



N-E-W-S CM Sai joins nomination filing of ... Pg 05



# Central Chronicle

## 'West Asia crisis hits economy, people'

Modi: Indians' security is top priority in conflicts.

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday termed the prevailing situation in West Asia "worrisome" as it is having a very adverse impact on the global economy and the livelihoods of people.



PM Narendra Modi speaks in the Lok Sabha.

Making a statement on the prevailing situation in West Asia in the Lok Sabha, Modi also said that the security of Indians has been the government's biggest priority in times of conflict, and the Centre is sensitive, vigilant and also ready to

extend every assistance. "The current situation in West Asia is worrisome. This crisis has been going on for more than three weeks, having a very adverse impact on the global economy and on people's lives. The

### 'Will overcome West Asia crisis like Covid'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the difficult global conditions caused by the West Asia conflict are likely to persist for a long time and called upon the nation to remain prepared and united, just as it had stood together during the COVID-19 pandemic.



entire world is urging all parties to resolve this crisis as quickly as possi-

ble," Modi said. He also said that cargo movement through the Strait of Hormuz has been a challenge from the beginning of the war, yet the government is ensuring that gas and fuel supplies remain the least affected. "We all know that India imports

60 per cent of its LPG needs. Due to uncertain supply, the government is prioritising domestic supply. LPG production in the country is also being increased," he said. The prime minister also said the conflict has created unexpected challenges, including economic, humanitarian and those related to national security. The countries affected by the conflict share extensive trade relations with India. The region fulfils a significant portion of our crude oil and gas requirements, he said.

## 2 Indian LPG tankers sail through Hormuz

NEW DELHI: Two more Indian-flagged LPG tankers, carrying roughly a day's supply of the country's cooking gas, have safely navigated through the war-hit Strait of Hormuz and are expected to reach Indian shores over the next two days. LPG tankers Pine Gas and Jag Vasant, sailing close to each other, started from the Persian Gulf on Monday morning before crossing the strait, ship tracking data showed. The two ships are carrying about 92,000 tonnes of LPG, said Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, at a news briefing. "The movement has started." Without disclosing the final port of destination, he said the ship typically took two to two-and-a-



half days to transit from the Gulf to India. Both the LPG tankers sailed through waters between Iran's Larak and Qeshm islands -- possibly to make their identity clear to Iranian authorities before they cross the Strait, ship tracking data showed. The two ships were among the 22 Indian flagged vessels that were stranded in the Persian Gulf after the war in the Middle East nearly closed the Strait of Hormuz -- the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the oil and gas-producing Gulf countries to the rest of the world.

### NEWSLINE

#### MADURAI

## 9 policemen guilty

A local court on Monday held guilty all the nine accused policemen in the case of custodial torture of a man and his son, leading to their deaths at Sathankulam in Thoothukudi district in the year 2020.

The First Additional District and Sessions Court Judge G Muthukumar declared that the prosecution had proven its case and held the policemen guilty of causing the death of the father-son. The quantum of sentence for the convicted policemen will be pronounced on March 30, the judge said.

On June 19, 2020, mobile phone shop owner P Jayaraj (59) and his son J Benicks (31) were taken to Sathankulam police station in connection with an alleged violation of norms to prevent the spread of a coronavirus pandemic.

## 'Trump backed down after firm warning'

Press Trust Of India

Iran called US President Trump's decision to suspend strikes on the Islamic nation's power grid as evidence of US hesitation



Abdul Majid Hakeem Ilah

DUBAI: The original deadline had been set for around 0000 GMT on Tuesday, but Trump announced on Monday that it would be pushed back. In response, Iranian state television displayed an on-screen graphic stat-

ing that the U.S. president had backed down following what it described as Iran's firm warning.

Iran's main state-aligned media moved quickly to call US President Donald Trump's decision to suspend strikes on the Islamic nation's power

grid as evidence of US hesitation. Iran alluded that it wants to take the path of deterrence rather than concession as talks crept forward.

Iran media Press TV reported there was no contact for talks with the US, whether direct or indirect. Press TV reported that a senior security official has said Trump withdrew the talks offer due to Iran's credible military threats and rising financial pressures in the US and the West.

### 4 labourers dead

PRAYAGRAJ: Four labourers were killed, and 12 were injured after being trapped under the debris following the collapse of a cold storage facility on Monday afternoon here, an official said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the incident and have announced financial assistance to the injured and ex-gratia for the kin of the deceased. District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma told PTI, "12 labourers were injured in the incident and are receiving treatment at SRN Hospital.

## No strikes against Iran's power plants for five days: Trump

Press Trust Of India

DUBAI: President Donald Trump on Monday extended his deadline for Iran to reopen the crucial Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, saying the US would hold off on strikes against Iranian power plants for five days. Shortly after Trump made the announcement on his Truth Social site, Iranian state television put up a graphic that read: "US president backs down following Iran's firm warning." The reprieve came hours ahead of Trump's



self-imposed deadline later in the day.

Writing in all capital letters, Trump said the US and Iran have had "very good and productive conversations" that could yield "a complete and total resolution" in the

war. Talks would continue "throughout the week," he said.

Trump added that the suspension of his threat to attack power plants was "subject to the success of the ongoing meetings and discussions."

### NEW DELHI

## Terror module

Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested a key operative of Pakistan-based terrorist Shahzad Bhatti's network and busted a module that was recruiting Indian youths through social media and grooming them for activities ranging from propaganda to terror attacks, an official said on Monday. The accused, identified as Harmandeep Singh alias Harman (18), a resident of Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, was apprehended following discreet surveillance on Bhatti and his foreign-based network, he said. "The arrest has exposed a structured terror syndicate being operated remotely from Pakistan, wherein handlers were targeting vulnerable youth in India and luring them with promises of money, recognition and a lavish lifestyle," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Narra Chaitanya said in a statement.

### NEW DELHI

## SC to examine identity

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to examine a significant constitutional challenge involving gender discrimination within religious personal laws, questioning whether a Parsi woman can be stripped of her religious identity following the inter-faith marriage. The top court issued notices to the Centre, Nagpur Parsi Panchayat, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Maharashtra government, and the Charity Commissioner on the plea filed by Dina Budhraj. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joy-malya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi heard preliminary submissions of senior advocate Shayam Divan.

## Two women killed as pickup overturns

BALOD: Two women died and several were injured when a pickup carrying villagers returning from a Chhathi naming ceremony overturned near Bhawarmara in Balod district on March 22.

What began as a joyful family occasion ended in tragedy on a dark rural road in Balod district on the night of March 22. A pickup vehicle overloaded with villagers returning home from the function lost control near Bhawar-



mara village under Mangchuwa police station jurisdiction and overturned violently. Two women died on the spot. Several others sustained injuries of varying severity and were rushed to nearby health facilities.

## Cold desert riverbank

LEH: Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday launched the Indus River Green Corridor Eco-Restoration Plantation at Spituk Pharka here, an initiative aimed at restoring the ecological integrity of the Indus riverbanks and creating green buffers in the fragile desert landscape of Leh-Ladakh. This initiative is a one-of-a-kind Cold Desert River Bank Restoration Project in India, a spokesperson said.

## Illegal opium cultivation busted in Raigarh, two held

Press Trust Of India

Opium was being cultivated in a field belonging to a farmer identified as Sadhram Nagvanshi.

RAIGARH: Police have unearthed illegal opium cultivation in a village in Raigarh district, the fifth such instance in



the past 18 days, officials said on Monday. Two persons have been arrested in connection with illegal opium

cultivation in Navin Ghatgaon village under Lailunga police station limits, which was found out after the administration carried out surveillance using drones, they added.

Opium was being cultivated in a field belonging to a farmer identified as Sadhram Nagvanshi, a police official

said. "Information was also received about dried opium being stored at the residence of another villager Abhimanyu Nagvanshi. When authorities reached the location, the accused were trying to destroy the evidence. The attempt was foiled and the contraband was seized," he added.

### RS REPLY

## Govt to deploy 10,000 AC e-buses by 2027

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government on Monday informed the Rajya Sabha that 10,000 air-conditioned e-buses would be provided to 116 cities across 26 states/UTs by the end of 2027 under the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme, and a new scheme would be launched thereafter to provide another 35,000 e-buses.

Replying to supplementary queries during



Question Hour, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on August 16, 2023, announced that the PM e-Bus Sewa scheme to provide mobility in smaller cities and tackle rising pollution.

### NUMBER

116

e-buses would be provided to 116 cities across 26 states/UTs by the end of 2027

Since states were unable to provide adequate finance for e-buses, a target of a total of 10,000 buses was put under the PM e-Bus Sewa scheme for towns with a population

between 3 lakh and 40 lakh, he said. The minister said states were told to give their demands, and a selection criterion was laid down, and buses were sanctioned on the recommendations of coordination committees.

"Out of 178 cities eligible, 116 cities participated, and they were allotted buses accordingly. Only four cities qualified under the scheme in Bihar, where 400 buses have been sanctioned.

## 342 pc higher spending on ex-CM Kejriwal's bunglaow

NEW DELHI: The renovation work at former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's then official residence, 6 Flagstaff Road, was completed for Rs 33.66 crore, 342 per cent above the estimated cost, said a CAG report tabled in the Delhi Assembly on Monday. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report for 2022, tabled in the Assembly by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, also mentioned that out



### HIGHLIGHT

Out of 33.66 cr, Rs 18.88 cr was spent on "superior specifications, artistic, antique and ornamental" items.

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rior specifications, artistic, antique and ornamental" items. The Flagstaff bunglaow, where Kejriwal lived as Delhi Chief Minister from 2015 to 2024, was nicknamed by the BJP as "Sheesh Mahal" to highlight alleged corruption by the Aam Aadmi Party and its national convener during the Assembly polls held in February 2025. The BJP removed the AAP from power in Delhi after a decade.

# Raipur



Rising electricity bills have badly affected common people's household budgets.

Sushil Anand Shukla  
PCC Communication Head

## Uniformity in departmental data is essential: Yadav

Workshop on data coordination among departments conclude.

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** A workshop-cum-meeting was held today at the Mantralaya (Mahanadi Bhawan) here, presided over by Bhuvanesh Yadav, Secretary of the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Chhattisgarh. During the meeting, comprehensive discussions were held regarding the standardization of departmental statistics at the state level and the subject of administrative data linking. Officials present at the meeting informed the gathering that the Administrative Statistics and Policy Division



of the National Statistical Office (NSO), Government of India (Delhi), has announced that a summit is being organized for national-level deliberations on the subject of administrative data linking. Representatives from various states and Union Territories are expected to participate in this summit. The conference will feature discus-

sions on the progress of data harmonization and related topics.

During the meeting, Bhuvanesh Yadav, Secretary of the Department of Economics and Statistics, urged the various departments to promptly provide their respective departmental information so that the process of data coordination can be advanced in a time-

bound manner. Speaking at the workshop, Roktima Yadav, Director of the Department of Economics and Statistics, stated that the exchange of data among departments would not only strengthen and streamline the data system but also significantly aid in the process of policy formulation. She further explained that ensuring

### FACTFILE

• The exchange of data among departments would not only strengthen and streamline the data system but also significantly aid in the process of policy formulation, says Roktima Yadav, Director of the Department of Economics and Statistics.

uniformity in data would eliminate duplication, thereby enabling the implementation of policies, schemes, and decisions based on precise data analysis.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### JOINT MEETING HELD

## All departments must coordinate to prepare for the CM's programs: Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh

**RAIPUR:** Regarding law and order and preparations for the Chief Minister's programs, Police Commissioner Mr. Sanjeev Shukla and Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh on Monday convened a joint meeting with the concerned departments and issued necessary directives.

Police Commissioner Mr. Sanjeev Shukla stated that the Chief Minister's security is paramount, and there must be absolutely no negligence in this regard. Wherever a program is scheduled, the itinerary must be obtained in advance, the venue inspected, and the organizers strictly instructed to comply with the recommendations of the Verma Commission Report. A written undertaking to this effect must be obtained from the organizers. Whether the Chief Minister's programs are private or official, the PWD Department shall be responsible for ensuring



the provision of the stage and other essential arrangements. At the program venue, the CMHO must ensure the mandatory presence of medical personnel—including those accompanying the motorcade—as well as the availability of necessary medicines in accordance with established protocols. The District Commandant shall ensure the provision of fire services and fire-fighting equipment at every event. All preparations at the Chief Minister's arrival/deboarding point must be kept robust and foolproof.

### MAA KARMA JAYANTI CELEBRATED

## Maa Karma Jayanti Mahotsav celebrated with great enthusiasm in Kota

**RAIPUR:** The "Bhakta Shiromani Maa Karma Jayanti Mahotsav" was celebrated with great enthusiasm by the Sahu Samaj in Ward-20 (Ramakrishna Paramahansa Ward), Teachers Colony, Kota. A large number of devotees, including senior citizens, youth, and children, participated in the programme, showcasing strong community unity.

The celebrations began with a Kalash Yatra, followed by pooja-archana and ceremonial lamp lighting at the newly constructed Maa Karma Bhawan. The event formally commenced with the Chhattisgarh state anthem. Guests were welcomed with traditional tilak, sandalwood paste, and garlands, while children presented vibrant cultural performances reflecting local traditions.

Ward President Bhojram Sahu expressed gratitude to MLA Rajesh Munat, Corporator Aman Thakur, and other leaders for supporting the construction of the community building.



He emphasized unity, social awareness, and respect among all sections of society, while highlighting Maa Karma's deep devotion. Corporator Aman Thakur lauded the unity of the Sahu community and shared upcoming development plans. Dr. Trishana Sahu encouraged women to realize their potential through determination and hard work.

Presiding over the event, MLA Motilal Sahu spoke about the blessings of Maa Karma and the community's progress. Several dignitaries and social workers addressed the gathering.

## Class 12 Hindi exam cancelled following paper leak claims

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education (CGBSE) has officially cancelled the Class 12 Hindi examination that was originally held on March 14, 2026. Following a high-level meeting of the Examination Committee on Monday, March 23, it was decided that the test would be conducted afresh on April 10, 2026. This decision comes after widespread reports and social



media claims suggested that Set B of the question paper had been leaked on March 15 and 16.

To investigate the authenticity of these claims, a written complaint was filed with the Cyber Cell, and a formal FIR was registered at the City Kotwali. While School

Education Minister Gajendra Yadav had previously expressed skepticism regarding the leak, the Board's latest move to nullify the previous exam aims to maintain the integrity of the competitive process and ensure a fair evaluation for all students. According to the revised schedule issued under order number 1520, the Higher Secondary Certificate Main Examination for Hindi will now take place on April 10, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 12:15 PM.

## 2 missing girls traced within 12 hours

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** Acting swiftly on a missing persons report, the Gudhiyari Police successfully located two girls—one minor and one adult—within 12 hours of their disappearance.

The families had approached the Gudhiyari Police Station on March 16, 2026, informing officials that the two close friends had left their homes in the Ramnagar area without noti-



fying anyone. Taking the matter seriously, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (North Zone) immediately directed officers to launch a detailed investigation. Police teams began gathering information and reviewing CCTV footage from key locations.

## Protest erupts over road widening in Gudhiyari

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** Tension gripped the Gudhiyari area of the state capital on Monday as large-scale protests broke out against an ongoing road-widening project. Hundreds of local residents, along with activists from the Congress party, Bhim Army, and Chhattisgarh Kranti Sena, staged a sit-in demonstration, blocking the road and raising slogans against the administration. The protest intensified as participants opposed the proposed widening work, alleging lack of proper consultation and concerns over displacement. The agitators were seen firmly occupying the road, bringing traffic movement in the area to a complete halt. In response to the escalating



situation, a heavy police force was deployed at the site to maintain law and order. Police personnel attempted to disperse the crowd and clear the road, but protesters remained adamant, leading to a tense standoff. Officials from the Municipal Corporation and the district administration were also present on the spot, monitoring the situation closely. Meanwhile, bulldozers and machinery were brought in, indicating preparations to proceed with the road-widening work despite the opposition.

### | GST 2.0 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE |

## Int'l Conference on GST 2.0 concludes at MATS

Central Chronicle News

**International participation and expert discussions on GST 2.0 and global taxation reforms.**

**RAIPUR:** A two-day international conference on "Next Generation GST 2.0: Its Global Impact" was successfully organized by the School of Business and Management Studies, MATS University, on March 23-24 at the New Convention Hall and Circuit House, Civil Lines. The event brought together scholars, academicians, and researchers from India and abroad to deliberate on evolving taxation systems and their global economic implications. The conference



### FACTFILE

• Multiple technical sessions, keynote lectures, and research presentations enriched academic discourse.

commenced with a formal inaugural session featuring Saraswati Vandana and the national anthem. Conference Coordinator Dr. Umesh Gupta welcomed the dignitaries and outlined the objectives of the event. Prominent guests included Chancellor Gajraj Pagariya, Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) K.P.

Yadav, Director General Priyesh Pagariya, and Higher Education Minister Tankram Verma, who highlighted the transformative potential of GST 2.0 in enhancing transparency, boosting global trade, and strengthening economic frameworks. Multiple technical sessions were conducted over the two days, featuring keynote lectures from international experts including Dr. M.D. Yousof (Oman), Dr. N.K. Rajagopal (Oman), and Dr. Santosh Kumar Verma (China).

### PROTEIN AWARENESS

## IB Group drives protein awareness, strengthens India's nutrition ecosystem

**RAIPUR:** As India intensifies its focus on nutrition and protein security, IB Group, under the leadership of Managing Director Bahadur Ali, is playing a pivotal role in transforming the country's food ecosystem. Widely regarded as a pioneer of modern poultry in India, Ali has expanded IB Group into a leading integrated poultry and protein enterprise, empowering thousands of farmers and rural entrepreneurs across multiple states. The company operates with complete backward and forward integration—covering feed production, breeding, farming, processing, and nationwide distribution—ensuring quality, efficiency, and consistent supply of affordable chicken protein to consumers. To address India's persistent protein deficiency, IB Group has launched the nationwide

campaign "Har Ghar Har Din Chicken Protein." The initiative spans over 2,500 tehsils across 20 states, promoting awareness about the importance of daily protein consumption and encouraging healthier dietary habits among families. Speaking on the initiative, Bahadur Ali emphasized that protein should be viewed as a daily necessity rather than a luxury. The campaign aims to bridge the awareness gap, especially in regions where diets are largely carbohydrate-based. With chicken emerging as a sustainable and affordable protein source, IB Group continues to strengthen its farm-to-consumer value chain.



### WATER CONSERVATION

## UltraTech boosts Water Conservation efforts in Baloda Bazar-Bhatapara

**RAIPUR:** Reinforcing its commitment to sustainable water management on World Water Day, UltraTech Cement's integrated units in Chhattisgarh—Hirmi, Rawan, Kukurdih, and Baikunth—have undertaken extensive water stewardship initiatives across Baloda Bazar-Bhatapara district and nearby regions. Hirmi Cement Works has made significant progress through its community watershed project, harvesting and recharging over 68,000 cubic metres of water in 2025 alone, with a cumulative achievement of more than 93 lakh cubic metres. The unit has also constructed 32 check dams and deepened seven ponds, benefiting over 3,200 farmers. Similarly, Rawan Cement Works has contributed over 3.3 lakh cubic metres of water recharge since inception, along with building check dams and deepening 36 ponds, positively impacting more than 31,000



farmers. Kukurdih and Baikunth units have also played a key role, collectively benefiting thousands of farmers through water harvesting and storage initiatives. At the national level, UltraTech reported harvesting and recharging over 16.2 million cubic metres of water in FY25 through its conservation projects, enhancing water access and agricultural productivity in rural areas. The company also focuses on efficient water use within its operations by recycling water, creating reservoirs in mined-out pits, and implementing rainwater harvesting systems. Overall, UltraTech has managed over 120 million cubic metres of water through its sustainability initiatives in FY25.

### | NEW WASTE RULES FROM APRIL 1 |

## Strict compliance for events, households

Central Chronicle News

**Mandatory prior notification for events with 100+ guests; heavy fines for violations.**



**RAIPUR:** A new Solid Waste Management Policy will come into effect across Chhattisgarh from April 1, introducing stricter rules for waste disposal, segregation, and accountability. Under the revised framework, organizers

of events with 100 or more guests must inform the municipal corporation at least three days in advance. Failure to comply or improper waste handling at such gatherings could attract on-the-spot fines ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 50,000, as

per local bylaws.

The policy aligns with the newly notified Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, replacing the 2016 rules. A major shift under the new regime is

the mandatory four-bin waste segregation system for households, institutions, and commercial establishments, aimed at improving recycling and reducing landfill burden.

Event organizers will be held responsible for ensuring zero-waste functions by maintaining cleanliness and proper segregation at the source. Meanwhile, street vendors have been directed to keep dustbins at their stalls and dispose of waste only at designated municipal collection

points, failing which penalties will be imposed. Bulk waste generators such as residential complexes, hotels, hospitals, and educational institutions will now be required to process waste at source. Waste pickers will be formally integrated into the system through registration, identity cards, and uniforms. Additionally, manufacturers will be made accountable for sanitary waste under Extended Producer Responsibility norms.

# Raipur News

## Continuous efforts underway for forest conservation: Kashyap

A workshop was organized on World Forestry Day focusing on forest conservation, tree plantation and environmental awareness.

