

WEEKEND

Central Chronicle



COMMENT

Scientists Unlock a Powerful New Way to Turn Sunlight into Fuel Page 10



SPORTS

Virginia leads NCAA swim championships as Curzan shines again Page 14



WEEKEND

'Dhurandhar: The Revenge' is a intense, unapologetic visual treat Page 12

PM condemns attacks on critical infra in West Asia

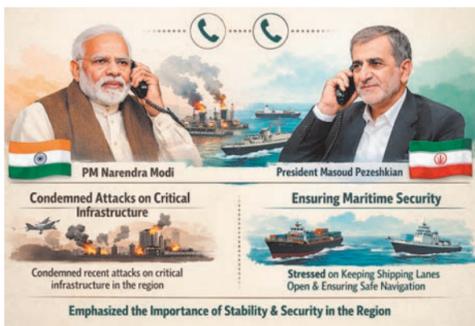
Modi for safeguarding navigation freedom and secure shipping lanes.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke to the President of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian, and condemned the attacks on critical infrastructure in West Asia, while stressing the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation and ensuring shipping lanes remain open and secure.

In his telephonic conversation with the Iranian leader, Prime Minister Modi conveyed Eid and Nowruz greetings, expressing hope that this festive season brings peace, stability and prosperity to West Asia.

"Spoke with President Dr Masoud Pezesh-



kian and conveyed Eid and Nowruz greetings. We expressed hope that this festive season brings peace, stability and prosperity to West Asia," the prime minister said in a post on 'X'.
Modi condemned the attacks on critical infrastructure in the region, which threaten regional stability and disrupt global supply chains.

Concern over evolving regional security.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Modi and the Iranian President since the present conflict started on February 28.

On March 12, President Pezeshkian briefed Prime Minister Modi on the current situation in Iran and shared his perspective on recent developments in the region.

The prime minister had expressed deep concern about the evolving security situation in the region and reiterated India's consistent posi-

tion that all issues must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, drawing retaliation from Iran which targeted its neighbours and Israel.

Iran also controls the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route through which 20 per cent of the world's energy is transported. Since the conflict, very few ships have been allowed by Iran to cross it.

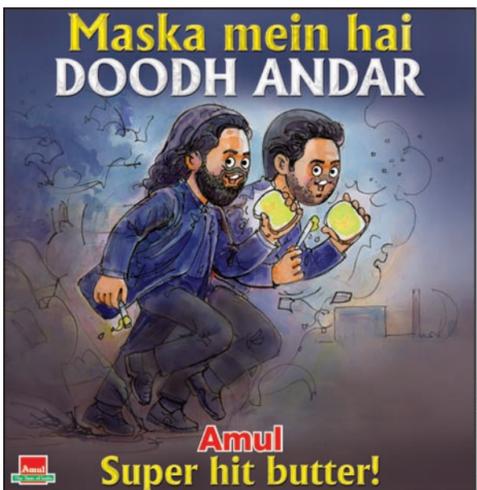
PM Modi has spoken to a number of world leaders since the conflict started. These include leaders from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, France and Malaysia.

Five dead

KOCHI: Five persons, including three children, were found dead at a rented house at Vaduthala here on Saturday, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Sree-kumari (58), her daughter Aswathi Nair (36), two grandsons aged 14 and 4, and a two-year-old granddaughter.

They were natives of Vilappilsala in Thiruvananthapuram and had been staying in a rented house on Karsaka Road in Vaduthala.



Fugitive in 2021 murder-robbery held by Ahmedabad cops

Press Trust Of India

AHMEDABAD: A man allegedly involved in a 2021 murder-robbery case in Chhattisgarh was arrested by Ahmedabad Crime Branch in Gujarat, an official said on Saturday.

Ajaykumar alias Laxmisagar alias Kimtishree Rajnarayan Mishra,



wanted in connection with the murder of one Shakuntala Devi under Tikrapara police station limits in Chhattisgarh, was held on Friday, the

official said.

"Shakuntala Yada and her younger son Amit were involved in a property dispute with her other son Ajay. Shankuntala and Amit approached Mishra, a history sheeter, for help. Mishra was a security guard in the hospital in which Amit was employed," the official said.

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Raipur



“Premium petrol, industrial diesel price hike an anti-public, unjust move.”
Vandana Rajput
Cong Spokesperson

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated with immense joy and devotion

Eid marks the end of Ramadan with prayers, charity, and celebrations.

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr is being celebrated across the state on Saturday with immense joy, devotion, and a spirit of togetherness. Marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, the day holds deep religious and cultural significance for the Muslim community.

Popularly known as ‘Meethi Eid,’ the festival symbolizes gratitude, compassion, and unity. Since early morning, devotees have been seen preparing for the occasion—bathing, wearing new or freshly cleaned clothes, applying perfume, and heading to Eidgahs and mosques to



offer special prayers in Raipur. After the prayers, people warmly greet each other with embraces, spreading the message of brotherhood and har-

mony. In several places, a traditional practice of returning home via a different route after prayers is also followed.

A key aspect of Eid cel-

ebrations is the offering of Zakat-ul-Fitr, a form of charity given before the Eid prayers. This act ensures that underprivileged individuals can

FACTFILE

● Zakat-ul-Fitr ensures inclusion of the needy in festive joy.

also participate in the festivities. Many people donate through mosques and social organizations to support those in need. Eid-ul-Fitr falls on the first day of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic calendar, and its date depends on the sighting of the moon. As a result, it may be observed on different days across countries. Historically, the festival traces back to the time of Prophet Muhammad in Medina, after the completion of the first Ramadan fasts.

Heroin syndicate busted; 4 key smugglers arrested

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: In a major breakthrough against inter-state drug trafficking, Raipur Commissionerate Police has busted a Punjab-based heroin (chitta) smuggling syndicate and arrested four key accused from Punjab. The operation was carried out under the joint leadership of DCP (West) Sandeep Kumar Patel and DCP (Cyber) Smritik Rajnala, with support from a coordinated team of Kabirnagar, Amanaka, and Cyber Police Stations.

The accused—Kawaljit Singh Pannu, Tarsem Singh



alias Sajan, Vicky Singh, and Janak Raj—were found to be part of a well-organized network supplying heroin from Punjab to Raipur. Police investigations revealed that Punjab served as the primary source of heroin, with local distributors in Raipur acting as the final link in the chain.

Kawaljit Singh Pannu, identified as a top-tier supplier, allegedly sourced heroin from networks operat-

ing near the India-Pakistan border. He was found in possession of an illegal Beretta pistol and live ammunition, highlighting the dangerous nature of the syndicate. The other accused used innovative methods to evade law enforcement—while Tarsem and Vicky routed drugs through courier parcels, Janak Raj relied on truck drivers transporting commercial goods as cover.

Ambedkar Hospital lacks basic sanitation facilities

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Serious concerns have emerged over the lack of basic sanitation facilities at Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Memorial Hospital, with patients and attendants facing acute inconvenience due to non-functional and poorly maintained washrooms. According to reports, several toilets constructed near the OPD block remain locked, despite heavy daily footfall at the hospital. Those that are open are in an unhygienic condition, with foul smell and dirt making them almost unusable. The situation has worsened due to the increasing



number of visitors, putting immense pressure on the limited available facilities. In a disturbing development, men have reportedly started using women's washrooms due to the unavailability of functional toilets. This has caused serious discomfort and inconvenience for female patients and attendants, forcing many to look for alternatives in wards or secluded areas, raising concerns over dignity and safety.

Narcotics racket busted in Gudhiyari; two arrested

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: In a major crackdown on illegal narcotics trade, the Gudhiyari Police arrested two accused re-handed near the CSEB ground in Kalinga Nagar with a large quantity of banned narcotic tablets and a weapon. The action was carried out following the specific intelligence inputs under the directives of senior police officials to curb the rising menace of drug trafficking in the city.

During interrogation, the accused confessed that they had procured the banned tablets from Odisha and were actively searching for customers in the area. They failed to produce any valid documents for possession or sale of the narcotics and initially attempted to mislead the police.



ated knife was also seized from their possession. The accused were identified as Sidhu Bagh (30) and Rohit Kumar (25), both residents of Raipur.

The event saw the presence of prominent citizens, automobile enthusiasts, and customers. The newly launched Kushaq stands out for its strong

New Skoda Kushaq launched with advanced AI features

Central Chronicle News

5-star Global NCAP safety rating with integrated Google Gemini AI technology.

RAIPUR: The automobile sector in the state capital witnessed a significant addition as Speed Skoda Raipur unveiled the new Skoda Kushaq in a grand launch event. The unveiling marked not just the introduction of a new vehicle, but a celebration of innovation, safety, and Skoda's engineering legacy.

The event saw the presence of prominent citizens, automobile enthusiasts, and customers. The newly launched Kushaq stands out for its strong

NEW LAUNCH



FACTFILE

● ‘Super Care’ package offers 4-year warranty and roadside assistance

safety credentials, having received a 5-star rating from Global NCAP.

One of its most talked-about features is the integration of Google Gemini AI technology, which enhances the driving experience through intelligent voice commands, real-time navigation, and

adaptive responses to user needs.

Designed to set new benchmarks in luxury and performance, the SUV boasts a premium leather interior, a panoramic sunroof, and a host of advanced features. These include a powerful TSI turbo petrol engine for superior performance, ventilated seats for enhanced comfort, and smart connectivity options such as wireless charging and a touchscreen infotainment system.

FREE FIRE NOC ENDS

Fire NOC outsourcing sparks concern across institutions

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: The recent decision to outsource the Fire NOC (No Objection Certificate) process to private agencies has triggered widespread concern among schools, hospitals, and other institutions across Chhattisgarh. Previously issued free of cost by the Fire Department, the NOC now comes with significant charges, with private firms reportedly



demanding up to Rs 10 per square foot for fire audits. This shift has imposed a heavy financial burden on institutions. For instance, a 50,000

sq. ft. hospital may now incur annual audit costs of nearly Rs 5 lakh. Smaller establishments, including schools and clinics, are also facing

FACTFILE

● Concerns over transparency and accountability as government outsources fire safety audits

expenses ranging from thousands to lakhs. In Ambikapur, several private hospital operators have voiced strong objections, calling the fees unsustainable. Questions are being raised over the

rationale behind privatizing a system already managed by trained fire department officials. Earlier, inspections were conducted transparently by district teams following online applications. Now, similar services are being monetized through private entities. In Surguja alone, thousands of institutions—including hospitals, health centers, and over 2,300 schools—will be impacted.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

WITNESS OVERWHELMING RESPONSE

Vedanta Greens draws strong response on day two, attracts 1000 visitors



RAIPUR: The launch of Vedanta Greens, a premium development by Ashtavinayak Realities and Shubha Dream Homes Pvt. Ltd., continued to witness overwhelming response on its second day. Located on Old Dhamtari Road, the project attracted over 1,000 visitors within two days, with 89 families confirming bookings for residential plots. Developers attributed the strong turnout to the project's strategic location, modern planning, and growing investor confidence in emerging corridors. Directors Ajay Sindhvani and

Shubham Adlakha highlighted that Vedanta Greens is designed not just as a housing project, but as a long-term investment opportunity backed by connectivity and infrastructure growth. Its proximity to key developments, including major road projects, is expected to boost its value significantly. CMD Santosh Lohana ‘Vicky’ emphasized that Old Dhamtari Road is rapidly evolving into a major residential hub, supported by nearby educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and large-scale developments like Kamal Vihar.

GENERAL BODY MEETING

Madhya Pradesh Central Bank Employees' meet held in Ambikapur

AMBIKAPUR: The General Body Meeting of the Madhya Pradesh Central Bank Employees Association (Chhattisgarh State Chapter) was successfully organised on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Hotel Makhan Vihar in Ambikapur. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from bank employees across the region. The meeting was graced by Chief Guest Randhir Singh, Regional Head and Assistant General Manager of Central Bank of India. Addressing the gathering, he highlighted the bank's overall progress and outlined targets related to new and innovative deposit and credit schemes. Responding positively, employees from various cadres pledged their commitment to achieving these goals. Senior union leaders, including S.R. Gupta



(President, AIBOC), General Secretary Suresh Bani, and Minesh Kasera, emphasized the role of the union as a crucial link between employees and management. They urged members to remain united and actively connected with the organization to safeguard their interests. The meeting also paid tribute to departed colleagues, reflecting a sense of solidarity among members. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Kamal Jain and the singing of the National Anthem.

SPECIAL CAMP

Power consumers receive major relief at bill settlement camp

RAIPUR: In a major consumer outreach initiative, the Electricity Distribution Division, Kurud, successfully organised a special camp under the Chief Minister Electricity Bill Settlement Scheme, offering significant relief to power consumers. The camp witnessed an overwhelming response, with a large number of consumers registering on the spot to avail the scheme's benefits. Addressing the gathering, Chief Engineer (Raipur Rural) Sanjeev Singh stated that the scheme has been introduced by the state government to assist consumers struggling to clear their pending electricity dues. Highlighting its pro-consumer approach, he urged all eligible individuals to take advantage of the initiative and ease their financial burden. He further informed that



the scheme has gained considerable traction across the state, with nearly 40,000 consumers already registered. Beneficiaries include APL, BPL, and agricultural category consumers, underlining the scheme's inclusive reach. Officials elaborated that the scheme provides substantial relief in both the principal outstanding amount and the surcharge. During the Kurud camp, 10 consumers were granted relief amounting to Rs 82,950 against total dues of Rs 1,21,920.

Obituary

Anna Rani Sinha



RAIPUR: Smt. Anna Rani Sinha, wife of Late Shri S.S. Sinha, passed away on Saturday evening. She is survived by her sons, Shri Somnath Sinha (Retd. BSP Employee), Shri Bishwanath Sinha, and daughter Smt. Meena Datta. The funeral procession will depart from her residence at Adarsh Nagar, Charoda, at 10:00 AM on Sunday to the local Muktidham.

संजीवनी

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MBBS, MS, MCh, क्लिनिकल डाइरेक्टर, कैंसर सर्जन



डॉ. विवेक पटेल
MBBS, MS, MCh, कैंसर सर्जन



डॉ. कल्याण पांडेय
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Raipur News

Audit report highlights strong revenue base, scope for strengthening GST oversight

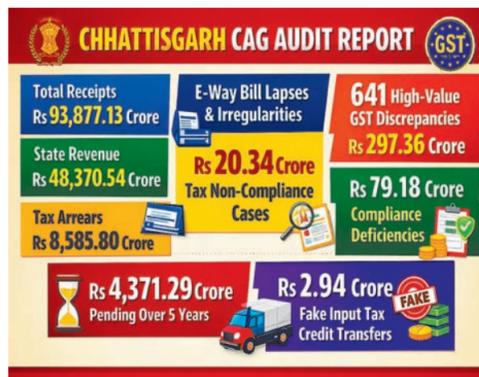
Chhattisgarh's 2022-23 total receipts reached Rs 93,877 crore, with own revenue at 52%.

Central Chronicle News

Pending arrears total Rs 8,586 crore, including Rs 4,371 crore over five years old.

RAIPUR: Underscoring a steady revenue performance while identifying areas for systemic strengthening, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's latest audit report on Chhattisgarh has highlighted the need to further enhance oversight and compliance within the Goods and Services Tax framework.

The Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on State Revenues for the financial year ended March 31, 2023, was presented in the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly under Article 151 of the Constitution of India, offering a detailed assessment of the State's fiscal position and tax administration systems. According to the report, the Government of Chhattisgarh recorded total receipts of Rs 93,877.13 crore during 2022-23. The State's own revenue contribution stood at Rs 48,370.54 crore, accounting for 52 per cent of total receipts, including Rs 33,122.30



crore in tax revenue and Rs 15,248.24 crore in non-tax revenue. Receipts from the Government of India were Rs 45,506.59 crore, reflecting a balanced revenue structure.

The report, while noting this strong revenue base, draws attention to pending arrears of Rs 8,585.80 crore across key departments such as Mining, Excise, Transport, Electricity, Registration and Commercial Taxes. Of these, Rs 4,371.29 crore have remained outstanding for over five years, indicating scope for improving recovery efficiency. A significant component of the audit relates to the Performance Audit of the Electronic Way Bill system under the Goods and Services Tax regime. The audit observed that while the system has facilitated

monitoring of goods movement, certain gaps in the common portal allowed generation of Electronic Way Bills by ineligible entities, including cancelled taxpayers and non-filers of returns. Instances of multiple Electronic Way Bills being generated for the same invoice were also noticed, pointing to areas where system controls can be further strengthened. The audit identified 29 cases of non-compliance involving a potential revenue implication of Rs 20.34 crore, including issues related to non-discharge of tax liabilities and irregular claims of Input Tax Credit. It also flagged cases where Electronic Way Bills were generated without actual movement of goods, resulting in irregular transfer of Input Tax Credit

amounting to Rs 2.94 crore.

