Collector



Bapatla, April 3: District Collector Dr. V. Vinod Kumar directed officials to prepare a comprehensive profile for every revenue village to ensure effective administration

and transparency. During a surprise inspection of the Gorigapudi village secretariat in Bhattiprolu mandal on Friday, the Collector instructed the VRO to map complete details of the village, including total land extent, government land, grazing land, and temple lands. He noted that the village has 761 pattadar passbooks, of which 535 have been re-surveyed and printed. The remaining passbooks will be issued after completion of the re-survey process. The Collector reviewed staff performance and biometric attendance, directing officials to issue show-cause notices to those who failed to mark attendance. He also enquired about services provided through the secretariat and availability of infrastructure such as computers, printers, scanners, and biometric devices. Later, he received petitions from villagers. Responding to a farmer's complaint about land reduction after re-survey, the Collector visited the site and ordered a fresh survey to resolve the issue. Officials from revenue and survey departments, along with local staff and villagers, were present.

Solar Power for SC/ST Households under PM Surya Ghar Scheme

Markapuram, April 3: State Energy Minister Gottipati Ravikumar announced that under the centrally and state-supported PM Surya Ghar Scheme, solar panels are being installed free of cost for SC/ST households consuming less than 200 units of electricity per month. The initiative aims to reduce electricity expenses and promote clean energy.

The program was launched in Krishnamsettipalli village of Giddalur mandal. Across the district, the project involves a total investment of ₹150.44 crore (₹74.06 crore from the Centre and ₹76.38 crore from the State) and is expected to generate 24.69 MW of power.

In Giddalur constituency, 2,410 households have been identified, with works underway at a cost of ₹29.28 crore. In Krishnamsettipalli alone, 111 service connections have been approved with an estimated cost of ₹1.349 crore.

Officials highlighted that the scheme will reduce carbon



emissions, lower electricity costs, and help households achieve energy self-sufficiency. Local MLA Muttumula Ashok Reddy and other officials attended the program.

District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad Inspects Yeleru Reservoir

Kakinada, April 3: District Collector



M.N. Harendhira Prasad visited the Yeleru Reservoir on Friday as part of his first field inspection after assuming charge. He

reviewed water storage levels, drinking water supply, irrigation releases, and inflows from the Polavaram Left Main Canal with engineering officials. The Collector noted a shortage of staff for the project and assured that recruitment will be taken up soon. He also inspected the power house and directed officials to maintain cleanliness along the reservoir approach road under employment guarantee works.

Later, he visited the Manihamsa Power Plant and reviewed water release details for farmers and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

He also discussed reservoir gate issues with officials and said notices would be issued to concerned contractors.

Tuni: Inspection of Dumping Yard and STP Sites

Kakinada, April 3: District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad inspected proposed sites for a dumping yard and a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) in Tuni town on Friday. He reviewed the land identified behind S. Annavaram Ramakrishna Nagar Colony for the dumping yard and another site behind Upparao Colony for the STP project. The Collector stated that the STP aims to treat wastewater generated from residential, commercial, and industrial sources. He directed officials to expedite the land acquisition process for the projects. Local revenue, municipal officials, and Tuni Tahsildar G.V.S. Prasad were present during the inspection.



District SP Participates in Annadanam at Sri Kodandarama Temple

Rajahmendravaram, April 3: District SP D. Narasimha Kishore participated in an Annadanam (food donation) program held at Sri Kodandarama Temple in the Jampeta Reserve Police Lines. Hundreds of devotees, members of the public, and police personnel attended the event. The SP stated that Annadanam is a noble act and such programs promote unity and reflect the richness of Indian culture. Additional SP (AR) L. Chinna Reddy, DSP (SB) B. Ramakrishna, DSP (AR) Ravikumar, and other police officials were present.