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** On the occasion of World Forestry Day (March 21), the Forest Department—in collaboration with various organizations—organizes workshops focused on forest conservation, tree plantation, and environmental awareness. During these events, experts engage in discussions regarding scientific techniques, the significance of afforestation, and the sustainable management of forests for the future. The program's Chief Guest was the Minister for Forests and Climate Change, Kedar Kashyap. Speaking on the occasion, he remarked that the lives of the people of Chhattisgarh are deeply rooted in nature, and that continuous efforts are being undertaken to conserve and enhance the state's forests. He lauded the increase in forest cover, the rise in wildlife populations, and the achievement of establishing the state's first Ramsar Site. Furthermore, he called for the departmental schemes to be implemented in a target-oriented and phased manner. During the event, several books—published by TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute), New Delhi—covering topics such as the assessment of forest ecosystem services, climate change, and traditional knowledge were



### FASTFACTS

● Experts discuss scientific techniques, the importance of afforestation, and Forest Management for the future.

released. On the occasion of World Forestry Day, a one-day workshop was organized by the Chhattisgarh State Climate Change Centre (under the

Department of Forests and Climate Change) at the Dandakaranya Auditorium, located within Aranya Bhawan in Naya Raipur. The program was presided over by Shri Vikas Markam, Chairman of the Chhattisgarh Local Health Traditions and Medicinal Plants Board. He emphasized that it is the duty of both the government and every member of society to

ensure that forests are neither cut down nor allowed to be destroyed.

Several senior officials were present at the event, including Additional Chief Secretary Richa Sharma; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, V. Srinivas Rao; and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Arun Kumar Pandey.

### Workshop highlights forest economics and climate resilience strategies

Technical sessions and panel discussions were also organized during the workshop. The technical sessions featured presentations on ecological services provided by forests, information regarding Green Climate Fund projects, and discussions on the financial assistance options available through NABARD. Meanwhile, during the panel discussions, experts shared their insights on the progress being made in the fields of forestry and climate change. On this occasion, stakeholders associated with the National Adaptation Fund project also shared their experiences.

It is noteworthy that the United Nations observes March 21st annually as World Forestry Day. This year's theme is "Forests and Economies," aimed at highlighting the economic and environmental significance of forests. This workshop represents a significant initiative toward promoting a forest-based economy within the state, conserving biodiversity, and raising awareness to address the challenges posed by climate change.

### Pledge of Antyodaya

**RAIPUR:** The landless agricultural labourers—the architects of Chhattisgarh's rural economy—are now entering a new era of economic security. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the State Government's 'Deendayal Upadhyay Landless Agricultural Laborer Welfare Scheme' is not merely a financial assistance program; it is a monumental endeavor ('Mahayagya') aimed at ensuring a life of dignity for the person standing at the very last rung of society. Under this scheme, a sum of Rs 10,000 per beneficiary will be directly transferred this year into the bank accounts of 495,965 landless beneficiaries. To facilitate this, the State Government has allocated a total provision of Rs 495.965 cr. This list of beneficiaries includes 22,028 Baiga and Gunia families, who serve as the custodians of the state's rich cultural and traditional heritage. The State Government had provided record-breaking assistance through this scheme last year as well. In 2025, a total sum of Rs 562.112 cr was distributed among 562,112 beneficiaries, at a rate of Rs 10,000 per individual. This consistent flow of statistics demonstrates the State Government's unwavering commitment to the economic empowerment of landless families.

On March 25, 2026, as CM Sai initiates the transfer of funds from the soil of Balodabazar, it will resonate as a powerful echo of 'Justice and Good Governance' across Chhattisgarh.

## Former insurgents swap weapons for pens



Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** In a powerful symbol of regional transformation, 28 rehabilitated youths who once carried weapons have taken their first steps toward a peaceful future by appearing for the ULLAS Mahapariksha. Held on Sunday, March 22, 2026, the event marked a significant turning point for the Bastar district, where education is increasingly replacing the cycle of violence.

The literacy drive, organized under the ULLAS Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, saw massive participation across the district, with a total of 25,706 candidates sitting

for the exam. The initiative aims to provide foundational literacy and numeracy to those who previously lacked access to formal schooling.

At the Adawal rehabilitation center, the participation of former insurgents signaled a major shift toward social reintegration, with observers noting that hands once used to hold guns were now holding pens to write a new future. This effort extended into the judicial system at Jagdalpur Central Jail, where 141 inmates, including 94 men and 47 women, appeared for the test to forge a new identity through literacy.

## Solemn tribute paid to Shaheed Bhagat Singh on martyrdom day

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The city of Raipur marked the martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh on Monday, March 23, 2026, with a dignified floral tribute ceremony at his statue located near the SRP Crossing in Shankar Nagar. Organized by the Culture Department

of the Raipur Municipal Corporation in collaboration with Zone 4, the event brought together political leaders, officials, and citizens to honor the legacy of the legendary freedom fighter.

## 72nd meeting of the DOLIC, Raipur conclude under chairmanship of DRM

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The 72nd meeting of the Divisional Official Language Implementation Committee (DOLIC), Raipur, was held on March 23, in the Divisional Conference Hall, under the chairmanship of the Divisional Railway Manager, Dayanand. During the meeting, the progress made regarding the Official Language within the Division during the period of October-December 2025 was reviewed, in accordance with the standard agenda issued by the Railway Board. In his welcome address, Bajrang Agarwal, Additional Chief Official Language Officer and Additional Divisional Railway Manager, stated that an inspection meeting of the Divisional Office was conducted by the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language in December 2025. During this meeting, the Committee issued several guidelines, which have since been circulated to all Branch Officers via official



letters. It is expected that these guidelines will be strictly adhered to. Today, neither typing nor translation presents any difficulty; therefore, Hindi should be utilized 100% in all original correspondence. Section 3(3) of the Official Languages Act, 1963, is a highly significant provision; it must be ensured that all documents falling under this category are invariably issued in a 100% bilingual format (Hindi and English).

In his presidential address, Divisional Railway Manager Dayanand stated that a set of "Check Points" for the implementation of Official Language rules has been issued under his signature. It is imperative to ensure both the personal compliance with, and the enforcement of, these check points. With

the aid of modern AI tools, work can now be executed in Hindi with great ease; everyone should take full advantage of this facility. Furthermore, maximum use of Hindi should be made in the 'noting' section within the e-Office system. Hindi should be utilized in all official correspondence.

During their regular inspections, officers should also conduct Official Language inspections and prepare their inspection reports in Hindi. Finally, officers are directed to apprise the officials and employees of their respective departments regarding the decisions and suggestions adopted during today's meeting, and to issue necessary instructions to them in this regard.

## Youth lead grand Raipur Padyatra to honor martyrs

Central Chronicle News

**Grand MY Bharat Padyatra on Shaheed Diwas, Youth echo spirit of patriotism.**

**RAIPUR:** On the occasion of Shaheed Diwas, MY Bharat (Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India) organized a grand padyatra in the capital city, Raipur. Held under the theme "My Bharat, My Responsibility," the march commenced from Telibandha Talab Marine Drive and culminated at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chowk, located near the Chief Minister's residence on Gaurav Path, where floral tributes were offered to the martyrs. A large number of MY Bharat youth volunteers, members of the Sikh community, and representatives from various social organiza-



tions participated in the padyatra. Carrying the national flag, participants filled the atmosphere with patriotic slogans, reflecting enthusiasm and unity throughout the route. Arpit Tiwari, State Director, MY Bharat, Chhattisgarh, stated that the objective of the padyatra was to pay homage to the great revolutionaries and martyrs, and to inspire a sense of patriotism and responsibility among the youth. He further informed that a series of activities were organized by MY Bharat

to mark Shaheed Diwas, including online quizzes on the MY Bharat portal, youth-led reels on freedom fighters, cleanliness drives, and awareness initiatives. The padyatra was led by Amarjeet Singh Chhabra, Chairman (Minister of State rank), State Minority Commission, Chhattisgarh.

The event not only symbolized respect for the sacrifices of the freedom fighters but also conveyed a strong message of unity, integrity, and patriotism. Sunita Chansoriya, Professor, Durga College, Raipur, remarked that Bhagat Singh continues to be a powerful source of inspiration for the youth, and by imbibing his ideals, young citizens can contribute meaningfully towards building a Viksit Bharat.

## Seminar strengthens rail efforts against human trafficking

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The South East Central Railway (SECR) Raipur Division hosted a comprehensive anti-human trafficking seminar at the Ullas Officers' Club in WRS Colony on Monday, March 23, 2026. This initiative follows a significant Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the National Commission for Women in July 2025, aimed at intensifying joint operations to pre-



vent the illegal transport of persons through the rail network.

The event was graced by Chief Guest Ms. Delina Khongdup, former member of the National Commission for Women, alongside

a panel of high-ranking officials including Raipur Police Commissioner Sanjeev Shukla, RPF Inspector General Munawwar Khurshid, and Divisional Railway Manager Dayanand.

A total of 222 partici-

pants attended, comprising RPF and GRP officers, ticket checking staff, train crews, and station porters, all of whom play a critical role as first responders in identifying suspicious activity.

During the technical sessions, speakers provided in-depth insights into the root causes of trafficking, methods for identifying potential victims and suspects, and the specific legal procedures required to prosecute offenders. Legal expert Naushina Afreen

Ali and representatives from the "Bachpan Bachao" NGO also shared strategies for effective intervention and victim support.

Railway authorities concluded the seminar by appealing for public cooperation. Citizens are urged to remain vigilant and immediately report any suspicious individuals traveling with women or children by calling the railway helpline 139 or contacting the nearest RPF, GRP, or police station.

## Brijmohan Agrawal opposes privatization of Jungle Safari

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** A delegation from the Chhattisgarh Daily Wage Forest Employees Association met with LS MP Brijmohan Agrawal to express their concerns regarding a proposal to hand over bus operations at the Jungle Safari—located in Naya Raipur—to private agencies. The delegation explained that if the bus operations are awarded to private agencies through a tender process, it would create a livelihood crisis for the drivers and guides who have



been working there for the past 10-15 years. Furthermore, they would be deprived of future opportunities for regularization and other government benefits. Terming the matter as extremely serious, MP Brijmohan Agrawal stated that, under no cir-

### NEWSLINE

#### TRIBAL GAMES

**Chhattisgarh hosts grand welcome for athletes as Khelo India Tribal Games begin**

**RAIPUR:** Chhattisgarh has transformed into a vibrant hub of athletic celebration as participants began arriving for the historic Khelo India Tribal Games on Monday, March 23, 2026. The atmosphere at Swami Vivekananda Airport in Raipur was filled with excitement as a contingent of 10 swimmers from Assam and a 17-member football team from Tamil Nadu were among the first to land. Officials from the Department of Sports and Youth Welfare, along with representatives from the Sports Authority of India (SAI), greeted the visiting athletes with roses and traditional cultural performances. This warm reception set the stage for a continuous influx of competitors from various states and union territories throughout the day.

#### HONOR

**Raipur honors revolutionary Martyr Hemu Kalani on his birth anniversary**

**RAIPUR:** City leaders and community members gathered near Kutcheri Chowk on Monday, March 23, 2026, to pay a heartfelt tribute to the young revolutionary martyr Hemu Kalani on the occasion of his birth anniversary. The memorial service, organized by the Raipur Municipal Corporation's Culture Department in coordination with Zone 2, featured a solemn floral offering ceremony at the martyr's statue. The event saw participation from prominent figures, including Raipur South MLA Sunil Soni, Raipur Mayor Meenal Choubey, and Municipal Speaker Suryakant Rathore. Other notable attendees included Amarjeet Singh Chhabra, Chairman of the State Minority Commission, former MLA Kuldeep Singh Juneja, Culture Department Chairman Amar Gidwani.

#### OBITUARY

#### Omprakash Mishra

**RAIPUR :** Omprakash Mishra, R/o Satyam Vihar Colony, breathed his last here on Monday. He was ailing for quite some time. The final rites will be performed at Mahadev crematorium on March 24 at 10:00 am. He was elder brother of Journalist Vijay Mishra of (Agradoot), Vaibhav Mishra and Richa Sharma and father of Aayam Mishra.

**HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Maharatna Company)  
Petroleum House, 17, Janshedji Tata Road, Mumbai-400020

**CORRIGENDUM**

Ref. HPCL DCA cum CS Advt. dated 10.02.2026 & 11.02.2026. Last date extended to 21.04.2026. Visit <https://petchem.hpcl.co.in/dca-cum-cs> for further details. Helpline: 8169234083 (10 AM - 5 PM, MON - FRI except public holidays).

# Bilaspur



After recent fire incidents in the market area, all the business establishments would have to ensure installation of necessary equipments to avert any mishap.

Rajnesh Singh  
SSP, Bilaspur

## Many areas tagged 'rural', new booking after 45 days

Since many of Bilaspur municipal areas have been classified as rural, the residents face delayed LPG refill cycle despite having urban status, causing inconvenience.

Central Chronicle News

**BILASPUR :** Residents of several areas now included under the Municipal Corporation are still being treated as rural consumers by gas companies, forcing them to wait 45 days for LPG booking instead of the 25-day cycle applicable to urban users. The issue has come to light during the KYC process, where many consumers' records still show "rural" instead of "urban." As a result, despite living within city limits, they are subjected to longer waiting periods for refilling cylinders. Around 18-gram panchayats were merged into the Municipal Corporation in 2019, but even after seven years, areas such as Sakri, Koni, Birkona, Devrikhurd, Mopka, Rajkishore Nagar, Lingiyadih, Torwa and Deendayal Colony continue to face this discrepancy. Residents allege a dual standard, as they pay municipal taxes and are included in urban schemes, yet are categorised as rural for gas distribution. This has led to growing dissatisfaction among consumers, especially amid an ongoing



LPG shortage. Gas distributors say the issue stems from outdated records in KYC data. Consumers whose connections are marked rural must wait 45 days between bookings, while those marked urban can book within 25 days. While restrictions on inactive connections have been welcomed to ensure fair supply, regular consumers say inconsistent supply and longer waiting periods continue to cause inconvenience. They have demanded clear and separate guidelines for such cases to ensure timely availability of LPG cylinders. According to the officials, initially the supply will fall short of total demand. During this phase, only about 20 percent of the regular commercial LPG cylinders will be made available in the market.

Most of these will come from existing stock, offering partial support to hotels, restaurants, and roadside food vendors. Although this step will not fully eliminate the shortage, it is likely to ease operational difficulties for businesses facing fuel constraints. Food Controller Amrit Kujur said that the administration is focused on maintaining an uninterrupted supply for household consumers while ensur-

ing a fair distribution system. He also stressed that commercial users must use only authorized commercial cylinders and comply with existing norms.

Authorities have reported that more than 210 cylinders have been confiscated in five different cases so far, highlighting strict action to curb misuse and help stabilize the supply situation during the ongoing shortage.

### Hospitality sector worst affected

The hospitality sector has been the worst affected by the crisis. Several hotels and eateries in Bilaspur and nearby areas have been compelled to switch to alternative cooking options. Many have started using induction cooktops and electric stoves, while smaller outlets and roadside dhabas are relying on traditional fuel sources such as firewood and coal.

## Youth learn importance of water resources and Biodiversity



Central Chronicle News

Beat policing boosts trust, improves intelligence gathering across Bilaspur

**BILASPUR :** On the occasion of World Water Day, Vikasarth Vidyarthi Bilaspur organised a one-day ecological study programme at Kopra reservoir to raise awareness about water conservation and biodiversity. During the programme, participants explored the natural features of the reservoir, its ecological significance, and the migratory birds visiting the area. Activities such as bird watching, nature observation and interac-

### FACTFILE

● Round-the-clock patrolling, accountability and GPS tracking strengthen policing system.

discussions on environmental issues were conducted. The initiative helped students understand the role of wetlands and reservoirs in maintaining ecological balance and sustaining biodiversity.

Speaking on the occasion, national co-convenor of Vikasarth Vidyarthi, Indivar Shukla, said that water, forests and land are not just natural resources but the foundation of life and culture.

## Teachers' Body demands dept-based TET Exam

**BILASPUR:** The Chhattisgarh Third Class Government Employees' Association has demanded that the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) be conducted by the Education Department. The demand was raised during a meeting held to discuss various issues related to the education sector. Members highlighted delays in promotions and time-scale pay benefits for teachers in Takhatpur and other blocks, urging authorities to take prompt action. The association also stated that if a TET examination is conducted in the future, it should be organised directly by the department to ensure transparency and efficiency.

State president Pawan Kumar Sharma, state coordinator GR Chandra, general secretary Himanchal Sahu, district president Kishor Sharma and other members were present at the meeting.

## Minister Tokhan shares winning strategy at Bijni

Central Chronicle News

Tokhan Sahu energized BJP workers, outlined strategy ahead of crucial elections.

**BILASPUR :** Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu addressed a BJP workers' conference in Bijni Assembly constituency, giving a strong push to the party's campaign ahead of the upcoming elections. His address aimed at motivating party workers and strengthening grassroots mobilisation. Speaking at the gathering, Sahu highlighted the rapid transformation of "New India" under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He underlined key achievements in welfare schemes, infrastructure growth, digital advancements

ASSAM POLLS |



### FASTFACTS

● The Minister focused on booth strength, grassroots connect and promoting government welfare schemes.

and national security, stating that these developments have significantly improved the lives of citizens across the country.

He also pointed out that Assam has witnessed remarkable progress under the

## NSS volunteers conduct sanitation at Jora Talab



Central Chronicle News

NSS volunteers lead cleanliness drive to promote water conservation awareness locally.

**BILASPUR:** The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit of DLS College organised a cleanliness drive at Jora Talab with the aim of promoting water conservation and hygiene awareness among citizens. During the drive, NSS volunteers actively cleaned all the ghats surrounding the pond. They collected plastic waste, polythene and other garbage scattered in and around the water body, ensuring its proper disposal. The initiative not only improved the cleanliness of the area but also sent a strong message about the importance of preserving natural water resources.

Alongside the cleaning activity, volunteers engaged with local residents and visitors, spreading awareness about water conserva-

### FASTFACTS

● Students clean Jora Talab, spread awareness on hygiene and water conservation

tion. They emphasised that water is essential for life and must be protected from pollution and misuse. Participants appealed to the public to avoid dumping waste into ponds, lakes and other water bodies, and to take responsibility for maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings.

The drive was conducted under the guidance of programme officers Sheikh Afridi (boys' unit) and Himani Tiwari (girls' unit), who motivated students to actively participate in community service. A large number of NSS volunteers took part in the initiative, including Nidhi Gupta, Gaurav Baghel, Radhika Patel, Monica Sarson, Neelakshi Ghrit, Reena Vastrakar, Ranjit Sahu, Mayank Kuren, Kishan Sahu, Tejeshwar Baghel, Krish Rajgir, Manas Pandey and Ronit Kurre.

### NEWSLINE

#### WEAPON

### Man held with illegal weapon

**BILASPUR:** Police arrested a 53-year-old man with an illegal weapon in Hiri police station limits, officials said on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off received at around 2:05 pm on March 22, a police team intercepted a suspect near Bhulkaha temple while he was moving from Dhaurabhatha towards Chhotamedpar. During a search, officers recovered an iron weapon (bhujali) from his possession.

The accused failed to produce any valid documents for the weapon. He was identified as Pokhrajpur Goswami, a resident of Chhotamedpar under Hiri police station.

#### PETITION

### Petition rejected as no loss proved: HC

**BILASPUR:** The High Court has dismissed a petition challenging the state government's decision to grant a one-year relaxation in experience criteria for promotion to the post of Chief Municipal Officer (Category B). The petition was filed by officers holding the post of Chief Municipal Officer (Category C), who opposed the relaxation given to revenue inspectors for promotion. The court observed that the state government's decision to grant relaxation as a "one-time measure" was within its jurisdiction and legally valid.

It found no evidence to suggest that the decision was arbitrary, unreasonable, or influenced by any improper considerations. The relaxation was granted through a government order dated February 2, 2018, reducing the required minimum service period from six years by one year for promotion eligibility.

During the hearing, the court noted that the petitioners failed to present any concrete or substantial material to prove that they suffered any actual loss due to the relaxation. Their claims were termed vague and unsupported by evidence.

#### SERVICE

### Demand to continue air services

**BILASPUR:** Concerns are rising over the possible disruption of air services in the city after March 28, prompting the Air Service Public Struggle Committee to intensify its efforts. The committee has approached public representatives, including Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao, Union Minister of State Tokhan Sahu and MLA Amar Agrawal, to highlight the situation and seek intervention. They stressed the growing demand for regular flights to Delhi, Prayagraj and Hyderabad. The issue stems from the fact that Alliance Air has not yet announced its summer schedule (March 28 to October 27), while the last scheduled flight from Bilaspur under the current timetable is on March 27.

LITERACY PROGRAM |

## Over 40,000 join Ullas Literacy assessment

Central Chronicle News

**BILASPUR:** The Ullas literacy assessment examination recorded an impressive participation of over 40,000 learners across Bilaspur district, marking a major achievement in the state's ongoing literacy drive. Conducted under the Ullas Navbharat Literacy Programme, the examination saw enthusiastic involvement from a wide cross-section of society. Participants included elderly couples, newly married pairs, women associated



with self-help groups, differently-abled individuals, and rural women—some of whom even attended the exam with their infants, reflecting strong commitment towards education. According to official data, a total of 40,777 candidates

appeared for the assessment at 961 centres set up across the district. Among them were 10,943 men and 29,822 women, highlighting a significantly higher participation of women in the literacy initiative. Authorities termed the turnout as historic and

noted that the examination process was conducted in a smooth, transparent and well-organised manner. The programme aims to equip learners with essential skills such as basic reading and writing in local lan-

guages, foundational numeracy, digital literacy and practical life skills. Officials said the initiative is playing a key role in empowering individuals, especially those who had previously been deprived of formal education. Participation was particularly strong in rural and tribal regions, with Kota block emerging as one of the most active areas in the district. The overwhelming response underlines growing awareness about the importance of literacy and lifelong learning.