On enforcement, the report indicates that while action has been taken in several cases, there is scope to enhance efficiency, particularly in timely adjustment of tax and penalties collected during enforcement drives, where delays ranging from 8 to 1,981 days were observed. In its Subject Specific Compliance Audit on oversight of Goods and Services Tax payments and return filing, the audit identified 641 cases of high-value discrepancies. Of these, 184 cases, representing 28.71 per cent, were confirmed as compliance deficiencies involving Rs 297.36 cr. The Department has recovered Rs 2.46 crore so far, with further scope for strengthening follow-up action.

The report also highlights issues such as excess or ineligible availing of Input Tax Credit, non-payment of tax by suppliers despite

Overall, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report highlights both the resilience of the State's revenue framework and the opportunities for strengthening compliance, technological safeguards, and enforcement mechanisms within the Goods and Services Tax system to ensure sustained fiscal discipline and revenue protection.

FASTFACTS

● GST e-Way Bill audit found gaps allowing ineligible use, with Rs 20.34 crore non-compliance.

● 641 high-value GST discrepancies confirmed Rs 297 crore issues, recovering only Rs 2.46 crore so far.

credit being claimed, and non-filing of statutory returns including GSTR-3B. In some cases, non-production of key records limited the scope of audit, indicating the need for improved transparency and documentation practices.

Further scrutiny of selected taxpayers revealed 23 compliance deficiencies involving Rs 79.18 crore, against which Rs 41.87 crore has already been recovered. The discrepancies were primarily linked to excess Input Tax Credit claims, short payment of tax, and inadequate reversal of credits.

CM SAI SLAMS CONGRESS OVER CORRUPTION |

"No right to give advice after 5 years of misrule"



Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has launched a scathing counter-attack against the Congress party following their allegations regarding the Surguja Olympics and the Chhattisgarh Staff Selection Board Act. In a firm statement, CM Sai dismissed the opposition's criticism, asserting that those who oversaw five years of rampant corruption have no moral standing to lecture the current administration. The CM stated that it is "unbecoming" for a party that failed to fulfill its promises during its tenure to offer advice now. He pointed out that the previous Congress government failed to deliver justice not only to the public but even to their own supporters despite receiving a clear mandate. CM Sai emphasized that the Chhattisgarh Staff Selection Board Act is designed to make

FASTFACTS

● The CM stated that it is "unbecoming" for a party that failed to fulfill its promises during its tenure to offer advice now.

the recruitment process more organized, transparent, and time-bound, effectively securing the future of the state's youth. He defended the Surguja Olympics, describing such events as vital platforms for nurturing local sporting talent and empowering young people. Labeling the Congress allegations as "completely baseless," the Chief Minister reiterated his government's dedication to Good Governance (Su-shasan) and transparency.

"Our government is working with a resolve for development and transparency. The trust of the people of Chhattisgarh is our greatest strength," CM Sai remarked.

NEWSLINE

INSPECTION

Municipal Commissioner inspects raw water pumps for summer readiness



RAIPUR: Following orders from Raipur Municipal Corporation Commissioner Vishwadeep, Additional Commissioner Lokeshwar Sahu conducted a thorough inspection today of raw water pumps at the Intakwell facility. He examined operations at Sagar, Sarita, Neer Kshir, and Kharun pump houses, checking pump capacities, running conditions, and administrative setups for the 33 kV/11 kV substations.

Accompanied by Executive Engineer (Water) Nar Singh Farendra and other officials, Sahu directly observed the sites. He directed immediate maintenance of all pumps and motors to prevent issues during the hot summer season, stressing checks on all parts and prior servicing. Sahu also instructed daily monitoring of raw water levels supplied by the Water Resources Department from the river, along with close coordination to ensure smooth supply. This proactive step aims to maintain uninterrupted water distribution for Raipur residents amid rising summer demand.

BLOOD QUALITY WORKSHOPS |

AIIMS Raipur hosts state workshops on blood centre quality assurance

Central Chronicle News

The workshops were conducted by the Department of Transfusion Medicine, AIIMS Raipur, in collaboration with the National Health Mission Chhattisgarh.



FASTFACTS

● The workshops offered a comprehensive blend of theoretical knowledge and hands-on practical training to Medical Officers and technical staff from blood centres across various districts of Chhattisgarh.

The inaugural session was presided over by Lt Gen Ashok Jindal (Retd), Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Raipur. The programme was graced by Ranbir Sharma, IAS, Mission Director, NHM Chhattisgarh, as the Chief Guest, and Dr Khemraj Sonwani,

Deputy Director, Blood Cell, NHM Chhattisgarh, as the Guest of Honour. The workshops were organised under the leadership of Dr Sankalp Sharma, Professor and Head, Department of Transfusion Medicine, AIIMS Raipur.

The workshops offered a comprehensive blend of theoretical knowledge and hands-on practical training to Medical Officers and technical staff from blood centres across various districts of Chhattisgarh. Key sessions focused on quality terminology, reporting of quality events, equipment maintenance,

External Quality Assurance Schemes (EQAS) and proficiency testing, interpretation of Westgard rules, documentation practices, immunohematology quality control, donor screening, apheresis monitoring, component quality control, and Transfusion Transmitted Infection (TTI) screening.

The programme concluded with participant feedback, networking interactions, and a group photograph, reflecting a strong commitment to strengthening quality-assured transfusion services and enhancing patient safety across the state.

WORLD TENNIS TOUR |

ITF World Tennis Tour Jrs J30 kicks off with qualifying rounds

Central Chronicle News

RAIPUR: The international tennis spotlight shifted to the Raipur International Stadium in Jora on Saturday as the J30 Raipur - ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors officially commenced. Organized by the Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association (CSTA) under the aegis of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) and sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation (ITF), the prestigious world-ranking tournament opened with high-stakes



qualifying matches.

Under the leadership of Tournament Director and CSTA Secretary Gurucharan Singh Hora, the event has drawn a global field of 111 athletes. Junior players from India, Australia, the United States, Indonesia, and Norway are competing, underscoring the tournament's growing interna-

tional reputation and high competitive standard. The opening day focused on the U-18 Boys' and Girls' Qualifying Round 1, where seeded players largely lived up to expectations. In the Boys' category, top seed Sarthak Ashok Gaikwad (India) survived a tough challenge from Kushagra Bhardwaj, winning 6-2, 2-6, [10-7]. Second seed Madhav Dadhich dominated Eklavya Singh Rajput with a 6-1, 6-0 victory, while other seeded players including Heet Bhimshibhai Kandoriya

(3), Aarav Dhekial (4), Aarav Bharat (6), Viren Suryavanshi (7) and Aarav Galwa (8) all secured their spots in the next round with convincing wins. Notably, Rishikesh Mane caused a major upset by defeating fifth seed Aditya Sharma in a flawless 6-0, 6-0 performance. International participants faced mixed results on the opening day. Australia's Jai Chinnasamy fell to India's Viren Suryavanshi 6-1, 6-0, and fellow Australian Jesiel Jivan was defeated by Kian Patel 6-1, 6-2.

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Bilaspur



District administration has launched a drive after getting complaints against illegal plotting.”

Sanjay Agrawal
Collector, Bilaspur

Action taken against illegal mining, 8 vehicles seized

Crackdown on illegal mineral transport in Bilaspur intensifies, eight vehicles seized during multi-location raids across district under administration's strict enforcement drive

Central Chronicle News

BILASPUR: Acting on the directions of the district administration, the Mining Department in Bilaspur has intensified its crackdown against illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals, seizing eight vehicles during a major enforcement drive across multiple locations. The action was carried out under the guidance of the Collector and supervision of senior officials, with teams conducting extensive inspections in areas including Niratu, Sendri, Turkadih, Lokhandi, Koni, Birkona and Sarkanda. The campaign aimed to curb unauthorised extraction and movement of minerals, which has been a persistent concern in the district. During the inspections, officials intercepted several vehicles involved in illegal transportation. In the Sarkanda area, two Hyva trucks carrying stone chips (gitti) and one Hyva transporting sand without valid permits were seized. Similarly, in Niratu, one tractor-trolley engaged in illegal transport was caught, while another tractor-trolley



was seized from Turkadih.

In Lokhandi, authorities seized one Hyva truck along with a tractor-trolley found transporting minerals in violation of rules. Additionally, in the Ashok Nagar area, one Hyva vehicle carrying murum (laterite soil) without proper documentation was confiscated. Overall, the department seized a total of five Hyva trucks and three tractor-trolleys, taking the number of impounded vehicles to eight. All seized vehicles have been placed under the custody of local police stations, including Sarkanda and Koni, for further legal action. Officials

from the Mining Department reiterated that such enforcement drives will continue in the future with equal intensity. They emphasised that strict action will be taken against those involved in

FASTFACTS

- Eight vehicles including five Hyvas seized during anti-illegal mining enforcement drive
- Strict action continues against illegal extraction, transport and storage of minerals

illegal mining activities, warning violators of stringent penalties.

The administration has maintained that curbing illegal mineral operations is essential to protect natural resources, ensure environmental sustainability, and maintain lawful mining practices in the district.

Illegal mining: Action to continue

The administration stated that strict action against illegal mineral operations is crucial to safeguard natural resources and prevent environmental damage. Officials emphasised that unchecked mining and transportation can harm ecosystems and disrupt legal frameworks. Ensuring compliance with regulations, they said, helps promote sustainable development and responsible resource use. The administration reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining lawful mining practices in the district while continuing enforcement drives to deter violations and protect ecological balance.

Navbharat-Suruchi Club to host Hindu Nav Varsh on 23

Central Chronicle News

Navbharat-Suruchi Club will celebrate Hindu New Year with cultural and creative activities in Bilaspur.

FACTFILE

- Cultural events, competitions and games will engage participants.

nised, where participants will be given 10 minutes to create and present their designs. The activity is expected to reflect both artistic flair and devotion. Participants have been asked to bring their own materials for the competition and a range of fun games designed to engage attendees of all age groups. Organisers believe these activities will create a lively and interactive environment, encouraging participation and enjoyment. Registration for the event is mandatory, and interested individuals can enrol by contacting the organisers at 9981058293. Club members have extended an open invitation to those interested in being part of the celebration.

| PUPPET WORKSHOP |

Puppet workshop held at St. Xavier's School

Central Chronicle News

BILASPUR: A puppet and theatre workshop was organised at St. Xavier's High School Bilaspur as part of its ongoing spring camp, offering students an engaging platform for creative learning and expression. The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and teachers, who actively took part in the interactive sessions. The programme was inaugurated by noted theatre and puppetry



director Kiran Moitra, who introduced participants to the basics of puppetry and its role in storytelling. Through demonstrations and hands-on activities, students were encouraged to explore their creativity while learning about this

traditional performing art. School Principal Santoshi Dakwa appreciated the initiative and encouraged students to follow the guidance shared during the sessions. She expressed joy over the students' enthusiasm and

active involvement. It was encouraging to see students' zeal in the workshop, she further said. A large number of students, teachers and parents were present on the occasion. The workshop also

Land yet to be allotted for police station

BILASPUR: The issue of setting up new police stations in Mopka and Mangla was raised in the Assembly, highlighting delays despite an announcement made in March 2023. The state government informed that land allotment and jurisdiction notification are still pending, preventing the project from moving forward. In a reply, Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Vijay Sharma stated that while provisions have been made in the 2026-27 budget—1.32 crore for building construction and approval of 66 posts—the absence of final land allocation and jurisdiction notification remains a major hurdle.

MLA Sushant Shukla raised concerns over the delay and urged the government to expedite the process. He pointed out that both Mopka and Mangla are rapidly growing areas where rising population has led to increased law and order challenges.

St. Xavier's & Pareeksha Academy host mega career guidance prog

Central Chronicle News

Initiative aimed to guide students with clear strategies for major competitive exams.

BILASPUR/MUNGELI: St. Xavier's School, in collaboration with Pareeksha Commerce, Law & Science Academy, successfully organised a comprehensive career guidance programme, drawing enthusiastic participation from a large number of students and parents. The initiative aimed to provide clarity, direction, and structured preparation strategies for highly competitive examinations such as IIT-JEE, NEET, CA, CS, and CLAT. The programme featured in-depth counselling and mentoring sessions conducted by experienced subject experts. Students were informed about the opportunity to

| COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION PREPARATION |



FASTFACTS

- Expert-led counselling with specialised, result-oriented coaching.
- Parents praised it as a step toward a brighter future.

receive specialised coaching under the guidance of distinguished mentors, including alumni from premier institutions like IITs and AIIMS, practising Chartered Accountants and Company Secretaries, as well as seasoned advocates associated with the High Court and Supreme

Grand procession marks Cheti Chand celebration



Central Chronicle News

Sindhi community celebrates Cheti Chand with grand procession and devotional fervour.

FASTFACTS

- Procession featured Jhulelal idol, tableaux, dances, music, and enthusiastic public participation.

BILASPUR: The Sindhi community celebrated Cheti Chand with great enthusiasm and devotion, organising a grand procession dedicated to their revered deity Jhulelal. The festival marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year for the Sindhi community and is observed with religious and cultural fervour. The celebrations commenced from Bandhwapara, where members of the Sindhi Yuva Samiti performed traditional rituals and a maha aarti. The procession was ceremonially flagged off by community members including Amar Bajaj and Manish Laharani following customary rituals. A beautifully decorated idol of Jhulelal was the centrepiece of the procession, accompanied by colourful tableaux and devotional performances. Cultural presentations added vibrancy to the event,

including live depictions of saint Kanwar Ram's bhajans, Radha-Krishna rasleela, Mahakal devotion and Kathak dance. A women's group led by Vinita Bhavnani performed dandiya, drawing enthusiastic participation from onlookers. The procession moved through several areas of the city, including Budhwari Bazaar, Dhanmandi Road, Guru Nanak Chowk, Torwa Naka, Dayalband, Gandhi Chowk, Gol Bazaar, Sadar Bazaar, Pratap Chowk and Sarkanda, before concluding at Sindhi Colony late at night.

Devotees welcomed the procession at various points with fireworks, bands and decorative gates. Prasad, including sweets, fruits and sharbat, was distributed among attendees. Pooja Vidhani also welcomed the procession.

NEWSLINE

VERDICT

HC orders bonus marks for COVID workers,

BILASPUR: The High Court has ruled that individuals who worked in the Health Department through private agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic are also entitled to bonus marks in recruitment. While hearing a petition, the court directed the state government to grant due benefit and issue appointment to the petitioner within 60 days for the post of pharmacist. Petitioner Sunil Kumar Markam had worked during the COVID-19 pandemic through Jai Ambe Emergency Service Pvt. Ltd. in a mobile unit at the Community Health Centre in Bhairamgarh, Bijapur. He later applied for the pharmacist post advertised by the CMHO Kondagaon.

As per the initial merit list, the petitioner was awarded 10 bonus marks for his COVID duty. However, in the final list.

WORKSHOP

Hindi workshop held at Kendriya Vidyalaya



BILASPUR: A one-day Rajbhasha Hindi workshop was organised at Kendriya Vidyalaya CRPF on March 20 to promote the effective use of Hindi among teachers and staff. The programme aimed to encourage the use of Hindi in official work and create awareness about the Rajbhasha policy. It was inaugurated by Principal Ramakant Kaushik with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

In his address, the principal highlighted the importance of Hindi, stating that it is not only the official language but also an integral part of cultural identity. He urged all participants to use Hindi more frequently in their daily work.

ATTACK

Husband attacks wife over dispute

BILASPUR: A woman was seriously injured after her husband allegedly attacked her with a sharp object near the Women Police Station following a domestic dispute. The victim, Kamini Kosle, a resident of Mungeli district, had been staying with her sister in Kududand for the past few days due to ongoing issues with her husband, Rakesh Kosle. She had visited the Women Counselling Centre at the police station regarding the dispute.

As she stepped out of the centre with her sister, the accused allegedly attacked her, reportedly angered over the complaint. The woman sustained serious injuries in the assault. The accused also threatened her sister when she tried to intervene. A case has been registered at Civil Lines police station, and further investigation is underway.

