

# Central Chronicle

## Modi, US Prez Trump discuss Middle-East crisis

Accessible Hormuz strait 'essential for world': PM Modi.

**Press Trust Of India**  
**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to US President Donald Trump, focusing on the crisis in the Middle East, US envoy Sergio Gor said.  
 "President Donald Trump just spoke with Prime Minister Modi. They discussed the ongoing situation in the Middle East, including the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open," Gor said on social media.  
 This is the first phone call since the US-Israel war on of Hormuz remains open, secure, and accessible is essential for the world. We agreed to stay in touch for efforts towards peace and stability."  
 The Trump-Modi call came a day after the US President claimed "very good and productive conversations (with Tehran) regarding a total resolu-



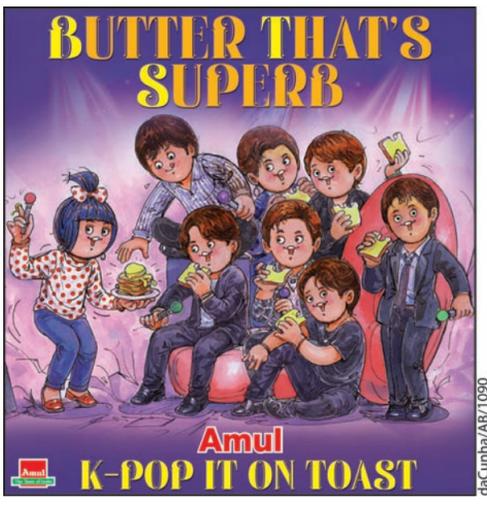
tion of hostilities in the Middle East". Trump said he had ordered the postponement of any planned American military strikes on Iranian power plants and/or energy infrastructure for five days to allow talks to proceed.  
 Trump's post raised hopes of a ceasefire, however temporary, to fighting that has raged in the Middle East since Feb 28

**Useful exchange of views.**  
**Narendra Modi**  
**Prime Minister**

and had a shock effect on the energy market, including driving benchmark Brent crude prices well past the US\$100 red line.  
 Hours earlier the Prime Minister told Parliament the war has triggered a "severe energy crisis". He said the war had disrupted supply of essential goods like fuel, gas, and fertilisers, all of which India sources, in vast quantities, from Middle East nations like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, and all of which have been hit by Iran strikes.

### Mild tremor

**RAJKOT:** A 3.2 magnitude tremor hit Rajkot district of Gujarat on Tuesday with no reports of casualties or damage to property, officials said.  
 The tremor was recorded at 5.41 pm with its epicenter located approximately 7 km south-southwest of Rajkot, at a shallow depth of 15 km, said the Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research. Local residents said the tremor was unnoticeable.



## Lifer for Kashmiri separatist Andrabi

**Press Trust Of India**  
**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court on Tuesday sentenced Kashmiri separatist and Dukhtar-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi to life imprisonment for conspiring to commit a



crime against the State. Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh also sentenced Andrabi's two associates, Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen, to 30 years' imprisonment in the case.

## Harish Rana, allowed passive euthanasia, passes away

**Press Trust Of India**  
**NEW DELHI:** Harish Rana, the first person in India to be allowed passive euthanasia, passed away on Tuesday at AIIMS-Delhi after more than 13 years in a coma, sources said.  
 The 31-year-old, who has been in a coma since 2013, was shifted from his Ghaziabad home to the palliative care unit at Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences



(AIIMS) on March 14. Three days before that, the Supreme Court, in a landmark judgment on March 11, allowed passive euthanasia for Harish, who was a B.Tech student at Panjab University who fell from a fourth-floor balcony in 2013 and suffered severe head injuries.

## Papa Rao surrenders

**KAWARDHA:** One of the last remaining senior Maoist commanders, Papa Rao, surrendered along with his team members on Tuesday, marking a significant milestone in Chhattisgarh's fight against Left Wing Extremism, officials said here.  
 The surrender underscores the waning fortunes of one of the country's longest-running insurgencies, as a combination of security pressure and rehabilitation efforts chips away at the movement's core, they said.

## No refund of tickets if cancelled within 8 hours of departure: Govt

**Press Trust Of India**  
**The new refund rule will take effect between April 1 and 15 this year.**  
**NEW DELHI:** There will be no refund for cancellation of train tickets up to eight hours before departure, instead of the existing norm of four hours, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said while announcing reforms in the sector on Tuesday.  
 The new refund rule will take effect between



April 1 and 15 this year. Other refund slabs have also been revised: a cancellation between 24 and eight hours will incur a 50 per cent deduction from the ticket cost. This is currently 12 to four hours. Similarly, the Rail-

ways will deduct 25 per cent of the ticket cost for cancellation between 72 and 24 hours before departure. A full refund -- except a flat cancellation charge per passenger -- will be given for cancellations made more than 72 hours before the train's departure. Under the existing policy, cancellations made between 48 and 12 hours incur a 25 per cent deduction of the ticket cost, while a full refund will be given for cancellations made more than 48 hours in advance.

### NEWSLINE

**NEW DELHI**  
**Pensionary benefits**  
 The Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday that women Short Service Commission (SSC) officers in the Army, Navy, and Air Force denied permanent commission due to a "systemic disparity" would be entitled to full pensionary benefits.  
 The top court delivered three separate verdicts challenging the denial of PC (permanent commission) based on policy changes in 2019 and previous Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) rulings in the Army, Air Force, and Navy. In the verdict on a plea by Yogendra Kumar Singh related to the Navy, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi granted PC to several groups of SSC Officers, primarily women, as a one-time measure.

## Centre calls all-party meet on West Asia today

**Press Trust Of India**  
**NEW DELHI:** The Central government has convened an all-party meeting on the West Asia crisis at 5 pm on Wednesday, sources said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to chair the meeting, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar expected to be present, they said. Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi told reporters at the Parliament House Complex



that he would not be able to attend the all-party meeting as he is scheduled to attend a programme in Kerala. The call for an all-party meeting comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address in Parliament on the West Asia situation.

## Significant decision

**NEW DELHI:** In a significant decision, the Supreme Court on Tuesday held that a Scheduled Caste community person converting to a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism loses the SC status from the moment of conversion regardless of birth. SC upheld an order of the AP HC, said that a person belonging to a Scheduled Caste community loses his Scheduled Caste status "immediately and completely" upon conversion to Christianity.

## I-PAC raids: Do ED officers lose rights when on duty?

**Press Trust Of India**  
**Top court: ED officers' pleas question citizenship status.**  
**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday quizzed the West Bengal government over its objection to the maintainability of the Enforcement Director-



ate's plea on the alleged obstruction by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a raid, asking

about the fundamental rights of ED officers. The top court remarked that some officers of the ED have filed petitions in their individual capacity seeking to know whether they cease to be citizens of India merely because they are officers of the agency.  
 The West Bengal government has questioned

the maintainability of the ED's plea which alleged obstruction by Banerjee and other state authorities during its January 8 search of the office of political consultancy firm Indian Political Action Committee's (I-PAC) in Kolkata. The search was in connection with a money-laundering probe.

## 'Pakistan ready to facilitate talks between US, Iran'

**Press Trust Of India**  
**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that Islamabad was "ready and honoured" to facilitate "meaningful and conclusive talks" between the US and Iran to end the ongoing conflict.  
 The announcement came following media reports about backdoor efforts by Pakistan along



**INDIA'S POLLUTION CRISIS**

- Cities like Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida
- Vehicle Emissions
- Industrial Smoke
- Crop Burning
- Construction Dust

**NUMBER**  
**130**  
 • 130 out of 143 countries exceeded the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline value.

While China is at the 20th position amongst the most polluted countries in the world, the USA is at the 120th spot and the UK is at the 110th spot.

**Press Trust Of India**  
**with Egypt and Turkiye to broker peace in West Asia. "Pakistan welcomes and fully supports ongoing efforts to pursue dialogue to end the war in the Middle East, in the interest of peace and stability in the region and beyond," Sharif said in**



**HIGHLIGHT**  
 • Pakistan backs dialogue to end Middle East war.  
 a post on X. "Subject to concurrence by the US and Iran, Pakistan stands ready and honoured to be the host to facilitate meaningful and conclusive talks for a comprehensive settlement of the ongoing conflict," he added.

**NEW DELHI**  
**Setback to Lulu**  
 In a setback to Lulu Prasad Yadav, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday refused to quash a CBI FIR in the land-for-jobs case involving him and his family, rejecting the RJD supremo's contention that it was unsustainable under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act that was introduced in 2018, whereas the allegations date back to 2004-2009.  
 Justice Ravinder Dubeja dismissed the petition by Yadav, a former railway minister and ex-chief minister of Bihar, that also sought quashing of the three chargesheets filed in 2022, 2023 and 2024, and the subsequent orders of cognisance in the matter.  
 "The petition, being devoid of merit, is dismissed," the judge said while pronouncing the verdict.



# दीनदयाल उपाध्याय

## भूमिहीन कृषि मजदूर कल्याण योजना

श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी  
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री

श्री विष्णु देव साय  
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़

25  
मार्च  
2026

4.95 लाख से अधिक हितग्राहियों के बैंक खाते में

**₹495.96 करोड़**  
आदान राशि वितरण कार्यक्रम

दोपहर  
12:00  
बजे



पं. चक्रपाणि शुक्ल हायर सेकेंडरी स्कूल मैदान, बलौदाबाजार  
जिला: बलौदाबाजार-भाटापारा (छ.ग.)



बजट 2026-27  
में ₹600 करोड़  
का प्रावधान



भूमिहीन कृषि मजदूरों  
को दी जा रही ₹10,000 प्रति वर्ष  
की आर्थिक सहायता



वर्ष 2025 में  
5.62 लाख से अधिक  
हितग्राहियों के खातों में  
₹562.11 करोड़ से  
अधिक की राशि  
अंतरित



22,028 बैगा-गुनिया  
परिवारों को भी मिल  
रहा लाभ



साथ सरकार में मेहनतकश हाथों को मिल रहा संबल, सुरक्षा और सम्मान

# Raipur News

## RMC issues final notice to property tax defaulters

All property taxes must be paid by March 31, 2026. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a mandatory 17% surcharge and strict legal actions, including property.

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The Raipur Municipal Corporation (RMC) has intensified its revenue collection drive, issuing a stern warning to major tax defaulters to settle their dues immediately. Under the direction of Municipal Commissioner Vishwadeep, the corporation has clarified that failure to pay will result in rigorous recovery actions, including the attachment of property and the sealing of premises. To facilitate smooth payments before the March 31, 2026 deadline, RMC has announced that revenue counters across all ten zones will remain operational even on public holidays. This includes Shri Ram Navami (March 26), Saturday (March 28), Sunday (March 29), and Mahavir Jayanti (March 31). Residents are encouraged to settle their property tax promptly to avoid a mandatory 17% surcharge that will be levied on all outstanding amounts after the closing date. For added convenience, citizens can make payments from their homes via the "More Raipur" mobile app or through the official online portal at <https://mcrairpur.in>. In Zone 7, teams under Commissioner Arun Dhruv are actively



contacting defaulters via calls and messages across all seven wards to encourage compliance. Meanwhile, in Zone 8, Commissioner Rajesh-

wari Patel has mobilized ward sanitation supervisors, providing them with lists of major defaulters to conduct door-to-door follow-ups.

### FASTFACTS

- To assist citizens, all 10 Municipal Zone offices and revenue counters will remain open on public holidays (March 26, 28, 29, and 31), allowing taxpayers to settle dues in person during the final week.

These officials have been instructed to inform residents that the corporation is prepared to initiate legal proceedings against those who do not clear their arrears before the end of the financial year.

## Crackdown on illegal plotting in Bhathagaon

Acting on the orders of Municipal Commissioner Vishwadeep and under the guidance of Zone 6 Commissioner Hitendra Yadav, the Town Investment Department conducted a decisive raid in the Kesari Bagicha area of Bhathagaon today. The operation targeted an illegal plotting attempt sprawling across approximately two acres of private land. A team of officials, including Executive Engineer Dinesh Sinha and Assistant Engineer Ashish Srivastava, reached the site with JCB machines to dismantle the infrastructure. The team successfully excavated and destroyed illegally constructed murrum roads, effectively blocking access to the site and halting any further unauthorized development by unidentified individuals. This crackdown follows an intensive three-day campaign conducted by the Zone 6 team in the Bhathagaon Bharrikhar area nearly three weeks ago. Officials stated that such actions will continue to curb the rise of unauthorized colonies and ensure adherence to urban planning norms.