# N-E-W-S



"The gov't's push for democratisation of technology has transformed television viewing experience in India."

Ashwini Vaishnav  
Union Minister

## 'Ayushman' reaches 11.69 cr hospital admissions: Jadhav

Government reports 11.69 crore admissions under Ayushman Bharat scheme, says Prataprao Jadhav in Parliament reply Monday

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** As many as 11.69 crore hospital admissions have been authorised under the Ayushman Bharat scheme till February 28, including 6.74 crore in private hospitals, the Parliament was informed on Monday.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prataprao Jadhav said that strict guidelines are in place to ensure that hospitals provide treatment to beneficiaries without refusal.



In case of any denial or irregularity, patients can file complaints through the Centralised Grievance Redressal Management System or call the 24x7 toll-free helpline 14555. "As on February 28,

2026, a total of 11.69 crore hospital admissions have been authorised under the scheme, including 6.74 crore admissions in private hospitals," the minister stated.

"Under AB-PMJAY,

### HIGHLIGHT

• 6.74 crore admissions recorded in private hospitals under flagship scheme.

• Patients can report denial via helpline 14555 or grievance system.

such grievances are monitored through a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism at the District, State and National level," Jadhav added.

He added that at each level, designated nodal

officers and Grievance Redressal Committees are in place to examine and resolve the grievances. The government also highlighted that the number of hospitals empanelled under the scheme has seen a sharp rise over the years. "From 6,917 hospitals in 2018-19, the network has expanded to 36,229 hospitals as of February 28, 2026. This includes 19,483 public hospitals and 16,746 private hospitals, providing a wide healthcare network to beneficiaries across the country," Jadhav explained.

## CM Sai joins nomination filing of K Rajasekharan in Kerala



**CHENGANNUR/(KERALA):** Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai participated in the nomination filing ceremony of the BJP candidates, Kummanam Rajasekharan, from the Aranmula Assembly constituency and at the filing of nomination papers of the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate, M.V. Gopakumar, in the Chengannur Assembly constituency of Kottayam district in Kerala here on Monday.

This Assembly election marks the beginning of a decisive transformation in the politics of Kerala. Moving beyond the politics of appeasement that has persisted for years, the public is now looking towards a leadership that is dedicated to public service and possesses the capability to steer the state to new heights of development. Inspired by the new benchmarks of development and trust estab-

lished by the nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP is rapidly emerging as the first choice of the masses in Kerala as well, CM added. CM said that 'I am fully confident that in this Assembly election, the vigilant electorate of Kerala will accord historic support to the BJP, prioritizing development, good governance, and national interest above all else.

| JYOTI-JYOT DIWAS |

## Shah pays tribute to Hargobind Sahib on Jyoti-Jyot Diwas

Press Trust Of India

**Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid tributes to Guru Hargobind Sahib on the occasion of his Jyoti-Jyot Diwas.**



and promoting the protection of humanity.

In a post on X, HM Shah highlighted that Guru Hargobind Sahib established the enduring tradition of the "Saint-Soldier," transforming Sikhism into a force

that combined spiritual strength with the courage to defend justice and human dignity. He noted that this philosophy played a crucial role in shaping the Sikh community during a challenging period in history.

The Home Minister also underscored Guru Sahib's role in reinforcing the Sikh faith through the establishment of the Akal Takht, which became a central institution for spiritual and temporal authority in Sikhism.

## Ensure prompt resolution: Raj CM

**JAIPUR:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Monday held a public hearing at his residence and directed officials to ensure prompt resolution of public grievances.

The chief minister said that people approach such hearings with expectations and officials must treat these cases with the highest priority and resolve them swiftly, according to a release. During the hearing, Sharma listened to complaints from various sections of society.

| SPECIAL DRIVE |

## Rs 9.57 cr fine imposed on traffic Violators; Special drive in Odisha

Press Trust Of India

**BHUBANESWAR:** The State Transport Authority (STA) in Odisha has imposed Rs 9.57 crore as fine on 17,831 people for violating motor vehicle norms during a special drive, an official statement said on Sunday.

The fines were imposed on the first day of the statewide drive launched on Saturday. The drive will continue till the end of this month, it said.

Joint enforcement



teams comprising officers from the transport and police departments, and the district administrations are participating in the special drive, the STA statement said.

On the first day, 17,831 e-challans were issued against persons found violating the Motor Vehi-

cles Act, 1988. A fine of Rs 9.57 crore has been imposed on these violators. Besides, 64 vehicles have been seized for serious violations of road safety rules, it said.

During the drive, special emphasis has been laid on preventing major causes of road accidents such as speeding, drunk-driving, riding without helmets, riding in the wrong direction, illegal parking, using mobile phones while driving and overloading, among others.

## BAHRAICH woman trampled to death by tusker

An 80-year-old woman was trampled to death by a tusker near the Kataria Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district on Sunday, marking the third such fatality in the region since last month, officials said. The victim, Kuwariya Devi, a resident of Bhawanipur village in the Kataria forest range, was grazing her goats near the forest edge around 11 am when the incident occurred, they said. "The woman had gone looking for one of her goats that had strayed into the forest area. She was attacked and trampled by a tusker, leading to her death on the spot," Kataria Wildlife Sanctuary Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Apoorva Dixit told PTI.

| 'ABHEDYA' APP |

## Haryana Police launches 'Abhedya' app to curb cybercrime, extortion

Press Trust Of India

**CHANDIGARH:** The Haryana Police on Saturday launched 'Abhedya', a mobile application designed to curb cybercrime, extortion and threatening calls. Officials said this is the first mobile-based security platform of its kind in India. The application aims to protect citizens



from suspicious calls, threatening messages, stalking, and digital harassment.

With this initiative, Haryana has become the

first state in the country to introduce such a measure. Haryana Director General of Police (DGP) Ajay Singhal said criminals are using internet-based calling and fake numbers to defraud people. He noted that the app will serve as a protective shield for citizens.

Following the state government's zero-tolerance policy, the DGP said strict

directions were issued by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to tackle extortion. He added that the app would provide relief to doctors, traders and contractors who are often targets of such threats. Singhal warned that those attempting to create an atmosphere of fear and terror would be treated as a terrorist and face action.

## Om Birla meets SL's Parliamentary Committee



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla during a meeting with the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Infra and Strategic Issues of Sri Lanka, in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

## CHENNAI DMK offers 5 seats to CPI(M)

The ruling DMK has offered five seats to its ally, CPI (M), for the forthcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, the Left party's State Secretary P Shanmugam said on Sunday. Seat-sharing talks between the DMK and CPI (M), which have been going on for the last 20 days, saw a new development with DMK President M K Stalin personally joining the negotiations.

"... this is the first time Chief Minister (M K Stalin) took part and requested us to accept the 5 seats offered by them," Shanmugam told reporters.

## SRINAGAR Man arrested in theft case

Jammu Police have arrested a man accused in a theft case registered in Baramulla district from Delhi, officials said. Rahil Ahmad Reshi was arrested by a team from Kunzer police station in Baramulla for allegedly robbing an electronic goods shop, a police spokesman said. Bilal Ahmad Bhat filed a complaint in Kunzer police station on March 9 that unknown persons had stolen 20 mobile phones, one laptop and Rs 5,000 in cash from his shop. Accordingly, a case was registered under relevant sections and investigation was initiated, the spokesman said.

## Bihar Intermediate exam results announced, pass percentage 85.19

Press Trust Of India

**PATNA:** Bihar Education Minister Sunil Kumar on Monday announced the results for the annual Intermediate (class 12) examination conducted by BSEB, with 85.19 per cent of the students clearing the test. Talking to reporters, Kumar said that the overall pass percentage of students this time was around 85.19



per cent - 86.23 per cent for girls and 84.09 per cent for boys. A total of 13.04 lakh students had appeared for the annual

intermediate exam. He said, "This is the eighth consecutive time that Bihar has announced Intermediate results before any other state in the country." Overall, 5,16,928 students got first division, 5,11,744 students got second division, and 82,425 passed with third division, a statement issued by BSEB said.

## High alert in Delhi's Uttam Nagar, tight vigil for Navratri

**NEW DELHI:** Security remains heightened in southwest Delhi's Uttam Nagar, with markets witnessing low footfall and police maintaining a high alert to ensure law and order for the Navratri festival, an official said on Monday. The police had detained more than 100 people as a preventive



measure during Eid to avoid any untoward incident. All of them were later released after verification, he said.

"The security will be deployed in JJ Colony area during the Navratri festival. This is a completely precautionary step to maintain peace during the festival," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Kushal Pal Singh said.

He further said that the situation is now nor-

mal, but the police are continuing heightened vigilance in view of festivals. People have been advised to maintain law and order and not pay heed to rumours. On Holi (March 4), a 26-year-old man, Tarun, died after being injured in a clash between two neighbouring families in JJ Colony.

| WORKSHOP |

## 'Economy-Ecology balance must for devp'

Press Trust Of India

**DEHRADUN:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav on Friday underscored the importance of maintaining a balance between economic growth and ecological preservation, calling it essential for India's sustainable development. He was address-

ing the inaugural session of a two-day national workshop in Dehradun held on the occasion of the International Day of Forests.

Highlighting the need for a scientific and evidence-based approach, the Minister said that policy decisions must integrate environmental concerns with developmental priorities. He



stressed that economic progress cannot come at the cost of environmental degradation, and a balanced strategy is the only way forward to ensure

long-term prosperity. Yadav reiterated India's strong commitment to nature conservation and pointed to the country's notable achievements in expanding forest cover and enhancing biodiversity. He advocated a "nature-first" approach, stating that sustainable living and harmonious coexistence with nature are cru-

cial to keeping the planet liveable for future generations.

Citing recent data, the Minister informed that India's forest cover has increased significantly over the past decade. According to official figures, forest area has grown by 13,669 square kilometres—from 701,673 sq km in 2014 to 715,342 sq km in 2026.

## Chakankar's resignation forwarded to CM: Sunetra

**MUMBAI:** NCP chief and Maharashtra deputy CM Sunetra Pawar on Saturday said she has forwarded Rupali Chakankar's resignation as state women's commission chairperson to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for acceptance.

Chakankar, a leader of the Nationalist Congress Party, on Friday ten-

dered her resignation after facing flak from opposition parties over her association with rape-accused 'godman' Ashok Kharat.

Following a meeting with CM Fadnavis, who asked her to step down, she handed the resignation letter personally to Sunetra Pawar late in the evening.

Bhoramdev Temple is not just an identity of Kabirdham, but it is an important heritage from historical and archaeological point of view.

Gopal Verma  
Collector-Kabirdham



# Bilaspur Region

## Strict directives issued as govt refutes claims of fuel scarcity

A review meeting was undertaken by the Central Government in Delhi wherein they stated that Chhattisgarh has adequate supply of all three fuels.

Central Chronicle News

**BAIKUNTHPUR:** In light of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, the Government of India's Ministry of Petroleum recently conducted a review and issued comprehensive guidelines regarding the availability and distribution of LPG, petrol, and diesel in the state of Chhattisgarh. The State Government has assured the public that oil companies operating in Chhattisgarh have sufficient stocks of all three fuels. Consumers are therefore urged not to be influenced by rumors or misinformation and to avoid unnecessary panic. In particular, they are requested not to make repeated bookings of LPG or engage in the hoarding of petrol and diesel.

To ensure continuous monitoring and transparency, the Food Department is conducting daily checks on the stocks of LPG, petrol, and diesel across the state. District-wise assessments of stock levels, distribution, and remaining quantities are being carried out, and



### FACTFILE

● Collector Mrs. Chandan Tripathi appealed to the public to not become swayed by false rumours.

necessary measures are implemented based on these reviews. To prevent illegal storage and misuse, joint inspection teams comprising officials from the District Administration and the Food Department are conducting regular raids. Strict action will be taken against any violations

under the Essential Commodities Act.

For prompt resolution of consumer complaints, several helpline numbers have been issued. Consumers may contact the toll-free numbers 1800-233-3663 or 1967. Additionally, the state-level control room can be reached at 0771-2511975, while the Korea district has a dedicated local control room at 7648093823. Authorities have directed that all complaints be resolved within 24 hours to ensure public convenience and confidence.

Domestic LPG consumers are advised to book refills only according to the prescribed intervals: 25 days for urban areas and 45 days for rural areas. Repeated bookings driven by unfounded rumors are discouraged. For commercial users, the supply of LPG is being prioritized for essential services, including hospitals and educational institutions. Storing more than 100 kilograms of LPG without a valid license is strictly prohibited. Hotels and similar establishments

are advised to use alternative energy sources and adopt limited menus to conserve gas.

The District Administration has emphasized strict vigilance against hoarding and black marketing of LPG, petrol, and diesel. Any agency or individual found violating regulations will face stringent legal action. Public awareness is also being prioritized: all gas agencies and Fair Price Shops have been instructed to prominently display information regarding LPG booking, distribution schedules, and safety protocols to keep consumers accurately informed. Chandan Tripathi, Collector and District Magistrate, has directed officials from all concerned departments to ensure strict compliance with these guidelines. These measures aim to prevent inconvenience to the public, maintain uninterrupted supply of essential commodities, and uphold orderly distribution during this period of heightened vigilance.

## Prarup Singh secures admission to NMNSS

**BAIKUNTHPUR:** Prarup Singh, a Class 5 student at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Baikunthpur, has brought pride to the region by excelling in three major competitive examinations in his very first attempt. Demonstrating exceptional talent and dedication, Prarup secured admission to both the National Military School and Sainik School. In the Military School entrance exam, he scored 126 out of 150 marks, achieving an All India Rank (AIR) of 275 in the General Category.

In the Sainik School entrance exam, he scored 242 out of 300, earning 4th rank in the Defence Category and 16th rank in the General Category in Chhattisgarh. Adding to his achievements, he secured 95 percent marks in the Navodaya Vidyalaya entrance, clinching the top district position. Prarup is the son of Subedar Praveen Singh of Gadhelpara, Baikunthpur, who served in the Indian Army's Corps of Signals. Now retired, he actively inspires and mentors local children and youth, guiding them toward academic and personal excellence.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

JAN GOSHTHI HOSTED BY SSM

## Saraswati Shishu Mandir opens doors for public discussion



**MUNGELI:** A public gathering (Jan-goshti) was organized at Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Pendarakapa, with Kailash Chandra, Regional Publicity Chief (Kshetra Prachar Pramukh) for the Central Zone, as the keynote speaker. Addressing the attendees, he emphasized the importance of serving society, stating, "That which causes distress to others is sin, and that which brings happiness to others is virtue."

He urged individuals to internalize Dharma—righteous duty—not merely as external symbols but as a principle guiding one's conduct, rooted in knowledge and scientific reasoning.

Kailash Chandra highlighted the collective power of the virtuous (Sajjan Shakti) and encouraged collaboration, noting that "just four individuals working together can transform an entire locality."

LAND SURVEY

## Land survey for Chirmiri-Nagpur Road Halt rail project from March 24 to 27

**MCB :** The Railways' long-awaited Chirmiri-Nagpur Road Halt rail project is now gaining momentum. According to information released by the Office of the Sub-Divisional Officer (Revenue), Manendragarh, a joint survey for land acquisition in the villages affected by the project will be conducted in a phased manner from March 24, 2026, to March 27, 2026. During this period, the survey will be carried out in the villages of Banji and Sarola from March 24 to March 25, 2026, while the survey in the villages of Chiraipani, Khairbana, and Chittajhor Chitt (Chirmiri Tehsil) will take place from March 26 to March 27, 2026. The survey work will commence daily at 11:00 AM and will involve land demarcation, preparation of 'panchnamas' (official records), photography, assessment of land usage, and a detailed inspection of existing structures such as houses, trees, wells, tube wells, etc. A total of 163 land parcels ('khasras') across 5 villages will be affected by this project; these include 55 parcels in Banji, 11 in Sarola, 41 in Chiraipani, 34 in Khairbana, and 22 in Chittajhor. The administration has appealed to all affected landowners, co-owners, and occupants to be mandatorily present at the site on the scheduled dates—bringing along all necessary land-related documents such as 'Khasra' extracts, 'B-1' records, land passbooks, sale deeds.

DIRECT RECRUITMENT

## Walk-in Interviews in Manendragarh on April 2; selection for 16 posts in PM

**MCB :** A significant opportunity has emerged for young individuals in the district who aspire to build a career in the field of education. According to a notification issued by the Office of the Collector (Tribal Development), walk-in interviews are being organized for the recruitment of Guest Teachers for the academic session 2026-27 at the PM-SHRI Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS). This recruitment is being conducted under the aegis of the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)—a prestigious institution operating under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

As per the issued order, this walk-in interview will be held on Thursday, April 2, 2026. The interview timings have been scheduled from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Interested candidates are required to appear in person at the Janpad Panchayat Commissioner's Auditorium in Manendragarh to participate directly in the interview.

This recruitment will be conducted on a strictly temporary 'Guest Teacher' basis; the appointment will remain valid only for the stipulated duration and will automatically terminate upon the conclusion of the academic session.

FREE YOGA CLASSES

## Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha spreading the Light of Yoga

**CHHURA:** Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha, who has been dedicated to spreading awareness regarding health and yoga in the region, has been providing free yoga services continuously for the past 12 years. His dedication and spirit of service have become a source of inspiration for the residents of the area. Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha is trained by the Patanjali Yogpeeth, the Ministry of AYUSH (Government of India), and the Vidya Bharati Sansthan; he also holds a bachelor's degree in Yoga. A large number of people attend the regular yoga classes conducted by Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha every day. Participants include people from all walks of life—youth, the elderly, women, and children. Through yoga, he inspires people not only to achieve physical health but also to cultivate mental peace and adopt a positive lifestyle. A noteworthy aspect of his work is that his service initiatives are receiving immense support from doctors within the medical community. Many doctors believe that regular yoga practice can help control various ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure, stress, and obesity. Doctors themselves often encourage people to join Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha's classes. Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha states that his objective is to make society healthy, disease-free, and free from addiction. He provides this service free of charge so that every individual—regardless of their economic status—can reap the benefits of yoga. Local residents have



also lauded his efforts, noting that his initiatives have heightened health awareness in the region, and people are increasingly moving towards maintaining their health through natural methods rather than relying solely on medication.

Wellness Coach Pawan Sinha remarked, "It is our hope and prayer that Yogacharya Ji lives to the age of 100 and continues to serve for a full century." Prominent citizens—including Nagar Seth Shankar Sachdev, Safar Sachdev, Anand Saraswat, Krishna Yadav, Rukmani Yadav, Kaushal Sahu, Mahendra Dwivedi, Bhuvaneshwar Patel, and others—stated that Yogacharya Mithlesh Sinha's spirit of selfless service serves as a truly inspiring example for society, one that will continue to motivate future generations to follow the path of health and service. The yoga classes are conducted through both online and offline modes.

## Simplified process for Aadhar name changes release

**MUNGELI:** The District Administration has simplified the process for updating names on Aadhaar cards to make it more convenient for the general public. Citizens no longer need to travel outside the district to obtain a Gazette Notification, as the facility is now available locally at Public Service Centers. Interested applicants can submit their applications along with the necessary documents at the nearest center, making the process more accessible, transparent, and time-bound. The required documents include a 430 challan deposited at any State Bank of India branch, a notarized affidavit on 50 non-judicial stamp paper (not older than three months), a recent local newspaper name-change notification, an affidavit with the names, signatures, and addresses of two witnesses, documents supporting both old and new names, and all relevant identity cards of the applicant and witnesses. The District Administration encourages citizens to utilize this facility to ensure their Aadhaar details are updated.

NO CHEATING CASE FOUND IN BOARD EXAMINATIONS

## Ramrajya achieved? Or is cheating still a concern in the district?

Central Chronicle News

**MUNGELI:** To curb cheating during the Class 10 and 12 Board examinations, the district administration constituted five flying squads to monitor a total of 66 examination centers. According to the Education Department, these teams visited centers in both urban and rural areas. Considerable resources were allocated for this operation, including substantial expenditure on fuel for the squad vehicles. Despite these efforts, the Board examinations have concluded without a single case of cheating being reported in the district.

This has sparked debate among educators and officials: if no cheating occurred, how could the squads have caught anyone? Allegations have also emerged suggesting that the flying squads may not have reached the rural centers—areas



historically associated with higher instances of malpractice. Critics claim that inspections in some areas were merely superficial, involving officials driving around without conducting meaningful checks. In contrast, other districts continued to report multiple cases of cheating, raising questions about the effectiveness of the monitoring process in the district.

Notably, this year, no 'home centers' were designated, meaning students did not take exams at the schools where they were enrolled. This change was expected to

make supervision easier, particularly at centers previously identified as "sensitive" for potential cheating. However, no center in the district was classified as "highly sensitive." The Education Department defended this approach by noting that, in recent years, no cheating had been recorded in the district, which justified reducing the number of highly sensitive centers. Nevertheless, the flying squads reportedly failed to conduct proper inspections even at those designated as sensitive.

The situation has sparked discussions

FACTFILE

● However, after the inspection of all 66 exam centers, it was found that no cases of cheating have been caught so far in the district.

within the Education Department regarding the performance of the flying squads and the effectiveness of the anti-cheating measures. While the evaluation of answer sheets is currently underway, questions remain about whether cheating has genuinely been eradicated from the district or if lapses occurred during inspections.