5 illegal vendors nabbed in surprise raid at station

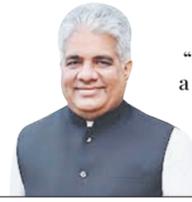
Central Chronicle News

BILASPUR: Acting against illegal vending at the railway station, authorities carried out a surprise raid and caught five unauthorised vendors operating on the premises. Following reports highlighting the issue, the zonal headquarters took a strict stance and directed inspectors to conduct enforcement action. During the inspection, officials identified and detained five illegal

vendors, initiating proceedings as per railway norms. Sources said illegal vending had been increasing at the station, allegedly with local support, prompting higher authorities to intervene directly.

The operation created a stir in the station area, with unauthorised vendors seen fleeing or going into hiding. Officials stated that such drives will continue to maintain order and transparency at the station.

N-E-W-S



“There is an urgent need for a balanced approach between economy and ecology for India's development.”

Bhopender Yadav
Union Minister

Indian Navy to commission indigenous frigate Taragiri

Indian Navy to commission indigenous stealth frigate Taragiri, boosting maritime strength, defence manufacturing, and operational readiness.

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The Indian Navy is set to commission its latest stealth frigate, INS Taragiri (F41), on April 3, marking a significant step in strengthening India's maritime capabilities and indigenous defence production. The commissioning ceremony will be presided over by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.



Taragiri is the fourth vessel under the Project 17A class of stealth frigates and has been constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai. With a displacement of around 6,670 tonnes, the warship represents an advanced evolution of earlier frigate designs, incorporating enhanced stealth features and a reduced radar cross-section for improved survivability in hostile environments. The vessel stands out for its strong indigenous content, exceeding 75 per cent, and reflects the government's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing. Its construction involved over 200 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), highlighting a broad domestic industrial ecosystem supporting the project. Equipped with a Combined Diesel or Gas (CODAG) propulsion system, Taragiri is capable of high-speed operations and long endurance, making it suitable for a wide range of missions. Its armament includes super-sonic surface-to-surface missiles, medium-range surface-to-air missiles,

HIGHLIGHT

● Indigenous stealth frigate strengthens naval power, boosts defence manufacturing.

● Advanced weapons,

and advanced anti-submarine warfare systems. These are integrated through a sophisticated combat management system designed for rapid response during naval operations. Beyond combat roles, the frigate is also equipped to undertake humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) missions, showcasing its multi-role versatility. The induction of Taragiri is expected to significantly enhance the Navy's operational readiness as it continues expanding its fleet with a focus on indigenous platforms.

Eid celebrated with fervour; Murmu greets



Press Trust Of India

Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated nationwide with prayers, unity, joy, and traditional festivities marking the end of Ramzan.

NEW DELHI: Eid-ul-Fitr is being celebrated across the country with deep religious fervour, enthusiasm and a spirit of togetherness. The festival marks the conclusion of the holy month of Ramzan, during which Muslims observe fasting, prayer and reflection. On this auspicious occasion, people dressed

FASTFACTS

● Devotees offer prayers, share sweets, spread joy nationwide today.

in traditional attire gathered at mosques and Eidgahs early in the morning to offer special Eid prayers. The atmosphere was filled with joy as families and communities came together to exchange greetings, embrace each other and celebrate the festival. Visiting relatives and friends, and sharing sweets and festive delicacies, remain an integral part of the celebrations. In the national capital New Delhi, major congregations are being held at prominent religious sites including Jama Masjid, Fatehpuri Masjid and Shahi Eidgah.

SONBHADRA

01 killed as chunk of coal falls down

A 30-year-old riding a motorcycle was killed and another critically injured after a large chunk of coal fell from a truck on them near a railway crossing in the Shaktinagar area here, police said on Saturday. Shaktinagar SHO Kamal Nayan Dubey said that the deceased has been identified as Amit Kumar, 30, while the pillion rider, Rahul Singh, 22, sustained severe injuries and is admitted to the hospital. The incident occurred on Friday night when the two men riding a motorcycle were travelling behind a coal-laden truck.

NEW DELHI

Preparations for Assly session reviewed

Ahead of the Budget Session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Speaker Vijender Gupta on Friday stressed the need for “shared dignity” of the House, while reviewing the preparedness of the assembly. “The forthcoming Budget session must reflect the finest parliamentary traditions, where debate is informed, conduct is measured, and every intervention contributes meaningfully to public purpose,” Gupta said.

PATNA

2 students killed, 3 injured

Two engineering students were killed and three injured when their speeding car fell into a roadside pit in Bihar's Nalanda district on Thursday, police said. The incident occurred near Gaudhapur More under Chandi police station area of Nalanda district. The deceased have been identified as Ashish Kumar and Rahul Kumar, both students of Nalanda Engineering College. Chandi Station House Officer (SHO) Suman Kumar said, “Initial investigations reveal that the accident occurred due to over-speeding and imbalance.

OPEN SCHOOLING

Centre pushes open schooling via NIOS for 100% enrollment

Press Trust Of India

The Dept of School Education would boost the open schooling through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).



to strengthen the open schooling framework through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), as part of a nationwide effort to bring out-of-school children

back into the education system and achieve a 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2030.

The move aligns with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which envisions universal school participation from pre-school to secondary level. The push also forms part of the broader vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Government data highlights the scale of the challenge.

Leopard cub found dead in Dudhwa

LAKHIMPUR: A mutilated carcass of a leopard cub was recovered from a field in Samapurnanagar range of Dudhwa buffer zone on Saturday morning, with forest officials attributing the death to an attack by another leopard.

Kirti Chaudhary, Deputy Director of the Dudhwa buffer zone, told PTI that the carcass of the cub, estimated to be seven month old, was found with multiple injuries.

HOUSE ATTACK

BJD leader's house attacked, Patnaik seeks CM's intervention

Press Trust Of India

BHUBANESWAR: BJD chief Naveen Patnaik on Saturday sought Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's intervention to restore law and order following an attack on the residence of a senior BJD leader and former minister here, police said. According to a complaint lodged at the Capital Police Station, security staff of BJD leader Pratap Jena alleged that around



15 miscreants attacked his residence on Friday night and used abusive language. According to the complaint, the attackers were armed with iron rods, a knife and a gun, and attempted to terrorise the security

personnel. On Friday morning, the party had issued a notice, signed by Jena in his capacity as vice-president (headquarters), suspending 10 members of the party's youth and student wings on charges of anti-party activities. Speaking to reporters after the attack on his house, Jena alleged that some suspended members of the party's youth and student wings created a ruckus outside his residence.

FOUR-YEARS OF GOVT

Rajnath Singh joins prog to mark four-years of Uttarakhand Govt

Press Trust Of India

DEHRADUN: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the world is currently passing through a phase of uncertainty and crisis, with conflicts continuing in several regions. He



expressed concern over the ongoing tensions and attacks in West Asia, noting that the situation has

implications not only for India but for global stability as well. Addressing a programme in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, marking four years of the state government, Singh highlighted that the evolving geopolitical situation could have far-reaching

consequences, particularly in terms of energy supplies and food security. He said that disruptions arising from conflicts in West Asia have the potential to impact economies worldwide, making it a serious issue for policymakers.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated in Ladakh



In Ladakh, Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated across Kargil district with religious devotion and simplicity. PTI

Murmu undertakes Govardhan Parikrama



Press Trust Of India

MATHURA: President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday visited the revered Danghati Temple in Govardhan, Mathura district, on the third and final day of her Uttar Pradesh tour. During her visit, she offered prayers and also performed the traditional Govardhan Parikrama, a significant ritual associated with devotion to Lord Krishna, before returning to Delhi.

The three-day visit of the President to Uttar Pradesh began on Thursday with a visit to the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya, where she had darshan and offered prayers. The visit underlined the cultural and spiritual importance of the region, which holds deep significance in India's religious heritage. Following her Ayodhya visit, the President travelled to Vrindavan, where she offered prayers at prominent temples including the ISKCON Temple Vrindavan and the Prem Mandir. Both sites are major centres of devotion and attract thousands of pilgrims from across the country and abroad.

On Friday, President Murmu also inaugurated the new Oncology Block at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram. The facility is expected to significantly strengthen cancer care services in the region by providing advanced treatment and support to patients. Her visit combined spiritual engagements with developmental initiatives, reflecting a focus on both cultural heritage and public welfare.

यशपाल शर्मा कहते हैं...

ISKCON

मार्क वाले

खलौने

से करें प्यार, मासूम बच्चों को दें सुरक्षित उपहार

वीडियो संदेश देखने के लिए यहाँ स्कैन करें

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Fun & Focus



Daily Horoscope

ARIES

Some of you may acquire clarity regarding your aspirations as a result of this passage. You will no longer be perplexed about the road you must pursue. Astrologi suggest that this is a fantastic moment for you to accomplish any assignment at hand right now. You may also discover a chance to clear the air and start again through your actions.

Taurus

Today is an excellent day for traveling, whether you are heading out with your family, friends, or on official business. The journey will be full of exciting sights and delightful conversations. With the Moon in Aries, get ready for some fun and adventure, dear Taurus! You will not encounter too many hurdles at this time, predicts Taurus daily horoscope.

Gemini

At least you were aware of who you were when you woke up this morning, but you feel that you could not possibly be the same person you were before. Today, avoid unnecessary disputes with those who are close to you. Disagreements will only worsen the issue rather than improve it. You should be particularly careful with what you say and how you express it at this time.

Cancer

Dear Cancer, the Moon in Aries will put you in an ambitious and competitive frame of mind. This is fine for certain domains in life as long as you do not become aggressive. Be considerate, especially when dealing with loved ones, suggests Cancer daily horoscope. Know that you can be assertive to get what you want without stepping on anyone's toes.

Leo

When your friends think highly of you, it makes you happy. Even if you may not be aware of it, your colleagues or classmates are constantly praising you. Your personality makes you prone to using sound judgment and practical experience. According to Astrologi astrologers, do not ruin your reputation by disappointing those who look up to you and seek your counsel.

Virgo

You have a unique ability to elicit a strong emotional response from the heart. Avoid arguments with neighbours or others today since they may become unpleasant and injure you. Even if these arguments are unnecessary, they are likely to arise today. Keeping a cool head and attempting to establish a cordial atmosphere between you and your partner.

Libra

Some of you might prefer to begin the day by concentrating on more important things. Take one item at a time, since doing so will prove beneficial as long as you can put it to good use. If you don't want to spoil your day, focus on your problem-solving talents and stay away from any bad energy.

Scorpio

The presence of the Moon in Aries might bring with it some auspicious news for you, clearing pending matters from your past. This will speed up some of your projects and will help meet deadlines. Astrologi astrologers suggest you get all the pending paperwork done as the stars will support you to complete your work quickly.

Sagittarius

It has the potential to keep you in a positive frame of mind. Although, do not impatiently look for final answers to pressing problems, or else you may end up feeling frustrated. You can accomplish a lot if you put your mind to it, say Astrologi astrologers. Wear the color white to attract peace and calm. Avoid doing anything important between 4 pm and 6 pm for maximum results.

Capricorn

Dear Capricorn, the Moon's position in Aries could make you disillusioned and irritated on several levels. Your performance may suffer, and you may become frustrated if the goals and objectives you establish for yourselves are not readily attained. This is only a temporary period, so please don't worry too much about these things. Dressing in golden yellow to boost our confidence.

Aquarius

The Moon's transit into Aries might make some of you feel a bit dazed and confused today. You may suffer from a lack of clarity, possibly due to this transit. However, don't worry too much. With your strong will and determination, you will cut through this fog. Nevertheless, it is important not to get annoyed at others because of your own confusion.

Pisces

You may gain clarity on issues that have confused you for some time now. This transit will bring in positive energy. It will help you begin steadily towards your professional goals. Utilize these positive developments to your advantage, advise Astrologi astrologers. If you face any trouble on the domestic front, now is the time to sort them out. Wear the color orange to attract positivity today.

SCIENCE WATCH

His name was Nikola Tesla



Nikola Tesla, born in 1856 was master in the field of electrical engineering and laid the foundation for modern electrified world. Tesla's groundbreaking designs played crucial role in advancing alternating current technology, enabling transmission of electric power.

He aced wireless transmission



One of Tesla's most significant contributions was the development of the Tesla coil, a high-voltage transformer that had a profound impact on electrical engineering. His innovative techniques allowed for wireless transmission of power.

A company bears his name



In recent years, Tesla's legacy has taken on a life of its own, often overshadowing his actual inventions. Perhaps most notably, the world's most famous electric car company bears his name.

KING OF CYBER SECURITY

Inspirational journey of Jay Chaudhry, the billionaire founder and CEO of the cybersecurity firm Zscaler.

Key Highlights of Jay Chaudhry's Journey
Humble Beginnings: Born in 1958 in the small village of Panoh, Himachal Pradesh. His childhood was marked by struggle, as his village lacked basic amenities like electricity and running water until he was a teenager.

Dedication to Education: He walked nearly 4 km daily to attend high school and often studied under trees during the day due to the lack of electricity at home.

Academic Excellence: He earned a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in Electronics Engineering from IIT (BHU), Varanasi. In 1980, he moved to the United States for further studies.

Global Success: After founding several successful startups (SecureIT, CipherTrust, AirDefense, and CoreHarbor), he founded Zscaler in 2007.

Net Worth & Recognition: As of 2025, his net worth is estimated at approximately \$17.9 billion (1.5 lakh crore), making him the wealthiest Indian-American immigrant in the U.S.. His company, Zscaler, currently has a market valuation of approximately \$24-28 billion.

Orangutan

COMMON NAME: Orangutans
SCIENTIFIC NAME: Pongo
TYPE: Mammals
DIET: Omnivore
AVERAGE LIFE SPAN IN THE WILD: 30 to 40 years
SIZE: Standing height: 4 to 5 feet
WEIGHT: 73 to 180 pounds

Though an adult male orangutan can weigh up to 220 pounds (100 kilograms)—females weigh about half what males do—orangutans spend most of their time up in the trees. They are the largest of all arboreal animals. As night time approaches in a tropical



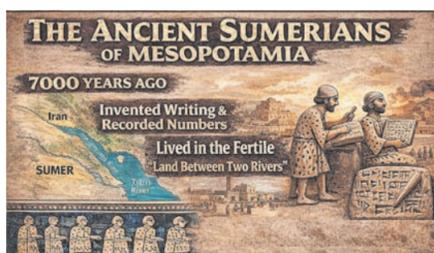
ANIMAL KINGDOM

rain forest in parts of Sumatra and Borneo in Asia, orangutans prepare for sleep. In forks of trees high off the ground, shaggy, red-haired apes bend branches down to form comfortable mattresses of leaves and twigs. They sometimes add a roof built from more branches, so that if it rains they will stay dry. Equipped with very long, powerful arms and hook-shaped hands and feet, these apes climb and swing from tree to tree with ease. They reach from one tree to the next with their long arms, grasping

the next branch with long hands or feet, and swing their bodies across the gap. If a baby following its mother reaches a gap between trees that is too wide for it to navigate, its mother makes a living bridge for the baby to scamper across. Sometimes heavier males can't find branches strong enough to hold their weight, so they climb down to get to the next suitable tree. On the ground, orangutans walk on all fours. Orangutans find their food in the trees where they live. More than half their diet consists of fruit. They also eat nuts, bark, and other parts of plants and trees. Every once in a while they eat insects such as ants and termites, as well as bird eggs.

TELL ME WHY?

Why were the people of Mesopotamia called Sumerians?



About 7000 years ago, farmers began to move into an area of land between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. This fertile land was called Mesopotamia, in what is now called Iraq. In the south of Mesopotamia was the land known as Sumer. The Sumerians, as they became known, were a very inventive race. They developed the first form of writing and recording numbers. The Sumerians drew pictures on soft clay with a pointed reed. The pictures were drawn downwards in lines, from the right-hand side. Later, they started to write across the tablet from left to right. The reed tip became wedge shaped, as did the marks it made.



- In the world of Tennis what is a Bagel?
- Where in the world of cricket one would find the words 'Yatra Pratibha Avsara Prapnothi'?
- The mascot of which defunct airline was The Common Man?
- What snack was invented by Amarjit Tibb and was named after a former cricketer?
- To celebrate which operation carried by the Indian Navy is 4th December celebrated as Navy India across India?
- Elephant Whisperers won the best of documentary film at the 95th Academy Award. In which national park was this movie shot?
- Which city in Southern India gives its name to the fabric Calico?