## Election schedule for Bar Association executive body

**RAIPUR:** The Raipur Bar Association has officially released the detailed schedule for the election of its 18-member Executive Management Committee for the upcoming two-year term. Chief Election Officer Ramnarayan Vyas, along with Assistant Officers Deepak Diwan and Narendra Mishra, issued the notification outlining the key phases of the democratic process.

According to Media In-charge Amar Gurbakshani, the preliminary voter list has been published. Advocates whose names are missing can inspect the list and deposit their membership fees by March 28 to ensure inclusion in the final voter list, which will be released on March 30. Nomination forms will be distributed on April 1 and 2, with the submission deadline set for April 4. Following scrutiny on April 6 and the withdrawal window on April 7, the final list of candidates will be revealed.

The election, scheduled for April 15, includes specific reservations for female advocates, including one post each for Vice President, Joint Secretary, and Cultural & Sports Secretary, along with two Executive Member positions.

In a first for the association, candidates are now permitted to form panels to contest either for the top positions or across all 18 seats.

## Safety awareness, training prog in factories on March 25

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The Department of Industrial Health and Safety is organizing safety awareness programs in factories. In continuation of this initiative, a one-day awareness and training program—focused on efforts to eliminate the possibility of accidents in factories—is being organized by the Department of Industrial Health and Safety on Wednesday, March 25, at 10:00 AM at the Devkinandan Auditorium in Bilaspur. The program will be presided over by Sunil Jain, Commissioner of the Bilaspur Division, and will be graced by the distinguished presence of Mr. Sanjay Agrawal (Collector, Bilaspur), Rajnesh Singh (Senior Superintendent of Police), Prakash Kumar Sarve (Commissioner, Municipal Corporation), and Manish Srivastava (Director, IHS, Raipur). During

the awareness program, various sponge iron factories located within the state will deliver presentations highlighting positive strategies aimed at reducing potential accidents in established industrial units to zero. Additionally, information regarding various aspects of safety—including fire safety—will be disseminated through street plays (Nukkad Natak).

The central theme of this one-day event will be "Safety as the Highest Priority." Through various PowerPoint presentations, the audience will be sensitized and trained on measures to ensure a "zero-accident" environment within factories.

The program will witness the participation of factory management personnel and workers from sponge iron plants located not only in the Bilaspur district but also across various other districts of Chhattisgarh state.

## Vehicle owners must claim election duty payments by March 31

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The Raipur District Election Office has issued a final notice to owners of vehicles acquired for various elections held between 2023 and 2024. This includes school and university buses,

as well as smaller vehicles like Scorpios and Innovas used across constituencies including Tilda, Dharsiwa, Raipur, Arang, and Abhanpur. Despite the completion of duties, several owners have yet to collect their outstanding payments.

### NEWSLINE

#### MOOT COMPETITION

**HNLU team secures runner-up position in Hong Kong**



**RAIPUR:** Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU), Raipur, is immensely proud to announce that its student team has achieved an outstanding feat at the prestigious 23rd Willem C. Vis East International Commercial Arbitration Moot, held in Hong Kong. Competing against leading law institutions from across the globe, the HNLU team secured the position of 1st Runner-Up. This achievement marks a significant milestone in the university's moot history and further solidifies its growing reputation in the field of international arbitration. The members of the team were as follows: Saumya Jain (3rd Year); Gaurav Agarwal (2nd Year); Shriyuth Singh (3rd Year); Shaurya Jha (2nd Year); Vidhi Chaudhary (3rd Year); Aditya Maharwal (2nd Year).

In addition to the team's overall success, HNLU also received an "Honorable Mention" for its Claimant Memorandum, reflecting the team's robust research, excellent drafting skills.

### WEATHER

**Light rain, thunderstorms forecast for Chhattisgarh**

**RAIPUR:** The Meteorological Department has issued a weather alert for March 25, predicting light rain and isolated thunderstorms across parts of Chhattisgarh. While much of the state is expected to remain dry, specific regions—particularly within the Bastar division—are likely to experience rain, lightning, and gusty winds. The change in weather is being driven by multiple atmospheric systems including a cyclonic circulation over central Pakistan extending up to 1.5 km in altitude, a second cyclonic circulation over central Madhya Pradesh and a trough line stretching from central Madhya Pradesh through Vidarbha and Marathwada to North Central Maharashtra.

While temperatures are expected to rise across most of the state, the Bastar region will see little change in maximum temperatures due to the localized rainfall. Residents in the affected areas are advised to stay cautious of potential lightning strikes (vajrapat) and sudden wind activity.

## N.H. Goel World School showcases global academic excellence on ICSP 2026



Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** Demonstrating its commitment to holistic education and global exposure, N.H. Goel World School, Raipur, proudly announces the participation of its esteemed faculty member, Dr. Sunayana Shukla (School Counselor), in the prestigious 11th International Conference on Spirituality and Psychology (ICSP 2026) held in Bangkok, Thailand from 13th to 15th March 2026. The international conference witnessed participation from renowned scholars, psychologists, and educators from across the globe including the USA, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. It served as a platform for exchange

ing innovative ideas and practices integrating psychology with spirituality for overall human development. During the conference, key themes such as mindfulness, emotional intelligence, trauma healing, and holistic development were explored. Dr. Shukla actively engaged in knowledge-sharing sessions and gained valuable insights into global best practices that can significantly enhance student well-being and emotional resilience.

Speaking on the occasion, school authorities expressed pride in this achievement, stating that such international exposure strengthens the institution's vision of nurturing well-rounded individuals.

## NHRC seeks detailed report in two weeks

**RAIPUR:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has taken suo motu cognizance of a media report that three sanitation workers died after inhaling toxic gases while cleaning a septic tank at a private hospital in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh on 17th March 2026. Reportedly, the relatives of the victims alleged that neither the hospital management nor the private contractor provided them safety gear.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of human rights of the victims.

Therefore, it has issued notices to the District Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Raipur, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks. The report is also expected to include the status of the investigation.

## AIIMS-R intensifies TB fight with new 100-day campaign

Central Chronicle News

**Lt Gen (Dr.) Ashok Jindal, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd.), ED and CEO of AIIMS Raipur emphasized institution's unwavering commitment to achieving a TB-free India.**

**RAIPUR:** In a major step toward eliminating tuberculosis, the Department of Community Health Nursing, College of Nursing, AIIMS Raipur & Nodal Officer of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP), observed World TB Day today. The event marked the official launch of a focused and intensified "TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan" - 100 Days Campaign. The day's activities started at 8:30 am and was officially inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Lt Gen (Dr.) Ashok Jin-



dal, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd.), Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Raipur. During his address, Dr. Jindal emphasized the institution's unwavering commitment to achieving a TB-free India. Dr. Renu Rajguru MS AIIMS Raipur, Dr. Binu Mathew Professor cum Principal, faculty from Pulmonary Department and Nursing Faculty from College of Nursing were also present at the inauguration. Under the global theme "Yes! We can end TB," the program successfully bridged the gap between clinical services and community awareness through several high-im-

pact initiatives: 4th-year B.Sc (Hons.) Nursing students presented a Poster Exhibition featuring focused on ending TB stigma, new health policies, and the importance of treatment adherence. TB sensitisation sessions were taken by Dr. Ajoy Kumar Behera, Nodal Officer, NTEP Chhattisgarh & Professor Dept of Pulmonary Medicine, AIIMS Raipur; Dr. Ujjwala Gaikwad, Professor, Dept of Microbiology AIIMS Raipur and Dr. Ranganath T, Additional Professor, Dept of Pulmonary Medicine, AIIMS Raipur. More than 100 delegates attended the session. A competitive

### FASTFACTS

- Clinical teams screened 400 plus patients across the Screening OPD, General Medicine OPD, and Pulmonary OPDs, identifying presumptive cases for immediate follow-up and testing.

- More than 500 visitors at the Dome Registration Area were sensitized through printed pamphlets and health awareness talks by nursing students.

TB Quiz was held to reinforce clinical knowledge and NTEP protocols, with prizes awarded to the top performers.

The integration of awareness programs with direct clinical screening allowed for a seamless transition from education to diagnosis for symptomatic individuals.

### MAYOR WATER PLAN

## Mayor drives summer water strategy for Raipur

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** Mayor Meenal Choubey visited the Municipal Corporation Zone 4 office on Tuesday to chair a high-level review meeting aimed at ensuring an uninterrupted water supply throughout the summer months. Accompanied by department heads and ward councilors, the Mayor meticulously reviewed the current preparedness of the water wing and the Amrit Mis-



sion project. During the session, Mayor Choubey listened to specific concerns raised by local representatives regarding water scarcity and technical

hurdles in various neighborhoods. Taking immediate cognizance of these issues, she issued a directive for a comprehensive field inspection to take place tomorrow,

Identify ward-specific water issues and submit immediate technical reports with solutions to ensure a smooth supply for citizens this summer.

**Meenal Choubey**  
Mayor  
March 25. Three special-

## India's Neil Kelkar defeats Australia's Om Kumaran with a double bagel

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The Raipur International Stadium in Jora is currently buzzing with high-octane tennis as the main draw matches of the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors 2026 get underway.

The opening rounds of Singles Round of 32 saw a mix of dominant victories and hard-fought battles across the Under-18 categories. In the Boys' Category, India's Neil Kelkar delivered a flawless performance, defeating



Australia's Om Kumaran Chinnaaswamy with a double bagel, 6-0, 6-0. Mean-

while, Om Patel overcame Yash Kumar 6-3, 6-4 and Ranveer Singh moved past Heet Kandoriya with a steady 6-4, 6-4 win.

Meanwhile in the Girls' Category, Angel Patel secured a commanding 6-1, 6-1 win over Dhriti Sandra Bantupalli. International talent also made its mark, with Sahej Lakhata (USA) defeating Ritu Mandar Gyan 6-1, 6-0. In a thriller, Swasti Singh bounced back from a set down to defeat Insiyah Monwala 5-7, 6-4, 6-1.

# Bhilai



Elaborate arrangements are being made to prevent gridlock on national highway at Kumhari during the bridge repair works

Vijay Agrawal  
SSP, Durg

# Kharun River bridge shut for repairs from April 1

Kharun River bridge on NH at Kumhari will remain closed from April 1 to 15

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** Commuters traveling between Durg and Raipur are advised to plan their journeys in advance as the Kumhari Kharun River Bridge will be closed for critical repair work starting April 1 through April 15, 2026.

The decision follows a high-level coordination meeting led by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Durg, Vijay Agrawal, alongside officials from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the district administration. To mitigate



SSP discussing the matter with the officials of district administration.

traffic congestion, a multi-layered diversion plan has been activated. Heavy vehicles arriving from Rajnandgaon will be redirected via the Anjora Bypass, passing through Pulgaon, Anda, and Amleshwar to reach

Raipur. Medium and light vehicles will be diverted at Sirsa Gate Chowk through Sirsa Kala and Amlihidi. Additionally, traffic from Balod and Dhamdha/Ahiwara has been assigned dedicated rural corridors to bypass the construc-

tion site. SSP Agrawal has instructed the construction agency to ensure 24-hour monitoring and provide cranes at strategic points, including Sirsa Gate and Amleshwar, to immediately clear any

### HIGHLIGHT

● Durg Police and district administration have established specific alternate routes for heavy, medium, and light vehicles to prevent gridlock.

vehicle breakdowns. Signage and route maps will be installed at all major junctions to guide drivers. For those traveling from Raipur toward Durg, light vehicles are permitted to use the old bridge via the Kanji House-Parsada Mod route.