The official approval of the Centre by declaring Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh is commendable

Madanapalle, April 03: The official approval of the Central Government by declaring the historic Buddhist pilgrimage site Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh is a matter of pride for all of us, said District Collector Nishant Kumar. Declaring Amaravati as the capital of the people is a historic moment and a matter of pride for all of us, he said. He said that the dreams of the people have come true today. He said that just as Delhi has been the capital of the country in history, Amaravati, a Buddhist pilgrimage site, will remain in the history of Andhra Pradesh as the capital. He said that a historic decision was taken in the Assembly under the leadership of State Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, and Amaravati was declared as the capital, passed a resolution and sent to the Centre. He said that the official approval of the Centre by declaring Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh after the bifurcation of the state is commendable. On this occasion, as per the instructions of the government, the District Collector has instructed the government officials to light rangoli and lamps by women at all village and mandal levels across the district and decorate every government building with electric lamps. On the auspicious occasion of the approval of the bill in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, recognizing Amaravati as the only permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh, on Thursday evening, under the auspices of the DRDA, MEPMA and Education departments, women across Annamayya district made rangoli, lit lamps



and celebrated with joy. Many residents of the district expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and the Prime Minister of the country for their special efforts in establishing a permanent capital for us.

Legitimacy of the capital in Parliament is a victory for the people of AP

Punganur, April 03: TDP senior leader and retired DSP Sukumar Babu expressed his joy that the legalization of Amaravati as the permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh in Parliament is a victory for the people of AP. On Thursday night, he celebrated with candles at High School Street, along with former TDP councilor K Sulochana and TDP ranks. Speaking on the occasion, Sukumar Babu said that the work on the people's capital Amaravati had stopped due to the negligence of the previous YSRCP government. He said that as soon as the coalition government came to power in 2024, under the leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the work on the capital Amaravati gained momentum. He said that this will be very beneficial for the farmers who gave their lands. He said that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is a visionary leader. He expressed confidence



that he will make Amaravati the most ideal capital in the country. He expressed happiness that AP is developing rapidly under the coalition government and that large investments are coming in. A large number of TDP and coalition leaders participated in this program.

Fire-damaged lorry, loss of Rs 9 lakh

Madanapalle, April 03: On Friday morning, at around 02.30 am, a fire broke out in a 12-wheeler lorry, AP03TJ0178, located at Amin Lorry Mechanic Garage, behind Rama Tulasamma Mandapam, Punganur Bypass Road, Madanapalle town, said Fire Officer G Sivappa. As soon as the information was received, the Fire Officer along with his staff reached the spot and found the lorry already on fire. The fire brigade personnel immediately doused the fire completely. The cabin of the lorry was completely gutted in the accident, causing a loss of about Rs 9 lakh, said the owner Shrivakumar. The owner said that the fire broke out due to an electrical short circuit.



Mini Truck Donated to TTD



Tirumala, 03 April 2026: Ashok Leyland donated a Dost Plus XL mini truck worth Rs 8.75 lakhs to TTD on Friday morning. On this occasion the company's Area Manager Mohammed Nazeeruddin performed special prayers for the vehicle in front of the Srivari Temple and handed over the vehicle keys to TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary.

After Varanasi, Ramayana Targets Rs.1000 Cr OTT Deal?

Ranbir Kapoor's mythological behemoth Ramayana is arguably the next highly awaited Bollywood film of the year. With 4000 Crores budget riding on this two-part project, the stakes are so high that the makers needs massive theatrical and digital deals to recoup the investment.

According to the latest buzz in Bollywood media, the production house behind this epic duology has rejected a mind-blowing OTT bid from a leading company. Reportedly, a staggering offer worth 700 Crores for the digital rights of both parts of Ramayana have been offered. But, producer Namit Malhotra is said to have declined the offer as he is expecting minimum 1000 Crores from OTT players for this ambitious project.

Earlier, there were similar unverified reports in the media that SS Rajamouli's upcoming globe-trotting action adventure 'Varanasi' also received a similar offer from OTT giant Netflix. Sources revealed that the team is yet to close the deal. Though it is unclear whether the price offered is exaggerated or the team is expecting more than the quoted amount, the OTT rights are still unsold.

Now, Bollywood circles are buzzing with the news that Ramayana makers are confi-



dent that Ramayana fetches more than 700 Crores and still looking for better offers. Another talk is that the producer is also thinking to sell the rights of two parts separately so as to make more profit out of the deals.

Keeping aside the rumours over these big-ticket deals, it should be noted that the first glimpse of Mahesh Babu starrer Varanasi received a phenom-

enal response due to the jaw dropping visuals and SS Rajamouli's incredible presentation. Whereas, the just released glimpse of Rama from Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana received mixed reports as the VFX effects didn't cater to the high expectations of moviegoers. There is no wrong in expecting record breaking deals for a film like Ramayana given the scale and budget involved.