In conclusion, although the five flying squads were deployed across 66 examination centers and significant resources were invested in monitoring, the absence of any recorded cheating has raised eyebrows.

SPECIAL FEATURE: WORLD WATER DAY

## Agar river faces crisis as summer heat causes it to dry up

Central Chronicle News

**MUNGELI:** The Agar River, flowing through the heart of the town, has begun to dry up with the onset of summer, now carrying mostly filthy drainage water. Plans for beautifying the riverbanks and developing a riverside promenade ('Chowpatty') have failed to materialize due to the inaction of elected representatives. The town is also unable to bene-

fit from the anicut constructed by the Water Resources Department in the Bada Bazar area.

Once a life-sustaining waterway, the Agar River held water throughout the year. This year, water levels began receding as early as March, leaving only sewage-filled water, which emits a foul stench. Residents, who previously relied on ghats such as Pachari Ghat, Kachahari Ghat, Pulpara, Bada Bazar, and Malai Ghat for



daily water needs, are now left disappointed. The stop dam near Pendarakapa has filled with stagnant, dirty water due

accumulating garbage. The proposed drainage channel to divert sewage remains incomplete. Earlier riverfront beautification plans, including a Chowpatty and a riverside road, have yet to be implemented, despite announcements by former and current government officials. If completed, these projects could improve sewage management, enhance aesthetics, and facilitate smoother traffic.



**"Former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had also announced plans for the beautification of the riverfront; however, these plans could not be brought to fruition."**

Sources

to neglect, while the Bada Bazar anicut is too low to impound water, instead

# Fun & Focus



## Daily Horoscope

### ARIES

Today is a day for you to prioritize the things that are most important to you. You'll need to strike a balance between your career, your family, and your relationship. You may have noticed that one or more aspects have degraded as a result of a concentration on the other. According to Astrology astrologers, the thought and planning you undertake today on these matters will offer you relief as well as mental clarity.

### Taurus

There won't be anything to be anxious about while your endurance and determination will get you through these periods. With time your troubles will fade away. Even though you might sense a little dissatisfaction it won't rattle you much. Putting on anything in grey will assist you in drawing lots of positivity and make a nice impression on people you come across during the day.

### Gemini

Respect, recognition, money, and growth may come to you in abundance, making this a great start to the week ahead. You're in a great place to put your thoughts and ideas into action. You might feel satisfied with the present direction of your life. Gemini daily horoscope recommends you use your contacts or influence to make positive changes for yourself, your organization, and others.

### Cancer

The movement of the Moon in Taurus is indicative of the possibility of getting into a quarrel with your partner or a close friend. In such situations, it's critical to learn to keep your emotions in check to avoid things getting out of hand. The best way to work these situations is to open doors of communication, say Astrology astrologers. Wearing any light shades of green is lucky for you.

### Leo

Dear Leo, the Moon is in Taurus today, so whatever the reason is, try to stay out of a fight today, especially with those you care about. It would be best to avoid arguments and irritations because they are only momentary and could hamper your relationship. You must keep calm and refrain from initiating arguments that will only make you and your family miserable.

### Virgo

Today, the transit of the Moon in Taurus will tone down the intensity with which the usual mad rush of the day affects you. Take a break from work, relax your mind, and instead of analyzing the past worries, leave them behind and simply learn from your mistakes. Astrology astrologers predict that doing so will help get your life in perspective and make you feel much better.

### Libra

Dear Libra, with the Moon in Taurus, you may be feeling your best today. Your intellectual abilities are at their peak today, and you feel at ease and ready to take on any task. Astrology astrologers advise you to look out for distractions as there are chances that you will lose focus today. It is an excellent time to focus on the impending tasks that have lingered on for long enough.

### Scorpio

Dear Scorpio, the Moon in Taurus, so you can experience several changes in your present situation. If you find any issue with someone, refrain from indulging in arguments. The little arguments can evoke the chances of bigger disputes in life. Astrology astrologers suggest keeping your head cool in every situation to avoid unwanted problems in life.

### Sagittarius

Dear Sagittarius, as the Moon is in Taurus today, you'll have a variety of contradictory feelings today. Avoid mood swings and make an effort to be upbeat the entire day. Try anything you like to do, whether it's reading, dancing, singing to music, or simply catching up with old friends. The Astrology Astrologers inform you of the outside physical reflections of your physical expressions.

### Capricorn

Dear Capricorn, as the Moon enters Taurus today, you may need to practice exerting yourself in a variety of challenging situations. You may have a propensity to be a little passive or aggressive at times, but today you should focus on learning how to be forceful instead. According to Astrology astrologers, this strategy, when combined with a good dose of diplomacy, may get you a long way in challenging situations.

### Aquarius

Dear Aquarius, the Moon is more potent today in Taurus and might bring more vigour and enthusiasm to you. You might feel more eager to gather new things in life and go beyond the boundaries to achieve the best results. But be sure to create a good balance between your work and thoughts as well as your work and life. Be rational in your judgments to focus on your goal.

### Pisces

The presence of the Moon in Taurus may influence your imaginative and artistic nature today. Make a count of your ideas as they can be fruitful for the future. Also, try to improve your imaginative skills as great work also needs imagination for its proper implementation. It will be a great day ahead and try to avoid minor problems to maintain your peace of mind.

## SCIENCE WATCH

### Does your body emit light?



The answer is 'yes' and this phenomenon, is known as ultraweak photon emission (UPE) or biophoton emission, but the glow is very meager to be visible. This light fades away once we take the last breath.

### First self funded space tourist



Dennis Tito was the first self funded space tourist on board the Russian spacecraft Soyuz TM- 3 on April 28 2001. At age 60, he paid a reported \$20 million spending over seven days in space.

### The old world map



Ptolemy created a world map that represented the "old World" based on his treatise Geographia (c. 150 CE). It was represented between latitudes of 60 degree N and 60 degree S.

Based on the article "Awaken Your Creativity", here are the key strategies for developing and re-energizing your creative thinking:

#### 1. Prepare for New Ideas

To develop creative thinking, it is essential to keep your mind active and fresh.

**Experiment and Fail:** It is normal to experiment, fail, and try again.

**Preparation Phase:** Spend time thinking and preparing before implementing a new idea to reduce mistakes and ensure more effective results.

#### 2. Change When Stuck

When you hit a creative block, you can try adjusting your approach rather than forcing it.

**Creative Prompts:** Try using four creative prompts to spark new thoughts.

**Keep Updating:** Even when things are going well, keep updating yourself with new information and perspectives from time to time.

**Embrace Change:** If a major shift is needed, do not be afraid; embrace it with courage.

#### 3. Challenge the Norm

Don't settle for the most obvious path.

**Extreme Solutions:** Choose a problem and imagine the most unusual or extreme solution possible.



**Question Assumptions:** Question your usual thinking rules and consider how they can be challenged.

**Wordplay:** Try changing the words you use to describe a problem to generate unique ideas.

#### 4. Go Back to Old Ways

Sometimes the best solution is one you've already considered.

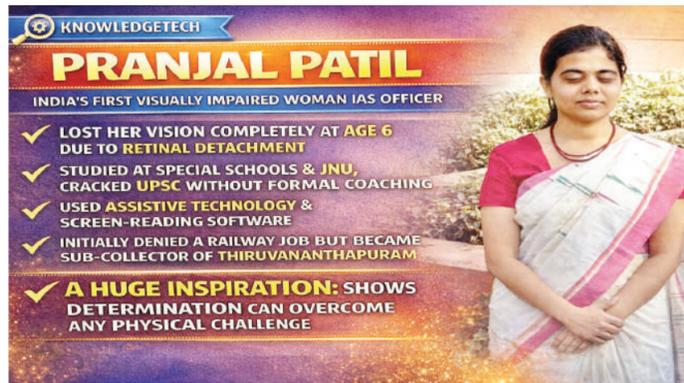
**List Past Ideas:** Compile a list of ideas that didn't work in the past, as circumstances may have changed.

**Discuss and Repurpose:** Discuss these with experienced professionals to see which old methods could be repurposed for new, effective solutions.

Pranjal Patil is India's first visually impaired woman IAS officer. She lost her eyesight at age six but cleared the UPSC civil services exam, securing AIR 773 in 2016 and improving to AIR 124 in 2017. Patil, from Maharashtra, took charge as the Sub-Collector of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in 2019.

Born in Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra, she lost her vision completely at the age of six due to retinal detachment.

She attended Kamla Mehta Dadar School for the Blind, graduated from St. Xavier's College, and completed her post-



graduation and M.Phil from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). She cracked the UPSC exam without formal coaching, relying on assistive technology and screen-reading software.

After initially being denied a railway job due to her vision, she persevered,

cleared the UPSC, and was appointed as Assistant Collector in Ernakulam (2018) before becoming Sub-Collector in Thiruvananthapuram (2019).

She serves as a huge inspiration, demonstrating that determination can overcome any physical challenge.

## Ladybug

**COMMON NAME:** Ladybugs

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Coccinellidae

**TYPE:** Invertebrates

**DIET:** Omnivore

**AVERAGE LIFE SPAN IN THE WILD:** 2 to 3 years

**SIZE:** 0.3 to 0.4 inches

There are about 5,000 different species of ladybugs in the world. These much loved critters are also known as lady beetles or lady-bird beetles. They come in many different colours and patterns, but the most familiar in North America is the seven-spotted ladybug,

## ANIMAL KINGDOM



with its shiny, red-and-black body. In many cultures, ladybugs are considered good luck.

One ladybug can eat up to 5,000 insects in its lifetime! Most ladybugs have oval, dome-shaped bodies with six short legs. Depending on the species, they can have spots, stripes, or no markings at all. Seven-spotted ladybugs

are red or orange with three spots on each side and one in the middle. They have a black head with white patches on either side. Ladybugs are happy in many different habitats, including grasslands, forests, cities, suburbs, and along rivers. They are most active from spring until fall. When the weather turns cold, they look for a warm, secluded place to hibernate, such as in rotting logs, under rocks, or even inside houses. These hibernating colonies can contain thousands of ladybugs. NASA even sent a few ladybugs into space with aphids to see how aphids would escape in zero gravity.

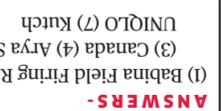
## TELL ME WHY?



R.D. Burman was nicknamed "Pancham" because as a child, he frequently cried or hummed in the fifth note—"Pa"—of the Indian musical scale (sa re ga ma pa), which is known as Pancham. Actor Ashok Kumar is credited with popularizing this nickname, noticing the young boy's musicality early on, with "Da" being an affectionate suffix for older brother in Bengali.



- 1) Where was the 'Abhedya Jwala' exercise conducted?
- 2) Dadasaheb Phalke-India, Cannes Film Festival-France and BAFTA Film Festival-?
- 3) Which country has the longest sea coastline in the world?
- 4) Satyarth-Prakash is the most important book of which society?
- 5) Which country has the world's third largest metro network?
- 6) Jasprit Bumrah became the brand ambassador of which brand?
- 7) Gujarat recently launched its first sounding rocket from which place?

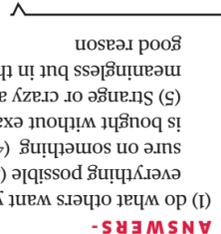


- Rama Quiz

## ENGLISH FUNDA

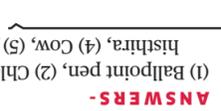
### Idioms and Phrases

- 1) Dance to someone's tune
- 2) Leave no stone unturned
- 3) Slack off
- 4) Pig in a poke
- 5) Method to my madness



## FIVE FAQ

- 1) In the 1930s \_\_\_\_\_ was called 'Biro' in Great Britain.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ pigment, found in the leaves of plants, was named in 1818.
- 3) In the Mahabharata, \_\_\_\_\_ cursed Kunti, and women in general, for not keeping a secret.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ has four compartments in its stomach.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ Mughal emperor had a brother named Daniyal.



### Across

- 1 First showing of a film (8)
- 6 Fool (3)
- 9 Abate (3,2)
- 10 Colonist (7)
- 11 Ridiculous pretence (7)
- 13 Synthetic fabric (5)
- 14 Whitening chemical (6)
- 15 Brigand (6)
- 18 Broadcasting medium (5)
- 20 Pseudonym (3,4)
- 21 First (7)
- 22 Subject, topic (5)
- 23 Express (3)
- 24 Extend (8)

### Down

- 2 Go over again (7)
- 3 Chart (3)
- 4 Festival in spring (6)
- 5 Divert (9)
- 6 Mixture of metals (5)
- 7 Fortified (12)
- 8 Bramble fruit (12)
- 12 Hermit (9)
- 16 Local language variation (7)
- 17 Handsome Greek god (6)
- 19 Make into a god (5)
- 22 Sudden abrupt pull (3)

## CROSSWORD -76



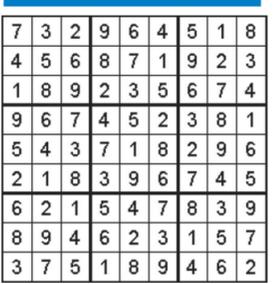
## CROSSWORD SOLUTION - 75



## SUDOKU - 76



## SUDOKU SOLUTION - 75



## DAILY WORD SEARCH

- Aida
- Almira
- Carmen
- Don Giovanni
- Elektra
- Ernani
- Faust
- Fidelio
- Figaro
- La Boheme
- Lulu
- Manon
- Martha
- Mignon
- Nabucco
- Norma
- Orfeo
- Otello
- Parsifal
- Rienz
- Salome
- Thais
- Tosca
- Turandot
- Wozzeck



# Business



"Coal gasification key to India's energy security."

**G Kishan Reddy**  
Union Minister  
for coal and mines

## UK confers Knighthood insignia on Chandrasekaran



Chairman of the Tata Group Natarajan Chandrasekaran, third right, with British High Commissioner to India Lindy Cameron, third left, and others, poses after receiving the insignia of Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE), in New Delhi.

## No proposal for complete loan waiver for farmers: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tells Parliament no proposal for full farm loan waiver, highlights KCC loans, PM-KISAN benefits, and continued disability pension tax exemption provisions.

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** There is no proposal of a complete loan waiver for farmers under consideration with the central government, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament on Monday. However, she said, the government has taken several measures to strengthen the economic conditions of the farmers, including timely and adequate credit through Kisan Credit Card

(KCC), wherein crop loan up to Rs 3 lakh is provided at subsidised interest rates under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), with additional incentives for timely repayment. Besides, the government has enhanced collateral free short-term agricultural loans, including loans for allied activities, from Rs 1.60 lakh to Rs 2.00 lakh and ensuring adequate flow of credit from the banking system to the priority sectors of

NUMBER

3

● Govt rules out complete farm loan waiver, focuses on credit access, subsidies, insurance, and income support measures.

the economy, including agriculture, under Priority Sector Lending guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), she said in

a reply to the Lok Sabha. Additionally, the government has launched crop insurance and direct cash transfer to landholding farmers through Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), etc. Replying to another question, Sitharaman said the exemption in respect of disability pension received by members of the armed forces, who are invalidated out of service on account of a disability attributable to, or aggravated by military

service, has existed since the framework under the Income-Tax Act, 1922, as provided vide Notification No. 878-F (Income Tax) dated March 21, 1922. When the Income-tax Act, 1961, came into force, she said, the exemption continued through the repeal and savings provisions. "With the enactment of the Income-tax Act, 2025, the earlier enactments pertaining to the Income-tax Act, 1922, and related savings provisions ceased to operate.

## India's strategic oil reserves about two-thirds full: Suresh

Press Trust Of India

**India's strategic oil reserves at about 64% capacity, covering nearly 9.5 days of supply disruptions.**

**NEW DELHI:** India's strategic oil reserves, designed to provide cover for about 9.5 days of supplies during disruptions or price shocks, are currently sitting at only two-thirds capacity, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Monday. India, the world's third-largest energy consumer and heavily dependent on imports for about 88 per cent of its crude oil needs, has built strategic underground storage facilities with a total capacity of 5.33 million tonnes across three locations -- Visakhapatnam



in Andhra Pradesh, and Mangaluru and Padur in Karnataka -- to store crude oil used for producing fuels such as petrol and diesel. "Quantity of the crude available in the caverns varies depending on market conditions," Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi said in a written reply in the Upper House. "Currently, ISPR has around 3.372 million tonnes of crude stock available, which is around 64 per cent of the total storage capacity."

## No plan to merge PSU banks: MoS Finance

Press Trust Of India

**Govt confirms no proposal for PSU bank mergers: past consolidations improved efficiency and expanded business growth significantly.**

**NEW DELHI:** There is no proposal under consideration before the government on the merger or consolidation of public sector banks (PSBs) at present, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday. Chaudhary, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, said the amalgamation of PSBs helped create stronger competitive banks with economies of scale and scope, while enabling the realisation of wide-ranging synergies. Leveraging



networks, better access to low-cost deposits, increased ability to support larger ticket-size lending, and competitive operations by virtue of greater financial capacity have provided the amalgamated banks a substantial rise in customer base, market reach and operational efficiency, he added. Synergy was also gained due to increased scope of operations and improvement in cost efficiency, with the adoption of best practices and digitisation, he said. The

| PSU BANK MERGERS |

FACTFILE

● EASE 9.0 reforms to boost AI adoption, risk management, customer service, and long-term banking capabilities.

amalgamation of PSBs, as envisaged, has contributed to improving operational efficiency and financial soundness of banks through streamlining of operations and reduction in costs, thereby resulting in increasing consolidated business of banks, the minister noted. Quoting Reserve Bank of India data, he said the consolidated total business of Bank of Baroda, in which Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank were amalgamated with effect from April 1, 2019, grew from Rs 16.1 lakh crore in March 2019 to Rs 27.0 lakh crore in March 2025.

| CREDAI-NAREDCO |

## West Asia conflict may push housing costs up

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Realtors' bodies CREDAI and NAREDCO on Monday said developers have started to feel the pinch of the ongoing conflict in West Asia due to the short supply of some building materials, and said construction costs could rise if tensions continue for a longer period. The two associations, together representing around 20,000 developers, also expressed

concern about possible delays in the completion of real estate projects due to likely shortages of construction materials. Both, CREDAI National President Shekhar Patel and NAREDCO President Parveen Jain said the input cost could rise if war persists for longer period, resulting in an increase in housing prices as well. "The Indian real estate sector remains largely stable despite the evolving geopolitical situation,



with no significant impact on construction activity as most key raw materials are manufactured

domestically," Patel said. At present, he pointed out that some temporary supply chain disruptions

are being observed due to global energy volatility. "Certain clusters, such as the marble and tile manufacturing hub in Morbi, Gujarat, are experiencing short-term challenges owing to fuel supply constraints and elevated logistics pressures. These, however, are transitional in nature. If the situation persists for a month or longer, it may begin to reflect in input costs, leading to a gradual impact on overall pricing," Patel said.

**BizBriefs**  
BEST OF THE REST

HOW THE MARKET'S BEHAVE TODAY?

**Sensex plunges 1,836 pts; Nifty down to 22,512 as war, crude oil prices continue to hit sentiments**



**MUMBAI:** Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty plummeted on Monday, in tandem with an extremely weak trend in global markets as the war in the Middle East showed no signs of a slowdown. Rising crude oil prices due to the war, which has entered its fourth week, relentless foreign fund outflows and weakness in the rupee have also made investors risk-averse. The 30-share BSE Sensex dived 1,836.57 points, or 2.46 per cent, to settle at 72,696.39. During the day, it plunged 1,974.52 points, or 2.64 per cent, to 72,558.44.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tanked 601.85 points, or 2.60 per cent, to end at 22,512.65. From the 30-Sensex firms, Titan tumbled the most by 6.24 per cent. Trent, UltraTech Cement, Bharat Electronics, InterGlobe Avia-

tion, Tata Steel, and HDFC Bank were also among the major laggards.

HCL Tech, Power Grid, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra were the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 0.97 per cent to USD 113.3 per barrel. "Markets witnessed a sharp sell-off on Monday, continuing the prevailing downtrend amid weak global cues and escalating geopolitical tensions. Investor sentiment remained extremely fragile amid escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia, which have once again pushed crude oil prices sharply higher," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. The spike in oil prices, along with continued foreign institutional investor outflows and weakness in the rupee, significantly dented risk appetite, Mishra said.

SINGLE WOMAN DIRECTOR

**No single woman director in 179 govt-owned cos, public sector enterprises**

**NEW DELHI:** As many as 179 government-owned companies, including public sector enterprises, do not have a single woman director as required under the companies law, the government said on Monday. Under the Companies Act, 2013, a certain class of companies are required to have at least one woman director. Every listed company and every other public company having paid-up share capital of Rs 100 crore or more or having a turnover of Rs 300 crore or more is required to appoint at least one woman director on its board. "Out of 708 government-owned companies, including Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), which are required to appoint at least one woman director on their boards, 529 companies have appointed at least one woman director and 179 companies have not appointed at least one woman director. "The non-compliance of minimum threshold limit of appointment of woman director are company specific and other administrative reasons," Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra in a written reply to the Lok Sabha on Monday.