# Food Dept raids water and juice units amid rising heat



### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** With the onset of a harsh summer, the Durg Food and Drug Administration has launched a rigorous inspection drive targeting water and beverage factories. Following directives from Collector Abhijit Singh, teams led by Senior Food Safety Officer Richa Sharma conducted surprise raids across Jamul, Bhilai, and Kumhari to ensure public health standards. During the crackdown, officials seized 180 bags of water pouches from IB Solutions in Kum-

hari due to regulatory non-compliance. Inspections at other units, including Amar Beverages and Jyoti Industries, revealed poor sanitary conditions. Inspectors have now made head caps and hand gloves mandatory for all factory staff to prevent contamination. Samples of bottled water and litchi juice have been dispatched to the State Food Testing Laboratory. Authorities warned that strict legal action under the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 will follow once lab reports are finalized.

### NEWSLINE

#### LABOUR WELFARE

#### Tehsil-level events today

**BHILAI:** A district-wide rollout of the Deendayal Upadhyaya Bhoomiheen Krishi Mazdoor Kalyan Yojana is scheduled for March 25. Following a state-level launch at 12:00 PM, specialized programs will be held across various tehsils in Durg, including Dhamdha, Patan, Bhilai-3, Bori, and Ahiwara.

Additionally, a central event is slated for 11:00 AM at the Collectorate Auditorium. During these sessions, eligible landless agricultural labourers will be officially felicitated with benefit certificates. Collector Abhijit Singh has issued strict directives to SDMs, Tehsildars, and Janpad CEOs to ensure seamless coordination and maximum outreach for the identified beneficiaries.

### MIRACLE AT DIST HOSPITAL |

# 900 gram premature baby survives against all odds

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** Doctors at the Durg District Hospital have achieved remarkable success by saving a critical, premature baby who weighed just 900 grams at birth. The infant, born on February 4 to Anjora resident Mamta Jangde, suffered from severe Respiratory Distress Syndrome and required immediate mechanical ventilation. A specialist team, led by Paediatrician Dr Y Kiran



Kumar, administered surfactant therapy to open the baby's lungs and provided exhaustive treatment, including blood transfusions, IV antibiotics, and strict nutritional

management within the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU). After a grueling 50-day battle, the baby is now fully healthy and has doubled in weight to 1.8 kg.

# MLA recommends Ahata construction

**BHILAI:** Collector Abhijit Singh has granted administrative approval for development work in the Saja Assembly constituency. Utilizing powers under the Assembly Constituency Development Scheme, the funds were sanctioned following recommendations from MLA Ishwar Sahu. The Rs 6 lakh allocation is specifically designated for the construction of Ahata near the Sen Bhavan in Semariya village, located within the Dhamdha development block.

### GOLD THEFT |

# Woman held for stealing gold worth Rs 74 lakh from her own family home

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** In a significant breakthrough, Bhilai Bhatti Police arrested a 26-year-old woman for allegedly stealing extensive gold jewellery from her family residence. The incident, reported in January by the suspect's father, involved the theft of nearly 60 'tolas' of gold from their home in Sector 2. Investigations led to the detention of the daughter, M Shyamala. During interrogation, she confessed to the theft, admitting



that she had pawned a substantial portion of the ornaments at IIFL Finance in Power House, Bhilai, for personal financial gain. Following the recovery of an initial stash, police successfully retrieved an additional 443 grams

of gold from the finance company. To date, a total of 513 grams of gold jewellery, valued at approximately Rs 74 lakh, has been seized. Police are continuing investigations to identify any potential accomplices.

### CRIME

#### Bookie arrested

**BHILAI:** Police have arrested 34-year-old Kurukshetra Nayak for operating an illegal betting (Satta) ring in Sector-05. Acting on a specific tip-off, a police team conducted a raid near Cross Street-4, catching the suspect red-handed while he was documenting bets. Authorities seized Rs 8560 in cash, a Vivo mobile phone, and gambling stationary, with a total valuation of Rs 18,560. The accused has been charged under the Chhattisgarh Gambling Prohibition Act 2022 and relevant sections of the BNS. Following his arrest, Nayak was presented before the court for further legal proceedings.

# MGNREGA cattle shed transforms Anarkali's dairy business

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** Anarkali Yadav, a resident of Mahmara Gram Panchayat, has scripted a remarkable success story by leveraging the MGNREGA scheme to transition from struggling farmer to a thriving dairy entrepreneur. For years, Anarkali and her husband, Rameshwar, managed their livestock in makeshift kucha sheds, facing severe losses during monsoons



due to poor hygiene and animal illness. Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a permanent cattle shed was sanctioned with an investment of Rs 0.95 lakh. This struc-

tural shift provided a safe, weather-proof environment for her herd. Consequently, her livestock count has jumped from 11 to nearly 35 animals, leading to a significant surge in milk production.

### WATER CONSERVATION |

# Water Conservation fortnight concludes at VYT College, Durg

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** The Government VYT PG Autonomous College successfully hosted the closing ceremony of "Water Conservation Fortnight," aimed at raising awareness among students and society about the importance of saving water. Principal Dr AK Singh urged students to



adopt conservation practices in daily life, such as avoiding wastage and promoting rainwater harvesting. MSc Zoology stu-

dents staged a powerful street play highlighting water wastage, future scarcity, and simple conservation measures,

followed by a rally with slogans to inspire the public. A special lecture by Dr Prashant Srivastava emphasized the severity of water crises and practical solutions. Poster and slogan competition winners were honoured, and the event concluded with a vote of thanks, marking the successful completion of the fortnight.

### ARREST

#### Police catch laptop thief

**BHILAI:** Police have arrested 20-year-old Kunal Dhruve for breaking into a locked house and stealing a high-end laptop. The incident occurred on March 21, when the complainant, Rajendra Sharma, returned from coaching to find his rented room's lock broken and his ASUS TUF A15 laptop missing. Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted the suspect at the Civic Center car parking while he was attempting to sell the stolen goods. Authorities recovered the laptop and charger, valued at Rs 67,500. The accused, a resident of Ruabandha, confessed to the crime and has been sent to judicial remand.

# Special health camps for sanitation workers in Durg

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** Following Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao's announcement of statewide health camps for sanitation workers and Amrit Mitras from March 14, 2026, the Durg Municipal Corporation has scheduled special camps under the Chief Minister Slum Health Scheme. Commissioner Sumit Agrawal directed



that mobile medical units (MMU) will conduct camps until March 31 near

workers' sites for easy access. Expert doctors will provide consultation,

treatment, and free medicines, along with tests including blood, thyroid, BP, sugar, urine, uric acid, LDH, and cholesterol. All female employees of the corporation will undergo health checkups, with daily reports sent to SUDA. Camps will be held on March 26 at Dhamdha Naka SLRM Centre, March 27 at Battalion SLRM Centre, and March 30 at Borsi Hat Bazaar SLRM Centre.

# BMC commissioner inspects works in Zone 2-Vaishali Nagar

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** Bhilai Nagar Municipal Corporation Commissioner Rajeev Kumar Pandey conducted a detailed inspection in Zone 2 Vaishali Nagar, reviewing paving blocks, proposed road sites, and cleaning of ponds and canals. He directed officials to further



improve sanitation arrangements. At Vaishali Nagar College, he examined paving blocks installed earlier for beautification, noting damage due to age

and instructing prompt repairs. For smoother public movement, he inspected the proposed road construction site at Babadeep Singh Nagar.

### ARSON ARREST

#### Man sets home ablaze

**BHILAI:** The Jamul Police have arrested a 30-year-old man, Punit Dhritlahre, for setting his own house on fire after his mother refused to give him money for alcohol. The incident occurred on the night of March 22 in Kherdha village, resulting in property damage estimated at Rs 2.5 lakh. According to the victim, Meena Dhritlahre, her son ignited clothes using a coal stove in a fit of rage, causing the blaze to spread rapidly. While the fire brigade managed to control the flames, the household goods were completely destroyed.

### CENTRAL INDIA'S LARGEST RELIGIOUS EVENT |

# Preparations underway for the 41st Shri Ram Janmotsav

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** The Shri Ram Janmotsav Samiti is set to celebrate its 41st consecutive year of grand Ram Navami festivities in Bhilai on March 26. A hallmark of this year's celebration is the preparation of 'Mahaprasad' using grains collected from over one lakh families across the district through the "Ek Mutthi Daan - Shri Ram



Ke Naam" campaign. This initiative, now in its fourth year, saw unprecedented

### NUMBER

# 1150

● 1150 Temples to join Grand Shobhayatra

participation from citizens, including the elderly and differently-abled, reflecting deep-rooted communal devotion. Addressing a press con-

ference, Youth Wing President Manish Pandey highlighted that the event has evolved into Central India's largest socio-religious gathering. The celebration will feature massive processions (Shobha Yatras) originating from over 1150 temples and 12 distinct blocks, including prominent ones like the Baba Bholenath and Maa Bamleshwari yatras. These processions, accom-

panied by vibrant tableaux (Jhankis), will converge at the Ramlila Maidan in Power House.

The event will be graced by spiritual leader Bal Yogeshwar Ram Balakdas Mahatyagi and high-profile guests including Chhattisgarh Education Minister Gajendra Yadav, Minister Guru Kushwant Sahab, and Samiti patron Prem Prakash Pandey.

# Community toilets upgraded under Swachhta Shringar Scheme

### Central Chronicle News

**BHILAI:** To provide citizens with cleaner and better facilities, the Durg Municipal Corporation is accelerating maintenance of community toilets. A total of 40 toilets have been formally handed over to selfhelp

groups for operation and upkeep under Chhattisgarh's Swachhta Shringar Yojana. Extensive repairs are underway to improve old and dilapidated units, including replacement of doors, repair of broken seats, and restoration of damaged sewer tanks.

# Raipur



Bastar declared a 'No-Naxal Zone,' marking a major security milestone.

Devlal Thakur  
BJP Spokesperson

## Chhattisgarh nears 'Maoist-Free' status after key surrender

Over 2,100 Naxalites surrendered since January 2024, major surge in recent months.

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma has stated that Chhattisgarh can now be considered nearly free from the long-standing menace of Maoist violence, following the surrender of senior Maoist leader Paparao. He emphasized that with this development, the top leadership of the Maoist movement in the state has effectively been dismantled, marking a crucial turning point in the region's security landscape. Addressing the media, Sharma revealed that



Paparao surrendered along with 18 other Naxalites, including 10 men and 8 women. During the operation, security forces recovered a significant cache of weapons from the group, including eight AK-47 rifles, one SLR, and one INSAS rifle. Paparao alone carried a bounty

of Rs 25 lakh, underscoring his high rank and influence within the insurgent network.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that no Maoist of comparable stature remains active in the state, signaling a major success in Chhattisgarh's sustained counter-insurgency operations. He further noted that since January 2024, more than 2,100 Naxalites have surrendered and returned to the mainstream, with a sharp rise in such cases observed over the past three months.

Recent incidents

### FACTFILE

● Paparao's surrender seen as symbolic end of Maoist leadership in Chhattisgarh.

reinforce this positive trend. On March 11, 2026, a total of 108 Naxalites surrendered across Mahasamund and Bastar districts, collectively carrying a bounty of Rs 3.95 crore. Earlier, on March 1, 15 Naxalites, including a senior Odisha State Committee member, laid down their arms. In February, another key development was

the surrender of Commander Mallesh in Kanker district.

The state government attributes these successes to its progressive rehabilitation policy, which offers financial assistance, skill development programs, and security assurances to former insurgents. This approach has played a pivotal role in encouraging Maoists to abandon violence and reintegrate into society. Authorities believe that sustained efforts in this direction could soon make Chhattisgarh completely free from Maoist influence.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

#### KQ Battle 4.0 ignites academic spirit on World Kidney Day at MMI Narayana Hospital

**RAIPUR:** Marking the occasion of World Kidney Day, MMI Narayana Hospital hosted the grand "KQ Battle 4.0 - Inter-State Kidney Quiz Contest 2026," drawing enthusiastic participation from medical students across the country. The event aimed to deepen knowledge in Nephrology while fostering a culture of academic excellence and healthy competition among aspiring doctors. A total of 24 teams from leading medical institutions competed in the quiz, showcasing remarkable expertise in kidney-related diseases, advanced treatment protocols, and recent developments in medical research. The contest was conducted under the guidance of a distinguished panel of specialists, including Dr. Sunil Dharmani, Dr. Pradeep Sharma, and Dr. Ajay Mishra, along with other senior doctors. The judging panel comprised eminent physicians such as Dr. Devpriya Lakra, Dr. Parvez Kamal, and Dr. S.K. Goyal, who evaluated the



participants on accuracy, depth of knowledge, and clinical understanding. The competition saw AIIMS Raipur securing the first position through Dr. Yogapriya and Dr. Nihilan. The second place was claimed by participants from GMC Nagpur, while the third position went to the team from CIMS Bilaspur. Winners were felicitated with attractive prizes, adding to the excitement of the event. Organizers highlighted that such initiatives play a crucial role in promoting continuous learning and motivating young doctors to pursue specialized fields, ultimately contributing to improved healthcare outcomes.