- ANSWERS -**
- (1) A set which is won 6-0 is labeled as Bagel.
 - (2) This shloka is inscribed on the IPL Trophy.
 - (3) Air Deccan (4) Frankie, named after Sir Frank Worrell (5) Operation Trident (6) Mudumalai National Park (7) Calicut

- Rama Quiz

THE FIVE FAQ

- The X-Ray was accidentally discovered by _____, Professor of Physics in Wurzberg, Bavaria, while he was experimenting with cathode rays. The first-ever X-ray image was that of his wife's hand.
- _____ is commonly believed to have been named in honour of Queen of Italy, Margherita of Savoy, and of the unification of Italy.
- Mount Everest was previously known as Peak XV. It was renamed in honour of the _____.
- In 2015, for the first time, the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year was not a word. It was a pictograph, the _____ emoji.
- Grammy winner Lorde was born as _____ in New Zealand.

- ANSWERS -**
- (1) Wilhelm Roentgen (2) Pizza Margherita (3) British Surveyor General of India, Sir George Everest (4) 'Face with Tears of Joy' (5) Ella Maria Lami Yellich-O'Connor.

ENGLISH FUNDA

1) Give the Feminine Gender of the following:
Masculine **Feminine**

- Bardolator
- Ram
- Usher
- Czar
- Viceroy

- ANSWERS -**
- (1) Bureau of Energy Efficiency (2) Point of sale (3) Solid State Drive (4) Light-Emitting Diode (5) Portable Document Format

- Across**
- Sailor (7)
 - Slender graceful female (5)
 - Scrub (5)
 - Large house (7)
 - Female warriors (7)
 - Crude (5)
 - Loathe (6)
 - Current (6)
 - Black and white beast (5)
 - Experienced person (3,4)
 - Synthetic material (7)
 - Musical drama (5)
 - Bart's father (5)
 - What is left (7)

- Down**
- Pungent condiment (7)
 - Spanish wine (5)
 - Jittery (7)
 - Negligent (6)
 - Underwater detection system (5)
 - Spare time (7)
 - Intuitive feeling (5)
 - Childish fit of anger (7)
 - Tiresome (7)
 - Be a go-between (7)
 - Football (6)
 - Succulent fruit (5)
 - More proficient (5)
 - In front (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION -

SUDOKU -

		3		7		8		
		4	3		1		7	
	9					3		
	1	9	2			4		
6								2
	4			8	9	7		
	8					2		
3	7		6	4				
6	7			8				

SUDOKU SOLUTION -

3	4	8	1	5	9	6	2	7
2	9	5	6	7	8	3	4	1
1	7	6	2	3	4	8	5	9
9	8	4	3	6	1	5	7	2
6	2	7	9	8	5	1	3	4
5	3	1	7	4	2	9	6	8
8	6	3	4	9	7	2	1	5
4	1	9	5	2	6	7	8	3
7	5	2	8	1	3	4	9	6

DAILY WORD SEARCH

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| Centipede | Tiptoe |
| Desktop | Topaz |
| Fingertip | Topcoat |
| Hardtop | Topic |
| Hilltop | Topper |
| Laptop | Treetop |
| Octopus | Wingtip |



The oil companies in state have sufficient stock of fuel and LPG and the people should keep away from fake rumours.

Chandan Tripathi
Collector Korea dist



Bilaspur Region

Collector speeds up district construction works

On Friday, Collector Kunal Dudawat held a departmental review meeting in the Collectorate.



FACTFILE

● He instructed the officials to finish district construction works in a timely manner.

(PMGSY) in areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), such as the Pahadi Korwa and Birhor families. The Collector stressed the need to expedite these projects to strengthen road connectivity to remote tribal settlements. Key road projects reviewed included Lemru-Devpahari, Madanpur-Manjhipara, Kodar-Manjhipara, and Main Road-Junapara. In addition, Mr. Dudawat instructed departments to

ensure quality construction, accelerate works under the Gram Gaurav Path and District Mineral Foundation (DMF) schemes, and prioritize the completion of roads, schools, health centers, and other government buildings. Specific attention was given to the Chirra-Shyang road, where he directed regular water sprinkling and serious efforts to speed up progress. The Collector also emphasized resolving land disputes, ensuring timely payments, and initiating DMF-sanctioned works that had not yet started. The PWD Bridge Division was instructed to expedite the Sunaliya road bridge project through coordination with relevant departments.

State-level training program for census field trainers scheduled

KORBA: Training for the Field Trainers appointed under Census 2027 will be conducted from March 23 to March 29 at the Collectorate Conference Hall, daily from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Field Trainers from the Korba Municipal Corporation (Zones 1 to 7), Nagar Panchayats Pali and Churikala, and Municipal Councils Dipka, Bankimnagra, and Katghora will undergo training from March 23 to March 25.

Trainers from the Tehsils of Korba, Katghora, Kartala, Pali, Podi-Uprora, Darri, Hardibazar, Barpali, Bhaisma, Dipka, Pasan, and Ajgarbhar will receive training from March 26 to March 29.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

NTPC LARA HOSTS FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT State-level football talent converges at Lara for U-20 championship

LARA: Subhash Thakur, Head of Project at NTPC Lara, inaugurated the NTPC U-20 Chhattisgarh Inter-state Football Championship 2025-26 on 20th March 2026 at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in Maitree Nagar township, NTPC Lara. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Thakur encouraged the young athletes to play with dedication, discipline, and team spirit, motivating them to showcase their best on the field. The inaugural match was contested between the District Football Associations of Balod and Korba. What makes this championship noteworthy is the participation of young footballers from 11 districts—Korba, Balod, Dantewada, Raigarh, Bilaspur, Durg, Surajpur, Raipur, Kondagaon, Koriya, and Narayanpur. Many players represent rural and semi-urban areas of Chhattisgarh,



where opportunities for exposure are limited. For them, the tournament is more than a competition—it is a chance to step onto a larger stage, gain recognition, and potentially earn a place in Team Chhattisgarh, which will represent the state in the National U-20 Championship.

Beyond promoting sports, the initiative reflects NTPC Lara's commitment to youth empowerment and community engagement.

MCB SECURES SECOND RANK IN DIGITAL HEALTH

State recognition for MCB's digital health achievements

Central Chronicle News

MCB: The Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur (MCB) district has once again earned recognition for its exemplary performance in the healthcare sector. Under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, the district achieved second place statewide in the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) campaign. This distinction underscores the district's administrative efficiency and its growing prominence in digital health services. Data from the NCD portal, covering April 2025 to February 2026, shows that a total of 81,762 ABHA cards have been generated in the district. Notably, 68,249 patients with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and hypertension have been linked to the ABHA system, achieving an overall seeding rate of 47.8 percent. This demonstrates that digital health initiatives are being effectively implemented at the grassroots level.



The ABHA card serves as a secure digital platform containing a patient's complete health record, including diagnostic reports, medication history, doctor consultations, and treatments. This system eliminates the need to carry physical documents repeatedly and enables healthcare providers to access accurate patient information instantly, enhancing the quality of care. Under the guidance of District Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Avinash Khare, the campaign has prioritized patients with NCDs. Every individual visiting an NCD clinic is registered for an ABHA card, with their diagnostic reports linked dig-

itally. District Nodal Officer Dr. Namrata Chakraborty and the health team—including ANMs, ASHAs, Mitans, and other health workers—are conducting door-to-door registration drives, earning strong public support. Special registration camps are being conducted at all Primary and Community Health Centers. An ABHA Help Desk has been established at the District Hospital, and awareness campaigns are held during Village Health and Nutrition Days as well as local Haat-Bazaars.

These initiatives ensure that residents from both rural and urban areas can easily access the digital platform.

Jal Jeevan Mission stalls in Koriya district

Central Chronicle News

BAIKUNTHPUR: The Jal Jeevan Mission, a joint initiative of the Central and State governments aimed at providing clean drinking water to every household, has reportedly failed at the grassroots level in Koriya district. The situation is particularly severe in villages near the district headquarters, Baikunthpur, including Sagarpur, Odgi, Talwara, Bhadi, Khanda, Kanchanpur, Ani, Salka, Salba, Narkeli,



and Narsinghpur. Villagers allege that the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department is claiming success on paper, while in reality, pipelines and infrastructure remain non-functional, leaving households without access to clean water.

Despite significant investments, water tanks, pipelines, and stand-posts lie defunct, incomplete, or damaged. Photographs reveal filth and discarded materials surrounding water facilities, reflecting the neglect of this critical scheme.

The Way Forward Sometimes Begins with a U-Turn

File Your Updated Income Tax Return (ITR-U) before

31st

March, 2026

Income tax Department receives information relating to financial transactions from various sources like banks, SROs, financial institutions, foreign jurisdictions, charitable organisations, commercial establishments and Law Enforcement Agencies etc. The information is shared with taxpayers in AIS, e- verification and through SAKSHAM NUDGE campaigns. Taxpayers are accordingly advised to see AIS, e-campaigns and SAKSHAM NUDGE messages related to unreported income or unsupported deductions / exemptions and review their ITR to correct if any income is not disclosed or unsupported claims have been made and file their updated ITR under section 139(8A) at specific rate. The time limit for filing an updated return is four years from the end of the relevant Assessment Year.

Key Features of an Updated Return:

- Purpose:** To promote voluntary compliance and reduce litigation.
- Form:** An updated return must be filed using Form ITR-U along with the applicable ITR form (ITR-1 To ITR-7) for the relevant assessment year.
- Additional Tax:** Filing an ITR-U requires the payment of additional tax, which varies based on the timing of the filing.
- Restrictions:** An Updated Return cannot be a return of loss, decrease the total tax liability, or result in increase of income tax refund.

Additional Tax Rates

The amount of additional tax (calculated on the aggregate of tax and interest payable) depends on when the return is filed:

ITR U - for the AY	Additional tax payable (if filed before 31.03.2026)
AY 2024-25	25% additional tax
AY 2023-24	50% additional tax
AY 2022-23	60% additional tax
AY 2021-22	70% additional tax

For more information and to pay income tax visit: www.incometax.gov.in

For Tutorial on ITR-U Scan QR code

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Business



India has taken swift steps to safeguard nation's maritime trade.

Sarbananda Sonowal
Union Minister for Ports, Shipping

Bhagwant Mann inaugurates Tata Steel Plant



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during the inauguration of the Tata Steel Plant in Ludhiana district.

Make life easier for taxpayers: FM to IT officers

Finance Minister stresses trust-based taxation, reduced litigation, digital systems, and awareness to make new income tax law simple, transparent, and taxpayer-friendly nationwide

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Emphasising that taxpayers are not adversaries, Nirmala Sitharaman asked income tax officers to ease compliance for honest assesseees while leveraging technology to crack down on wilful tax evasion. Addressing the 'PRARAMBH 2026: Nationwide Awareness Campaign on the Income Tax Act, 2025', the minister also exuded confidence that the Income

Tax Act, 2025, effective April 1, will certainly set the trend for making India a very tax-friendly country. The multimedia campaign, spanning print, radio, television, outdoor, digital and social media, has been designed to build awareness about the key features of the new Act, which is set to come into effect from the beginning of the next financial year. "Make paying tax so easy that honesty becomes the natural choice. But those

NUMBER

536

• Nirmala Sitharaman urges simpler tax compliance, leveraging technology to detect evasion while ensuring ease for honest taxpayers.

who are wilfully evading, those who are deliberately trying to get away, technology must catch

them. If you are honest, the system will make your life easy, but if you evade, the system will find you. This message should go to the taxpayer," Sitharaman said. Parliament, on August 12, 2025, passed a new Income Tax Bill to replace the six-decade-old Income Tax Act, 1961. It does not impose any new tax rate and only simplifies the language, which was required for understanding the complex Income Tax laws.

The Act has removed redundant provisions and archaic language and reduced the number of Sections from 819 in the Income Tax Act of 1961 to 536 and the number of chapters from 47 to 23. The number of words had been reduced from 5.12 lakh to 2.6 lakh in the new Income Tax Bill, and for the first time, it introduces 39 new tables and 40 new formulas, replacing the dense text of the 1961 law to enhance clarity.

Lexus drives in first battery electric model ES500e in India

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Luxury carmaker Lexus India on Friday introduced its first battery electric vehicle ES500e with plans to expand the product range further based on customer demand. The ES500e, which comes with a driving range of around 580 km on a single charge, is priced at Rs 89.99 lakh (ex-showroom). In an interaction with PTI, Lexus India President Hikaru Ikeuchi stated that the company may bring in more models from the global lineup after gauging the customer interest in the country. "We are carefully monitoring the growth of the Indian market and diversified customer demand. We will also consider infrastructure readiness for introducing new products," he added. Terming India as an impor-



tant market, Ikeuchi noted that, except Japan, it is only in the US and India where the company has set up local production. Launched alongside the flagship LS in 1989, the ES has been a core model for Lexus. The model has been sold in more than 80 countries worldwide. "The all-new Lexus ES500e represents our vision for the future of luxury mobility in India. With the launch of our first BEV for the Indian market, we reinforce our multi-pathway approach to electrification and our commitment to advancing sustainable mobility in the country," Ikeuchi noted.

Airlines oppose govt's 60 pc free seat selection decision

Press Trust Of India

Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet warn fares may rise due to revenue losses from free seat mandate.

NEW DELHI: IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet have raised strong objections to the government's decision asking airlines not to levy any charges for the selection of at least 60 per cent seats on flights, saying the move will force them to hike airfares to recover lost revenues. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, has also urged the Civil Aviation Ministry to take steps to withdraw the decision. On Wednesday, the ministry announced that directions have been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats



FACTFILE

• Federation of Indian Airlines says policy could hurt affordability, reduce flexibility, and impact overall passenger welfare.

for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers. In a letter written to Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha on Thursday, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector. "The financial

impact of the directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares. As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," it said. FIA noted that seat selection fees form a legitimate component of airline revenue, particularly in the high-cost environment where costs rise year-on-year under the regulator AERA-governed regime that accords full cost recovery plus an assured margin to airports.

BizBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

FOREX RESERVES DURING WEEK ENDED MAR 13

India's forex reserves dropped USD 7 billion to USD 709.76 billion



MUMBAI: India's forex reserves dropped USD 7.052 billion to USD 709.759 billion during the week ended March 13, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had dropped USD 11.683 billion to USD 716.81 billion. The kitty jumped USD 4.885 billion to an all-time high of USD 728.494 billion during the week ended February 27. For the week ended March 13, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, fell USD 7.678 billion to USD 555.568 billion, the data released by the central bank showed. Expressed in dollar terms,

the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves. Value of gold reserves increased USD 664 million to USD 130.681 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down USD 23 million to USD 18.697 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by USD 15 million to USD 4.814 billion in the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data.

PLANS SUBSIDIARY LISTING

Thomas Cook India to demerge resort biz into Sterling Holidays

NEW DELHI: Thomas Cook India Limited on Friday said it will demerge its resorts and resort management business into Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited (SHRL), paving the way for the future listing of the company's wholly-owned arm. The Board of Thomas Cook (India) Limited (TCIL) gave an in-principle approval to the demerger proposal based on a recommendation by the audit committee and the independent committee.

TCIL owns and/or operates 6 resorts directly under the brand name Nature Trails. It will demerge this business into SHRL as part of the demerger. The restructuring will streamline the existing capital structure of TCIL, resulting in improved earnings per share for TCIL shareholders, the company said. TCIL shareholders will receive SHRL shares as consideration for the demerger and in accordance with the share entitlement ratio of 0.81 shares of SHRL for every share of TCIL. TCIL will continue to hold its current number of shares in SHRL post the demerger. Promoters and public shareholding pattern of TCIL and SHRL will remain similar post the demerger.

PRODUCTION GROWTH

Core sectors growth slows down to 3-month low of 2.3 pc in Feb



NEW DELHI: Production growth in eight core infrastructure sectors slowed to a three-month low of 2.3 per cent in February due to a contraction in the output of crude oil, natural gas, and refinery products. According to the government data, these eight sectors expanded by 3.4 per cent in the same month last year. The growth rate in production of fertiliser, cement and electricity declined to 3.4 per cent, 9.3 per cent and 0.5 per cent, respectively, in February this year. However, coal and steel production recorded healthy growth. During April-February, the cumulative production growth in the infrastructure sector was 2.9 per cent compared to 4.4 per cent in the same period of the last financial year.

COMMERCIAL LPG ALLOCATION

Govt hikes commercial LPG allocation to 50 pc as domestic output improves



NEW DELHI: The government has approved an additional 20 per cent allocation of commercial LPG to states and Union Territories, taking the total allocation to 50 per cent, as increased domestic output is helping the situation crawl back to normalcy. The three-week-long war in the Middle East disrupted energy supplies to India, leading to initial curtailment in LPG supplies to commercial establishments like hotels to prioritize supplies to household kitchens. Later, a fifth of their supplies were restored, and the government offered an additional 10 per cent, subject to states expediting piped gas projects. On Saturday, the government announced a 20 per cent enhanced allocation to key sectors such as restaurants, hotels, industrial canteens, food processing units, com-

munity kitchens and subsidised food outlets, while also supporting migrant workers through targeted distribution. The additional allocation will be subject to commercial establishments registering with oil companies and applying for a piped natural gas connection, according to a letter written by the oil secretary to states.