ON WEAK DEMAND

**Gold tumbles Rs 9,050, silver declines by Rs 10,500/kg**



**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices slumped by Rs 9,050 to Rs 1.43 lakh per 10 grams while silver tumbled Rs 10,500 to Rs 2.30 lakh per kg in the national capital on Monday amid subdued domestic demand and weak global trends. According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity plunged by Rs 9,050, or nearly 6 per cent, to Rs 1,43,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of Rs 1,52,650 per 10 grams. Silver also declined sharply by Rs 10,500, or 4.36 per cent, to Rs 2,30,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had settled at Rs 2,40,500 per kg in the previous market session. "Precious metals extended last week's losses, with spot gold slipping to a four-month low in intraday trading on Monday," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

FOR INDIAN FARMING OPERATIONS

**Alliance launches AGRI-HAUL, India's first R-1 plus bias tractor tyre**



**MUMBAI:** Alliance, a leading global brand of agricultural and off-highway tyres, launched AGRI-HAUL, India's first-of-its-kind R-1 Plus bias tractor tyre. AGRI-HAUL's R-1 Plus tread depth, ensures longer life than standard tractor tyres, making it best-suited for Indian farming operations. Additionally, the tyre is designed to provide superior puncture protection and strong grip on the soil. "The Alliance AGRI-HAUL is a complete package, designed to perform in both agriculture and haulage applications," said Dnyutiman Chattopadhyay, Chief Technology Officer, Yokohama-ATG. "We can't wait for the Indian farmers to experience and reap the benefits of our latest offering." "We are excited to launch India's first R-1 Plus Bias tractor

tyre, perfected to suit the local farming conditions. India is a key market for us and we will continue to offer tailored solutions that solve the varied needs of Indian farming," said Anuj Thakar, Senior Vice President, India & SAARC. Key features of the Tyre include: R1 Plus design with deeper tread leading to longer tyre life, Special swing lug designed to offer superior traction during field operations, Stubble guard compound and higher under-tread providing exceptional puncture protection, Wider tread width offering a better footprint leading to higher load carrying capacity, Mud breaker design for better self-cleaning and efficient mud ejection and unique central tie bar ensuring rock solid stability and superior ride comfort.

# PMK row: SC backs HC; civil court to decide symbol dispute

Ramadoss seeks to bar Anbumani from using party name, flag, symbol.

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Asking PMK founder S Ramadoss to approach the civil court, the Supreme Court on Monday upheld a Madras High Court decision dismissing his two petitions for a direction to the EC to either let his faction use the 'mango' symbol during the upcoming assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry or freeze the symbol. Ramadoss has been fighting a legal battle to restrain his son Anbumani from using the party's name, flag or symbol. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said that the Election Commission (EC) cannot decide a dispute over the allocation of symbols of an unregistered political party, and if the application is filed by Tuesday for remedy, the civil court may adjudicate it expeditiously. "We do not find fault with the high court order. The high court appears to be correct that a dispute over the allocation of symbols of an unregistered political party cannot be decided by the Election Commission of India. "However, it does not mean that an

## PMK row: SC backs HC; civil court to decide symbol dispute



Ramadoss seeks to bar Anbumani from using party name, flag, symbol

agrieved party be left remedied. Thus, the party (PMK) is at liberty to move the civil court and if such an application is filed with the civil court by tomorrow, then let it be decided expeditiously," the bench ordered. The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) party has challenged the February 20 decision of the Madras High Court dismissing two petitions filed by Ramadoss seeking a direction to the poll panel to either let his faction use the 'mango' symbol during the ensuing Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry or freeze the symbol altogether so that the faction led by his son Anbumani too would not be able to use it. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the PMK, said that if the symbol is unfrozen by the Election Commission, then anyone can be allotted the 'mango' symbol of the party by a lottery system.

Senior advocates Meenakshi Arora, Mukta Gupta and Shyam Divan, appearing for different parties, said the issue can be decided by the civil court alone as the Election Commission cannot adjudicate the dispute over symbols concerning unregistered political parties.

## Anbumani was expelled by the Ramadoss-led party in Sept last year

On March 12, the high court granted an interim stay on a city civil court proceedings in the PMK leadership dispute case and held it was necessary that party general secretary (Vadivel Ramanan) be made a party to the proceedings. On December 26, last year, the infighting in the PMK intensified after party founder S Ramadoss issued a public

errory or freeze the symbol altogether so that the faction led by his son Anbumani too would not be able to use it. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the PMK, said that if the symbol is unfrozen by the Election Commission, then anyone can be allotted the 'mango' symbol of the party by a lottery system.

Senior advocates Meenakshi Arora, Mukta Gupta and Shyam Divan, appearing for different parties, said the issue can be decided by the civil court alone as the Election Commission cannot adjudicate the dispute over symbols concerning unregistered political parties.

### HIGHLIGHT

● On Mar 12, HC stayed civil court proceedings in PMK dispute

● Ramadoss cited Dec 4 Delhi HC verdict claiming party control.

notice through his lawyers warning his son Anbumani against using the party's

## Strong participation

**MUMBAI:** Delta Exchange, has recorded an average daily trading volume of \$6 Billion as of February 2026, highlighting the accelerating adoption of crypto derivatives across India. This growth is increasingly being driven by emerging trading hubs such as Raipur, where participation in financial markets is steadily expanding beyond traditional asset classes.

Raipur is seeing a gradual rise in retail investor participation, along with growing interest in equities and options trading and is now witnessing early traction in crypto derivatives. Events such as Traders Mela are helping accelerate this shift by bringing together traders, educators, and platforms and improving awareness of advanced trading instruments in the region.

Delta Exchange enables traders to access Crypto Futures and Options without owning crypto, as all contracts are settled in INR and only INR deposits are accepted, which are securely held with Indian banks. This structure is particularly relevant for emerging trader communities like Raipur, where participants are exploring new asset classes while prioritising transparency, ease of use and capital efficiency. Lower margin requirements further enhance accessibility, especially for retail traders entering the derivatives segment.

# Cong, BJP trade charges on petrol price hike

Press Trust Of India

BJP said the government should be praised for diversifying its energy sources.

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Monday accused the government of refraining from hiking petrol prices as it had the upcoming assembly polls in sight, a charge rejected by the BJP, which said the government should instead be praised for diversifying its energy sources. Initiating a debate on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Amar Singh also targeted the government, saying its corporate tax collection is much lower than its income tax collection. He said even though corporate taxes are lower, high net-worth individuals were investing abroad and not in India. Singh also alleged that the upcoming five assembly elections were preventing the central government from hiking petroleum prices. The global crude prices have gone up due to the conflict in the Middle East, driving up petrol and diesel prices in many countries. Hitting back, BJP's Nishikant Dubey said the government should be commended for not hiking prices of petrol and diesel but the Con-

FASTFACTS

● Corporate tax collection is lower than its income tax collection

● India's oil sources rose from 21 to 41 countries.

ernment doesn't follow the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Bill but asks states to have fiscal discipline. "The Centre has no locus standi if they don't follow the FRBM so that more money is passed to the states."

The House should also know about the status of India's Free Trade Agreements -- the trade volume has increased, but so has the trade deficit, he said.

gress was instead questioning it. Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement made in the House earlier in the day, Dubey said that earlier India was procuring oil from 21 countries, but the figure now stands at 41. The BJP leader said the government has worked for years to ensure energy security, a move which should be appreciated. He claimed that during previous Congress governments, the Benami Transactions Act and minimum alternate tax were deliberately not implemented to either appease the corporates or to browbeat them into submission. Participating in the debate, DMK MP Arun Nehru said the gov-

ernment doesn't follow the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Bill but asks states to have fiscal discipline. "The Centre has no locus standi if they don't follow the FRBM so that more money is passed to the states."

The House should also know about the status of India's Free Trade Agreements -- the trade volume has increased, but so has the trade deficit, he said.

## Zero landfill fires recorded in Delhi in 2025

Press Trust Of India

The survey said a detailed protocol is now in place for controlling fires at landfill sites.

**NEW DELHI:** The number of landfill fires in Delhi dropped to zero in 2025 from 159 in 2017, according to the Economic Survey 2025-26 tabled in the Delhi Assembly by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday. The survey said a detailed protocol is now in place for controlling fires at landfill sites, leading to a sharp decline in such incidents over the years, with increased monitoring and action against burning of waste materials and garbage in the open. To check such incidents, 622 dedicated patrolling teams were deployed during winter last year for the prevention of open burning of garbage. An anti-open burning drive was launched in coordination with stakeholder departments, it said. Open burning of biomass and solid waste remains a

significant contributor to air pollution in the national capital, particularly during winters, it said. Citing directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in the matter of air pollution in Delhi, the survey noted that a fine of Rs 5,000 is imposed on any person found burning garbage, leaves, plastic, rubber, self-moulding compound or similar material in the open.

"The person who is found actually burning such material and/or responsible for abetting such burning would be liable to pay compensation... and would be liable to pay a sum of Rs 5,000 to be paid instantaneously," it said, referring to the NGT's order dated April 28, 2015. The survey also highlighted progress in the remediation of legacy waste at Delhi's three dumpsites -- Bhalswa, Ghazipur and Okhla. The total legacy waste at the three landfill sites stood at 280 lakh metric tonnes in 2019, of which 204.94 lakh metric tonnes had been bio-mined till November 16, 2025, it said.

## India nominates Living Root Bridges for UNESCO inscription

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** India has nominated 'Jingkieng Jri/ Lyu Charai Cultural Landscape', the Living Root Bridges of Meghalaya that signify harmony between humans and nature, for inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage List for the 2026-27 cycle, the government informed Parliament on Monday. In a written response to a query in the Lok Sabha, Union Culture Minister Gajen-



dra Singh Shekhawat also said the country has sent a proposal to the World Heritage Centre, seeking a UNESCO tag for the 'Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath' in Uttar Pradesh for the 2025-26 cycle. The culture ministry was asked for details

about the number of UNESCO World Heritage sites in the country and whether the government has sent any proposals for the inclusion of new sites in the World Heritage List. "Yes, sir. The government has sent the following proposals to the World Heritage Centre for consideration for inclusion in the World Heritage List: Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath (2025-26), Jingkieng Jri/ Lyu Charai Cultural Landscape (2026-27)," he said. Locally known

as Jingkieng Jri, Living Root Bridges (LRB) are Ficus-based rural connectivity and livelihood solutions within the dense subtropical moist broadleaf forest eco-region of Meghalaya in the eastern extension of the Indian Peninsular Plateau, according to its description on UNESCO's website.

## PUBLIC NOTICE / NAME CHANGE

It is informed to the general public that I, Pushplata, D/O Ram Singh, resident of Village - Binjhara, District - Korba, Chhattisgarh, Pin - 495445, have changed my old name Pushplata, D/O Ram Singh. In the future, I should be recognized by my new name, which is Pushplata Maravi, D/O Ram Singh, in all government and other documents.

**Pushplata Maravi**  
Village - Binjhara  
District - Korba, Chhattisgarh

**ICICI Home Finance** Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India  
Branch Office: 1st floor, Indira Tower, A-26, Zone II, Main Road Vyapar Vihar Bilaspur (C.G.) - 495001  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

**E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date and Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
1.	Samina Begam (Borrower) Saiyad (Ishaque Ali (Co-Borrower) Loan No. NHBRSR00001297471	Ph No 34/37, Ward No 44, Chuchuhya Para Ward, Ganesh Nagar, Vikashkhanda, Near Old Water Tank, Mauja Torwa Kharsa No 927/4 Plot No 473 Bamhani Bazar	Rs. 24,37,800/- March 20, 2026	Rs. 13,60,800/- Rs. 1,36,080/-	02.02.2026 11:00 AM 03:00 PM	09.02.2026 02:00 PM 03:00 PM	08.02.2026 05:00 PM	Physical Possession Before

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link- <https://BidDeal.in>) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagors/ notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till April 08, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before April 08, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before April 08, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 9920807300.

The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit <https://www.icicifhc.com/>

Date: March 24, 2026  
Place: Bilaspur  
Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited",  
CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

## Puri Ratna Bhandar inventory

**PURI:** Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Monday said elaborate arrangements, including videography, photography and 3D mapping, have been made for the inventory of Puri Jagannath Temple's Ratna Bhandar, scheduled to begin on March 25 after a gap of 48 years. He said the use of technology is aimed at ensuring transparency and proper documentation of the temple's ornaments and other valuables.

**Chola** CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED  
Corporate office: Chola Crest, Super B, C54 & C55, 4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600 032

**Possession Notice ((Appendix IV) Under Rule 8 (1))**

WHEREAS the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rules 3 of the Security Interest [Enforcement] Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices dated mentioned below under Section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon you being the borrowers (names and addresses mentioned below) to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers mentioned herein below having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers mentioned herein below and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under sub-section (4) Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The borrowers mentioned here in above in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with said property and dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited for an amount as mentioned herein under and interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF BORROWER/S & LOAN/AC No.	DT. OF DEMAND NOTICE	O/S. AMT.	DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	DATE OF POSSESSION
Loan A/c Nos. LAP4LAS000086567 1. Mr/Mrs. Mulchand Sahu 2. Mr/Mrs. Nita Sahu Both at:- Mahant Para Dhangaoon G Dhangaoon, Mungeli C.G., Near Govt. H.S. School, Bilaspur (CGH), Chhattisgarh-495330 Also at:- New KH No 153/6 Old No 153/1 New No 153/6 Mauja Dhangaoon, Mahant Para, Ph No 34 Jarahaondhangaoon Mungeli Mungeli, Near To Govt School, Old No 153/1 New No 153/6, Chhattisgarh-495330	31-12-2025	Rs.2019686/- (Rupees Twenty lakhs Nineteen Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Six Only) as on 31-12-2025	Property Situated at New Kharsa No-153/6 Part, Area-0.20 Hectares/2180 Sq.Feet, Village-Dhangaoon (GO), PH-No-34, R.N.M.-Jarahaon, Circle & Tehsil & District-Mungeli, Grampanchayat-Dhangaoon (Gor) Boundaries-On The North-Dongors Balance Land, On The South-Farm of Daduram, On The East-Kaccha Rasta, On The West-Farm of Rekhuram	18-03-2026 (POSSESSION)

Place : Mungeli  
Date : 18-03-2026  
Sd/- Authorised Officer,  
Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

**JANA SMALL FINANCE BANK** (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)  
Registered Office: The Fairway, Ground & First Floor, Survey No.10/1, 11/2 & 12/2B, Off Doolur, Koramangla Inner Ring Road, Next to EGL Business Park, Challaghatta, Bangalore-560071. Branch Office: Malay Heights, 1st Floor, Above IDBI Bank, In front of RBI, Mahadevghat Road, Sundar Nagar, Raipur (C.G.)-492001.

**DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002.**

Whereas you the below mentioned Borrower/s, Co-Borrower/s, Guarantor/s and Mortgagors have availed loans from Jana Small Finance Bank Limited, by mortgaging your immovable properties. Consequent to default committed by you all, your loan account has been classified as Non Performing Asset, whereas Jana Small Finance Bank Limited being a secured creditor under the Act, and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with rule 2 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand notice calling upon the Borrower/s/ Co-Borrower/s/ Guarantor/s/ Mortgagors as mentioned in column No.2 to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with future interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served on some of them for various reasons.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Loan Account No. & Loan Amount	Details of the Security to be enforced	Date of NPA & Demand Notice date	Amount Due in Rs. / as on
1	1) Mr. Dharmendra Yadav, S/o. Pardeshi Yadav, 2) Mr. Jitendra Yadav, S/o. Pardeshi Yadav, 3) Ms. Chameli Yadav, D/o. Pardeshi Yadav, 4) Ms. Champa Yadav, D/o. Pardeshi Yadav, 5) Mr. Pardeshi Yadav, S/o. Lala Yadav	Loan Account No. 45099430000568 Loan Amount: Rs.5,10,546/-	Immovable Property: All that piece and parcel of Diverted land bearing part of Kharsa No.241/29, total admeasuring area of 1860 Sq.ft., together with construction thereon, situated at Mouza Sirgitti, Sheet No.31, P.H. No.23/41, R.N.M. Bilaspur, Block Bhila, Tehsil & District Bilaspur (C.G.). Bounded by: East by: Land of Sundaral Gadam, West by: Land of Arun Kumar Sen, North by: Rasta and South by: Land of Saraswati Sende.	03-03-2026 & 13-03-2026	Rs.5,07,888.47 (Rupees Five Lakh Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Eight and Forty Seven Paise Only) as on 10-03-2026

Notice is therefore given to the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor & Mortgagor as mentioned in Column No.2, calling upon them to make payment of the aggregate amount as shown in column No.6, against all the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower within 60 days of Publication of this notice as the said amount is found payable in relation to the respective loan account as on the date shown in Column No.6. It is made clear that if the aggregate amount together with future interest and other amounts which may become payable till the date of payment, is not paid, Jana Small Finance Bank Limited shall be constrained to take appropriate action for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described in Column No.4. Please note that this publication is made without prejudice to such rights and remedies as are available to Jana Small Finance Bank Limited against the Borrower/s/ Co-Borrower/s/ Guarantor/s/ Mortgagors of the said financials under the law, you are further requested to note that as per section 13(13) of the said act, you are restrained/prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the above security or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise of the secured asset without prior consent of Secured Creditor.

Date: 23.03.2026, Place: Bilaspur (C.G.)  
Sd/- Authorised Officer, For Jana Small Finance Bank Limited



"Crisis is a chance to do better, not just to recover."

[ Anonymous ]

| OUR VIEW |

## India's Balancing Act Amid Middle East Conflict

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address in the Lok Sabha underscored the gravity of the escalating confrontation in West Asia involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. His words carried both urgency and reassurance, reflecting India's delicate position as a nation deeply tied to the region through energy dependence, trade routes, and the safety of its diaspora. Modi emphasized India's commitment to diplomatic engagement, urging restraint and dialogue to prevent further destabilization. The Prime Minister's concern was not abstract—it was rooted in the tangible risks to India's energy security, fertilizer imports, and essential commodities. With nearly one crore Indians living and working in the Middle East, the humanitarian dimension added weight to his appeal. The Cabinet Committee on Security's recent deliberations highlight the government's proactive stance. India is not merely reacting to global tremors; it is preparing contingency plans to safeguard supplies and shield its economy from shocks. This foresight is crucial, given how past conflicts—such as the Russia-Ukraine war—exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains and forced India to diversify its energy imports. Yet, the challenge is profound. India must balance its strategic partnerships with the United States and Israel while maintaining its long-standing ties with Iran and the wider Arab world. This balancing act is not new, but the stakes are higher than ever. The Prime Minister's speech signals India's intent to remain a voice of moderation, advocating peace while securing national interests. For citizens, the message is clear: India is alert, engaged, and prepared. But it also serves as a reminder of how interconnected our world has become. A conflict thousands of miles away can ripple into our fuel prices, food security, and the livelihoods of millions abroad. As Modi prepares to address the Rajya Sabha, the nation watches closely. The editorial takeaway is one of cautious optimism—India's leadership is aware of the risks, committed to diplomacy, and determined to protect both its people and its economy. In times of global turbulence, such clarity of purpose is not just reassuring; it is essential.

| GUEST VIEW |

## Dangerous Elevators, Deadly Negligence

Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College has once again come under scrutiny after a tragic incident at its trauma centre. A patient's father lost his life when he and his family were trapped inside a malfunctioning lift. Reports suggest he was fatally caught either between the lift doors or between the lift and the wall, following a sudden, uncontrolled movement of the elevator. This shocking accident underscores the urgent need for rigorous monitoring and foolproof upkeep of hospital lifts. Secure electrical connections, proper lubrication of parts, and consistent temperature control for wiring cannot be taken for granted. Periodic checks of door functionality and sensors are essential, as these mechanisms are critical to passenger safety. Depending on whether a lift is residential or commercial, monthly or quarterly servicing must be mandatory. Scrupulous adherence to annual maintenance contracts (AMCs), documentation, and timely audits should never be bypassed. Hospitals, in particular, must ensure that old and jaded elevators are replaced with modern, reliable systems. Traction lifts are more effective in larger buildings, and their adoption should be encouraged. The absence of trained lift operators adds to the risk, as most are neither conversant with proper functioning nor adequately trained. Safety cannot be compromised—especially in institutions meant to save lives.



Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

# Comment

## Why Bhagat Singh Loved Hindi: A Special Connection

When we hear the name of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, images of revolution, sacrifice, and strong love for the country come to mind. He was a great revolutionary, a skilled writer, and a deep thinker. Through his writing, he awakened the minds of common people.

He wrote in different languages, but he gave special importance to Hindi. Bhagat Singh's mother tongue was Punjabi. He was very good at Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit—he could read and write all of them correctly. Still, he chose Hindi to spread his ideas across the whole country.

His first important Hindi essay was probably "The Problem of Language and Script in Punjab." He wrote it in 1924 at the age of just 17. This essay was for a competition by the Punjab Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, and he won the first prize of 50 rupees. It was later published in "Hindi Sandesh" on February 28, 1933.

In this essay, Bhagat Singh deeply analyzed the language issues in Punjab. He felt sad that language was being given a religious color. He asked: "... It has been the misfortune of our province that language has been given a religious color here."

Bhagat Singh was born in 1907 in Punjab, where Punjabi and Urdu were dominant, but Hindi was also

common in print media and Hindu families. At that time, Arya Samaj and supporters of Sanatan Dharma were promoting Hindi. Bhagat Singh's family was connected to Arya Samaj—his grandfather, Sardar Arjun Singh, was close to Dayanand Saraswati. Many Sikhs were also linked to Arya Samaj. So, learning Hindi at home, school, and college was natural.

Dr. Chandrapal Singh, a history professor at PGDAV College, Delhi University, and author of the book "Bhagat Singh - Revisited," says that the tradition of Hindi was already strong in the family.

As Bhagat Singh became active in revolutionary work, he realized that writing in Hindi would help him reach ordinary people across India easily. After joining the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), he met revolutionaries from different parts of India, most of whom spoke Hindi. He had great respect for Chandrashekhar Azad and was very close to him.