### LITERARY MEET

#### Vijay Mishra honoured at Chhattisgarhi literary conference in Mahasamund

**RAIPUR:** The conference of the Provincial Chhattisgarhi Sahitya Samiti, which has been actively promoting Chhattisgarhi literature since 1981, concluded successfully in Mahasamund with enthusiastic participation from literary figures across the state. On the occasion, Vijay Mishra 'Amit' was conferred with the prestigious Sushil Yadu Samman for his contribution to Chhattisgarhi literary creation. During the conference, several other honours were also presented. The Dr. Nirupama Sharma Samman



was awarded to Suman Sharma Bajpai, while the Hemnath Yadu Samman went to Pokhan Das Manikpuri and the Shiv Kumar Yadu Samman to Jagannath Dasena.

## Convict escapes from hospital while in custody

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** In a major security lapse, a convict serving a sentence for attempted murder escaped from Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Memorial Hospital (Mekahara) after outwitting jail guards who had escorted him for medical treatment. The Convict has been identified as Saheb Kumar Tati. According to police sources, Tati, a native of Bihar, had been lodged



in Raipur Central Jail for the past three years following his conviction in an attempted murder case registered at Gobranawapara Police Station. He was taken to the hospital for treatment when he managed

to escape, reportedly still wearing handcuffs, after finding an opportunity to evade the guards. Station In-charge Mukesh Sharma confirmed that police have received information regarding the incident and a search operation has been launched to trace the absconding inmate. Officials are scanning nearby areas and reviewing security arrangements to track him down at the earliest.

## Staff shortage at AIIMS raised in RS

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The issue of shortage of doctors and staff at AIIMS Raipur was strongly raised in the Rajya Sabha by Congress MP Phulodevi Netam, who highlighted the hospital's alarming situation and sought immediate corrective measures. Raising the matter during Zero Hour, Netam said that delay in treatment is equivalent to denial of healthcare, stressing that patients at AIIMS Raipur are facing serious difficulties in accessing timely medical services. She pointed out that out of 305 sanctioned posts for doctors, only 190 are currently filled, leaving 115 vacancies. Critical departments such as cardiology, neurology, and surgery are among the worst affected. She further informed that out of 3,884 sanctioned posts for nursing, technical, and administrative staff, only 2,387 are filled, while 1,497 positions remain vacant. This acute shortage, she noted, has resulted in long queues in OPDs, delays in surgeries and diagnostic procedures, and denial of hospital admissions due to lack of beds. Highlighting the urgency of the situation, Netam demanded immediate filling of all vacant posts and expansion of bed capacity to ensure that patients receive timely and quality healthcare services at the premier institute. Meanwhile, the issue was first brought to the forefront through an agitation led by the Lok Janshakti Party (Ramvilas), Raipur District—an effort that is now beginning to show



results. Additionally, Chirag Paswan, National President of the party, had also written to the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare highlighting the persistent mismanagement at AIIMS Raipur.

### SHIFT TO ONLINE PAYMENTS

## Manual Challan System to end from April 1

Central Chronicle News

Manual challan submission to be completely discontinued across Chhattisgarh from April 1.



### FACTFILE

● Online 'e-Challan' system via e-Kosh portal to ensure transparency, accuracy, and faster processing.

procedural inefficiencies. Officials stated that the new system will ensure greater accuracy, eliminate manual errors, and improve transparency in financial transactions.

To facilitate a smooth transition, a one-day training session was conducted on Monday for key stakeholders. District Treasury Officer Gajanan Patel provided compre-

hensive guidance on the process of submitting Over-the-Counter (OTC) online challans. The training was attended by Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs), stamp vendors, and bank representatives.

The workshop, held at the Government Girls' Polytechnic in Byron Bazaar, focused on familiarizing participants with the digital process. Officials highlighted that the online system simplifies the selection of the correct budget head (account code), thereby minimizing discrepancies and enhancing operational efficiency. Under the new arrangement, challans can be generated and submitted through the 'e-Challan' module available on the e-Kosh portal.

### BHAKTA MATA KARMA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

## Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti celebrated in Saddu

Central Chronicle News

**RAIPUR:** The auspicious festival of Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti, dedicated to the 'Kuldevi' of the Sahu community, was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm in Saddu. A large number of community members gathered, creating an atmosphere filled with devotion, cultural vibrancy, and social harmony. Rural MLA Motilal Sahu attended the event as the chief guest, while Sadhna Pramod



Sahu presided over the function. Several distinguished guests, including Pradeep Sahu, Gopesh Sahu, Liladhar Sahu, Rishi Sahu, Anant Ram Sahu, Trishna Sahu, Vimal Sahu, Khem Sen, and Corporator Savitri Bharat Dhivan,

were present. The program began with a grand procession, followed by Mata Karma's aarti and a felicitation ceremony. Notably, Anant Ram Sahu and Dr. Saroj Saav were honored for their contributions to society. Meri-

torious students were also recognized, encouraging academic excellence among the youth. The celebration featured distribution of Khichdi Prasad and devotional bhajan-kirtan by Manas Mandali Baroda, adding to the spiritual ambiance. A community feast was later organized, where all attendees shared prasad together. The event, held at Maa Durga Pandal in Housing Board Colony, Saddu, saw participation from nearby areas such as VIP City, Shivam City, and Parsulidih.

## Lost Money in a Financial Fraud?

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It should be made clear in land records that land to be acquired is free from forest or any other controversy, so that investment procedure can be done.

Sanjay Agrawal  
Collector Bilaspur



# Raipur Region

## Lamp lighting, worship mark start of Bhoramdev festival

The 30th Bhoramdev Festival is underway in Kawardha.



Central Chronicle News

**KAWARDHA:** The 30th Bhoramdev Festival was celebrated with grandeur at the historic Bhoramdev Temple, nestled in the Maikal hill ranges. The festival began with the worship of Lord Bhoramdev, ceremonial lamp lighting, and chanting of sacred mantras, marking the commencement of vibrant cultural programs.

The event was attended by numerous dignitaries and public representatives, including Suresh Chandravanshi, Ishwari Sahu, Gopal Verma, Kailash Chandravanshi, Bhagat Patel, Balka Ramkinkar Verma, Nand Shriwas, and other prominent local leaders. Speaking at the occasion, Suresh Chan-

dravanshi, Chairman of the Farmers' Welfare Board, emphasized that the Bhoramdev Festival symbolizes Chhattisgarh's rich cultural heritage and provides a vital platform for local artists.

He highlighted the ongoing development of the Bhoramdev Corridor, which aims to boost religious tourism, generate employment, and strengthen the region's economy. District Panchayat President Ishwari Sahu remarked that Bhoramdev, recognized as the "Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh," has gained prominence nationally and internationally. He noted that under the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, construction

### FACTFILE

The festivities were started by lighting lamps and worshipping Lord Bhoramdev.

of the corridor is progressing rapidly, following models from Ujjain and Banaras, enhancing both tourism and local development.

District Panchayat Vice-President Kailash Chandravanshi highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage, citing initiatives like the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, and Mahakaleshwar Corridor in Ujjain as examples of India's cultural renaissance. Collector Gopal Verma announced that the Rs.146 crore Bhoramdev

Corridor project has officially commenced, with efforts to beautify the surrounding area while preserving the temple's archaeological integrity. The festival venue was shifted this year due to construction work.

The festival showcased folk art, music, and cultural performances from across Chhattisgarh. Devotees participated enthusiastically, creating an atmosphere of devotion and festivity. Performances by renowned artists, including Jasgeet singer Dr. Dilip Shadangi and folk singer Aaru Sahu, enthralled the audience. Dr. Shadangi's devotional Jasgeets filled the temple complex with spiritual energy, while Aaru Sahu's Chhattisgarhi songs delighted spectators.

## Post-Matric scholarship apps open until March 30

**BIJAPUR:** The Department of Tribal and Scheduled Caste Development has invited online applications for the Post-Matric Scholarship for the academic session 2025-26. Students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, who are currently enrolled in Class 12 and higher studies at any government or private college, ITI, or polytechnic in the district, are eligible to apply. Applications must be submitted online through <http://postmatric-scholarship.cg.nic.in> by March 30, 2026.

## DV&SV meeting on March 30

**RAJNANDGAON:** A meeting of the District-Level Vigilance and Survey Committee (DL&VS) has been scheduled for March 30, 2026, at 11:00 AM. This committee has been constituted under the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act" to oversee the effective implementation of the Act and ensure the welfare of affected communities. The meeting will take place in Room No. 30 (Additional Collector's Chamber) at the District Office, and will be chaired by the Additional Collector.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### GANJA SMUGGLERS NABBED

## Mahasamund police nab two interstate smugglers with kg Ganja



**BASNA:** The Mahasamund Police achieved a significant breakthrough in a major narcotics case with the arrest of two interstate smugglers from Nagpur, Maharashtra, in connection with the seizure of 23.73 kg of Ganja (cannabis). Acting on technical evidence and call detail records, the police traced the accused to Nagpur and apprehended Mohammad Adnan (25) and Sheikh Irshad (20). Both have been sent to judicial custody, while police continue searching for four

other accomplices. The case originated on January 7, 2026, when Basna Police attempted to stop a suspicious white XUV 500 (MH 24 AB 1947). The driver tried to escape, crashing the vehicle into the Basna City Ground gate, and fled under the cover of darkness. A search of the vehicle recovered 23 kg 730 grams of Ganja. An FIR was registered, and a joint investigation was launched by Basna Police, the Anti-Narcotics Task Force, and the Cyber Branch of Mahasamund.

### ARRESTED

## Man nabbed for possession of 10 liters of illegal mahua liquor

**BASNA:** In a continued effort to combat illicit activities, the Bhanwarpur police, operating under Basna Police Station, achieved a notable success in curbing illegal alcohol trade. Acting on directives from the Superintendent of Police, intensive operations have been underway across the district, targeting illegal liquor and other contraband activities. Recently, the Bhanwarpur Police Outpost received a tip-off regarding a man in the village of Karrabhauna allegedly storing illicit Mahua liquor for sale. Responding promptly, the police, accompanied by witnesses, raided the accused's home. During the operation, they apprehended a 25-year-old man, Kamal Bhardwaj, son of Jage Ram Bhardwaj, and recovered approximately 10 liters of country-made Mahua liquor stored in a white 20-liter plastic bucket.

### NEGLIGENCE

## Chhuikhadan education department ignoring coordinator complaints

**CHHUIKHADAN:** Concerns continue to mount over the persistent negligence of coordinators in schools under the Chhuikhadan Block Education Office, as no effective action has been taken despite repeated complaints. Reports indicate that coordinators are frequently absent from their assigned schools, neglecting their teaching duties and cluster inspections. Government directives require coordinators at the approximately 40 school cluster centers in the region to teach for four days a week and conduct cluster-level inspections for two days. However, many coordinators are reportedly failing to fulfill these responsibilities, directly impacting the quality of education received by students.

## DVMP convenes on March 30

**RAJNANDGAON:** A meeting of the District-Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee has been scheduled for March 30, 2026, at 11:00 AM to oversee the implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules in the district. The meeting will be held in Room No. 30 (Additional Collector's Chamber) at the District Office and will be chaired by the Additional Collector. All members of the committee are requested to attend the meeting punctually. The agenda will focus on reviewing ongoing measures for preventing atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, monitoring compliance with legal provisions, and evaluating progress in addressing complaints and grievances. Members will also discuss strategies for strengthening awareness, ensuring effective enforcement of the Rules, and coordinating with district authorities for timely interventions.