An official statement said domestic LPG supply remains stable, with no reported shortages at distributorships and normal delivery operations continuing. Panic bookings have declined, and citizens have been advised to avoid crowding and rely on home delivery. To ease supply pressures, the government is also promoting a shift towards piped natural gas (PNG), particularly for commercial establishments.

TO BE EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1

CBDT notifies rules for simplified income tax law

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified the Income-tax Rules, 2026, which will come into effect from April 1, operationalising the simplified framework under the Income-tax Act, 2025. The new rules aim to streamline tax compliance, enhance transparency, and modernise the country's direct tax system. One of the key changes includes enhanced benefits for

House Rent Allowance (HRA), with the number of cities eligible for 50% salary exemption doubled to eight—Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Bengaluru. However, taxpayers will now be required to disclose landlord-tenant relationships to claim deductions.

The rules significantly revise thresholds for quoting Permanent Account Number (PAN).



PAN will now be mandatory for cash deposits or withdrawals exceeding Rs 10 lakh annually, purchase of vehicles above Rs 5 lakh, hotel or event payments above Rs 1

lakh, and property transactions exceeding Rs 20 lakh. Additionally, cryptocurrency exchanges must share transaction details with tax authorities, and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) has been recognised as a valid electronic payment mode. The new framework also strengthens compliance by increasing the responsibility of auditors in verifying PAN duplication and tax liabilities. It introduces

stricter norms for capital gains, stock market transactions, and non-resident taxation, while simplifying disclosure mechanisms. Replacing the six-decade-old Income Tax Act, 1961, the updated law reduces sections from 819 to 536 and chapters from 47 to 23. The text has been simplified significantly, with word count nearly halved and supported by new tables and formulas for better clarity.

TMC plans twin-front campaign from Mar 24

Mamata will launch the campaign in north Bengal on Mar 24

Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA: With barely a month left for the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections, the ruling TMC is preparing to unleash a twin-front campaign blitz led by party supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in north Bengal and her nephew Abhishek in the southern districts, a strategy aimed at countering the BJP across two distinct electoral battlegrounds. Party sources said Mamata Banerjee will formally launch the campaign in north Bengal, a region long regarded as a BJP stronghold, with a mega rally at the Alipurduar Parade Ground on March 24. The chief minister is also scheduled to address meetings the same day at Matigara in Darjeeling district and Maynaguri in Jalpaiguri. The move signals a clear attempt by the TMC leadership to wrest back political ground in the northern belt, where the BJP had made deep inroads in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and retained a strong presence through the 2021 assembly elections. Political observers note that despite the TMC's improved perfor-



mance in the 2024 parliamentary polls, north Bengal continues to remain a key theatre of contest, with the BJP hoping to consolidate its foothold among Rajbanshi, tribal and migrant communities.

Abhishek Banerjee strengthens booths, energises cadres

"Abhishek's style of campaigning is more organisational and cadre-driven. He tends to focus on consolidating the booth network and energising the grassroots machinery," a political analyst said. Sources said the Diamond Harbour MP will also travel to north Bengal later in the month, with plans to address rallies and roadshows in at

"Mamata herself leading the charge from Alipurduar sends a message that the party is taking the BJP's challenge in north Bengal seriously," a senior TMC leader said. The chief minister

HIGHLIGHT

- The election assumes high stakes for all sides.

- Abhishek plans to address rallies and roadshows in at least nine assembly segments.

least nine assembly segments across the region

is expected to leave for north Bengal after addressing a workers' conference in her own constituency, Bhabanipur, on Sunday evening, where she is likely to outline the party's booth-level strategy for the upcoming polls.

The meeting at Ahindra Mancha in Chetla will bring together booth workers and local leadership of the Bhabanipur assembly segment, including state TMC president Subrata Bakshi, Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim, South Kolkata district president Debasish Kumar and councillors from the area.

on March 26, 28 and 31. The staggered campaign schedule, with Mamata focusing on the northern districts and Abhishek covering southern Bengal, is being seen within the party as a strategic division of political turf ahead of what the TMC calls a battle to retain power for a fourth consecutive term. The election assumes high stakes for all sides.

Full Exit

MUMBAI: Venture Catalysts, has announced that it has taken full exit from Pee Safe following the women's hygiene and wellness brand's recent USD 32 million funding led by global healthcare-focused private equity firm OrbiMed. The secondary component of the round enabled liquidity for select early investors, including Venture Catalysts, converting long term value creation into cash returns. This outcome underscores the firm's strategy of identifying category creators early and supporting them through scale until institutional capital participation and liquidity events emerge.

Venture Catalysts first backed Pee Safe in August 2017, supporting the company at an early inflection point as it expanded from a focused toilet hygiene proposition into a broad personal hygiene and wellness portfolio.

In June 2017, the company had raised pre series capital that included Venture Catalysts, highlighting the firm's focus on founders with clarity of mission and speed of execution. At the time of investment, organised women's hygiene innovation was still nascent in India, reflecting Venture Catalysts' ability to spot underserved consumer categories ahead of mainstream investor attention.

'Forests basis of life, key to ecological balance'

Press Trust Of India

Yogi said global warming and cooling trends present a new challenge to humanity.

LUCKNOW: Stressing the importance of environmental conservation, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that forests are the basis of life and a vital dimension of nature's balance. Inaugurating the 'Aranya Samagam', a national dialogue on the theme 'Forests and Economies' at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on the occasion of International Day of Forests, Adityanath said global warming and cooling trends present a new challenge to humanity.

"Our Vedic tradition equates one tree with the value of 10 sons. Nature has placed the highest importance on trees. If there are forests, there is water; if there is water and forests, there is air; and if there is air, there is life," Adityanath said.

Emphasising the importance of trees, he said forests serve as the very foundation of life and a crucial dimen-

FASTFACTS

- Vedic tradition equates one tree with the value of 10 sons.
- Nature has placed the highest importance on trees.

sion of nature's balance, noting that this year's theme highlights how forest conservation can drive economic development and human welfare. Modern environmental challenges are a direct consequence of tampering with nature, he said. The chief minister also referred to the Vedic tradition of "Earth is our mother", and emphasised that every citizen has a responsibility to protect and conserve the planet. "We must reflect on where we faltered in our efforts, as we are now witnessing a massive shift in the global weather cycle," Adityanath said, urging people to become more aware of forest preservation.

State ministers Arun Kumar Saxena and K P Malik also addressed the event, which was attended by senior forest officials from Uttar Pradesh and other states.

NEWSLINE

SHIMLA

'New step on new path'



Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Vinay Kumar on Saturday described the state budget for financial year 2026-27 as a new step on a new path and said despite a financial crisis, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has demonstrated his unwavering commitment to inclusive development.

Kumar said the budget lays emphasis on rural development with growth in agriculture and horticulture, besides expanding basic amenities in education, healthcare and employment generation. All India Congress Committee (AICC) spokesperson and former state party chief Kuldeep Rathore said it is a balanced budget despite the fiscal challenges in the wake of the discontinuation of the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG).

Welcoming the cut (deferment) in the salaries of politicians and bureaucrats, he said the government is leading by example and not burdening the common people.

'Crises strain consular services globally'

Press Trust Of India

Tharoor said that consular work is a form of diplomacy, "measured not in communiqués or declarations, but by the tangible difference it makes to people's lives".

NEW DELHI: Consular work serves as both a stabilising force and a bridge, helping to sustain connections even when broader political currents may be uncertain, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said, asserting that it contributes quietly but significantly to the resilience of global relationships.

In his address at an event held here on Friday evening to mark Consular Day, Tharoor also said that consular work is a form of diplomacy, "measured not in communiqués or declarations, but by the tangible difference it makes to people's lives".

The 'Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique - India' hosted the event to present awards to honorary consuls and NGOs for their "excellent work" in boosting consular activities and bilateral relations. Tharoor, who's also the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, was the chief guest at the event, which was attended by the ambassadors of several countries.

"From geopolitical tensions to public health crises, from disruptions in travel to the complexities of migration, the demands placed upon consular systems have grown, both in scale and in sensitivity," the Thiruvananthapuram MP said.

Tharoor's remarks come amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia, and the movement of Indian nationals from the affected countries in the region to India, in which consular services play a key role.

Milk production

CHANDIGARH: Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) M L Jat has said India's milk production rose from 17 million tonnes in 1950 to 247 MT in 2025.

Jat, a distinguished agronomist, highlighted dairy's dominance within the Rs 17.25 lakh crore livestock sector -- contributing 65 per cent of output and driving 16 per cent of India's gross value added (GVA), which supports 46.1 per cent of the population.

"The Union Budget has allocated Rs 6,153 crore for animal husbandry (up 16 per cent) to recruit 20,000 veterinarians, subsidize colleges/labs and provide cooperative tax relief, powering Viksit Bharat in 2047," he said, while addressing the 22nd convocation of ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (ICAR-NMRI) at Karnal in Haryana on Friday.

Bill for 'umbrella' law on CAPFs in RS on Mon: Shah

Press Trust Of India

All the CAPFs -- CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB -- are governed by their respective Acts.

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will introduce in the Rajya Sabha on Monday an "umbrella law" for central armed police forces (CAPFs) to regulate recruitment, deputation, promotion and other conditions of services of their officers, according to the List of Business issued by the House.

All the CAPFs -- CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB -- are governed by their respective Acts. The rules under these Acts govern the recruitment and conditions of service of Group A General Duty Officers and other officers and members in the CAPFs. The Central Armed Police



Union Home Minister Amit Shah

Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, provides that for the purposes of appointment of officers from the Indian Police Service in CAPFs, 50 per cent of the posts will be filled by deputation in the rank of Inspector General and a minimum of 67 per cent of the posts will be filled by deputation in the rank of Additional Director General. The posts in the ranks of Special Director General and Director General shall be filled by deputation only,

it proposes. The proposed legislation comes after the Supreme Court, in October last year, dismissed the Centre's plea seeking a review of its 2025 verdict that directed that IPS officers' deputation in the CAPFs be reduced and asked for a cadre review to be carried out in six months.

"In view of expanding functional and operational requirements, the distinct organisational structure of these Forces have evolved over a period of time. In recent years, due to the

FASTFACTS

- 50 % of the posts will be filled by deputation in the rank of IG
- 67 % of the posts will be filled by deputation in the rank of ADG.

absence of an umbrella law, regulatory provisions have evolved in a fragmented manner, resulting in several litigations on service-related matters, leading to some functional and administrative difficulties," the objectives of the bill state.

The bill seeks to regulate the recruitment, deputation, promotion and other conditions of services of Group A General Duty Officers and other officers appointed in these Central Armed Police Forces, the Objectives of the bill circulated among Rajya Sabha members said.

SAMANA

'Urgent need for change'



Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini stated on Saturday that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India is achieving new heights of development; however, he expressed deep concern about the current state of Punjab. Saini reflected on a time when Punjab led the nation in agriculture, sports, defence, and industry, noting that now the situation is entirely different. He remarked that farmers are distressed, the youth are disheartened, and mothers are anxious about their children's futures while addressing a program held at Kisan Palace in Samana.

CHENNAI

'DMK formula unacceptable'



Seat-sharing talks between allies DMK and Congress for the April 9 Assembly polls in Puducherry have reached a stalemate, with the national party expressing its dissatisfaction over the 9:21 formula offered by its southern ally, which is now proposing a revised deal. The two are preparing for the ultimate eventuality of separately facing the elections, should there be no consensus on seat-sharing. Parleys between the two parties have remained in a deadlock allegedly over a "leadership tussle" and "disagreement" over the number of seats.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE-2026 |

Equality must translate into reality: CJI

Press Trust Of India

BENGALURU: CJI Justice Surya Kant on Saturday underscored the need to transform "formal equality" into real, lived experiences for women in the legal profession, calling for structural reforms and sustained institutional support to ensure their continued participation and advancement. Speaking at the National Conference-2026 on "Reimagining Judicial Governance: Strengthening Institutions for Democratic Justice", organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association on

the outskirts of Bengaluru, he highlighted key findings of a survey documenting the challenges faced by women lawyers and the need for systemic solutions. "I personally believe that when we talk of equality within our constitutional framework, this equality is not merely on paper. So equality has to be translated into lived experiences," the Chief Justice said. He lauded the survey prepared by women lawyers, describing it as "a very remarkable and a very scientific survey" and an "eye opener" that also provides a road-



map to identify challenges and solutions. Describing the survey as a guiding framework, he said, "This report is a guidebook. It should hold as a smaller constitution for us," expressing confidence that sustained efforts would help eliminate gender dis-

crimination and realise the constitutional promise of equality. Pointing to encouraging trends, the Chief Justice noted that women now constitute over 50 per cent of students in law schools and a significant proportion of new entrants to the Bar. However, he flagged concerns about attrition.

"The problem starts after that. Are we able to maintain that equality at the subsequent stages of progression in life, progress in professional life," he asked. Emphasising the need to address structural barriers, he said stakeholders must identify impediments that prevent women from continuing in the profession. "Let us identify the issues, the challenges, the impediments, the roadblocks, which are eventually denying equality to women," he said. Suggesting concrete measures, the Chief Justice called for enhanced representation of women in government panels and legal aid. "Let's not go by 30 per cent -- at least 50 per cent women lawyers should be empanelled as government counsel," he said, adding that similar representation should be ensured in legal aid panels. He said such steps would provide women lawyers with a platform and stability in their early years. "This is how you get a platform, an opportunity to show your work, the talent never hangs," he observed. Highlighting progress in the judiciary, he noted that nearly 45-50

per cent of judicial officers in the country are women, with some states reporting up to 60 per cent representation at the entry level, which would eventually be reflected in higher judicial positions. The Chief Justice also stressed the need for systemic support mechanisms, including maternity protection, safe working conditions, childcare facilities, and financial assistance. "There must be a child care centre in every judicial court complex," he said, adding that such infrastructure is essential for retention.



QUOTE FROM THE QUOTABLE

"Be the change you wish to see in the world, through truth, courage, and selfless service."

[Mahatma Gandhi]

OUR VIEW |

Reopening Lipulekh Signals Pragmatic Border Engagement Shift

The decision to resume border trade between India and China through the Lipulekh Pass after six years is more than a routine administrative move—it reflects a cautious yet necessary recalibration of ground-level engagement along a sensitive frontier. In a relationship often defined by tension at higher diplomatic and military levels, such steps restore a measure of normalcy that directly impacts livelihoods in remote Himalayan regions. Historically, border trade routes like Lipulekh have served as vital economic and cultural lifelines. When trade through this pass was revived in 1992 after decades of dormancy, it symbolised not just commerce but confidence-building between two neighbours navigating a complex relationship. The abrupt halt in 2019 due to the pandemic, followed by prolonged disengagement, disrupted local economies and left traders in uncertainty, with goods stranded across the border and traditional networks weakened. The current move, backed by clearances from multiple ministries and coordinated administrative planning, indicates a recognition that border communities cannot remain perpetual casualties of geopolitical strains. Ensuring infrastructure, banking access, medical facilities, and security arrangements shows a welcome seriousness in execution. Yet, this reopening must be viewed with measured optimism. Trade at Lipulekh is modest in scale, but its symbolic value is significant. It tests whether limited cooperation can coexist alongside unresolved strategic differences. For India, it is also an opportunity to reinvigorate border economies, reduce outmigration, and strengthen its presence in frontier areas through development-led engagement. The real challenge lies in sustaining such initiatives beyond seasonal windows and insulating them from abrupt disruptions. If handled with consistency and foresight, the resumption of Lipulekh trade could become a template for pragmatic engagement—where local welfare and economic logic prevail, even when larger political equations remain unsettled.

GUEST VIEW |

Youth Driven Innovation Can Redefine Diabetes Care

India's growing diabetes burden calls for a decisive shift toward innovation, collaboration, and early intervention. A strong emphasis must now be placed on encouraging young medical professionals to step beyond clinical practice and actively engage in research that addresses emerging challenges in diabetes care. Their fresh perspectives, combined with evolving technologies, can significantly accelerate breakthroughs in prevention, treatment, and long-term management.