Bhagat Singh mostly wrote about political, social, and revolutionary issues. At first, he wrote in Urdu and English, but later he turned to Hindi. He contributed to many Hindi newspapers and magazines like "Pratap," "Chand," "Kirti," and others.

To avoid arrest, he used fake names like "Balwant Singh," "Ranjit," and "Vid-

rohi." Because of this, his writings could not be collected properly, which was a big loss.

In 1925, Bhagat Singh went to Kanpur and worked at Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi's newspaper "Pratap." He lived near the press in Pilkhana and improved his Hindi writing there. Kanpur was a major center for Hindi, so staying there made his Hindi even stronger.

His early writings were mostly about other freedom fighters and their struggles. The magazine "Chand" brought out a special issue on martyrs, and Bhagat Singh contributed to it. He stressed values like freedom, equality, justice, and communal harmony.

Bhagat Singh's writings had a deep impact on India's freedom movement, especially on the youth. His passionate, clear, and logical articles inspired thousands to join the revolution. His simple but powerful style in Hindi increased the number of readers.

While at "Pratap," he also did reporting—for example, in 1926, he came to Delhi to cover the riots in Daryaganj. Most of his articles appeared in "Kirti," "Pratap," and "Chand," where he wrote openly about revolutionary ideas, political philosophy, and social issues.

In his early days, Bhagat Singh was deeply influenced by the idea of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the whole world is one family). He dreamed of the world becom-

ing one family with love and mutual respect. His article "Vishwa Prem" (Universal Love) was published in "Saptāhik Matwala." In it, he explained the Sanskrit phrase meaning "The whole world is one family." This was a core idea of Sanatan Dharma, which he accepted as universal love.

Through self-study, working with Hindi-speaking revolutionaries, and journalists, Bhagat Singh became a strong Hindi writer. He was not a traditional journalist, but his contribution to Hindi journalism was priceless. It gave a new direction to the freedom movement.

It is surprising that at such a young age—and while doing revolutionary and organizational work—he wrote so much. This was possible because of his hard work, strong commitment, and smart use of opportunities.

One important thing is that Bhagat Singh used Hindi for pamphlets and announcements to spread ideas. These were distributed in public places to encourage people to join the fight for freedom.

Even in court, he used Hindi because he believed Hindi was the language of the common people, and it helped him reach more people with his message. Bhagat Singh's pen still inspires us today. It shows that language is not just for talking—it can also be a weapon for revolution.



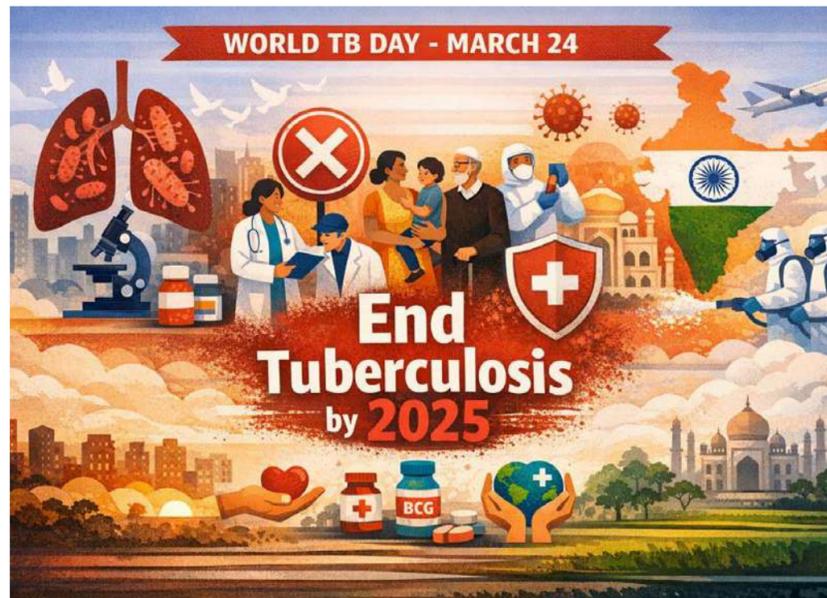
Vivek Shukla, Ex Information officer UAE Embassy, New Delhi

## The Future is TB-Free - World Tuberculosis Day

As TB represents a health problem both at the international and local levels, the world celebrates on the 24th of March every year the World TB Day.



Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit, Free lance journalist, writer and cartoonist



Every year, we recognize World TB Day on March 24. World TB day is a global health awareness program focusing on efforts to eliminate TB worldwide. As TB represents a health problem both at the international and local levels, the world celebrates on the 24th of March every year the World TB Day. On March 24 the bacillus that causes the disease of Tuberculosis was discovered. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB. TB is the world's deadliest infectious killer. Every second, a new person contracts TB worldwide and more than two million people annually die because of this disease. It is a day to

educate the public about the impact of TB around the world and to share successes in TB prevention and control and raise awareness of the challenges that hinder our progress toward the elimination of this devastating disease. As COVID-19 continues to have an impact on everyday life around the globe, the TB community should stay safe and healthy. Essential TB services should be sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that gains

made in the fight against TB are not reversed. WHO has developed an advocacy and communications package to support awareness building and drive action across all levels, in the lead up to and on World TB Day..

TB is spread from person to person through the air. When people with TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air. TB remains the world's deadliest infectious killer. Every day over 4000 people lose

their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. The Government of India has committed to eliminate the prevalence of TB by 2025, with commensurate resources to rapidly reduce TB incidence prevalence and mortality in India. B infection, also known as passive TB or TB infection is not contagious. It can become active TB, so treatment is vital for an individual with hidden TB and helps to reg-

ulate the spread of TB. It is estimated that about 2 billion people are hidden. A healthy immune system often fights with TB bacteria, but if one's immunity is low, then body is unable to increase effective immunity.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is implementing the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025). TB is an airborne disease that has a devastating effect on lungs causing fatigue, fever, and swollen lymph nodes. It can have an impact on other body parts too including kidneys, brain, and spine. BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin) is the vaccine recommended for babies against TB. Ending TB requires concerted action by all sectors to provide the right services, support and enabling safe environment in the right place, at the right time. Everyone has a role to play in ending TB - individuals, communities, businesses, governments, societies. On this World TB Day, we stand with our global health partners in our firm resolve to end TB. Let us prevent the spread of this disease through disseminating health awareness in the community and providing treatment for TB patients free of charge in India is needed.

### YOUR LETTERS

#### Forests - The Lungs of our Mother Earth

International Day of Forests, celebrated annually on March 21st to raise awareness about the importance of forests/trees for the survival of humanity and the planet. 2026 Theme: "Forests and Economies", focus on the economic benefits of sustainable forest management. According to the 'Biotic Pump Theory', forests manufacture rain droplets which promote agricultural activities, increase crop yields, and conserve natural water resources. Other benefits include: carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, water management, soil protection, livelihood and economic support, air purification etc.

Nabnit Panigrahi, Raygada, Odisha

#### Negligence Turns Pilgrimage Deadly

The fatal ropeway trolley crash at Khallari Mata Temple in Mahasamund is a grim reminder of neglected safety in pilgrimage infrastructure. A snapped cable led to one death and multiple injuries. Authorities must enforce rigorous inspections, especially during high-footfall events like Navratri. Ropeway systems must meet national safety benchmarks, and emergency protocols should be mandatory. Let this tragedy not be repeated—pilgrimage must never come at the cost of lives. Public trust depends on strict safety standards being upheld.

P Basanti, Bhilai

Send your articles (600-650 words) and letters (70-80 words) for this page on: [editorialcc07@gmail.com](mailto:editorialcc07@gmail.com) The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity.



No plan to restore 1-year BEd programme  
**Jayant Chaudhary**  
Union Minister

## '438 terror victim families given job letter'

Sinha said such cases left families in silence, facing loss and social neglect.

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that appointment letters have been issued to 438 terror-victim families since 2025, describing the figure not merely as a statistic but as "shattered worlds" that lost loved ones to violence. Addressing a gathering here, Sinha said each such case represented homes where "laughter was replaced by silence" and families that had to fend for themselves for years, often facing social neglect in addition to personal loss. Sinha on Monday handed over appointment letters to 37 next of kin of victims of terrorism and 29 next of kin of government employees who lost



J&K LG Manoj Sinha during the handing-over ceremony of appointment orders under SRO 43, in Jammu.

their lives in service. "So far, appointment letters have been given to 438 terror-victim families.

This is not merely a number—these are 438 shattered worlds," Sinha said while addressing the gathering. Paying tribute to the victims of terrorism, the Lieutenant Governor vowed the strongest action against the terror ecosystem and its supporters. "I pledge

### HIGHLIGHT

● LG vowed the strongest action against the terror ecosystem and its supporters.

● LG said justice means not just punishment, but healing and restoring dignity.

alone but also involves healing wounds and restoring dignity.

Sinha said that for decades, families affected by terrorism were sidelined while elements linked to terror networks allegedly received protection and benefits. Such circumstances, he said, represented a collapse of social morality and weakened law, trust and the foundations of a just society.

### Mishap

**UNNAO:** A female passenger died and at least 37 others were injured after a bus rammied into a divider and overturned on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district on Monday, police said. According to the police, the accident occurred near Nasirapur village in the Bangarmau area when the bus heading towards Lucknow and carrying about 50 passengers, went out of control and crashed into the divider. The impact was so severe that the bus's engine detached and fell onto the road, police said, adding that preliminary investigations suggest that the driver may have felt sleepy while driving the vehicle. Police said that Taravati, 55, a resident of the Goshainganj area in Lucknow, died on the spot. The injured were immediately taken to a community health centre, from where 14 critically injured individuals were referred to the District Hospital.

### Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

#### STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP

### UK Air Chief Marshal Smyth hails move for IAF to train Royal Air Force pilots



**NEW DELHI:** Britain's Air Chief Marshal Sir Harv Smyth on Monday hailed a new move that will facilitate the Indian Air Force train pilots of the UK's Royal Air Force as the two sides are looking at boosting overall defence ties in the face of emerging security challenges. The Chief of the Air Staff, presently on a three-day visit to India, held wide-ranging talks with his Indian counterpart Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and it is understood that the West Asia crisis figured in the discussion. Air Chief Marshal Smyth met Singh to discuss evolving security threats and ways to further strengthen the part-

nership between the two air forces, according to a British readout. Smyth is in India to boost military ties in the face of "emerging security challenges", it said without elaborating. In February this year, the UK and India signed an agreement under which the Indian Air Force will deploy three qualified flying instructors to Royal Air Force (RAF) Valley in the UK – the training base for British fast jet pilots. The two air chiefs will also travel to Air Force Station in Gwalior to understand IAF's operational procedures and best practices in countering new-age aerial threats.

### Blast outside home

**JAMMU:** A mysterious blast outside the house of a former sarpanch in Samba district early Monday shook the neighbourhood, officials said. The blast, whose origins are yet not known, occurred outside the residence of Jai Ram Sharma in Gawala Talab, some 10 km from the International Border in the Ghawal sector, they said. The blast damaged the house's gate, a portion of the boundary wall, and shattered window panes of several adjoining houses. No casualties were reported. A team of forensic experts took samples from the scene to ascertain the cause of the explosion, the officials said. Teams of the National Investigation Agency and the National Security Guard, accompanied by sniffer dogs, also visited the blast site.

#### SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

## East Coast Railway sets new records in freight handling

Press Trust Of India

ECOR achieved loading target of 275 MT on 20th March 2026

**BHUBANESWAR:** East Coast Railway has achieved a significant milestone in freight performance by achieving the loading target of 275 Million Tonnes (MT) on 20th March 2026, 11 days ahead of schedule. This achievement reflects ECoR's consistent focus on operational efficiency and excellence in freight transportation.

ECoR has loaded 275.6 Million Tonnes of freight up to 20th March 2026, registering a growth of 10.4% over the corresponding period at



249.6 Million Tonnes. Further, East Coast Railway has surpassed 250 MT of unloading on 21st March 2026, significantly improving upon last year's unloading figure of 236.5 MT during the same period. With these achievements, ECoR has set a new benchmark in both loading and unloading

performance, reflecting its strong commitment towards enhancing freight operations and contributing to the overall growth of Indian Railways. This outstanding performance reflects East Coast Railway's pivotal role in strengthening the nation's freight economy and supporting industrial

### HIGHLIGHT

● Zone registered a growth of 10.4% over the corresponding period at 249.6 MT.

● ECoR has set a new benchmark in both loading and unloading performance.

growth in its hinterland. Continuous monitoring, innovative operational practices, and the dedicated efforts of railway employees have played a key role in achieving this milestone.

East Coast Railway continues to play a key role in supporting industries, ports and businesses by ensuring smooth and reliable transportation

#### ASSEMBLY ELECTION

### Gaurav Gogoi files nomination from Jorhat assembly seat

**JORHAT:** Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi filed his nomination papers from the Jorhat assembly seat on Monday, making his debut electoral foray in the state polls. The deputy leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha visited religious places of all communities before starting his rally from Jorhat stadium. It concluded at the district commissioner's office after around three hours, with a large number of people participating in the procession. The Jorhat MP also visited his family home in Nazir Ali area and offered prayers before the portrait of his father and former chief minister Tarun Gogoi. He will engage in a direct fight with veteran BJP politician and sitting MLA Hitendranath Goswami, who has represented the seat for five terms -- thrice consecutively since 1991 as an AGP candidate and twice since 2016 for the saffron party.

#### WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

### Prez appeals to work together to end tuberculosis for all

**NEW DELHI:** President Droupadi Murmu on Monday asked all stakeholders to work together with collective resolve to end tuberculosis once and for all. In a message, she said tuberculosis (TB) continues to pose a significant public health challenge, affecting millions of lives across the world.

However, TB Mukht Bharat Abhayan has made remarkable progress in expanding early diagnosis, ensuring free treatment, strengthening nutritional support and improving patient care, Murmu said on the eve of World Tuberculosis Day.

This progress underscores our shared determination and the strength of the national TB elimination programme, she said.

"I urge all stakeholders to work together with collective resolve to end tuberculosis once and for all," the President said.

#### ASSURANCE

## 'Serve fearlessly; govt assures family security'

**LUCKNOW:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday assured soldiers attending the 'Janata Darshan' programme that they should serve the nation without worry, as the government will take responsibility for the safety, dignity and well-being of their families.



According to an official statement, the chief minister said, "You should serve the nation without any worry. The government is responsible for the service, facilities, security and dignity of your families as well as the 25 crore people of the state. The government has been serious about this from day one."

Adityanath interacted with soldiers who attended the 'Janata Darshan', listened to their grievances and assured them that all issues would be resolved appropriately. He asked them to return home without worry, stating that the government will ensure proper redressal of their concerns. The programme also saw complaints from various districts related to policing, land disputes, financial assistance and transfers. The chief minister listened to each case individually, took applications and directed officials to ensure timely resolution within a fixed time-frame.

Regarding cases seeking financial assistance for medical treatment,

**कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता**  
**मिनीमाता बांगो बांध संभाग क्र. 03 माचाडोली (छ.ग.)**  
**निविदा निरस्तीकरण आदेश**  
आदेश क्र. 915/व.ले.लि./2025-26 माचाडोली, दिनांक 20/03/2026  
कार्यालय प्रमुख अभियंता, जल संसाधन विभाग, शिवनाथ मवन, सेक्टर-19, नार्थ ब्लॉक, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, रायपुर का पत्र क्र. 4264015/निविदा प्रकोष्ठ/2026/4273 (T.C.) नवा रायपुर, दिनांक 06.03.2026 के अनुपालन में इस कार्यालय की निविदा सूचना क्र. 12/व.ले.लि./2025-26 दिनांक 05.01.2026 सिस्टम नं. 183008 (प्रथम आमंत्रण) मिनीमाता बांगो बांध के मेसेनरी बांध से पी.एम.जी.एस.वाई. रोड चौक तक सी.सी. रोड एवं पक्की नाला का निर्माण कार्य की अनुमोदित राशि रु. 170.07 लाख कार्य के लिये आमंत्रित की गई निविदा में 03 निविदाकारों से ऑनलाईन प्राप्त दस्तावेज परीक्षणोपरांत प्रतिस्पर्धाओं में 01 निविदाकार योग्य पाया गया है।  
अतः एकल निविदाकार होने के कारण निविदायें निरस्त की जाती है।  
प्रकाशन जी.क्र. 252605833  
दिनांक 07.01.2026  
कार्यपालन अभियंता  
मिनीमाता बांगो बांध संभाग क्र. 03 माचाडोली (छ.ग.)  
G-252607331/1

**खान मंत्रालय**  
**MINISTRY OF MINES**  
**DESIGNATED OFFICER, MINISTRY OF MINES, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
GPOA-3 Netaji Nagar, New Delhi, 110023, 011-26773606  
"Invitation of Bids for Seventh Tranche for Grant of Mineral Concession of Critical and Strategic Minerals"  
In exercise of the power of auction conferred by Section 11(D) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to the Central Government to grant mineral concession for minerals specified in the Part D of the First Schedule and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 as amended from time to time notified thereunder, the Government of India has directed the Designated Officer, Ministry of Mines to undertake the auction of 19 blocks in Seventh Tranche of Auction of Critical and Strategic Minerals. The notice inviting tender (NIT) has been published on MSTC e-auction portal and on the Ministry of Mines website. The commencement of sale of tender document will begin on Monday, March 30, 2026. Tender document and other details can be accessed on (<https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlc/nl>).  
**CBC 26101/11/0009/2526**

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
**HDFC Bank Ltd.**  
Branch: Alaska Tower, Lodihipara Road, Shankar Nagar, Raipur  
Tel: 0771-4243149/240 CIN L65920MH1994PLC080618 Website: www.hdfcbank.com  
Whereas the Authorised Officer of HDFC Bank Limited (erstwhile HDFC Limited having amalgamated with HDFC Bank Limited by virtue of a Scheme of Amalgamation approved by Hon'ble NCLT-Mumbai vide order dated 17th March 2023) (HDFC), under the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("said Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) to pay the amounts mentioned against their respective names together with interest thereon at the applicable rates as mentioned in the said notices, within 60 days from the date of the said Notices, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc till the date of payment and / or realisation.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative (s)	Outstanding Dues*	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Description of Immovable Property (ies)/Secured Asset(s)
01.	Mr. Chakraborty Kunal H.No. 123/P. Parijat Mongra Juhu, Block B, Talpuri, Durg Talpuri Ward 63, Bhilai Nagar, Durg - C.G. Pin-491001 - India. Mr. Chakraborty Kunal Tidal Healthcare Private Limited, Ghatkopar-west, A-101, Ghatkopar Industrial Estate, Lbs Marg, Ghatkopar-west Mumbai-400086. Mrs. Chakraborty Tripti H.No. 123/P. Parijat Mongra Juhu Block B, Talpuri, Durg Talpuri Ward 63, Bhilai Nagar, Durg - Chhattisgarh, Pin-491001 - India.	₹ 4,77,291/- due as on 31-Aug-2024*	03-Oct-2024	18-MAR-2026 (Physical Possession)	Flat-123/O, Floor-3 Parijat Apartments, S.No., Twin City Talpuri Housing, Board Colony, Aamdri, Ruabandha; Bhilai C.G.
02.	Mr. Kumar Pankaj House/Bldg/Apr.288K, Village/Town/City Moh Bhatia, District- Baloda Bazar Po., Mohbhatha State Chhattisgarh, Mohbhatha - Baloda Bazar, C.G. - 493113. Mr. Kumar Pankaj Ms. Pankaj Panjariya, H.No. 288 K, Mohbhatha, Mohbhatha - Baloda Bazar - 493113. Mrs. Panjariya Bindu Kumari Alias Mrs. Sah Bindu Kumari, H. No. 288 K, Mohbhatha, Baloda Bazar, Chhattisgarh, Pin-493113.	₹ 15,30,550/- due as on 31-DEC-24*	31-JAN-2025	20-MAR-2026 (Physical Possession)	All that Piece and Parcel of Flat Admeasuring-499 Sq.Ft. Kh.No.-303/2, 303/10 Part, 303/115 at Mauza-Jangini, Flat No.- 508, 2BHK, Block -B, 5th Floor "Sai Villas & Apartments" P.H.N.-44/49, RIC-Ahiwara Teh. Dhamda & Dist. Durg Chhattisgarh & Bounded By North By - Open Sky South By -Flat-507, East By-Flat No. 506, West By -Open Sky.
03.	Mr. Dewangan Jagat Ram Jugnubai Colony, Santoshi Nagar, Raipur - 492001. Mr. Dewangan Jagat Ram Shyam Metallics And Energy Limited, Shyam Metallics & Energy Ltd, Vill. Pandoli, Lapanga, Sambalpur - 761016. Mrs. Dewangan Kamla Bai W/o. Jagat Ram Dewangan, Makaan No. 494/1, Ward No. 20, Neem Chowk, Dewangan Mohallakurud, Champa - Janjgir Champa - 495671.	₹ 23,07,161/- due as on 31-DEC-24*	05-FEB-2025	20-MAR-2026 (Physical Possession)	Diverted Residential Plot Along with Construction thereon Admeasuring 1000 Sq.ft. Kh.No.-15002/1, Part-Mauza-Kumhari, Plot No.-667, Avinash Twin City, P.H.N.-53 , RIC-Ahiwara Teh. - Damdha, Dist-Durg Chhattisgarh & Bounded By North By - Land No.-668 South By - Land No.-666 East By - Land No.-1227 West By -Road Colony.
04.	Mr. Rokkam Sridhar 558 Panchsheel Nagar East, Po. B.M.Y., Charoda, Ward 20, Bhilai Charoda Durg, Bhilai-493441. Mr. Rokkam Sridhar M/s. Sri Brothers Enterprises, 01 Village Sankra, Tehsil Dharsiwa, Post Sondra, Raipur 492001. Mrs. R Rajani 558 Panchsheel Nagar East, Po. B.M.Y., Charoda, Ward 20, Bhilai Charoda Durg, Bhilai-493441. Mrs. R Rajani M/s. Sri Brothers Enterprises, 01 Village Sankra, Tehsil Dharsiwa, Post Sondra, Raipur 492001.	₹ 9,23,756/- due as on 31-JAN-25*	25-FEB-2025	20-MAR-2026 (Physical Possession)	All that Piece and Parcel of Unit L-76, Admeasuring-690 Sq. Ft. Khata No.-323, Kh. No.-88/2 Part, Situated at Lotus City, P.H.N.-4, RIC-Bhilai-3, Gram-Parsada, Teh.-Palan & Dist. Durg Chhattisgarh & Bounded By-North By- Plot No. L-65, South By-Path, East By- Plot No. L-75, West By-Plot No. L-77.