### CHILD LABOUR-FREE CHARIOT

# Collector flags off child labour awareness chariot

Central Chronicle News

To ensure a safe future for children, Collector Gopal

child labour awareness chariot in Kabirdham.

**KABIRDHAM:** In a major initiative to safeguard the rights of children, Collector Gopal Verma flagged off the Child Labor Eradication Awareness Chariot (Bal Shram Mukti Rath) from the Collector's Office premises on Wednesday. This campaign, conducted under the Access to Justice for Children program, complements the earlier initiative by Dy CM Vijay Sharma, who had launched the Child Marriage Eradication Chariot. The campaign aligns



### FACTFILE

This campaign is being run under Access to Justice for Children.

with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)'s Pan-India Rescue and Rehabilitation Campaign for Eradication of Child and Adolescent Labor, with the goal of eliminating child labor from the district entirely. The

Krishak Sahyog Sansthan has partnered with Just Rights for Children, the nation's largest civil society network of over 250 organizations dedicated to child rights.

Addressing the gathering, Collector Verma emphasized that children belong in schools, not workplaces. He described child labor as both a legal offense and a violation of fundamental rights, asserting the administration's commitment to

making Kabirdham district free of child labor. "Compelling children to work robs them of their childhood," he said, urging citizens, traders, and employers to actively participate in the campaign and report any instances of child labor to authorities. Verma also unveiled specially designed awareness posters promoting child labor eradication.

Ashu Chandravanshi, Convener of the Rath Yatra, explained that the chariot will tour various villages, urban settlements, markets, bus stands, and other sensitive areas across the district. Loudspeakers mounted on the chariot, along with posters and leaflets, will inform the public about child labor laws and the penalties for employing children under the age of 14.

### BIRTHDAY SPECIAL: 25 MARCH

# Dr Mohan Yadav: A confluence of simplicity & strategy

The Political journey of Dr. Mohan Yadav (CM, Madhya Pradesh)

ational ranks, can indeed reach the very pinnacle of power.

Central Chronicle Bureau

**RAIPUR/BHOPAL:** In the landscape of national politics, Chief Ministers holding a PhD is a rare breed. Dr. Mohan Yadav, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, belongs to this highly exclusive list. He has emerged as a leader whose working style is perceived as relatively quiet and low-profile, yet organizationally robust

## Early Life

Mohan Yadav was born on March 25, 1965, into a humble family in Ujjain. His childhood was marked by financial hardships. His father worked in a mill, while his uncle ran a tea stall where Mohan would lend a helping hand after school hours. He pursued his higher education at Vikram University. He also earned a PhD in Political Science, a pursuit that significantly strengthened his ideological foundation. During his student days, he established ties with the RSS—and subsequently with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)—associations that ultimately charted the course of his political trajectory.

## Political Journey

Mohan Yadav's political career commenced with organizational work. He shouldered various responsibilities within the BJP, gradually evolving into one of the party's most trusted and reliable faces. Subsequently, while serving consecutive terms as the MLA for the Ujjain South constituency, he successfully cultivated a strong grassroots support base. In 2020, he was appointed as the Minister of Higher Education in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government; just three years later—following the 2023 Assembly elections—the BJP leadership surprised everyone by elevating him to the post of Chief Minister.

## Stays alone at CM House

Mohan Yadav is widely regarded as a leader characterized by his simplicity, unwavering loyalty to the organization, and ideological clarity. His greatest strengths lie in his deep-rooted command over the organizational machinery of both the RSS and the BJP, coupled with an extensive grassroots network.

## Fitness Mantra

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav's fitness mantra consists of regular yoga, a disciplined diet, and self-discipline. Despite the complexity of the poses, he effortlessly performs difficult asanas—such as the Mayurasana (Peacock Pose). Notwithstanding his demanding political life, he prioritizes exercise and yoga in his daily routine.

### PRICES OF FUEL, ELECTRONICS SURGE

# Global conflicts drive up electronics, fuel costs

Central Chronicle News

**RAJIM:** Rising global tensions involving the US, Iran, and Israel are now directly affecting the common people, with international market instability driving up prices of electronics and fuel. Crude oil fluctuations and supply chain disruptions have pushed petrol and diesel prices higher, increasing the financial burden



on households. Petrol has risen by Rs.2 per liter, impacting not only private vehicle owners but also transportation costs, which in turn raises the prices of vegetables, milk, grains, and

other essential commodities. Simultaneously, electronics such as TVs, refrigerators, coolers, and ACs have witnessed a sharp price surge. Summer demand and the ongoing wedding season

"If international conditions do not normalize soon,

further in the coming days." Economic Experts

have further fueled this increase. Manufacturers have already raised prices, and shopkeepers anticipate further hikes.

Many families, especially from middle and lower-income groups, are postponing purchases or opting for cheaper alternatives, struggling to balance household budgets amid rising costs of cooking gas, food, and other necessities.

Small traders and shopkeepers are also affected, with rising expenses reducing sales and forcing them to keep lower stock levels.

# Fun & Focus



## Daily Horoscope

### ARIES

Dear Aries, the Moon transiting in Gemini has you in a pensive mood. However, this day is not about serious issues but being optimistic and it is this optimism that can lead you to self-discovery! Along with the important work that you have on the cards, you may choose to spend some quality time alone to explore the many dimensions of your personality.

### TAURUS

Dear Taurus, as the Moon is in Gemini today, make the most of the fun-filled day by enjoying it to the fullest. It would be best if you took a break from your usual routine right now. You might spend the day having fun by taking a joyride with loved ones. If you have no plans, you should instantly change your mind and schedule a trip; suggest Astrologi Astrologers.

### Gemini

Dear Gemini, use your skill and patience to overcome all obstacles as the Moon is the most potent in Gemini. It will create a positive vibes within you to fight with the obstacles and hardships. This day will give you the confidence and experience to take on new tasks and move on toward a new chapter. Believe in your abilities to utilize them to change your life and to success.

### Cancer

Dear Cancer, with the Moon placed in Gemini, you may want to spend some time with your family without any worries. Today is full of warmth and will help you gather the support and appreciation of your loved ones. Treasure these moments as they might not last forever. Make each moment count so it helps strengthen your bond. Red is your lucky color for the day.

### Leo

Dear Leo, with the presence of the Moon in Gemini, you might find that your self-confidence will be on the rise today. This will bring happiness and satisfaction to you. Use it to your advantage and you surely will benefit from it, say Astrologi astrologers. You will be in a position to put your best foot forward with your positive attitude and beaming confidence.

### Virgo

The Moon will influence you in more positive ways now. You can get better solutions to your previous problems in life. Moreover, you can settle issues related to your personal life. The settlement of your problems will provide peace and serenity to your mind. Today is a new opportunity to take on fresh challenges in your life. Enjoying the day with your loved ones to make the day more cherishable.

### Libra

Today the prospects for the growth of your business look bright, predicts Libra daily horoscope. Property investments, done with the right intention, will benefit you in the long run. If you consider investing your money today, you should look at sectors that offer gain in the long term. The Moon in Gemini ensures a prosperous day ahead of you, dear Libra.

### Scorpio

Dear Scorpio, the Moon makes its presence felt in Gemini and warns you of missing your deadlines. There is a high probability that you miss your deadlines due to a lack of prioritizing or due to some last-minute additions at your workplace. Take extra caution while working on any important documents today. Finish all the responsibilities at hand to avoid any problem that might crop up unexpectedly.

### Sagittarius

Dear Sagittarius, this might be a better and more appropriate time to unlock your true potential because the Moon is moving in Gemini. Do not depend on your determination or courage for the day because your luck will carry you through it. Today, everything might go your way, but you may find out that none of them are the results of your efforts.

### Capricorn

Dear Capricorn, today, carefully entrust your faith in people as the Moon moves into Gemini. Life is all about meeting new people, be it personally or professionally. However, be cautious of those who claim to be your friends but do not hold your best interest in mind. Know where to draw a line with this colleague or friend. You might encounter an unpleasant situation because of such people.

### Aquarius

Dear Aquarius, the position of the Moon in Gemini can influence several positive changes in your life. You can get several positive insights into your abilities and inner soul. Today, you can also bond with your friends and family members. Communication with your loved ones may increase your self-confidence and clarity and help you to think positively.

### Pisces

Dear Pisces, you may feel slightly frustrated due to minor hurdles that come your way, owing to the movement of the Moon in Gemini. You have been putting efforts into avoiding them but still, you couldn't evade them. Do not feel disheartened! Remain patient and use your perseverance to get through this, suggest Astrologi astrologers. Red is your lucky color for the day that will help attract positivity.

## SCIENCE WATCH

### The monk who understood genes



Gregor Mendel, an 19th-century Austrian monk, founded modern genetics by breeding over 28,000 pea plants, discovering that traits are inherited through discrete "factors" (now called genes).

### Genes follow the laws he made



Mendel studied laws of dominance segregation and independent assortment via experiments with pea plants. Human genes follow these laws for simple traits, such as blood type or specific genetic disorders.

### It's in the genes!



If you are a solemn person or a superb fool, self proclaimed smart or an idiot the reason - it's your genes. No training in the world can give you more or less than what your genes give you.

### ICONIC LEGEND

Elena Lucrezia Corner also known in English as Helen Cornaro, was a Venetian philosopher of noble descent who in 1678 became one of the first women to receive an academic degree from a university, and the first to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

As a young girl, Lady Elena was seen as a prodigy. By the advice from Giovanni Fabris, a priest who was a friend of the family, she began a classical education. She studied Latin and Greek under distinguished instructors, and became proficient in these languages, as well as French and Spanish, by the age of seven. She also mastered Hebrew and Arabic, earning the title of Oraculum Septilingue ("Seven-language Oracle"). Her later studies included mathematics, philosophy and theology.

In 1669, she translated the Colloquy of Christ by Carthusian monk Lanspergius



from Spanish into Italian. The translation was dedicated to Gian Paolo Oliva, her close friend and confessor. The volume was issued in five editions in the Republic from 1669 to 1672. She was invited to be a part of many scholarly societies when her fame spread and in 1670 she became president of the Venetian society Accademia dei Pacifici. On 5 June 2019, Google celebrated her 373rd birthday with a Google Doodle. She died in Padua in 1684 of tuberculosis and was buried in the church of Santa Giustina.

### Amazing World

Okunoshima is a small island in the Inland Sea of Japan in the city of Takehara, Hiroshima Prefecture. It is accessible by ferry from Tadanoumi and Omishima. There are campsites, walking trails and places of historical interest on the island. It is often called Usagi Shima ("Rabbit Island") because of the numerous feral rabbits that roam the island; they are rather tame and will approach humans.

Many rabbits who live on the island are descended from rabbits intentionally let loose when the island was developed as a park after World War II. During the



war, rabbits were also used in the chemical munitions plant to test the effectiveness of the chemical weapons.

Those rabbits were killed when the factory was demolished and are not related to the rabbits currently on the

island. Hunting the rabbits is forbidden, and dogs and cats are not allowed on the island.

### Tarantula

**COMMON NAME:** Tarantulas  
**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Theraphosidae  
**DIET:** Carnivore  
**AVERAGE LIFE SPAN IN THE WILD:** Up to 30 years  
**SIZE:** 4.75 inches long; leg span: up to 11 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 1 to 3 ounces

Tarantulas give people the creeps because they have large, hairy bodies and legs. While these large spiders can take a painful bite out of a human, a tarantula's venom has a low toxicity to people. Tarantulas move



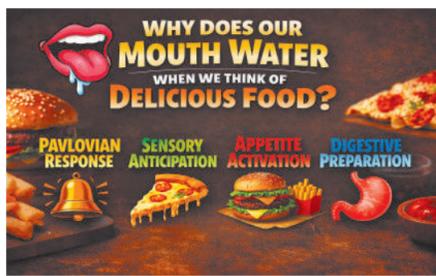
### ANIMAL KINGDOM

slowly on their eight hairy legs, but they are accomplished nocturnal predators. Insects are their main prey, but they also target bigger game, including frogs, toads, and mice. Tarantulas are burrowers and typically live in the ground.