National-level scientific gatherings and conferences play a vital role in shaping this ecosystem. By offering hands-on training in areas such as advanced wound care and multidisciplinary management, they help bridge the gap between theory and practice. More importantly, they



Dr Jitendra Singh

create a platform where ideas can be exchanged across specialties, fostering integrated approaches to complex complications like diabetic foot. Recognition of contributions in this field not only honors individual achievements but also inspires a new generation to pursue impactful work. Strengthening collaboration between clinicians, researchers, and healthcare institutions is essential to improving patient outcomes. Moving forward, the focus should remain on building a research-driven culture among young professionals, ensuring that diabetes care in India evolves with scientific rigor, innovation, and a patient-centric approach.

Comment

Scientists Unlock a Powerful New Way to Turn Sunlight into Fuel

In a remarkable scientific breakthrough, researchers have unlocked a powerful new method to convert sunlight into usable fuel—bringing humanity significantly closer to a clean and sustainable energy future. At a time when the world is grappling with rising energy demands, depleting fossil fuel reserves, and worsening climate change, this advancement offers renewed hope. It has the potential not only to transform the global energy landscape but also to reduce long-standing dependence on polluting conventional fuels.

At the heart of this innovation lies the process of photocatalysis, in which sunlight is harnessed to drive chemical reactions. Though the concept has been known for decades, its practical application has remained limited due to inefficiencies and material constraints. Now, with recent scientific progress, researchers have begun to overcome these barriers, making the dream of converting sunlight directly into storable fuel—often described as “liquid sunlight”—increasingly achievable.

A key component of this breakthrough is the development and optimisation of a special class of materials known as carbon nitride compounds, particularly polyhep-

tazine imides (PHIs). These materials stand out because of their ability to absorb visible sunlight, which makes up the majority of solar radiation reaching the Earth. Unlike earlier catalysts that depended heavily on ultraviolet light, PHIs can function efficiently under natural sunlight conditions.

The structural properties of PHIs further enhance their effectiveness. Their layered, graphene-like framework allows for smooth and efficient movement of electrons, which is essential for sustaining chemical reactions. In addition, these materials are non-toxic, thermally stable, and significantly more economical than the expensive precious metals—such as platinum and iridium—that were previously used as catalysts. This makes them not only scientifically promising but also commercially viable in the long run.

Another major advancement supporting this discovery is the introduction of a sophisticated computational framework. In the past, scientists struggled to fully understand and predict how subtle changes in material structure would impact performance. With the help of advanced modelling techniques, researchers can now design, test, and refine photocatalysts

with far greater speed and precision. This marks a shift from trial-and-error experimentation to a more targeted and efficient approach to innovation.

Equally significant is the development of a novel “molecular sponge” that mimics the natural process of photosynthesis. In plants, energy from sunlight is accumulated in multiple steps before being used to drive complex chemical reactions. Inspired by this, scientists have engineered a molecule capable of storing multiple charges—up to four at a time—under normal sunlight conditions. Earlier synthetic systems often failed because they could not retain energy long enough. This new molecule, however, demonstrates remarkable stability, opening the door for real-world applications.

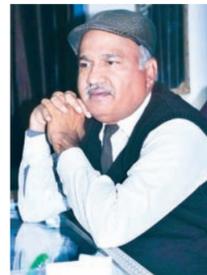
The implications of these combined breakthroughs are far-reaching. One of the most promising outcomes is the production of green hydrogen through the splitting of water. Hydrogen is widely regarded as a clean fuel of the future because it releases only water when used. Additionally, this technology could enable the conversion of carbon dioxide into valuable chemicals or synthetic fuels, contributing to the development of a circular carbon economy. Such

an approach would not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also turn waste carbon into a resource.

These advancements come at a critical moment. As nations strive to meet climate targets and transition to renewable energy sources, innovations like these provide a practical pathway forward. They complement other breakthroughs in solar energy efficiency and energy storage, suggesting that integrated systems for solar fuel production may soon become a reality.

However, challenges still remain. Scaling up these technologies for industrial use, ensuring long-term durability, and maintaining cost-effectiveness will require sustained research, investment, and policy support. The journey from laboratory success to widespread adoption is often complex and time-consuming.

Despite these hurdles, the progress achieved so far is highly encouraging. The vision of harnessing sunlight not just for electricity but for producing clean, storable fuels is no longer a distant dream. With continued scientific effort and global cooperation, this breakthrough could redefine how energy is produced, stored, and consumed—ushering in a new era of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Dr Vijay Garg
Retired Principal
Educational Columnist
Eminent Educationist

War Threatens Global Energy Economic Stability

Escalating conflict in West Asia has begun to disrupt critical global energy infrastructure, raising fears of supply shocks, rising inflation, and a looming worldwide economic downturn. By Anjan Roy

The intensifying conflict in West Asia has rapidly evolved from a localized security crisis into a looming global economic threat, with far-reaching consequences for energy markets, financial systems, and geopolitical stability. What initially appeared to be another regional escalation has now taken on a much broader dimension, as recent strikes on Iran's South Pars gas field and retaliatory attacks on Qatar's North Dome facility have disrupted one of the most critical energy hubs in the world.

These two adjacent gas fields—shared between Iran and Qatar—collectively constitute the largest natural gas reserve on the planet, holding trillions of cubic feet of recoverable resources. They play a central role in supplying liquefied natural gas (LNG) to key global markets, including Asia and Europe. Any disruption to this integrated system effectively constrains a major artery of the global energy network. For energy-importing nations such as India, which relies heavily on Qatari LNG to meet domestic demand, the implications are immediate and deeply concerning. A sudden tightening of supply threatens not only energy availability but also price stability, with cascading effects across industries.

Global markets have responded with alarm. Brent crude prices have surged to



approximately \$114 per barrel, reflecting heightened risk premiums and fears of prolonged supply disruption. Natural gas markets, already strained by previous geopolitical tensions and uneven post-pandemic recovery, are now facing a new wave of uncertainty. Analysts warn that if hostilities escalate further or infrastructure damage proves extensive, energy prices could climb even higher, exacerbating inflationary pressures worldwide. The complexity of repairing damaged extraction and processing facilities means that even a ceasefire would not guarantee a quick restoration of supply.

Beyond energy markets, the geopolitical dimension of

the crisis has further intensified uncertainty. Mixed and often contradictory statements from global powers—particularly the United States and Israel—have complicated the situation. While official narratives attempt to distance these actors from direct involvement, reports suggesting prior strategic consultations have cast doubt on such claims. This erosion of diplomatic credibility makes de-escalation more difficult, as trust between stakeholders weakens and the risk of miscalculation grows.

The economic fallout is already becoming visible across global financial systems. Major stock indices have recorded sharp declines,

reflecting investor anxiety and a flight toward safer assets. Market volatility has increased significantly, with sectors heavily dependent on energy—such as manufacturing, transportation, and chemicals—facing mounting cost pressures. At the same time, consumer sentiment is beginning to weaken as higher fuel prices translate into broader cost-of-living increases.

Central banks, which until recently were preparing to pivot toward monetary easing in response to moderating inflation, are now reassessing their strategies. The sudden surge in energy prices threatens to reignite inflation, forcing policymakers to adopt a

more cautious stance. Institutions such as the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England have already signaled a pause in anticipated interest rate cuts. This shift reflects growing concern that premature easing could fuel inflationary momentum, even as economic growth shows signs of slowing.

Indeed, key economic indicators are beginning to deteriorate. Employment growth in several major economies is losing momentum, while input costs for businesses are rising. Growth projections are being revised downward, with economists warning of a potential stagflationary environment characterized by stagnant growth and persistent inflation. The fragile global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic now faces a renewed and potentially more severe challenge.

Compounding the crisis is the disruption of critical global shipping routes. The Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's oil and gas supplies transit, has become increasingly unsafe due to rising military activity. Numerous vessels are currently stranded in the Gulf region, unable to navigate the heightened security risks. Reports indicate that nearly 20,000 seafarers are effectively trapped in these high-risk zones, highlighting not only logistical bottlenecks but also serious humanitarian concerns.

YOUR LETTERS

Clean fuel innovation reduces LPG import dependence

India's push for energy self-reliance gains momentum with the development of an indigenous Dimethyl Ether (DME) technology. Scientists have created a patented process that converts biomass-derived methanol into DME using a specialised catalyst. With properties similar to LPG, DME can be blended for cooking and transport use. This innovation not only offers a cleaner alternative fuel but also strengthens energy security by reducing dependence on costly LPG imports, marking a significant step toward sustainable domestic energy solutions.

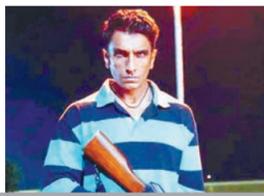
Nabnit Panigrahi, Rayagada, Odisha

Hormuz crisis reshaping global power equations

The Hormuz conflict carries far-reaching geopolitical consequences. While a nuclear arms race in the Gulf may not be immediate, it could strengthen Iran's determination to pursue nuclear capabilities. It may also embolden regimes like North Korea to justify expanding their arsenals in the name of security. Meanwhile, rising economic costs are hurting domestic political prospects in the United States, as inflationary pressures grow despite potential gains for oil companies, weakening leadership approval.

MK Nair, Raipur

Send your articles (600-650 words) and letters (70-8 0 words) for this page on: editorialcc007@gmail.com The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity.



Weekend

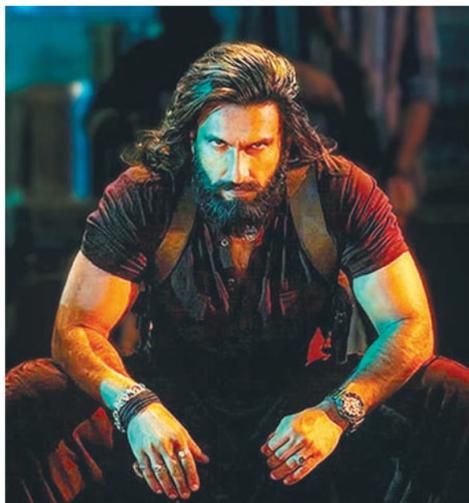


SUNDAY
Bilaspur, March 22, 2026

THE SUNDAY REVIEW

‘Dhurandhar: The Revenge’ is a intense, unapologetic visual treat

Dhurandhar: The Revenge showcases Ranveer Singh’s force, craft and unrelenting charisma.



Ranveer Singh in a still from Dhurandhar: The Revenge

Dhurandhar: The Revenge is bold, unapologetic, and unapologetically grand, pushing the envelope far beyond its predecessor. Director Aditya Dhar transforms what began as a geopolitical thriller into an intense character study, centering the narrative on Hamza Ali Mazari, played by Ranveer Singh. The film traces Hamza’s evolution from an idealistic young soldier to a feared figure operating across borders, oscillating between identities in a way that gives the story rare emotional depth. The intensity is matched by a visceral sense of realism that keeps the audience constantly on edge. Dhar’s vision is methodical and relentless. Every sequence dismantles the machinery of terror with

HIGHLIGHT

● From borders to personal obsession, the film delivers calculated, cinematic spectacle consistently.

clinical precision, yet never sacrifices storytelling clarity. The six-chapter structure allows Hamza’s character to harden vulnerabilities into weapons, while the narrative simultaneously asserts India’s resilience with unflinching confidence. Ranveer Singh dominates every frame, balancing haunting stillness with explosive energy. His performance is mythic, exuding both force and craft, making Hamza’s journey riveting. The supporting cast Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, and others adds depth, their arcs fully realized rather

than ornamental.

The film’s politics are front and center, rooted in real events but filtered through Dhar’s cinematic lens, never allowing ideology to overshadow narrative drive. Visually, the film is precise, moving effortlessly from extreme close-ups to sweeping vistas, supported by tight editing and immersive sound design. Nostalgic tracks punctuate the story, balancing intensity with levity. And the finale: audacious, shocking, and perfectly timed, it reinforces Dhar’s mastery of suspense and spectacle. Dhurandhar: The Revenge is not subtle cinema. It is loud, meticulously designed, and fearless, offering an unapologetic vision of “new Hindi cinema” led by a powerhouse performance from Ranveer Singh.

PixelView

WHAT TO WATCH HOMEBOUND



Jazz City

Cast: Arifin Shuvoo
Where to watch: Streaming on SonyLIV, Jazz City is set in 1971 Calcutta during the Bangladesh Liberation War. This Bengali period thriller unfolds in a smoky Park Street jazz club, a hub for revolutionaries, artists, and undercover spies. As political tensions rise between India and Pakistan, hotelier

Jimmy Roy (Arifin Shuvoo) is drawn into the chaos and must abandon his neutrality, choosing a side. Blending history, suspense, and music, the series immerses viewers in a gripping tale of loyalty, courage, and the personal cost of political conflict.



Border 2

Cast: Sunny Deol, Varun, Diljit, Ahan
Where to watch: Streaming on Netflix, Border 2 is set during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, highlighting the sacrifices of military personnel. The film follows three officers one each from the Army, Navy, and Air Force depicting their struggles on the battlefield alongside the challenges their families face back home. Blending intense war action with emotional family drama, the film explores courage, duty, and the human cost of conflict.



Deadloch Season 2

Cast: Dulcie Collins, Madeleine Sami, Eddie Redcliffe, Alicia Gardiner and others
Where to watch: Streaming on Prime Video, Deadloch Season 2 picks up as Eddie

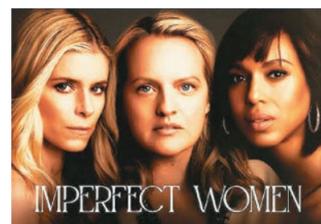
Redcliffe investigates the mysterious disappearance of his former police partner. Alongside Dulcie Collins, he uncovers human remains inside a crocodile while two backpackers also go missing. The season unravels the connections between these cases, blending dark humour, suspense, and intricate crime-solving in a gripping murder mystery.



Wicked: For Good

Cast: Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande
Where to watch: Streaming on JioHotstar, Wicked: For Good is a sequel to Wicked (2024), adapting the second act of the 2003 stage musical. Set before The Wonderful Wizard

of Oz, it explores the evolving relationship between Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) and Glinda (Ariana Grande), showing how their friendship shapes and strengthens each other in this magical, musical fantasy drama.



Imperfect Woman

Cast: Kate Mara, Elisabeth Moss, Kerry Washington
Where to watch: Streaming on Apple TV Plus, Imperfect

Woman follows Nancy (Kate Mara), whose sudden murder shocks her friends Mary (Elisabeth Moss) and Eleanor (Kerry Washington). As they cope with grief, they begin uncovering hidden aspects of Nancy’s life, including secrets in her marriage that were invisible from the outside. The film blends suspense, emotional tension, and psychological drama, exploring friendship, trust, and the unexpected layers behind a seemingly ordinary life, keeping viewers engaged until the final revelation.

| HOLLYWOOD |

‘The immortal man’ delivers Tommy Shelby’s epic finale

Central Chronicle News

Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man brings Cillian Murphy back as Tommy Shelby, delivering a moody and gripping conclusion to the beloved Netflix saga. Set during World War II, Tommy returns to Birmingham to confront his estranged son Duke, who has taken control of the Peaky Blinders gang and made reckless decisions. As German forces threaten the city, Tommy must protect his people while grappling with father-son tensions, moral dilemmas, and the weight of his past. The film also highlights how family loyalty and personal ambition can clash in unexpected ways, creating tense, emotional moments. Director Tom Harper preserves the series’ signature atmosphere, blending moody cinematography, fog-drenched streets, and tense sequences with accelerated pacing in the latter half. Key series callbacks,



Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man Movie Review

HIGHLIGHT

● The Immortal Man sees Cillian Murphy reprise his legendary role as gangster Tommy Shelby

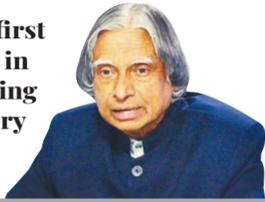
from Arthur Shelby Jr. to Polly Gray and Ruby, enrich the story for long-time fans. The emotional beats, including Tommy’s return to the Garrison Pub,



balance the action with heartfelt character moments. Performances shine, with Murphy embodying Tommy’s swagger, torment, and relentless drive. Barry Keoghan impresses as Duke, revealing vulnerability beneath ambition, while Tim Roth adds menace as Nazi sympathizer John Beckett. New characters like Rebecca Ferguson’s twin sisters provide freshness, though some feel slightly out of place. The film also explores the personal cost of power, showing how choices ripple through generations. The narrative explores themes of family, redemption, and power, staying true to Peaky Blinders’ tone while offering a satisfying closure. Though it may not fully reach the depth of six seasons, The Immortal Man delivers layered drama, thrilling sequences, and emotional resonance, giving fans a fitting farewell and setting the stage for the anticipated Netflix spinoff.