\*With further interest as applicable, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and / or realisation. However, since the borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) mentioned hereinabove have failed to repay the amounts due, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) mentioned hereinabove in particular and to the public in general that the Authorised Officer of HDFC have taken possession of the immovable property (ies) / secured asset(s) described herein above in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned above. The borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) and Legal Representative(s) mentioned hereinabove in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the aforesaid Immovable Property(ies) / Secured Asset(s) and any dealings with the said Immovable Property (ies) / Secured Asset(s) will be subject to the mortgage of HDFC. Borrower(s)/ Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) attention is/are invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. Copies of the Panchama drawn and Inventory made are available with the undersigned, and the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) is/ are requested to collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.  
Place : DURG  
Date : 24-MAR- 2026  
Regd. Office: HDFC Bank House, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai - 400013  
For HDFC Bank Ltd. Sd/- Authorised Officer

"I don't blame any of them for making the kind of decisions they make in their career that I may or may not endorse, but I get it, I see what they are going through."

Karan Johar



# & Glitters

CLOSE UP

## Anupam Kher applauds Ranveer for stellar Dhurandhar performance

Anupam Kher praises Ranveer Singh for delivering a powerful Dhurandhar performance.

Central Chronicle News

Aditya Dhar's film continues to soar at the box office with strong buzz.

Veteran actor Anupam Kher has heaped praise on filmmaker Aditya Dhar's latest outing Dhurandhar: The Revenge, calling it far more than just a cinematic spectacle. In a heartfelt social media post, Kher described the film as "an experience" and "an emotion" that lingers long after the credits roll, striking a deeply personal chord with viewers. Fronted by Ranveer Singh, the high-octane sequel has already stormed the box office, crossing the 300 crore mark domestically within days of its release. The film boasts a powerful ensemble cast including R. Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, Sara Arjun, and Rakesh Bedi, and has been released in multiple languages, amplifying its pan-India appeal. Sharing a video on Instagram, Kher expressed that some films transcend words, and Dhurandhar is one such story meant to be felt rather than explained. He particularly applauded Sanjay Dutt's performance, calling it "brilliant," while also lauding the entire team for crafting a film that is "powerful, magical, and deeply human."



Anupam Kher praises Ranveer Singh in Dhurandhar 2.



Responding to the veteran's glowing review, Ranveer Singh shared an emotional note of gratitude, acknowledging Kher's influence on his journey and calling the appreciation deeply meaningful. Set against the volatile backdrop of Karachi's Lyari region, the film weaves a gripping

narrative around covert intelligence missions intertwined with real-life events such as the Kandahar hijack and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. The sequel further explores the rise of Singh's character, blending action with an introspective origin story.



SMALL SCREEN

## Alfia Jafry opines on challenging debut in "The Pyramid Scheme"

Central Chronicle News

Actor Alfia Jafry is set to make her OTT debut with the upcoming web series The Pyramid Scheme, a gripping drama exploring ambition, risk, and the consequences of chasing quick wealth. Produced by The Viral Fever, the series features a strong ensemble cast including Paramvir Cheema, Ranvir Shorey, and Shekhar Suman, offering Alfia a valuable learning experience alongside seasoned performers. The story follows Goldy, a young man whose pyramid marketing venture spirals out of control, impacting his relationships and future,

providing a tense backdrop for Alfia's debut. Fans are eager to see her performance and the energy she brings to the ensemble. The series promises intense drama, high stakes, and unexpected twists throughout. Speaking about her role, Alfia said, "Debuting with The Pyramid Scheme feels surreal. The moment I read the script, I knew I wanted to be part of it. It instantly resonated with me." She

### HIGHLIGHT

Alfia Jafry is set to shine in her first OTT project, The Pyramid Scheme.

Alfia Jafry opens up about her OTT debut



Alfia Jafry opens up about her OTT debut

reflected on working with experienced actors: "Sharing screen space with Ranvir sir and Shekhar sir has been incredible. Their discipline, craft, and energy on set are inspiring. I feel fortunate to start my digital journey with such amazing co-actors." Alfia added that the role challenged her creatively: "This role pushed me out of my comfort zone. It made me explore new layers as an actor, which I will always cherish." She is also excited to see how audiences react: "I hope people connect with my character and the story as much as I did while shooting it."

## CineBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

Web Series

### Mallika Sherawat joins cast Of The Traitors India 2

Actor Mallika Sherawat has officially joined The Traitors India Season 2, hosted by Karan Johar, as filming begins in Jaisalmer. The official contestant list is yet to be revealed, but Mallika's involvement had been widely speculated for weeks. Like the first season, Season 2 is being shot at Suryagarh Palace, a grand location that also hosted Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani's wedding in 2023. Known for its intense mind games and the quest to identify traitors, the series promises high drama. Mallika was last seen in Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video alongside Rajkumar Rao and Triptii Dimri.

Bollywood pairs

### Parineeti Chopra admits having crush on husband



Actress Parineeti Chopra recently admitted on social media that she has a crush on her latest co-actor her husband, Raghav Chadha. Sharing a photo of a vanity van with his name on the door, she captioned it, "Sometimes you can have a crush on your costar," delighting fans eager to see the couple on screen together. Parineeti has often praised Raghav publicly, including calling him her "hero" for raising menstrual hygiene issues in Parliament. Married in September 2023, the couple welcomed their son Neer in October, continuing to share glimpses of their personal and professional life with fans.



Fashion

### Ananya Panday reinvents corporate look with capri pants

Actress Ananya Panday recently showcased a fresh take on corporate fashion, blending classic tailoring with playful modernity. Styled by Priyanka Kapadia, Ananya paired a crisp white oversized shirt with a slim black tie, introducing menswear-inspired elements softened by fitted black leather capri pants. Classic black pointed heels elongated her frame, while minimal accessories a Rolex Datejust and delicate earrings added subtle luxury. Her feathery bangs and fresh, luminous makeup emphasized effortless beauty, keeping attention on the silhouette.

## Trending on Insta

@theshilpashetty

### Shilpa Shetty shows balance with tasty cheat indulgence

While Shilpa Shetty maintains a strict fitness regime, she indulged on Sunday, sharing a hilarious video enjoying her cheat day with some delicious samosas, proving balance is key to her lifestyle.



### Bloodhounds season 2 hits Netflix

Bloodhounds Season 2 is set to premiere on Netflix on April 3, 2026, returning with its intense action and gripping storytelling. The Korean drama follows boxers Gun-woo and Woo-jin as they face new dangers in the underworld.



### Shefali Shah remembers Delhi Crime journey

Actress Shefali Shah celebrated seven years of her acclaimed series Delhi Crime by sharing rare behind-the-scenes glimpses. She wrote she still "basks in its stardust," reflecting on the show's enduring impact and acclaim.



### Dr. Gargi's story continues in season two

Akansha Ranjan Kapoor reprises her role as Dr. Gargi in Gram Chikitsalay 2, exploring deeper emotional layers, vulnerabilities, and resilience, as the series highlights the challenges of rural healthcare and her personal journey on Amazon Prime Video.



### Star Plus announces Mahasangam special

Star Plus announces Deshmukh Mahasangam, a special crossover of Udne Ki Aasha and Mr. and Mrs. Parshuram, where Sachin-Sailee and Shivprasad-Shalini collide, sparking family tensions, conflicts, and emotional drama in an intense, engaging episode.



### Death threats after Snape casting

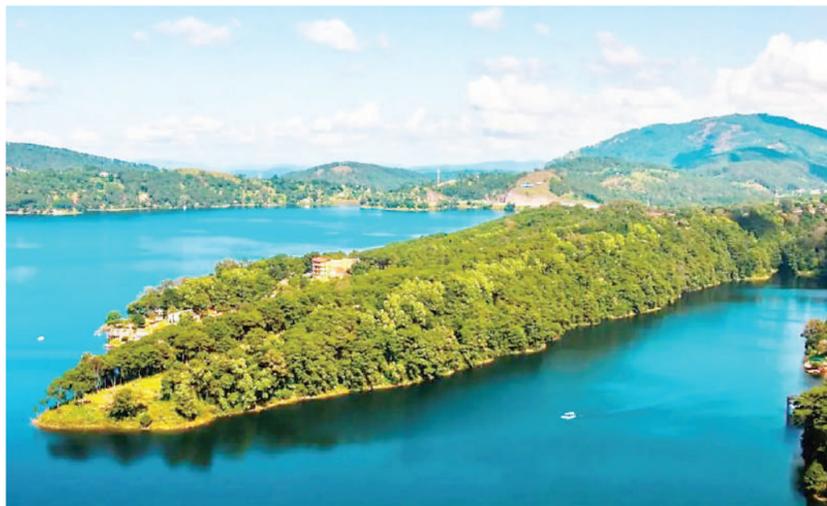
Actor Paapa Essiedu revealed he received death threats after being cast as Severus Snape in HBO's Harry Potter series. He says the backlash fuels his passion and inspires him to honor the character for young fans.



# Excursion

TRAVELOGUE

## Meghalaya the serene summer retreat



As summer temperatures soar across much of the country, Meghalaya offers a welcome escape into cool, lush landscapes. Known as the “Abode of Clouds,” this northeastern gem boasts fresh mountain air, gentle rains, and verdant hills, making it an ideal destination for travellers seeking relief from the sweltering heat of city life. The state’s charm lies not only in its natural beauty but also in the variety of experiences it offers. Shillong, often called



the “Scotland of the East,” is perfect for leisurely strolls along tree-lined avenues, exploring quaint cafes, and soaking in panoramic views from viewpoints like Shillong Peak. For nature lovers, the cascading waterfalls of Elephant Falls, Bishop Falls, and Sweet Falls offer picture-perfect spots and a soothing retreat into nature. Adventure enthusiasts can trek through dense forests, navigate living root bridges, or explore the crystal-clear caves of Mawmai and Liat Prah. Meghalaya’s lighter summer showers add a magical touch, turning meadows

### HIGHLIGHT

● Adventure, relaxation and natural beauty awaits in waterfalls, hills and forests.

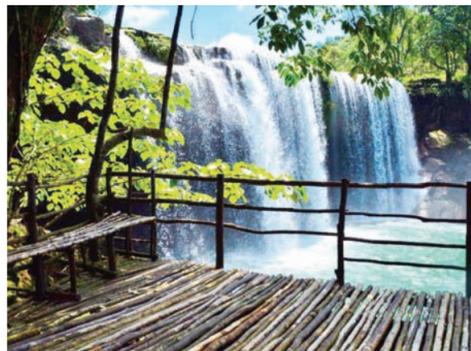
and valleys into vibrant, green landscapes, ideal for photography and outdoor activities. The state is also rich in culture and tradition. Local markets in Shillong and Cherrapunji brim with hand-woven textiles, bamboo crafts, and local cuisine, giving travellers a taste of authentic Meghalaya life. Sampling traditional dishes



like Jadoh and Tungrymbai adds a culinary dimension to the journey.

Whether you’re seeking tranquillity amidst rolling hills, adventure through misty forests, or simply a cool break from the heat, Meghalaya offers a rejuvenating summer getaway.

Escape city life and immerse yourself in Meghalaya’s serene summer landscapes.



Meghalaya is an ideal summer escape from extreme heat.

## WindowView

HIDDEN SUMMER ESCAPES IN INDIA



### Tawang

#### Arunachal Pradesh High-Altitude Escape

Tucked in Arunachal Pradesh, Tawang offers misty valleys, monasteries, and snow-

capped peaks, keeping summers cool. Its serene landscapes, alpine lakes, and gentle streams provide a peaceful retreat. Visitors can explore the Tawang Monastery, trek through surrounding hills, and witness vibrant local festivals. For Indian travellers seeking offbeat hill escapes, spiritual immersion, and calm amidst nature, Tawang offers a perfect combination of Himalayan beauty and cultural richness far from mainstream summer destinations.



### Ziro Valley

#### Arunachal’s Hidden Green Plateau

Ziro Valley, a verdant plateau in Arunachal Pradesh, is home to the Apatani tribe and surrounded by pine forests

and terraced fields. Summer brings cool breezes, misty mornings, and vibrant greenery. Visitors can trek through villages, witness tribal customs, and capture breathtaking landscapes. For Indian travellers seeking a peaceful, offbeat summer retreat, Ziro Valley offers cultural immersion alongside natural beauty. Less frequented by tourists, the valley provides serenity, photogenic views, and a perfect escape from the heat, combining adventure, tradition, and tranquillity.



### Chopta

#### Uttarakhand’s Mini Switzerland

Chopta, a quiet Uttarakhand hamlet, is surrounded by alpine meadows, dense forests, and snow-tipped peaks. Its cool summer

climate and wildflower trails make it ideal for trekking to Tungnath and Chandrashila. Birdwatching, nature walks, and photography are popular activities. Chopta remains far less crowded than nearby hill stations, offering peaceful mornings and scenic sunsets. Indian travellers seeking an offbeat, refreshing mountain escape can enjoy adventure and tranquillity here, blending Himalayan beauty, serene landscapes, and a calm environment away from urban chaos and mainstream tourist spots.



### Majuli

#### Assam River Island Cool Escape

Majuli, the world’s largest river island on the Brahmaputra, is a tranquil summer haven in Assam.

Surrounded by water, wetlands, and greenery, it hosts traditional Vaishnavite satras, tribal villages, and artisanal crafts. Indian travellers can enjoy riverside walks, cultural immersion, and photography of lush landscapes. Summer temperatures remain mild, making it a perfect break from city heat. Majuli’s slow-paced lifestyle, vibrant festivals, and serene surroundings make it an offbeat destination for nature lovers and culture enthusiasts seeking a unique, peaceful, and refreshing Indian summer escape.



### Tirthan Valley

#### Himachal’s Quiet Water Paradise

Tirthan Valley, tucked in Himachal Pradesh, is a serene, offbeat destination with the Tirthan

River flowing through pine forests and quaint villages. Cool summer weather provides the perfect backdrop for fishing, trekking, and camping. Remote homestays offer authentic experiences and tranquillity away from crowds. Indian travellers can explore waterfalls, nature trails, and local cuisine while enjoying peaceful mornings by the river. With refreshing air, untouched landscapes, and adventure opportunities, Tirthan Valley is an ideal hidden Himalayan escape for those seeking a cool, rejuvenating summer retreat.

| TRAIL |

## The future of travel is blending of productivity and leisure

Central Chronicle News

Hybrid work is reshaping the way people travel, and hotels are evolving in response. No longer just places to sleep, modern hotels are becoming lifestyle ecosystems where work, wellness, and leisure coexist seamlessly. The emergence of the “hybrid traveller” someone combining business trips with personal retreats has prompted the hospitality industry to rethink design, operations, and guest experiences. Today’s travellers expect more than basic accommodation. They seek high-speed connectivity, ergonomic workspaces, and flexible public areas that serve as coworking lounges by day and social hubs by evening. Wellness has moved beyond spas and gyms, integrating natural light, calming interiors, healthy local cuisine, and activities like yoga,



Hybrid work is transforming travel and hospitality.

### HIGHLIGHT

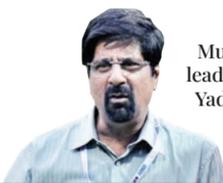
● Travel and work are no longer separate experiences for modern guests.

guided walks, and immersive cultural experiences. Hotels are now designed to accommodate productivity, relaxation, and leisure within the



same stay. Extended stays are increasingly popular, as travellers aim to balance work commitments with personal wellbeing. Flexible spaces allow informal meetings in lounges, productive work in guest rooms, and downtime in serene areas. This shift is influencing both metropolitan and smaller destinations, where consistent comfort, connectivity, and lifestyle amenities are expected across properties. Hotels are also experimenting with curated experiences to encourage longer and more fulfilling visits. Hotels that successfully blend work, wellness, and leisure are better positioned to meet modern expectations and build guest loyalty. From coworking areas and wellness retreats to locally inspired experiences, the focus has shifted from transactional stays to meaningful, immersive ones.

# Sports



Mumbai Indians must rethink leadership and give Suryakumar Yadav captaincy to revive team balance and results.

**Kris Srikanth**  
Former India Captain

## New-look Indian Archery squad targets strong Asia Cup start

India begins the Asia Cup season in Bangkok with a young squad, aiming to test bench strength, build momentum, and maintain dominance despite absence of star archers.

Press Trust Of India

Young Indian squad blends rising teenagers with experienced returnees to test bench strength early

**BANGKOK:** India will kick-start the new international archery season with a fresh-faced squad at the Asia Cup Stage 1, banking on a blend of exciting teenagers and returning veterans instead of established stars in the tournament beginning here on Tuesday.

The team will be without Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Abhishek Verma as the Indian think-tank wants to use the continental opener to test bench strength ahead of a packed season culminating in the Asian Games in Japan come September-October. The top Indian archers, however, will be back in action with the World Cup's first two legs in Puebla (Mexico) and Shanghai April onwards.

Despite the absence of its marquee archers, the overall champions would be firm favourites. In the last year's opening leg, India topped the tally with eight medals, including five gold. The team will look to main-



tain its dominance on the Asia Cup circuit which has been given a miss by the world heavyweights South Korea. In Korea's, India's main rivals would be China and Bangladesh.

In recurve men's section Australia's Ryan Tyack is the top-ranked archer with a ranking of world No.27, while the women's section has Russian-born neutral athlete Nuriniso Makhmudova (No. 45) as the highest ranked archer. The spotlight will firmly be on the formidable Indian men's compound unit, spear-

headed by world No.4 Rishabh Yadav alongside Asian Games gold medalist Prathamesh Jawkar and the seasoned Rajat Chauhan. They will look to defend the title. Last year, Kushal Dalal was the individual champion. He, along with Manav Jadhav and Ganesh Thirimuru, had won the team gold. Yadav, one of India's most consistent performers, will be keen to build on his historic World Championships gold in the team event last year.

The women's compound side will enter a rebuilding phase in the absence of Jyothi, with 20-year-old Chikitha Taniparthi leading the charge. Ranked 37th in the world, she returns to a venue where she won a team bronze last year and will be supported by comeback archers Tejal Salve and Swati Dudhwal, along with the experienced Raj Kaur. None from the women's compound side managed to win a medal in individual event in 2025 and Chikitha and Co. will look to make it count this time.

Eighteen-year-old Tejal had won a gold in the Singapore Asia Cup Leg 2 last year while 34-year-old Raj was a member of the 2019 world championship bronze medal-winning team. The 30-year-old Swati is also making a comeback, having won a gold medal at the world university championship in 2016 and a gold at the 2015 Asian Archery championship here. In recurve, the focus shifts to a young core trying to find its feet on the big stage.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

MIAMI OPEN

### Alcaraz loses to Sebastian Korda in the third round thriller



**MIAMI GARDENS (USA):** Carlos Alcaraz suffered a surprising third-round exit at the Miami Open, losing to Sebastian Korda in a closely contested three-set match on Sunday. Korda delivered an impressive performance to defeat the world No.1 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 in over two hours. Although Alcaraz staged a strong comeback in the second set, winning five straight games, Korda maintained composure and

sealed the match in the decider. This defeat marks a rare setback for Alcaraz, who had been in excellent form this season. Korda, ranked 36th, showcased belief and precision during crucial moments to outplay the top seed. Other notable results included wins for Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul, while Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina advanced comfortably in the women's draw. **PTI**

VINIUS LEADS VICTORY

### Vinicius scores twice to lead Real Madrid to a pulsating 3-2 win over Atletico



**BARCELONA:** Vinicius Júnior scored twice to guide Real Madrid to a thrilling 3-2 victory over Atletico Madrid, keeping their La Liga title hopes alive. After facing criticism earlier this season, Vinicius delivered a standout performance, equalizing through a penalty before

scoring a decisive goal in the second half. His resurgence has been key for Madrid, especially with stars like Kylian Mbappé and Jude Bellingham sidelined. Federico Valverde also contributed with a goal but was later sent off, putting Madrid under pressure in the closing stages. **PTI**

INTER SLIP AGAIN

### Inter's Serie A lead is down to 6 points after 1-1 draw at Fiorentina



**ROME:** Inter Milan's Serie A lead was cut to six points after a 1-1 draw against Fiorentina, extending their winless streak to four matches across competitions. Inter made a perfect start as Pio Esposito scored within the opening minute. However, Fiorentina fought back strongly, with Cher Ndour netting a late equalizer

to earn a crucial point for the hosts, who remain just above the relegation zone. AC Milan and Napoli continue to apply pressure after recent victories, tightening the title race with eight rounds remaining. Meanwhile, Como strengthened its hold on a Champions League spot with a dominant 5-0 win over Pisa. **PTI**

MESSI LEADS COMEBACK

### Messi magic inspires Inter Miami to stunning comeback win



**NEW YORK:** Lionel Messi starred as Inter Miami secured a thrilling 3-2 comeback victory over New York City FC at Yankee Stadium on Sunday. Miami took an early lead through Gonzalo Luján, but NYCFC responded with goals from Nicolás Fernández and Agustín Ojeda to go ahead. Messi then turned the match around, scoring a crucial free-kick

equalizer before setting up Micael dos Santos for the winning goal. The Argentine legend's brilliance proved decisive as Miami handed NYCFC its first loss of the season. The win lifts Inter Miami into a second-place tie in the Eastern Conference. Messi's influence continues to shine, guiding Miami with experience and match-winning contributions. **PTI**

## CA refuses to take more Test pitch control

**MELBOURNE:** Cricket Australia has ruled out taking greater control over Test pitch preparation, insisting that local curators are best placed to deliver good, unique surfaces despite criticism following the costly Ashes series earlier this year. Following the two-day finishes in the Perth and MCG Tests, which cost CA nearly AUD 15 million in revenue, the quality of the state pitches came under intense scrutiny. CA CEO Todd Green had also admitted that short Tests are "bad for business". But despite the losses, CA is reluctant to opt for a centralised model. "It's inconceivable that we could ever control much more than we do now," CA's head of operations Peter Roach was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press.