There are hundreds of tarantula species found in most of the world's tropical, subtropical, and desert regions. They vary in colour and behaviour according to their spe-

cific environments. A tarantula doesn't use a web to trap its prey, though it may spin a trip wire to signal an alert when something approaches its burrow. Tarantulas have few natural enemies, except for the parasitic peeps wasp, which can paralyze a tarantula with its sting and lay its eggs on the spider's body. When the wasp eggs hatch, the larvae chow down on the still living tarantula. Tarantulas shed their external skeletons in a process called molting. During the process, they also replace internal organs, such as stomach lining, and can even regrow lost legs.

## TELL ME WHY?



Our mouth waters because of a neurological reaction or reflex action. Russian scientist Anton Pavlov had divided reflex actions into two classes-conditional (acquired out of habitual experience) and unconditional (inborn) reflexes. Watering of the mouth falls under the first category. As soon as we think of some delicious food, chemicals that transmit impulses to the brain are switched on. The brain identifies the signal and sends responses through carrier nerves to stimulate the saliva-secreting glands and our mouth begins to water.



- Name the mascot for the 1982 Asian Games after whom an amusement park in Delhi was named?
- Which company was the first to distribute the mouse as a standard component with the personal computer?
- The law describes a long-term trend in the history of computing hardware, in which the number of transistors that can be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit has doubled approximately, every two years. Which law is being described above?
- Methods for uniquely recognizing humans based upon one or more intrinsic physical or behavioral traits like fingerprints, iris scan, voice, face recognition is known as what?
- Who represented the Rairangpur Assembly constituency in Odisha for two terms in 2000 and 2004?
- 'Shape of Momo' film belongs to which state?
- What did the Supreme Court of India approve for the first time?

- ANSWERS -**
- Appu (2) Apple computers (3) Moore's Law (4) Biomimetics (5) Dranupadi Murmu (6) Silkim (7) Passive Euthanasia

- Rama Quiz

### YES OR NO

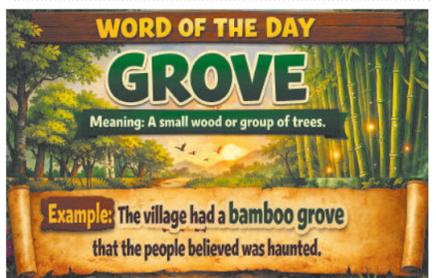
- A kimono is a traditional Korean garment worn by both men and women.
- A kilt is a Scottish knee-length skirt worn by men.
- A dirndl is a traditional feminine dress worn in Austria.
- The large, loose garment, poncho, originated in Europe.
- A Mackintosh is a waterproof raincoat made out of rubberized fabric.

- ANSWERS -**
- No (It is Japanese), 2-Yes, 3-Yes, 4-No (South America), 5-Yes

### WHO AM I?

Very few people know that it was he who discovered the talent of Dr Manmoan Singh after appointing him as an adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. According to a-wikileaks-kinds-of-report when money was paid by the KGB to the Congress party it was through him. He was then acting as a Railway Minister. He died mysteriously in a bomb blast at Samastipur, Bihar, in 1975 and now has a B-School named after him. Who Am I?

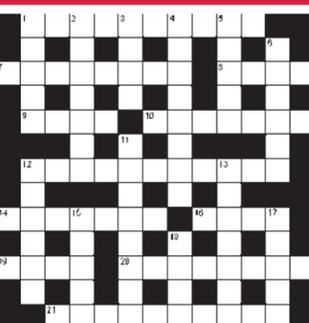
**ANSWER -** Lalit Narain Mishra



- Across**
- Destitute (4-3-3)
  - Severe headache (8)
  - Head-cook (4)
  - Yellow part of an egg (4)
  - Stuck (7)
  - Everlastingly (11)
  - Story in three parts (7)
  - Moist (4)
  - Burial place (4)
  - London airport (8)
  - Early bird song (4,6)

- Down**
- Place where butter and cheese are made (5)
  - Songbird (7)
  - Continent (4)
  - Awful (8)
  - Male relative (5)
  - Cure (6)
  - Extend (8)
  - Talking bird (6)
  - Shoe material (7)
  - Seventh sign of the Zodiac (5)
  - Devout (5)
  - Vow (4)

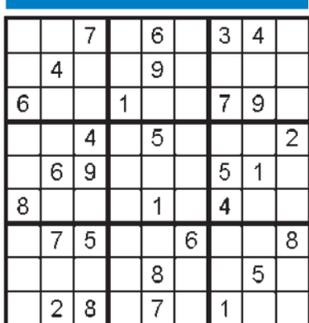
### CROSSWORD -77



### CROSSWORD SOLUTION - 76



### SUDOKU - 77



### SUDOKU SOLUTION - 76



### DAILY WORD SEARCH

- Amazon
- Arno
- Avon
- Clyde
- Congo
- Ebro
- Elbe
- Hudson
- Indus
- Liffey
- Maas
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Murray
- Niger
- Nile
- Oder
- Ohio
- Orange
- Rhine
- Seine
- Severn
- Thames
- Tyne
- Vaal
- Volga
- Zaire



# Business



AI becoming integral to how networks are designed, experienced.

Anil Kumar Lahoti  
TRAI Chief

## NHAI's RIIT listing ceremony



Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, left, with NHAI Chairman Santosh Kumar Yadav during the listing ceremony of NHAI's Rajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT), at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) in Mumbai, Tuesday, March 24.

## BizBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

HOW THE MARKET'S BEHAVE TODAY?

### Stock markets jump nearly 2 pc as Trump halts strikes on Iran's energy infra



**MUMBAI:** Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded by nearly 2 per cent on Tuesday, tracking a relief rally in Asian peers after US President Donald Trump announced a temporary halt on strikes targeting Iranian energy infrastructure. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,372.06 points or 1.89 per cent to settle at 74,068.45. During the day, it soared 1,793 points or 2.46 per cent to 74,489.39.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 399.75 points or 1.78 per cent to end at 22,912.40. From the 30-Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro, InterGlobe Aviation, Eternal, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and UltraTech Cement were the biggest winners. Power Grid and State Bank of India were the only lag-

gards from the pack. Trump said on social media that he has extended the deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the strategically located shipping lane between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and that he will hold off strikes against Iranian energy sites for five days. "Indian equities witnessed a constructive rebound, with markets closing on a positive note after the sharp sell-off in the previous session. The recovery was largely driven by a moderation in risk perception, as early signs of potential de-escalation in the ongoing US-Iran tensions helped restore some investor confidence," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Live-long Wealth, said.

## '60,518 cr unclaimed deposits transferred to RBI Fund'

Government reveals rising unclaimed financial assets across banking, insurance, and mutual funds, outlines regulatory measures to streamline claims and improve investor participation in green bonds

Press Trust Of India

NUMBER

2

Unclaimed deposits in banks cross Rs 60,000 crore; regulators push faster refund mechanisms nationwide.

reply.

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Government has informed the Rajya Sabha that unclaimed deposits transferred by public sector banks (PSBs) to the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund of the Reserve Bank of India stood at Rs 60,518 crore as of January-end 2026. The information was shared by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in a written

The minister further stated that unclaimed insurance amounts with insurers stood at Rs 8,973.89 crore as of Feb-

ruary-end 2026. Additionally, unclaimed funds in mutual funds regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) amounted to Rs 3,749.34 crore.

Highlighting government efforts, Chaudhary said multiple measures have been undertaken by financial sector regulators to identify rightful claimants, reduce the accumulation of unclaimed financial assets, and simplify the claims pro-

cess. These steps aim to ensure that citizens can more easily recover their funds while preventing further build-up of such unclaimed amounts.

Responding to another query, the minister informed that the government has reviewed investor interest in Sovereign Green Bonds (SGRBs). Since their introduction in FY 2022-23, the average bid-cover ratio has remained above 2, indicating strong investor

demand. In FY 2025-26, the bid-cover ratio stands at 2.32. He also noted that investors offered a "greenium" of 7 basis points in the latest auction held on November 28, 2025, demonstrating continued attractiveness of these bonds. However, the government clarified that there is currently no proposal to introduce tax incentives for investors in Sovereign Green Bonds to boost climate finance mobilisation.

## BHIM Payments App announces MS Dhoni as brand ambassador

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI:** BHIM Services Limited (NBSL) announced the appointment of World Cup-winning former Captain of the Indian Cricket Team, Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the Brand Ambassador for the BHIM Payments App, Bharat Ka Apna Payments App. The partnership brings together two names synonymous with trust, consistency, and dependability, reflecting values that resonate across generations and geographies. As BHIM approaches a decade of enabling India's digital payments journey, this association marks a strategic step in its next phase of growth focused on scale, inclusion, and long-term user confidence. The association reflects a natu-



ral alignment of ethos and journey. BHIM Payments App delivers secure digital payments built on NPCI's robust infrastructure, while Mahendra Singh Dhoni is recognised for composure, discipline, and delivering under pressure. Speaking on the development, Lalitha Nataraj, MD & CEO, NBSL said, "As digital payments continue to scale in India, the next phase of growth is about strengthening preferences and deepening user confidence.

| MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT |

## 'Higher airfares due to cost escalation will hit demand'

Press Trust Of India

Rising fuel and forex costs may lead to higher airfares, impacting passenger demand.

**MUMBAI:** The country's largest airline IndiGo on Tuesday said international flights in the summer schedule will vary depending on the Middle East situation and flagged that demand will be impacted if there is any further rise in costs that will push airfares higher. The escalating conflict involving US, Israel and Iran have pushed jet fuel prices higher and airlines' operations have also been disrupted due to the airspace curbs in the Middle East. For Indian carriers, jet fuel expenses account



FACTFILE

IndiGo to adjust international operations based on Middle East developments.

for around 40 per cent of the overall operating costs. In a statement to PTI, an IndiGo spokesperson on Tuesday said it intends to start its domestic summer schedule with nearly 2,000 daily flights in April. "IndiGo's international schedule was planned at similar levels to winter, but the deployed scale will, of course, vary based on ongoing circumstances in the Middle East. It should

be noted that there is a very material escalation in operating costs, with fuel and forex related costs expected to continue to increase very substantially, in addition to what is already an escalating cost environment," the spokesperson said. While the number of flights planned now is almost the same as that of the 2025 summer schedule, it is lower than the services that were scheduled for the ongoing winter schedule. IndiGo had to reduce the winter schedule in the wake of massive operational disruptions that happened in early December last year.

| TO BOOST EASE OF DOING BUSINESS |

## Government tables Corporate Laws Amendment Bill

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has introduced the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha, proposing wide-ranging changes to the Companies Act, 2016 and the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 to enhance ease of doing business and reduce compliance burden. The bill was tabled by Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and has been referred to a Joint Parlia-

mentary Committee for detailed examination. A key proposal relates to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) norms. The government has suggested raising the net profit threshold for CSR applicability to Rs 10 crore and extending the timeline for transferring unspent CSR funds from 30 days to 90 days. Revised eligibility criteria for constituting CSR committees have also been proposed. The bill focuses significantly on decrimi-



nalisation, seeking to replace several procedural offences under company and LLP laws with civil penalties. It also proposes simplification of mergers and amalgamations by easing approval thresholds for fast-track mergers, along with provisions for filing applications before a sin-

gle bench of the National Company Law Tribunal. Further, companies will be allowed to hold Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs) in hybrid mode, combining physical and virtual formats. Relaxations have also been proposed for small companies and startups, including exemptions from certain CSR-related compliance requirements. The bill introduces enabling provisions for setting up special benches of the NCLT

to handle specific cases under the Companies Act and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. It also allows firms in International Financial Services Centres to issue share capital in foreign currency, subject to regulatory approvals. Additional reforms include flexibility in share buy-backs, easing compliance for alternative investment funds, enabling multi-disciplinary partnerships, and replacing certain affidavits with self-declarations.