But, the content in the promos should match the high expectations and create unprecedented buzz on the franchise. The team should come up with more fascinating promotional content in the coming days to up the ante before the release of the first part. Ramayana stars Ranbir Kapoor, Yash, Sai Pallavi and Sunny Deol in the lead roles. The film is releasing for a Diwali 2026.

Ramayana vs Varanasi Debate Brings Kalki into the Spotlight

The ongoing debate around Ramayana has unexpectedly brought Kalki 2898 AD back into the spotlight. After the teaser of Ramayana received mixed reactions, particularly criticism over a few VFX shots, film lovers, especially from the South, began drawing comparisons with other big-budget spectacles. Many pointed to S. S. Rajamouli's approach, highlighting that beyond budgets, conviction and clarity of vision play a crucial role. His Varanasi pre-visualization glimpse was widely appreciated and faced minimal criticism, reinforcing the idea that execution matters as much as scale. Amid this discussion, Kalki 2898 AD has emerged as a benchmark. Being mounted on a massive budget, the film was largely praised for its visual effects and CG quality, with very few complaints from audiences regarding the screenplay. Interestingly, this renewed conversa-



tion has turned into free publicity for Kalki, especially as work on its sequel has already begun. The film's technical strengths are once again be-

ing acknowledged, keeping it relevant in public discourse. In a way, the Ramayana debate has only strengthened Kalki's standing as a visual spectacle

done right. The shooting of the sequel has already gone on floors and Nag Ashwin is leaving no stone unturned to make this film a smash hit.

Mega Hero Betting Only on Big Concepts?

Until 2023, Mega hero Sai Durgha Tej did films in quick succession and made sure that at least two movies released every year. Even after meeting with a serious accident in 2021, he recovered very quickly and completed both Virupaksha and Bro without taking much gap. It has now been nearly three years since the release of his last film and still shooting for his upcoming ambitious pan-India project, Sambarala Yeti Gattu, which is being helmed by debutant director Rohit and produced by Hanuman fame Niranjana Reddy.

In the making for two years, Sambarala Yeti Gattu is yet to lock the release date as some portions are still pending. The big-budget film has faced several delays in these two years. But, the team is now gearing up for a grand release very soon. The date is likely to be announced in a few weeks. Meanwhile, SDT recently announced a new collaboration with the directorial duo behind Kiran Abbavaram's KA. Producer Saahu Garapati, who is



fresh from the success of Mana Shankara Vara Prasad, will back this project which is also expected to be a high-budget mystic thriller just like his previous blockbuster Virupaksha.

Looking at his recent choice of scripts, it is clear that Sai Durgha Tej is more inclined towards choosing intense larger-than-life subjects rather than regular commercial potboilers and romantic entertainers which he tried before Virupaksha. But, the pace at which he is doing films is a worrying factor as far as his career progression is concerned. For an actor like SDT, spending more than a year for a single project is quite disappointing as many top-tier actors are able to complete minimum one film every year. It is time for him to shift gears immediately and have at least one or two releases in a year without wasting much time.

Dinesh Karthik focuses on helping players understand roles at RCB

Hyderabad: From one of the most accomplished finishers in T20 cricket to shaping one of the most dynamic batting units in the league, Dinesh Karthik's transition into a coaching role at Royal Challengers Bengaluru is yielding strong results as the side began their 2026 IPL campaign by scripting history, pulling off the fastest 200-plus chase in IPL history against Sunrisers Hyderabad, chasing down the target in just 15.4 overs, a performance that highlighted both preparation and execution under pressure. "In our team, we have players at very different stages of their careers. All of them are eager to learn, and my role is to understand what each individual needs, while ultimately preparing them for match situations," says Karthik. "Where they bat and the challenges they face are very different. For example, someone like Phil Salt will often deal with the new ball swinging, whereas for someone like Romario Shepherd, swing is rarely a factor at that stage," he said. "So, it's about helping them understand those scenarios, what positions to get into, what to look for and then observing and giving them feedback accordingly. Coaching is as much about understanding the person as it is about the skill," Karthik said, reflecting on his coaching philosophy. Drawing from both his playing days and time in broadcasting, Karthik has also emphasised clarity, brevity and trust, allowing players to make informed decisions in high-pressure situations. "DK is a mastermind. He's very detailed