“Don’t take rest after your first victory because if you fail in second, more lips are waiting to say that your first victory was just luck.”

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



YouthZone

CHANGEMAKERS

Comics & animations offer youth a bold creative platform

Digital storytelling empowers youth to express creativity across comics, reels, animations.

HIGHLIGHT

● Young creators are redefining narratives with innovative digital tools and imagination.

honesty, and creativity that resonates with young readers. Reels and short-form videos are another game-changer. With just 15 to 60 seconds, creators can craft mini-stories, share personal experiences, or even deliver social messages with viral potential. The beauty of reels lies in their immediacy and shareability one clever idea can reach millions overnight, making storytelling a social experience rather than a solitary one.

Animations, too, are breaking boundaries. Affordable



Young creators are bringing a comic story to life digitally.



software and AI-powered tools allow young animators to bring their imagination to life, blending visuals, sound, and narrative into dynamic experiences. Whether it’s a funny skit, a motivational story, or a slice-

of-life adventure, animations can engage audiences in ways static media cannot.

Digital storytelling isn’t just entertainment; it’s a revolution. Comics, reels, and animations are giving youth the

power to tell their stories on their terms bold, creative, and unfiltered. In this fast-paced digital age, these mediums are shaping the voices of tomorrow, one frame, clip, or animation at a time.

MINICHEF
Rainbow fruit sandwiches



Texting helps Gen Z set boundaries and energy

Gen Z doesn’t hate talking they just dislike surprise calls. Growing up with smartphones, notifications, and group chats, unexpected calls feel abrupt and stressful. Texting gives them control: time to think, edit, and respond thoughtfully. It’s not laziness it’s about setting boundaries and protecting mental energy. Phone calls can trigger anxiety, awkward pauses, or misread tones, while texts create clarity and a record of conversations. Even professionally, messaging apps like Slack or Teams dominate. For Gen Z, connection is intentional, not instant. Important calls happen but usually after a heads-up. Text first, call later.



Gen Z fashion: Secrets to perfectly layered style

For Gen Z, fashion is built in layers, not worn as a single piece. Start with a clean base tank, fitted tees, or bodysuits in neutral tones to anchor the look. Add middle layers for texture and contrast, like oversized shirts, cropped cardigans, or zip hoodies, mixing soft and structured fabrics.

| LEADERS |

THE BEST LEADERS ARE GREAT FOLLOWERS

FIVE KEY CAPABILITIES FOR GREAT LEADERS:

LISTEN DEEPLY	LEARN RELENTLESSLY	VALUE COLLECTIVE WISDOM	PRIORITIZE PURPOSE	COACHABILITY
ACTIVE LISTENING	PRIORITIZING PURPOSE	RELIABLE EXECUTION	CRITICAL DISSENT	COACHABILITY

Core Message: Leadership through Followership

Central Chronicle News

The article argues that in today’s fast-changing, knowledge-driven world, the most effective leaders are not those who simply command from the top, but those who embody the qualities of exceptional followers. Leadership is no longer about authority alone; it is about influence, adaptability, and the ability to learn from others. The best leaders recognize that they do not have all the answers and instead build environments where ideas can flow freely and innovation can thrive.

Listen Deeply: They suspend their ego to absorb input without defensiveness, creating psychological safety for their team. By truly listening, leaders build trust and encourage open dialogue, allowing diverse ideas to surface. This approach not only reduces misunderstandings but also empowers team members to contribute confidently, knowing their voices are valued and respected.

Learn Relentlessly: They remain “coachable,” treating continuous improvement and feedback as essential parts of their identity. Great leaders understand that learning never stops, and they actively seek new perspectives and insights. By embracing feedback and adapting to change, they stay relevant and inspire their teams to adopt a similar growth mindset.

Value Collective Wisdom: They recognize they do not have all the answers and instead leverage the expertise of their team to make better decisions. By fostering collaboration and inclusivity, leaders tap

into a wider pool of knowledge, resulting in more thoughtful and effective outcomes that benefit the entire organization.

Prioritize Purpose: They put the team’s goals and shared outcomes ahead of their own personal credit or ego. This focus on collective success strengthens unity, drives accountability, and ensures that every effort contributes meaningfully toward a common vision.

Five Key Followership Capabilities for Leaders

- 1) Active Listening: Reducing blind spots by truly hearing others.
- 2) Prioritizing Purpose: Focusing on results over personal theatrics.
- 3) Reliable Execution: Knowing how to turn strategic plans into actual results.
- 4) Critical Dissent: Making it safe for the team to push back and challenge ideas.
- 5) Coachability: Staying curious and adaptable to avoid becoming obsolete.

Ultimately, leadership through followership is about humility, awareness, and shared progress. The leaders who embrace these qualities are not only more effective but also more trusted, creating teams that are empowered, innovative, and future-ready.

UPSC PREPARATION

NEWS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Newspapers
- Monthly Magazines
- Websites & Apps

NCERT BOOKS

- Strong Fundamentals
- Core Concepts

GENERAL STUDIES

- POLITY
- ECONOMY
- HISTORY
- GEOGRAPHY
- SCIENCE & TECH
- ENVIRONMENT

OPTIONAL SUBJECT

- IN-DEPTH STUDY

NOTES MAKING

- CONCISE NOTES

MOCK TESTS

- Solve Regularly
- Mistake Analysis

STAMINA + POSITIVITY + CONSISTENCY

ANSWER WRITING

- ESSAY PRACTICE

INTERVIEW

- MOCK INTERVIEWS
- Current Affairs
- Mock Interviews
- Personality Development



Sports



Including squash in Olympics is transformative moment, but expanding grassroots access and coaching systems remains essential for sustained global growth

Saurav Ghosal
Sports Commissioner,
World Premier Squash

Gill targets explosive IPL season after snub

After T20 World Cup disappointment, Shubman Gill eyes IPL 2026 as the perfect platform to showcase aggressive batting, boost strike rate, and strengthen his comeback case.



SHUBMAN GILL
UNDER PRESSURE & SEEKING REDEMPTION

GT BOAST STRONG
TOP ORDER

QUALITY ALL-ROUNDERS
ADD SQUAD DEPTH

FORMIDABLE
PACE ATTACK

GUJARAT TITANS
EYE IPL 2026 TITLE

Press Trust Of India

Gujarat Titans boast strong squad depth with explosive top order, quality all-rounders, and a formidable pace attack leading their title ambitions.

NEW DELHI: After missing T20 World Cup selection, Shubman Gill enters IPL 2026 under pressure and opportunity, aiming to boost his strike rate and reclaim India's T20 spot. Former India bat-

ter Cheteshwar Pujara believes IPL 2026 presents the ideal stage for Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill to silence critics and reaffirm his credentials in the shortest format. Left out of India's ICC Men's T20 World Cup squad, Gill now has added motivation to elevate his performance and push for a comeback into the national T20I setup.

Pujara described Gill as a rare multi-format talent who already leads India in Tests and ODIs, emphasizing that a strong IPL campaign

could quickly bring him back into T20 contention. According to him, while the exclusion may create pressure, it also provides the perfect opportunity for Gill to evolve his batting approach, particularly by increasing his scoring tempo.

The former Test specialist pointed out that Gill has been working on improving his strike rate, suggesting that IPL 2026 could be the season where he consistently bats at a rate of 150 to 160. Such an improvement would not only

enhance his T20 credentials but also make him a more complete modern-day batter.

Pujara also expressed strong confidence in the Gujarat Titans as title contenders this season, highlighting their formidable top order. With Gill leading alongside Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler, the team boasts one of the most consistent and dangerous batting lineups in the league. Their ability to deliver runs regularly forms the backbone of GT's campaign.

Beyond the top order,

Gujarat Titans possess significant depth in both batting and all-round capabilities. Rahul Tewatia is expected to play a crucial finisher's role, while Shahrukh Khan could be a game-changer if he performs to his full potential. The addition of Jason Holder further strengthens the squad, offering balance with both bat and ball. On the bowling front, GT's pace attack stands out as a major strength. The likes of Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj, and Prasad Krishna form a potent trio.

Karnataka's Tumakuru to host first ITF Women's W35 meet

BENGALURU: In a significant boost to Karnataka's growing tennis stature, Tumakuru is set to host its first ever ITF Women's World Tennis Tour W35 tournament from May 4-10. The tournament will be held at the Tumkur District Tennis Stadium, Tumkur University Campus. The upcoming W35 will be the second international event in Tumakuru's history and the first ever ITF Women's tournament in over two decades. The USD 30,000 event is part of the global ITF Women's circuit, offering a pathway for players to earn professional ranking points and progress towards the WTA Tour. Emerging international players and top Indian professionals will compete across a 32-player singles main draw and qualifying rounds.

Press Trust Of India

Teenagers dominate Miami Open, delivering breakthrough wins and signaling tennis future arrival.

MIAMI: Rei Sakamoto emerged as one of the standout teenage performers at the Miami Open, securing his first ATP Tour victory in dramatic fashion. The 19-year-old Japanese wildcard defeated Aleksandar Kovacevic in a rain-disrupted three-set encounter, showcasing composure and resilience under pressure. Ranked 164th globally, Sakamoto's breakthrough win sets up a challenging second-round clash against ninth seed Daniil Medvedev, offering him a major opportunity to



test himself against elite competition.

Sakamoto's triumph adds to an impressive wave of teenage success at the tournament, highlighting a generational shift in men's tennis.

Among the standout performers, 17-year-old Moise Kouame delivered a historic result by defeating Zachary Svajda. His victory not only made him the youngest male player to win a match in

| TEEN TENNIS SURGE |

Teen Kouame matches Nadal feat as Sakamoto wins in Miami

Press Trust Of India

FACTFILE

• Five teenagers reach second round, first time since 2007 milestone achievement

• Kouame becomes youngest Masters winner since Nadal, marking historic teenage breakthrough

Miami but also the youngest ATP Masters 1000 winner since Rafael Nadal in 2003. Ranked 385th, Kouame also became the first player born in 2009 or later to claim an ATP Tour win, underlining his immense potential.

Elsewhere, Brazil's Joao Fonseca, American Darwin Blanch, and Spain's Rafael Jodar also advanced, completing a remarkable group of five teenagers reaching the second round.

| STYLE MEETS GRACE |

Mandhana stuns with glamorous awards look

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Smriti Mandhana turned heads with a stunning glam transformation at the BCCI Naman Awards, stepping away from her signature sporty look. The India vice-captain embraced high fashion with confidence, leaving fans impressed by her elegant presence

Seeing a Barbie inspired by my journey feels surreal and humbling, inspiring young girls everywhere to dream bigger.

Smriti Mandhana India vice-captain off the field. Mandhana wore a custom metallic



blue gown designed by Rimzim Dadu, featuring

a textured, liquid-like shine and a structured silhouette. The outfit's flowing trail added subtle drama, while her minimal styling ensured the look remained refined and balanced. Her effortless poise elevated the entire appearance, making it one of the standout fashion moments of the evening.

Beyond her strik-

ing look, Mandhana achieved a significant milestone as she was honoured with a Barbie doll inspired by her journey. She became the first woman cricketer to receive such recognition, marking a proud moment in her career. The honour reflects her impact not just as a player, but as a role model for aspiring athletes.

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

CURZAN LEADS VIRGINIA

Virginia leads NCAA swim championships as Curzan shines again



ATLANTA: Virginia junior Claire Curzan successfully defended her 100-yard backstroke title on Friday, clocking 48.24—the second-fastest time ever—at the NCAA women's swimming and diving championships. She finished well ahead of Bella Sims and Maggie Wanezek, who tied for second. Curzan also helped Virginia dominate the 400

medley relay alongside Sara Curtis, Aimee Canny, and Anna Moesch. Virginia leads the standings with 437.5 points, ahead of Texas and Stanford. Elsewhere, Stanford's Lucy Bell and Torri Huske secured victories, while California's Claire Weinstein and South Carolina's Sophie Verzyl also claimed titles. The competition concludes Saturday. **PTI**

CHINA OPEN

Cameron McEvoy breaks the 50-meter freestyle world record



SHENZHEN: Olympic and world champion swimmer Cameron McEvoy has broken the men's 50-meter freestyle world record which had stood for 17 years. The 31-year-old Australian posted a time of 20.88 seconds on Friday at the China Open in Shenzhen, taking 0.03 second off Brazilian César

Cielo's previous mark. Cielo set his world record of 20.91 during swimming's so-called "super suit" era in 2009. Those suits were later banned because they increased buoyancy and reduced drag, resulting in nearly 150 world records falling in 2009 before being prohibited in 2010. **PTI**

VILLARREAL DOMINATES SOCIEDAD

Villarreal overruns Real Sociedad to move into third place in La Liga



MADRID: Villarreal beat Real Sociedad 3-1 and completed its first La Liga double over the Basque side since 2016-17 on Friday. All of Villarreal's goals came in a busy first half. Gerard Moreno got the opener with a header after seven minutes, and eight minutes later Georges Mikautadze tapped in a second following good work from midfield by Alberto Moleiro. Nicolas Pépé made it 3-0 midway through the first half when he strode forward and his deflected shot crept past goalkeeper Alex Remiro. Luka Sucic pulled a goal back for Sociedad in the first minute of the second half but the visitor could not mount a comeback. It remained in seventh place after missing a chance to go equal on points with the team above it, Celta Vigo. **PTI**

LENS BACK ON TOP

Lens back on top of Ligue 1 thanks to star turn from Florian Thauvin



LENS: Florian Thauvin scored one and made two and Ousmane Edouard grabbed a double as Lens beat Angers 5-1 to leapfrog Paris Saint-Germain and return to the top of Ligue 1 on Friday. Lens is seeking a first French title since 1998 but its challenge has faltered in recent weeks with losses to Lorient and Monaco. However, it made its intentions clear in a comprehensive win

over a side that has lost five of its last six league matches. Thauvin set the ball rolling in the 13th minute with his fourth goal in six games. Then he set up Edouard to make it 2-0. Mamadou Sangare added the third just before halftime. Edouard scored a fourth three minutes into the second half after taking a perfectly weighted pass from the outstanding Thauvin. **PTI**

Sports News

Kohli urges RCB to maximise every practice session

Virat Kohli set the tone early, urging Royal Challengers Bengaluru teammates to maintain peak intensity, maximise practice sessions, and prepare relentlessly for a challenging IPL title defence.

Press Trust Of India

RCB strengthened squad while focusing on fresh start despite last season's title success.

BENGALURU: Talismanic batter Virat Kohli on Saturday urged his Royal Challengers Bengaluru teammates to "switch on" themselves and not waste even a minute at the training sessions as they gear up for their IPL title defence.

Addressing the squad during their first practice session at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Kohli underlined the need to maintain the intensity that brought them the title last year.

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

RCB will open their IPL 2026 campaign against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 28 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Emphasising urgency from day one, he added, "We don't waste these days. We stay ahead. So, switch on now. Let's not



waste even a minute of any session that we are a part of. We must give our 120 per cent for these two and a half months."

RCB added Venkatesh Iyer, Mangesh Yadav, Jordan Cox, Vicky Ostwal and Satvik Deswal to their squad at the auction.

Head coach Andy Flower expressed satisfaction with the squad assembled after the auction, saying the franchise had strengthened key areas.

"We had an interesting auction and I think we've improved our squad, to be quite frank. We've brought in some great new additions. Integrating them into the RCB way alongside established players led by Virat and Rajat is an exciting part of building this team," Flower said.

Highlighting the significance of being reigning champions, Flower said the team would embrace the challenge rather than dwell on past success.

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

Wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma spoke about the positive atmosphere within the group as new and old members came together.

"Everyone was very excited to meet each

other. I was excited to get more batting time. I got a chance to meet all the coaches and train again," he said.

Flower also pointed to the advantage of beginning their campaign at home.

"Our first game is here at Chinnaswamy, which is a fantastic opportunity for us to build momentum early and be welcomed by our home fans. The outfield is looking superb, lush, green and beautiful," he said.

KKR bowling lacks fear factor ahead of IPL: Ashwin

Press Trust Of India

Ashwin questions KKR bowling strength ahead of challenging IPL season campaign.

CHENNAI: Kolkata Knight Riders' bowling attack no longer carries the same aura of fear and the "novelty factor" around their mystery spinners have faded, says former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

Analysing the strength and weakness of KKR ahead of the IPL, Ashwin said India spinner Varun Chakravarty will have a lot of responsibility on his shoulders.