PRE-SUMMER CAMP

### Isuzu Motors announces nationwide 'ISUZU I-Care Pre-Summer Camp'

**CHENNAI:** In a constant endeavour to reaffirm ISUZU's commitment to provide best service and ownership experience, Isuzu Motors India will be conducting a nation-wide 'ISUZU I-Care Pre-Summer Camp' for its range of ISUZU D-MAX Pick-ups and SUVs. This service camp is aimed at offering customers exciting benefits and preventive maintenance checks for a hassle-free driving experience during the season across the country. An initiative of 'ISUZU Care', the pre-summer camp will be organised across all ISUZU authorised dealer service outlets, between 23rd - 28th March 2026 (both days inclusive). During this period, customers can also avail special offers & benefits for their vehicles. The Pre-Summer Camp will be organised at all authorised service facilities of ISUZU located in Agra, Ahilyanagar, Ahmedabad, Ambikapur, Anantapur, Baramulla, Bareilly, Barmer, Baruch, Bathinda, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Bikaner, Bilaspur, Calicut, Chatrapathi Sambhaji Nagar, Chennai and other cities.

BULLION MARKET

### Gold rebounds Rs 1,200 to Rs 1.44 lakh/10g; silver stays flat



**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices snapped a four-day losing streak and climbed Rs 1,200 to Rs 1.44 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, while silver remained flat at Rs 2.30 lakh per kilogram, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,43,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. Traders attributed the rebound in domestic gold prices to a recovery in global commodity markets and some buying at lower levels after recent sharp declines. In the international markets, spot gold rebounded after nine sessions of losses, rising USD 16.96, or 0.38 per cent, to USD 4,423.83 per ounce, while silver was trading 1.03 per cent higher at USD 69.86 per ounce.

DIAMOND DRILLING PROGRAMMES

### Deccan Gold advances Critical Minerals strategy with dual drilling programmes

**NEW DELHI:** Deccan Gold Mines Limited (Deccan Gold), India's only listed gold and critical minerals mining company, has commenced diamond drilling programmes across two high-potential critical minerals projects in India and Europe, marking a significant step in advancing its strategic resource portfolio. The Company has initiated drilling at its Bhalukona Nickel-Copper-PGE project in Chhattisgarh, aimed at testing subsurface mineralisation in zones identified through anomalous rock chip sampling and supported by promising geo-physical signatures.

In parallel, through its Dubai subsidiary, Deccan Gold has commenced drilling at the Logrosan Tungsten Project in Spain, targeting tungsten-bearing zones identified by previous exploration programmes, with the objective of progressing toward a maiden mineral resource.

These drilling programmes mark a critical milestone in Deccan Gold's strategy to build a diversified portfolio of gold and critical mineral assets across geographies, aligned with the growing global focus on energy transition metals and supply chain resilience. Deccan Gold expects to share initial outcomes from both drilling programmes in the coming weeks. Commenting on the development, Dr. Hanuma Prasad Modali, Manag-

ing Director, Deccan Gold Mines Limited, said: "Critical minerals are now central to global economic priorities, underpinning clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and resource security. India's Atmanirbhar Bharat focus further reinforces the need to build domestic capabilities in this space. The commencement of drilling at Bhalukona and Logrosan marks a decisive step in advancing our diversified, future-facing resource portfolio across India and Europe.



Central Chronicle Classifieds

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## QUOTE FROM THE QUOTABLE

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks"  
[ John Muir ]

## OUR VIEW |

## From Reassurance to Warning: PM's Shift in Tone

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's twin addresses in Parliament on the West Asia conflict reveal a deliberate shift in tone and emphasis. In the Lok Sabha, his remarks were largely reassuring, focusing on the immediate safety of Indians in Gulf nations and the government's vigilance against black-marketing of essential commodities. He spoke of readiness, of short-term measures, and of the Cabinet Committee on Security's monitoring of supply chains. It was a speech designed to calm anxieties and assure citizens that the government was alert to the crisis. Yet in the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister's words carried a different weight. He acknowledged that the conflict has "shaken" the world economy, disrupting energy flows and threatening global trade routes. Modi explicitly mentioned India's diplomatic engagement with Iran, Israel, and the United States, underscoring that the crisis is not merely regional but global in scope. His warning that the war could lead to "serious problems" for energy security was a sobering reminder that India's economic stability is intertwined with international currents beyond its control. The analogy he drew to the COVID-19 pandemic was telling. Just as the pandemic demanded collective resilience, the present crisis, he argued, requires national unity and preparedness. This was not reassurance alone; it was a call to brace for long-term consequences. By shifting from immediate protection to strategic foresight, the Prime Minister signalled that India must prepare for sustained turbulence in global markets and energy supplies. The editorial lesson here is clear. The Lok Sabha speech was about managing the present, while the Rajya Sabha speech was about anticipating the future. Together, they form a continuum: from safeguarding citizens to safeguarding the economy. For journalists and citizens alike, the contrast is instructive. It shows how leadership must balance reassurance with realism, and how India's foreign policy is now inseparable from its domestic stability. The Prime Minister's words in the Upper House should be read as a warning and a pledge. A warning that the crisis will not pass quickly, and a pledge that India will engage diplomatically and strategically to protect its interests. The responsibility now lies in translating that pledge into preparedness at home and influence abroad.

## GUEST VIEW |

## National Litigation Policy, why the delay?

Nearly forty percent of cases filed by the governments before the High Courts and the Supreme Court are frivolous. Why do the governments file cases? To buy time, of course. Central and state governments are litigants in approximately 46 percent of cases before the courts. In the Supreme Court alone, government is party in 73 percent of cases admitted. Cases are often filed before a division bench against the order of the single judge in High Courts despite the law officers knowing well that they will not withstand the test of scrutiny by the higher benches. Notwithstanding strictures by courts, the governments are busy filing cases. To frisk authentic cases from the senseless ones becomes a daunting task even for the powerful institution. Recently, former Chief Justice of India Bhushan Gawai felt it was time the country had the "National Litigation Policy" in place. The policy is



Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

in limbo. It was provided a renewed push by the Centre in 2024, to transform the government into "efficient" and "responsible" litigant. Overall goal was to reduce government litigations and reduce pendency time. But the Centre, in 2025, decided against implementing the policy because of the belief that the "right to approach courts cannot be restricted". So, where do we go from here?

# Comment

## Khelo India Tribal Games: A Stepping Stone for India's Olympic Dreams

India's sporting story is one of extraordinary diversity. From the mountains of the North-East to the forests of central India, talent exists in every corner of our nation. It has been eight years since the launch of the Khelo India programme, and in this relatively short span, it has rapidly evolved into a nationwide movement. Through multiple verticals like the Youth Games, University Games, Beach Games, and Winter Games, among others, Khelo India has successfully tapped into a diverse pool of young athletes across the country.

The addition of the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) marks another important step in this journey. The first edition will be held in Chhattisgarh from March 25 to April 3, bringing together nearly 3,000 athletes from 31 States and Union Territories. Competitions will be held across seven medal sports - athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming, and wrestling.

The Games will be hosted across the tribal-majority districts of the Bastar region, part of the ancient Dandakaranya belt, as well as the Sarguja region and areas such as Raigarh and Manpur. This is not merely the introduction of another sporting event. It represents a conscious and systemic effort of our Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to expand the

scope of India's sporting ecosystem, ensuring that opportunities reach every athlete irrespective of geography or background. Simply put, it is about bringing the margins to the mainstream.

Athletes from tribal regions have long brought pride to the nation. From legendary archer Limba Ram of Rajasthan to archery icon Deepika Kumari of Jharkhand, and from numerous hockey stars to Olympic medallists like Mirabai Chanu, their achievements continue to inspire millions. These role models demonstrate the immense potential that exists in these regions.

Many tribal regions overlap with areas that have historically faced socio-economic challenges. For young people in these regions, opportunities for recognition and growth have often been limited. By bringing structured sporting competitions to these areas, we are channelising the energy of youth towards positive and nation-building pursuits. It is about replacing uncertainty with opportunity and isolation with inclusion.

Indeed, the vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi - "Khelega Bharat toh Khilega Bharat" - has become a reality. Sport today acts as a powerful catalyst and equaliser, enabling athletes from marginalised backgrounds to find their

place in the national and international sporting arena. Expanding the Khelo India platform into tribal regions is a natural extension of this vision and reinforces the belief that sport is an integral pillar of nation-building.

Hosting the Khelo India Tribal Games will also have a lasting impact on the local sporting ecosystem. The Games will lead to the development and upgradation of sports infrastructure in tribal regions, while creating opportunities for local coaches, trainers and support staff. Schools and community institutions will be encouraged to integrate sport into everyday life, helping nurture a sustainable and inclusive sporting culture at the grassroots level.

The Khelo India Tribal Games are not a one-time event, they are here to stay. The KITG will be institutionalised as a permanent fixture in the Khelo India annual calendar, ensuring that tribal athletes across the country have a sustained, recurring platform to compete and grow. This continuity is fundamental to long-term athlete development. With each successive edition, the Games will serve as a feeder into the broader Khelo India ecosystem. The Tribal Games are, in this sense, not just a platform unto themselves but an entry point into a thriving sporting universe.

Through the Khelo India Tribal Games, we aim to iden-

tify and nurture that potential. Talent identification teams comprising national coaches, high-performance directors and technical officials from the Sports Authority of India will be present at the Games. Selected athletes will receive advanced training at SAI centres to help them progress further in their sporting journeys.

As India prepares to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and pursues its bid for the 2036 Olympic Games, expanding our talent pool becomes even more critical. This means reaching every corner of the country and ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all, including young athletes from tribal communities. The introduction of the Tribal Games is a direct outcome of this approach and reflects the strength of India's evolving sporting ecosystem.

The journey to sporting excellence often begins in villages and communities where dreams exist but opportunities are limited. With the Khelo India Tribal Games, Modi Government is taking sport to these very spaces. In doing so, we are not only discovering future champions but also strengthening India's talent pipeline, as we move towards becoming a global sporting powerhouse and realizing the Prime Minister's vision of becoming a top ten sporting nation by 2036 and top five by 2047.



Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya,  
Union Minister of  
Youth Affairs & Sports  
and Labour & Employment,  
Government of  
India

## Bird Watching May Reshape the Brain

Recent scientific studies have revealed that experienced birdwatchers exhibit measurable structural changes in their brains.



Dr. Vijay Garg,  
Educational Columnist

In an age dominated by fast-paced digital stimulation, the quiet and patient activity of bird watching—often seen as a simple hobby—is now gaining attention from neuroscientists. Emerging research suggests that bird watching does far more than relax the mind; it may actually reshape the brain, enhancing cognitive abilities and even protecting against age-related decline.

Recent scientific studies have revealed that experienced birdwatchers exhibit measurable structural changes in their brains. Compared to beginners, expert birders show more "compact" and efficient brain regions linked to attention and perception. These changes are not merely



symbolic—they directly correlate with a person's ability to identify birds accurately, even unfamiliar species.

This phenomenon is an example of neuroplasticity, the brain's remarkable ability to reorganize itself through learning and experience. Bird watching demands a unique combination of skills: sharp visual observation, sustained attention, pattern recognition, and memory. Over time, practicing these skills strengthens neural pathways, making the brain more efficient and adaptable.

Interestingly, the benefits of bird watching extend

beyond skill development. Researchers have found that the cognitive advantages gained through birding may act as a "cognitive reserve," helping to slow down the ageing process of the brain. As people grow older, functions like memory and processing speed typically decline. However, individuals engaged in mentally stimulating activities like bird watching tend to maintain these abilities longer.

The activity also contributes to mental well-being. Studies show that bird watching reduces psychological distress and improves overall

mood. Being in nature, listening to birdsong, and focusing on the present moment can lower stress levels and promote emotional balance.

What makes bird watching particularly powerful is its accessibility. It does not require expensive equipment or specialized training—just curiosity, patience, and a willingness to observe the natural world. Whether in a rural landscape or an urban park, anyone can engage in birding and potentially reap its cognitive and emotional benefits.