INDOOR ATHLETICS BEGINS |

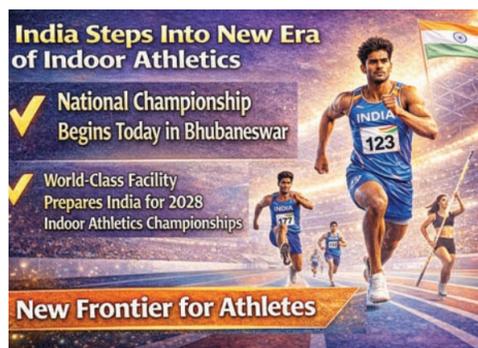
## New era of Indian indoor athletics begins in Bhubaneswar today

Press Trust Of India

India launches indoor athletics journey with first national championship in Bhubaneswar today.

**BHUBANESWAR:** India marks a historic moment as it begins its indoor athletics journey with the maiden national championship starting Tuesday in Bhubaneswar. The event signals a major step towards hosting the World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2028 at the same venue.

The two-day championship will be held at the newly built state-of-the-art indoor facility inside Kalinga Stadium, inaugurated in 2024. This marks India's first serious attempt to develop and



promote indoor track and field events, which have remained relatively unexplored due to the lack of proper infrastructure.

Indoor athletics differs significantly from outdoor formats. Events are conducted on a 200m track with banked curves inside a closed arena, ensuring stable weather conditions without wind

interference. Popular events include the 60m sprint and 60m hurdles, along with field events like long jump, high jump, pole vault, triple jump, and shot put. However, throwing events such as javelin and discus are excluded.

Around 300 athletes from across the country will participate, with strong contingents from

### FACTFILE

- World-class Bhubaneswar facility prepares India to host 2028 global indoor athletics championship successfully

- Young athletes gain exposure to unique indoor conditions with consistent track performance advantages

Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Notable outdoor national record holders like Animesh Kujur, Mohammed Afsal, and Praveen Chitravel will compete, adapting to indoor conditions. Big names like Neeraj Chopra and Avinash Sable will not feature as their events are not part of the indoor roster.

CANDIDATES CHESS |

## Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk steps in for Humpy

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk has replaced Koneru Humpy in the upcoming Candidates Tournament in Cyprus after the Indian Grandmaster withdrew citing safety concerns due to the host country's proximity to the ongoing West Asia conflict. The tournament, which will

As per tournament regulations, Humpy's spot was offered to the next eligible finisher, with Anna Muzychuk securing qualification.

FIDE  
World Chess Body

determine the challengers for the world champi-



onship crowns currently held by D Gukesh (Open) and Ju Wenjun (women), is scheduled to begin in Paphos on Saturday. Humpy, a two-time Women's World Rapid Champion, pulled out of the event despite assurances from organisers, citing concerns over personal safety. Earlier this month, a British air base in Cyprus was targeted in a drone

attack, heightening security fears in the region. In a statement, FIDE confirmed that Muzychuk had been invited as Humpy's replacement. "In accordance with the tournament regulations, her (Humpy's) place was offered to the next highest finisher in the Women's Events Series 2024-25 who has not yet secured qualification.

## Sports News

# India anchors cricket as global game expands: ICC CEO

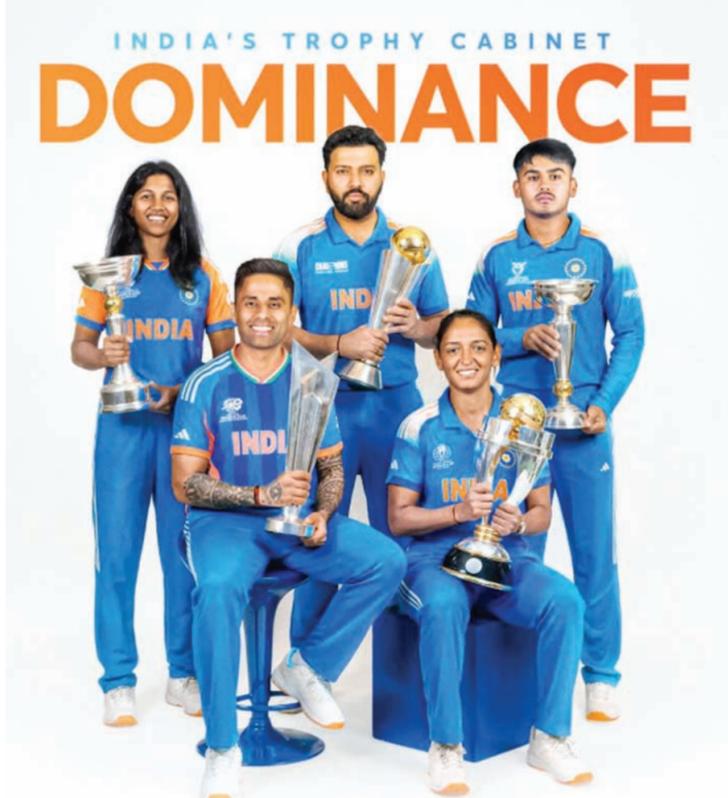
India continues to drive cricket's economic and cultural engine, yet the sport is increasingly spreading beyond its traditional strongholds into new, competitive, global territories.

Press Trust Of India

Associate nations played fearless cricket, challenging established teams and signalling a maturing global sport landscape.

**NEW DELHI:** India remains the undisputed anchor of world cricket, but the sport's reach is expanding far beyond its traditional centres, according to ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta. While India's massive fan base, financial strength, and deep-rooted passion continue to sustain the global cricketing ecosystem, recent international tournaments have demonstrated that the game is evolving into a truly global phenomenon.

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 served as a powerful example of this transformation. Featuring 20 teams, the tournament highlighted the growing competitiveness of Associate nations. Teams like Nepal, Italy, and the USA captured global attention with their fearless and spirited performances, often pushing established cricketing powers to their limits. These perfor-



mances were not merely surprising upsets but clear indicators of a sport that is maturing across regions.

Traditional teams also reaffirmed their capabilities. Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, often underestimated in recent years, made strong statements

by advancing to the Super 8 stage. Zimbabwe's remarkable victory over former champions Australia and Nepal's near-upset against England underlined the narrowing gap between established and emerging cricketing nations. Even Italy, despite limited

experience, impressed with resilience and determination.

Gupta emphasized that such developments signify more than isolated success stories. They reflect a broader shift in the sport's global structure, where talent and competitiveness are

no longer confined to a few dominant nations. Cricket, once regionally concentrated, is now witnessing a steady and irreversible expansion.

Another major driver of this growth is women's cricket. India's triumph in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 marked a significant milestone. Winning on home soil amplified the impact, unlocking a vast and influential audience. Gupta noted that when a market as large and passionate as India fully embraces women's cricket, it creates ripple effects worldwide, encouraging investment, participation, and visibility across countries.

Importantly, the ICC continues to focus on maintaining balance among cricket's three formats—Test matches, One Day Internationals, and T20 Internationals. Despite ongoing debates about the relevance of ODIs in a T20-dominated era, Gupta reiterated that each format serves a unique purpose. Test cricket remains the ultimate measure of skill, endurance, and strategy, while white-ball formats drive innovation, entertainment, and global outreach.

# I don't like it: Axar Patel on Impact Player rule in IPL

Press Trust Of India

Axar Patel criticises Impact Player rule, citing harm to all-rounders' development.

**NEW DELHI:** An all-rounder himself, Axar Patel on Monday became the latest Indian cricketer to criticise the Impact Player rule in the IPL with a blunt "I don't like it" response before insisting that it hurts the growth of his tribe.

Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya have spoken against the Impact Player rule, which allows teams to substitute anyone in the playing XI with one of the five listed substitutes at any point of the match. It was introduced in 2023 and will stay until at least 2027.

In 2024, Rohit had said that he was not a fan of the strategic rule saying it hampered the development of all-rounders in Indian cricket while the following season, Hardik said it had become too difficult to pick an all-rounder in the side unless he was equally good with both bat and ball.

Responding to a PTI query seeking his views on the rule, the Indian T20 vice-captain too weighed in on the subject ahead of his second season as Delhi



### FASTFACTS

- Impact Player rule reduces need for all-rounders, affecting team balance and opportunities.
- Axar urges fearless cricket approach, avoids comparisons with teams from different eras.

Capitals captain.

"I don't like this rule as I am all rounder myself (laughs). Earlier we used to pick all-rounder for this role (batting and bowling). Now team management goes with a particular batter or bowler, they say why do we need an all-rounder?"

"Being an all-rounder

myself I don't like it but at the same time rules are rules. We have to follow them. But personally I don't like it," said Axar.

Axar bowled only 204 balls in the last IPL season compared to 264 balls a season earlier. He said it was not because of the Impact Player rule, but a finger injury that had bothered him leading up to the IPL.

"I did not bowl a lot. It wasn't because of Impact Player. After the Champions Trophy, my spinning finger got cut. After that it got worse because of the seam of the ball. Later, it developed into a deep cut, I was not able to apply pressure and rotation on the ball.

| STARC CLEARANCE AWAITED |

# Delhi Capitals await Starc clearance before IPL

Press Trust Of India

Delhi Capitals await Starc's NOC, hopeful of timely arrival before IPL opener.

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Capitals are still awaiting a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from Cricket Australia for Mitchell Starc ahead of the IPL season, but remain optimistic about his availability for their opening match on April 1. The franchise management confirmed they are in constant communication with Cricket Australia, which is currently assessing the pacer's fitness and workload before granting clearance.

Head coach Hemang Badani stated that Starc has resumed bowling



recently, but the final decision rests with Cricket Australia. Cricket director Venugopal Rao echoed similar sentiments, expressing confidence that Starc will join once approval is granted.

Captain Axar Patel

emphasised that team selection would depend on overall balance rather than a like-for-like replacement if Starc is unavailable. He added that T Natarajan, who has recovered from injury, remains fully fit and ready.

# Hardik, Sukhjeet, Sanjay, Abhishek in fray for Hockey India Player of the Year award

**NEW DELHI:** Star Indian midfielder Hardik Singh, forwards Sukhjeet Singh and Sanjay, and defender Abhishek are in contention for the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Player-of-the-Year award for 2025.

In the women's category, Salima Tete, Navneet Kaur, Lalremsiami and Savita have been nominated for the top honour.

The HI awards ceremony, scheduled to be held here on Friday, will also throw spotlight on emerging talent through the Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player-of-the-Year (U-21 men) and Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player-of-the-Year (Under-21 women).

A total of 32 nominees across eight categories have made the final shortlist.

In addition, special

recognitions such as the President's Award for Outstanding Achievement and Jaman Lal Sharma Award for Invaluable Contribution will be presented.

Officials will also be honoured through awards for Umpire/Umpire Manager of the Year, Technical Official of the Year, and Best Member Unit.

The ceremony will also felicitate the gold medal-winning Indian men's team from the Asia Cup and the junior men's side who secured a bronze medal at the World Cup.

"As we enter a crucial year for Indian hockey, it is important to recognise the standout performers and contributions made over the past year," Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said.

# PSL faces mounting player, financial challenges

Press Trust Of India

**KARACHI:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is facing significant challenges ahead of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) II, as contract breaches and rising pay demands complicate preparations. Several overseas players have withdrawn despite agreements, choosing the more lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL), which overlaps with

the PSL schedule.

The expanded PSL, now featuring eight teams, begins in Lahore just days before the IPL, leading to direct competition for players. Financial disparity between the leagues remains a major hurdle, with PSL franchises unable to match IPL salaries.

Additionally, some players have demanded higher fees citing regional instability due to ongoing conflicts. While the PCB has discussed

imposing bans on players who withdraw, concerns remain that strict penalties could discourage future participation.

Despite setbacks, some international players and support staff have arrived in Pakistan. Meanwhile, the tournament will proceed without spectators, with matches limited to Lahore and Karachi amid security and financial considerations.

| ICC PLAYER OF THE MONTH AWARDS |

# Reddy, Farhan crowned ICC players of month

Central Chronicle News

Arundhati Reddy and Sahibzada Farhan earn ICC monthly awards for stellar performances.

**DUBAI:** India's medium pacer Arundhati Reddy and Pakistan's opener Sahibzada Farhan were honoured with the ICC Player of the Month awards for February following their exceptional performances in international cricket.

Reddy earned the accolade for her outstanding contributions in India's T20I series victory against Australia. Playing in challenging condi-



tions Down Under, she emerged as the leading wicket-taker in the three-match series, helping India secure a memorable 2-1 win. Her impressive figures of 4/22, 2/30, and 2/35 reflected her consistency and control, finishing the series with a remarkable average of

10.87 and an economy rate of 7.25.

Expressing her delight, Reddy described the recognition as a special honour, particularly because it came after contributing to a rare series win in Australia. She noted that defeating Australia at home is always a tough

### FASTFACTS

- Reddy leads India to historic T20I series win in Australia with bowling brilliance.
- Farhan breaks records with consistent runs and centuries in T20 World Cup.

challenge, making the achievement even more significant. The victory, she added, has boosted the team's confidence as they prepare for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England and Wales.

Meanwhile, Sahibzada Farhan was recognised for his record-breaking

performances in the men's T20 World Cup. The Pakistani opener delivered a sensational campaign, scoring 383 runs in seven matches at an outstanding average of 76.60 and an explosive strike rate of 160.25.

Farhan's achievements included surpassing Virat Kohli's record for most runs in a single T20 World Cup edition. He also became the first player to score two centuries in one tournament, reaching the milestone against Namibia and Sri Lanka. His consistency and aggressive approach made him one of the standout performers of the competition.

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# World



"The US and Iran have had, over the last two days, very good and productive conversations regarding a complete and total resolution of our hostilities in the Middle East."

Donald Trump  
US President

## Iranian-Americans rally in Los Angeles for regime change



Iranian-Americans chant and carry signs during a protest against the Iranian regime at the Federal Building in the Westwood section of Los Angeles on Sunday, March 22, 2026. AP/PTI

# Iran war poses major threat to global economy

The IEA reports an 11-million-barrel daily oil loss, exceeding the combined impact of the 1970s oil shocks.

Press Trust Of India

**WELLINGTON:** The head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said Monday that the global economy faces a "major, major threat" because of the Iran war. "No country will be immune to the effects of this crisis if it continues to go in this direction," Fatih Birol said at Australia's National Press Club in Canberra on Monday. The crisis in the Middle East, he said, has had a

worse impact on oil than the two oil shocks of the 1970s combined, and a worse effect on gas than the Russia-Ukraine war. Israel launched a new wave of attacks early Monday against Tehran. U.S. President Donald Trump also warned the United States will "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran doesn't fully open the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours. That prompted Iran to say it would respond to any



IEA ED Fatih Birol speaks at the National Press Club in Canberra, Australia.

such strike with attacks on U.S. and Israeli energy and infrastructure assets.

### HIGHLIGHT

● Conflict has severely damaged 40 energy assets across nine countries, doubling the gas market disruptions seen during the Russia-Ukraine war.

Trump is facing increasing pressure at home to secure the strait as oil prices soar. One major fear is that the war could knock out oil and gas production in

the Middle East for a long time, which would mean high prices could last a while and cause inflation to rip higher around the world. The U.S. stock market has a history of bouncing back relatively quickly from past conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, as long as oil prices don't stay too high for too long. Iran on Monday renewed strikes on its Gulf neighbors and threatened to start hitting their power plants.

### UK ANTISEMITIC ATTACK

## Jewish ambulance service vehicles set on fire in London

**LONDON:** Four ambulances belonging to a Jewish charity in London were set on fire early Monday morning in London, in what British police are investigating as a hate crime.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the "deeply shocking" antisemitic arson attack. "My thoughts are with the Jewish community who are waking up this morning to this horrific news," he said.

Officers were called to Golders Green, a London neighbourhood with a large Jewish population, after receiving reports of a fire, the Metropolitan Police force said.

Four ambulances belonging to Hatzola Northwest, a volunteer organisation that provides emergency medical response, were damaged, according to the London fire brigade.

### LANKA IRAN ENVOY

## Strait of Hormuz open to friendly nations: Iran's envoy to Sri Lanka

**COLOMBO:** The Strait of Hormuz remains open to friendly countries, the Iranian envoy to Sri Lanka said on Monday, stressing that Tehran is ready to supply oil or other essential goods to the island nation if the need arises. The conflict in West Asia, involving the US, Israel, and Iran, has led to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route through which 20 per cent of the world's energy is transported. Iran, which controls the Strait of Hormuz, has allowed very few ships to cross it since the conflict started on February 28. Addressing a press conference here, Iran's Ambassador to Sri Lanka Alireza Delkosh said that the key strait remains open to friendly country vessels to pass. "Sri Lanka is our friendly country and as I told you, Hormuz is not closed to our friends like Sri Lanka," he said.

## Earthquake of 4.1 magnitude hits Nepal's Bajhang

**KATHMANDU:** A earthquake of 4.1 magnitude hit the Nepal's Sudurpaschim province on Monday afternoon. There was no immediate reports of any loss of life or damage to property. According to the Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre, the tremor was recorded at 1:14 pm. The epicentre of the quake was located near the Rayal area of Bajhang. Tremors were also felt by residents in neighbouring districts, including Bajura and Baitadi. A 4-magnitude earthquake struck the Sudurpaschim province on March 17. The earthquake hit the Sitaula area of the Darchula district, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre. Nepal, which experiences multiple earthquakes in any given year, lies in one of the most active tectonic zones.

## Pilot, copilot killed as Air Canada flight hits fire truck

Press Trust Of India

An Air Canada regional jet struck a fire truck on a LaGuardia runway, killing both the pilot and copilot.

**NEW YORK:** Two pilots were killed after an Air Canada regional jet collided with a fire truck on a runway during landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport late Sunday night, officials said.

The collision crushed the nose of the aircraft, while 39 passengers and crew members were taken to area hospitals, some with serious injuries. Most have since been released from treatment, authorities said Monday.

Two Port Authority employees who were travelling in the fire truck



An Air Canada Jet sits on the runway at LaGuardia Airport, Monday, March 23, 2026, after colliding with a Port Authority aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicle in New York. (AP Photo)

also suffered injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening, said Kathryn Garcia, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport.

The two deceased individuals were the pilot and copilot of the aircraft. Both were based out of Canada, Garcia said during a news conference early Monday. The airport will remain

closed until at least 2 pm Monday to facilitate the investigation, which is being led by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The fire truck was travelling across the runway to respond to a separate incident aboard a United Airlines flight, whose pilot had reported "an issue with odour," said Garcia, who deferred additional questions about the

### FASTFACTS

● The truck was crossing the runway to attend to a separate United Airlines incident when the crash occurred.

● Audio recordings reveal an air traffic controller frantically ordered the truck to stop just before the impact.

sequence of events leading up to the crash to the NTSB.

There were 72 passengers and four crew members aboard the aircraft, a Jazz Aviation flight operating on behalf of Air Canada, according to a statement from the airline. The flight originated at Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, the major airport serving Montreal.

### NKOREA JAPAN SUMMIT

## NKorea rejects Japan summit over "Anachronistic" tactics

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**SEOUL:** The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Monday a summit between her brother and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi won't happen if Japan sticks to "its anachronistic" approach.

Kim Yo Jong's statement came after Takaichi told reporters last week that she had informed US President Donald Trump during

a summit in Washington that she had "a very strong desire" to meet Kim Jong Un. "But this is not the one that comes true, as wanted or decided by Japan," Kim Yo Jong said. "In order for the top leaders of the two countries to meet each other, Japan should first be determined to break with its anachronistic practice and habit." Kim Yo Jong, who is also a senior official, didn't explicitly say



what Japan's "anachronistic practice and habit" are. However, in 2024, she said in a statement that North Korea's acceptance of a reported offer for a meeting

and ignoring its past abductions of Japanese nationals. The meeting eventually didn't occur. In her latest statement carried by state media on Monday, Kim Yo Jong said, "I don't want to see the prime minister of Japan coming to Pyongyang." But she still described her rejection as "just my personal position," suggesting she was pressuring Japan to make concessions.

by one of Takaichi's predecessors would depend on Japan tolerating the North's nuclear weapons program

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