and excellent at gathering information along with Freddy (Wilde) and the rest of the coaching staff, and then simplifying it into something that's easy to take onto the pitch. That's probably his biggest strength. He brings a lot to the coaching setup, and it's even more valuable because he's played at the highest level so recently. We're very fortunate to have him," Phil Salt commented on the batting coach. "These are elite players who are already dominating world cricket, so you don't need to overcoach. It's about giving them the right inputs and trusting them to make the best decisions. My experience in broadcasting has been very helpful. You travel, watch different teams and players closely, and analyse both their strengths and weaknesses. As a commentator, you're constantly observing and breaking the game down, which

helps later in coaching. It's also taught me to communicate clearly and concisely, and that really helps when working with players," Dinesh Karthik added. RCB's batting performances this season have reflected a clear sense of structure and adaptability across phases. A key aspect of Karthik's work has been tailoring preparation to individual players, particularly in helping them anticipate and respond to specific match scenarios. "Tim David is working on specific scenarios that bowlers might target him with. It starts with understanding his strengths. He's a tall player with a unique range, and we figure out how to get him into positions where he can execute certain shots consistently. We try to simulate match situations in training, identify the shots he's most comfortable with, and also the areas where he feels he can improve. Then it's about designing drills around that," Karthik said.

Telangana thrash Gujarat 20-0 in sub junior men's hockey championship



Rajgir: Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Delhi Hockey, Telangana Hockey and Chhattisgarh Hockey registered notable wins in their respective matches on the second day of the 16th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2026 at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium in Bihar. In the first match of the day, Hockey Andhra Pradesh secured a 3-1 win against Le Puducherry Hockey in Pool A of Division C. Surya Ganesh Kataru Pradeep (13'), Chaitanya Lanka Chaitanya Yesu (19') and captain Maduru Ganga (27') scored for the winners. For Le Puducherry Hockey, Dharshan (58') netted their only goal. The second match of the day in the same division saw Hockey Mizoram beat Assam Hockey 6-0. Joseph Malsawmtluanga (5', 33', 54') bagged a hat-trick, with captain Malsawmkima (12'), Vanlallhmgaiha (38') and Lallhmgaihuuala (48') also scoring. In Pool A of Division B, Delhi Hockey registered a 9-1 victory against Hockey Bengal. Aryan (4', 14'), captain Yuvraj Singh (10', 22'), Sushant Sehrawat (26', 58') and

Siddharth (29', 53') all scored a brace each, with Luv (24') also adding to the tally. Ayush Pradhan (13') scored for Hockey Bengal. In the same pool, Telangana Hockey overpowered Hockey Gujarat with a 20-0 win. Amit Dayal (5', 21', 22', 37', 41', 47', 50', 52', 55', 56') had a day to remember, while Hadrian Lawrence (2', 20'), Harsh Kumar Gautme (4', 7'), Akhil Gogula (24', 34'), Gyaneshwar Pittala (12'), Pendor Dhanraj (26'), Eslavath Yuvaraj (35') and captain Yashith Jala Surya (44') also scored. In Pool B of Division B, Hockey Karnataka played out a

2-2 draw against Hockey Arunachal. Captain Adarsh Govind Mutagar (18', 54') scored for Hockey Karnataka, while captain Kumar Shashank (4') and Ashwani Patel (45') netted for Hockey Arunachal. In the final game of the day from the same pool, Chhattisgarh Hockey prevailed 7-2 against Hockey Himachal. Captain Piyush Kumar Sahu (30', 38', 60') netted a hat-trick, with Yogesh Thakur (39'), Om Kumar Yadav (47'), Aadrsh Raj Singh (51') and Abhishek Yadav (53') also scoring. Sidhant Kaushal (13') and Daksh (59') scored for Hockey Himachal.

India U-20 women suffer defeat against Japan in Asian Cup opener

Pathum Thani: The Indian U-20 women's national team suffered a 0-6 defeat at the hands of Japan in their opening match of the AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026 at the Thammasat Stadium in Pathum Thani, Thailand, on Thursday. The Young Nadeshiko led 1-0 at half-time. Six-time champions Japan got the lead early on through an own goal by Thoibisana Chanu Tojam (12'og). However, it was not until the second half that they really managed to start hurting the Young Tigresses, with Miki Kimura (54'), Noa Fukushima (57'), Natsumi Tago (75'), Miyu Matsunaga (81') and Yura Honda (87') netting one each.