"I don't think oppositions will be worried after looking at KKR's bowling attack. I think the mystery factor, the novelty factor, and the fear, that particular facet, would have gone. Earlier, batters used to go to the analyst's room, watch the bowler's hand, or just look to take a single," Ashwin told on his YouTube channel.

"Varun is at a stage in his career where he has to find answers. But, it is natural for every cricketer's progress and his career. I think the novelty factor is out," he said.

Ashwin also noted that seasoned all-rounder Sunil Narine's effectiveness has diminished, particularly with restrictions on his variations.

"Sunil Narine also cannot bowl the faster ball anymore, because of his action.



Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh, right, and others during a practice session ahead of IPL at Eden Gardens, in Kolkata, Thursday, March 19.

FASTFACTS

● Ashwin says mystery spin threat faded, placing pressure on Varun Chakravarty

● Injuries and squad changes weaken KKR attack, raising concerns before IPL season

Eden Gardens is a small ground, so now it becomes easy for the opposition to say, 'Hey, you know what, here is a team that is not going to make me scared, so let us go after them,' he added.

Ashwin stressed that without the element of surprise, KKR's bowlers could find it increasingly difficult to contain aggressive bat-

ting line-ups, especially on smaller grounds.

The legendary Indian spinner further noted that injuries and personnel changes have weakened the bowling unit since the auc-

"After the auction, I had said that KKR's bowling attack is solid. But now, Mustafizur Rahman is not there. (Matheesha) Pathirana's injury is there, Harshit Rana has been ruled out," he said.

"KKR have the blessing of Blessing Muzarabani. He has worked hard and I am excited to see them, but with all the injuries plaguing them, somebody has to do the heavy lifting. I can't see anyone who can do that."

| NATIONAL TABLE TENNIS |

Manav, Yashaswini win maiden National TT crowns

Press Trust Of India

Manav lived up to the expectations with a commanding 4-1 (11-2 11-4 6-11 11-9 11-3) victory over Jeet Chandra.

INDORE: Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) paddlers Manav Thakkar and Yashaswini Ghorpade clinched their maiden singles titles at the Senior National Table Tennis Championships here on Saturday.

In the men's final, top seed Manav lived up to the expectations with a commanding 4-1 (11-2 11-4 6-11



11-9 11-3) victory over Jeet Chandra of Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB).

The PSPB star dominated from the outset, racing through the opening two games with ease. Although Jeet briefly pushed back to take the third game, he struggled to replicate the sharp form that carried him through the semifinals.

Manav quickly regained control, sealing the contest 11-3 in the fifth game to cap off an emphatic title run.

The women's final delivered everything you'd expect from a title clash -- intensity, momentum swings, and a finish that kept everyone on edge till the very last point.

Japan wins the Women's Asian Cup, beating Australia 1-0

SYDNEY: Maika Hamano took a pass from the left with her back to goal, turned and launched a powerful strike from outside the area in a moment of individual brilliance that secured Japan a third Women's Asian Cup final with a 1-0 win over Australia.

The 21-year-old Hamano, on loan at Tottenham from Chelsea, scored in the 17th minute to almost silence the crowd of 74,397 at Sydney's Stadium Australia on Saturday night.

The Australians applied all the pressure in the last 10 minutes pressing for an

equalizer but were continually denied by Japan's defense, including Alanna Kennedy's close-range header with two minutes left in regulation.

Japan had beaten Australia in finals to win back-to-back Women's Asian Cups in 2014 and 2018 and has now won the title three times in the last four continental championships.

"I just want to enjoy it today because it's only the third time that Japan actually managed to win this tournament," Japan coach Nils Nielsen said. "(We) really deserve it, I mean we won six games -- it's OK we take the trophy.

Tanvi's campaign ends with semifinals defeat against Okuhara

Press Trust Of India

ORLEANS: Unable to rein in her errors, India's teen shuttler Tanvi Sharma went down in straight games against former world champion Nozomi Okuhara in the women's singles semifinals of the Orleans Masters Super 300 tournament here on Saturday.

The 17-year-old Indian, a World Junior Championships silver medallist, struggled with her length

and control throughout the match, losing 9-21, 16-21 in 35 minutes to the 31-year-old Okuhara, a 2016 Olympic bronze medallist and 2017 world champion.

Tanvi came into the match with a win under her belt against Okuhara at the Syed Modi International last year in a thrilling three-game contest.

Known for her long rallies, Okuhara opened up a 3-0 lead and then moved to 6-3 as Tanvi committed

a string of unforced errors.

The Japanese used her deception effectively, while Tanvi continued to miss the lines, trailing 6-11 at the interval.

Okuhara constructed her rallies smartly, moving her opponent around the court and finishing with steep smashes. Tanvi, on the other hand, looked out of sorts as most of her strokes went wide or long, allowing Okuhara to surge to 19-7.

| CHAMPIONSHIP FINALE SHOWDOWN |

Top teams set for dramatic chess title decider

Central Chronicle News

Top teams clash as Raipur hosts thrilling finale of national chess championship.

RAIPUR: Raipur is witnessing a gripping sporting spectacle as the Chief Minister's Trophy—featuring the 45th National Open and 23rd National Women's Team Chess Championship—reaches its climactic final round on March 22. After days of intense competition at Agrasen Dham, the battle for national supremacy has tightened, with top teams delivering commanding performances and emerging talents making headlines.

In the women's section, the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) has surged

Anika Reddy holds veteran to draw

One of the most talked-about moments of the tournament came from Chhattisgarh's young prodigy, 10-year-old Anika Reddy Goluguri. In a remarkable display of composure, she held seasoned 60-year-old Woman FIDE Master Sarita K.K to a draw. The encounter symbolized the beauty of chess—where age and experience meet youthful brilliance on equal terms.

ahead as a strong title contender. Their dominance was evident in a convincing 3½-½ victory over Telangana A. Leading from the front, Mary Ann Gomes displayed aggressive control and precision, while

Padmini Rout's attacking approach ensured another crucial win for PSPB. With consistent performances, PSPB has strengthened its grip on the top position heading into the final showdown. Meanwhile, the open

HIGHLIGHT

- Young Anika Reddy holds veteran Sarita in stunning intergenerational contest clash today
- PSPB and RSPB dominate standings ahead of decisive final round battles on Sunday.

section continues to be led by the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) A team. Their emphatic 3½-½ victory over Tamil Nadu A underlined their championship credentials. Grandmaster Visakh N R showcased exceptional positional strength and endgame mastery, while steady performances across boards have kept RSPB firmly in control of the standings.

The Chief Guest for the closing ceremony will be Guru Khushwant Saheb, Cabinet Minister in the Government of Chhattisgarh (holding the portfolios of Skill Development, Technical Education & Employment, and the Ministry of Scheduled Caste Development). The program will be presided over by Raghavendra Singhanian—Vice President of the All India Chess Federation and President of the State Chess Association—while Dr. Vikram Sisodia (General Secretary of the Chhattisgarh Olympic Association) and Dharmendra Kumar (President of the South Asian Chess Council and Treasurer of the All India Chess Federation) will attend as Guests of Honor.



Attacks against Iran will 'increase significantly' next week.
Israel Katz
Israeli Defence Minister

Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

IRAN US UK DIEGO GARCIA

Britain condemns 'reckless attacks' after Iran fires missiles at UK-US base in Indian Ocean



DUBAI: Britain has condemned "Iran's reckless attacks" after its military fired missiles at the UK-US air base on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. UK officials have not given details of the attempted strike, which was unsuccessful. It's unclear how close the missiles came to the base, which is about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometres) from Iran.

The Ministry of Defence said Saturday that Iran's "lashing out across the region and holding hostage the Strait of Hormuz, are a threat to British interests and British allies." Britain has not participated in US-Israeli attacks on Iran, but has allowed American bombers to use UK bases to attack Iran's missile sites.

On Friday, the British government said US bombers can also use UK bases, including Diego Garcia, in operations to prevent Iran attacking ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran targeted the base before that UK statement.

Iran currently has a self-imposed limit on its ballistic missile program, limiting their range to 2,000 kilometres (1,240 miles). That puts all of the Mideast and some of Eastern Europe in range, but Diego Garcia would be far beyond it. However, U.S. officials long have alleged Iran's space program could allow it to build intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Diego Garcia air base is home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel and has supported US military operations from Vietnam to Iraq, Afghanistan and strikes on Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Diego Garcia is part of the Chagos Islands, a remote archipelago in the middle of the Indian Ocean off the tip of India. The islands have been under British control since 1814. They are at the centre of a UK spat with President Donald Trump over Britain's plans to hand sovereignty of the Chagos archipelago to Mauritius. Britain would then lease back the Diego Garcia base.

IRAN-US-CONGRESS

Congress looks for Trump's exit plan as Iran war drags on

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump took the United States to war without a vote of support from Congress, but lawmakers are increasingly questioning when, how and at what cost the war with Iran will come to an end. Three weeks into the conflict, the toll is becoming apparent. At least 13 US military personnel have died, and more than 230 have been wounded. A USD 200 billion request from the Pentagon for war funds is pending at the White House. Allies are under attack, oil prices are spiking and thousands of US troops are deploying to the Middle East with no endgame in sight. "The real question is: What ultimately are we trying to accomplish?" Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., told The Associated Press. "I generally support anything that takes out the mullahs," he said. "But at the end of the day, there has to be a kind of strategic articulation of the strategy, what our objectives are."

NEPAL ICIMOD GLACIERS

Himalayan glaciers' ice loss rates doubled since 2000: ICIMOD report

KATHMANDU: Glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalaya are melting at an accelerating rate with ice loss rates doubling since 2000 even as they lost 12 per cent of their area between 1990 and 2020, two reports by ICIMOD said Saturday.

Coinciding with the World Day for Glaciers, observed annually on March 21, the reports were published by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a regional inter-governmental body headquartered in Kathmandu, providing the most comprehensive evidence of glacier change in the region.

The reports 'Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Region from 1990 to 2020' and 'HKH Glacier Outlook 2026: Insights from 50 years of Himalayan Glacier Monitoring' reveal a total loss of up to 27 metres of ice thickness since 1975, ICIMOD said in a press release here.

PEARL HARBOR

Surprise, embarrassment, unease in Japan after Trump uses Pearl Harbor to defend Iran war



TOKYO: Senior U.S. and Japanese officials tend to shy away from anything but very careful public comments about Japan's 1941 sneak attack on U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor. So there was embarrassment, confusion and unease on Saturday in Japan after President Donald Trump casually used the World War II attack to justify his secrecy before launching the war against Iran. The Japanese discomfort was compounded by the fact that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was sitting awkwardly at Trump's side as he spoke.

Partly, the reaction is linked to the crucial security and economic role that the U.S. plays for Japan, its top ally in the region. Put simply, Japan needs to make sure the U.S. relationship thrives. That's why Takaichi was in Washington.

But it's also a reflection of just how fresh the political debate about

Japan's role in World War II remains here, even 80 years after its end. Senior leaders, including Takaichi, have argued that Japan has apologized enough for what happened in the war. Takaichi herself has recently hinted at visiting Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war criminals are honored among the 2.5 million war dead. It is, however, somewhat startling for Japan to see these history questions spill over into a White House summit. On Friday, when asked by a Japanese reporter why he didn't tell allies in Europe and Asia ahead of the U.S. attack on Iran, Trump cited Pearl Harbor to defend his decision, saying, "Who knows better about surprise than Japan? Why didn't you tell me about Pearl Harbor, OK?"

The liberal leaning Asahi newspaper said in an editorial Saturday that Trump's comments "should not be overlooked."

Israel vows major escalation after Iran targets Diego Garcia

Iran targeted the joint U.K.-U.S. Diego Garcia air base, revealing it possesses missiles with a much greater range—over 4,000 kilometers—than previously acknowledged.

Press Trust Of India

DUBAI: Israel's defense minister threatened a surge in attacks against Iran on Saturday and Britain condemned Iran for targeting a joint U.K.-U.S. base in the Indian Ocean as the war in the Middle East entered its fourth week.

The Iranian attack on the Diego Garcia air base — located about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) from Iran — suggested Tehran has in its stockpile missiles that can go far further than it had previously acknowledged.

Also on Saturday, Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility was hit in an airstrike, an official Iranian news agency reported, saying there was no radiation leakage.

Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a video statement that next week, "the intensity of the attacks" by Israel and the United States against Iran's ruling theocracy will "increase significantly."

He spoke shortly after fragments from an Iranian missile slammed into an empty kindergarten near Tel Aviv. Israeli army spokesman Nadav Shoshani posted a video on X of the kindergarten building; no casualties were reported as the place was empty at the time. Overnight and into



View of a kindergarten hit by fragments of an Iranian missile in Rishon LeZion, Israel, Saturday, March 21, 2026. | File AP/PTI

HIGHLIGHT

● An airstrike hit Iran's Natanz nuclear facility, while Saudi Arabia intercepted 20 drones over its oil-rich eastern region during a surge in regional hostilities.

● Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz announced that the intensity of U.S. and Israeli strikes against Tehran will "increase significantly" starting next week.

the morning, Tehran, Iran's capital, saw heavy

airstrikes, residents said. In Iraq, a drone struck the intelligence service headquarters in Baghdad, killing an officer. No group immediately claimed responsibility for that attack. Saudi Arabia said it downed 20

drones in just a couple of hours in the country's eastern region, home to major oil installations. No injuries or damage were reported.

The attacks — and threats of more to come — indicate the Iran war

shows no sign of abating. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Japan's Kyodo news service on Friday that Iran wanted "not a cease-fire, but a complete, comprehensive and lasting end to the war."

Iran's attempt to hit Diego Garcia air base in the Indian Ocean

U.K. officials have not given details of the attempted strike on the ocean air base on Friday, which was unsuccessful. Britain's Ministry of Defense said Saturday that Iran's "lashing out across the region and holding hostage the Strait of Hormuz, are a threat to British interests and British allies."

Britain has not participated in U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran, but has allowed American bombers to use U.K. bases to attack Iran's missile sites. On Friday, the British government said U.S. bombers can also use U.K. bases, including Diego Garcia, in operations to prevent Iran attacking ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran targeted the base before that U.K. statement.

NUCLEAR FACILITY STRUCK

Iran's Natanz nuclear facility struck as Middle East war escalates

Press Trust Of India

Iran's primary enrichment site at Natanz was hit by an airstrike on Saturday, though officials report no radiation leakage despite visible structural damage.

DUBAI: Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility was hit in an airstrike on Saturday, the official Iranian news agency Mizan reported. There was no radiation leakage, it said, as the war in the Middle East entered its fourth week.

Natanz, Iran's main enrichment site, was hit in the first week of the war and several buildings appeared damaged, according to satellite images. The United Nations' nuclear



A view of Iran's nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz, Iran, on April, 9, 2007. | (AP Photo, File)

watchdog had said that "no radiological consequence" was expected from that earlier strike.

The nuclear facility, located nearly 220 kilometres (135 miles) south-east of Tehran, had been targeted by Israeli airstrikes in the 12-day war between Iran and Israel in June 2025, and by the

United States.

The strike comes a day after US President Donald Trump said he was considering "winding down" military operations in the Middle East even as the US is sending three more amphibious assault ships and roughly 2,500 additional Marines to the region. Trump's post Fri-

FACTFILE

● President Trump suggested "winding down" military operations while simultaneously deploying 2,500 additional Marines and three assault ships to the region.

● Rising oil prices and stock market volatility led the U.S. to lift sanctions on pre-loaded Iranian oil in an attempt to stabilize global fuel costs.

day on social media followed an Iranian threat to attack recreational and tourist sites worldwide and another day of the airstrikes and drone and missile attacks that have engulfed the region.

RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR

Zaporizhzhia strike kills two as Ukraine seeks peace talks

Press Trust Of India

KYIV: A Russian drone attack on the city of Zaporizhzhia killed at least two people on Saturday, a Ukrainian official said, ahead of expected US-Ukraine talks.

Zaporizhzhia regional head Ivan Fedorov said a man and a woman were killed and two children wounded when a Russian drone hit a private



house in the morning. The attack came ahead of the expected US-Ukraine talks, which Ukrainian state media reported would take place later in

the day in Miami.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Thursday he had sent an official delegation to the United States



"The pause is temporary; we hope it's temporary regarding the continuation of the trilateral format."

Dmitry Peskov
Kremlin Spokesman

in a bid to move forward suspended US-brokered talks on ending Russia's invasion.

Trilateral talks involving Russia, which have yet to produce any breakthrough on key issues, have been on ice while the Iran war has dominated international attention. The White House did not confirm any meeting with the Ukrainian delegation.