In conclusion, bird watching is more than a leisurely

pastime; it is a brain-boosting activity with profound scientific backing. By sharpening attention, enhancing memory, and promoting mental well-being, it demonstrates how simple interactions with nature can lead to meaningful changes in the human brain. In a world increasingly detached from nature, perhaps the path to a healthier mind lies in looking up at the skies and listening to the songs of birds. Birdwatching acts as a powerful, natural form of mindfulness. It encourages people to get outdoors, slow down, and focus entirely on the present moment, which is widely recognized for reducing stress and anxiety—two factors that, when chronic, can be damaging to the brain's long-term health. While this doesn't replace the need for other healthy habits like regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep, it does suggest that picking up a pair of binoculars might be one of the most intellectually stimulating (and inexpensive) ways to keep your mind sharp as you age.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the newspaper)

## YOUR LETTERS

### Water-powered hydrogen stoves

War triggers LPG shortage across India. As a remarkable scientific breakthrough, hydrogen cooking stoves are emerging as a sustainable, zero-emission alternative to LPG in India, with an acceptable price tag of Rs 1-1.5 lakh per unit. NTPC has successfully demonstrated hydrogen cooking. Currently, hydrogen stoves in the Indian market are in the pilot or testing phase. To commercialize large quantities at affordable prices, the government needs to certify products as per the guidelines, provide subsidies, and set up demonstration units.

Nabnit Panigrahi, Raygada, Odisha

### End Judicial Stagnation

Honourable Justice Nagarathna's call for a reforms commission is a vital indictment of India's legally rational yet systemically catastrophic culture. With pendency exceeding 50 million cases, the status quo thrives on perverse incentives—lawyers profit from adjournments while bureaucrats hedge risks through endless appeals. This backlog drags GDP growth by 2-3%. Only strict timelines and fiscal penalties for frivolous government appeals can realign stakes. Without accountable adjudication, the constitutional promise of speedy justice remains a myth.

Dr Vijaykumar HK, Raichur

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

# Nation



Punjab Police capable of probing official's death  
**Bhagwant Mann**  
Punjab CM

## NCW's Media Manthan calls for responsible journalism

Seminar united media professionals and experts nationwide to discuss responsible reporting on women's issues.

Central Chronicle News

**NEW DELHI:** The National Commission for Women (NCW) successfully concluded its two-day national journalist meet Media Manthan at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi, on March 21, with a strong call for responsible and gender-sensitive reporting. The seminar, held on March 20-21, brought together print and digital media professionals from across more than 20 states and union territories, alongside editors and legal experts, to deliberate on the challenges and responsibilities of reporting on women's issues. The event was inaugurated by NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar, in the presence of Member Secretary Sudeep Jain and Additional Secretary Radhika Chakravarthi. In her keynote, Rahatkar emphasized the transformative role of media in shaping public perception and advancing women's rights. "Gender-sensitive reporting is a commitment to dignity, truth, and justice—where women's voices are respected,



### HIGHLIGHT

- Event was inaugurated by Vijaya Rahatkar, in the presence of Sudeep Jain and Radhika Chakravarthi.
- A dialogue with Vijaya Rahatkar urged journalists to drive change and amplify women's empowerment.

not sensationalised," she said. Two publications were released during the inaugural session: "True Cyber Sakhi" by Truecaller and "Reporting with Dignity" by

NCW, both designed to guide media professionals towards ethical practices and safer digital engagement. The conference featured thematic sessions led by experts. Dr. Pinky Anand, Senior Advocate and NCW Committee Member, spoke on Media Law and Ethical Framework. Manmohan Verma, NCW Law Officer, addressed Laws Related to Women. Dr. Pragya Paliwal Gaur, Vice Chancellor of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, explored evolving narratives in her session Media in Transition, Women in Transformation. Swaty Gupta, broadcaster with Prasar Bharti,

emphasized the critical role of language in shaping perception. Interactive discussions enabled participants to share regional experiences, success stories, and challenges in reporting on women's issues. A special dialogue session with Chairperson Rahatkar encouraged journalists to act as catalysts for change and become strong voices for women's empowerment. The seminar concluded with a collective call for ethical journalism that safeguards dignity, promotes gender justice, and strengthens media's role as a partner in women's empowerment.

### New forensic lab

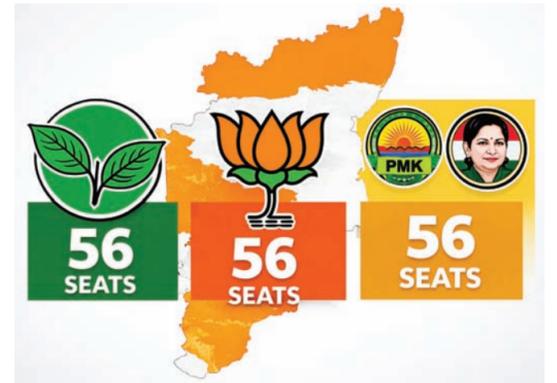
**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government has proposed to set up a new Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL) at Sheikh Sarai with an outlay of Rs 2 crore this year, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Tuesday. Presenting the 2026-27 Budget, Gupta said the move is aimed at improving forensic infrastructure and ensuring the timely investigation of criminal cases in the city. At present, Delhi has only one forensic science laboratory in Rohini, which is burdened with a heavy caseload. Gupta said that in many cases, further legal proceedings get stalled due to delays in forensic reports. "Once an FIR is registered, the process often gets held up as reports are not received on time," she said. The Chief Minister said the government will prioritise improving the forensic system so that cases can be resolved more efficiently. Meanwhile, officials at the Rohini forensic laboratory said operations have improved in recent months with better resources. "Earlier, we were handling around 1,200 cases per month. Over the past five months, after a new in-charge took over, the situation has improved, and we are now reporting more than 3,200 cases," an official said. The official attributed the improvement to increased manpower and upgraded equipment.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### POLL ALLIANCE

**Seat-sharing agreement done deal in NDA; AIADMK allots 56 seats to BJP, PMK, AMMK**



**CHENNAI:** The AIADMK-led NDA in Tamil Nadu on Monday finalised seat sharing arrangement for key constituents of the alliance for the April 23 Assembly polls, with the Dravidian party allotting 27 seats for BJP, 18 for PMK and 11 for AMMK. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, addressing a crowded press conference at party headquarters Puratchi Thalaivar MGR Maaligai, here, said talks continued with other allies as well and it will be concluded by tonight. The names of constituencies to be contested by alliance parties will be identified soon, he said, adding the seat sharing talks were cordial. Elections to 234 Assembly seats in Tamil Nadu will be held on April 23. NDA's other constituents include former union minister GK Vasan-led Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) and IJK. Asked about the number of seats to be contested by AIADMK, Palaniswami said talks continued with some parties and following its conclusion the information would

be shared. In the presence of leaders of alliance parties including senior BJP leader Piyush Goyal, PMK top leader Anbumani Ramadoss and AMMK chief TTV Dhinakaran, Palaniswami described the alliance it leads as one marked by "bonding," and called it a "victorious" combine. He expressed confidence that the alliance would go on to win at least 210 Assembly constituencies out of the total 234. "The alliance will win and AIADMK will form the government," he asserted. Ridiculing "protracted, delayed" seat-sharing exercise involving "war of words" between the DMK and Congress, he alleged the CPI(M), which got six seats in 2021 was now struggling to get five Assembly seats. "Piyush Goyal, Nainar Nagenthran L Murugan, Anbumani Ramadoss TTV Dhinakaran came in the morning, it (seat-sharing) was decided in the afternoon and the decision is being announced in the evening; see how quickly it has happened.

CENTRE INFORMS LOK SABHA

## 'Rajasthan tops drug recoveries in 2025, 292 drones seized'

Press Trust Of India

92 unmanned aerial vehicles were recovered along the Indo-Pak border in 2025.

**NEW DELHI:** Rajasthan recorded the highest quantity of drug seizures among border states in 2025, followed by Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, adding that 292 unmanned aerial vehicles were recovered along the Indo-Pakistan border in 2025. Replying to a query by MP Shyamkumar Daulat Barve, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said nearly 2.25 lakh kg of narcotics were seized in Rajasthan in 2025, the highest in the country. Around 1.16 lakh kg of narcotics were seized in Punjab, while 80,331 kg were recovered from Uttar Pradesh. The data also showed consistently high volume of drug recoveries in these states



over the past three years, underlining their vulnerability to cross-border trafficking.

Other states reporting significant seizures in 2025 include West Bengal (75,948 kg), Bihar

(49,964 kg) and Tripura (46,346 kg). Addressing concerns over narco-terrorism, the minister said "foreign based elements are involved in facilitating narco terrorism by pushing narcotics across the border to generate funds for financing terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab."

**The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**  
(Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

# Niveshak Shivir

The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), operating under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), is launching Niveshak Shivir - a dedicated initiative to address the concerns and queries of claimants across India.

**Objective**

Niveshak Shivir aims to simplify investor services, promote financial literacy and strengthen investor protection to:

- Facilitate the transfer of unpaid dividends (held for 6-7 years).
- Assisting with KYC and nomination updates with the company.
- Resolving pending IEPFA claims of unclaimed and unpaid shares and dividends.

**Scheduled City**

To take this vision forward, Niveshak Shivir will be organised in **Bhubaneswar**.

**Event Details**

**Date/Time:** 27th March 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 04:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Event Square, Near Hotel Swosti Premium, Jaydev Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Pincode -751013

**How to Participate**

Please register by scanning the QR code provided in this notice or by clicking on the link: <https://qr.me-qr.com//NiveshakShivir>

This registration will help us ensure that you have received the most effective and timely assistance in Niveshak Shivir.

**For More Information**

Please visit our official website at [www.iepfa.gov.in](http://www.iepfa.gov.in). You can also follow us on our social media channels for the latest updates and announcements related to Niveshak Shivir.

We encourage all claimants to take advantage of this opportunity to have their concerns addressed directly by our experts. Your engagement is crucial in helping us provide better service and support.

**Toll Free Number: 14453 | Call Centre: Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

[www.iepfa.gov.in](http://www.iepfa.gov.in) |

**CBC 07110/12/0013/2526**

## Strict directives

**KOLKATA:** The state administration on Tuesday issued strict directives to all government departments, employees and officials in West Bengal, making it clear that "no unrest will be tolerated" during the upcoming Assembly elections. The instructions were issued as part of the state and the Election Commission of India's coordinated efforts to ensure a free and peaceful electoral process. The communication emphasised a zero-tolerance approach towards any disruption.

**Ministry of Women & Child Development**  
**Govt. of India**

### NOTICE

This is for the information of the General Public that the process of receiving applications for the PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR (PMRBP) will commence on 01.04.2026 on the National Awards Portal (<https://awards.gov.in>). The awards are given to children who deserve recognition at the national level in the fields of **Bravery, Sports, Social Service, Science & Technology, Environment, and Arts & Culture.**

Any child above the age of 5 years and not exceeding 18 years (as on 31st July, 2026), who is an Indian Citizen and residing in India is eligible for the awards.

Nominations from any citizen will be received only through the National Awards Portal on <https://awards.gov.in>. Self-nomination & recommendations for the awards, both shall be considered. The last date for receipt of online applications is **31.07.2026**. For more details, please visit the National Awards Portal (<https://awards.gov.in>).

**CBC 46101/11/0046/2526**

**AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED**  
(CIN:L65922RJ2011PLCO34297) Regd. & Corp. Office: 201-202, 2nd Floor, South End Square, Mansarovar Industrial Area, Jaipur. 302020

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred upon me under section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said rules on the dates mentioned as below. The borrower and Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED** for an amount mentioned as below and further interest thereon.

Name of the Borrower	Date & Amount of Demand Notice	Description of Property	Date & Type of Possession
<b>Chhabi Lal Dewangan</b> , Nirmala Bai, Bhubneshwar Kumar Guarantor: Toran Devangan, Harish Kumar Dhruw (A/C NO.) 201217201564975 & 221217202319031	6 Jun 26 Rs. 613857/- & Rs. 568383/- 5 Jan 26	Khasra No 243/1 Part, P.H.No-39, Vill.-Kokadi, Teh.-Kuruad, Dist.-Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, Pin Code-493663 <b>Admeasuring 0.02 Hect.</b>	Symbolic Possession Taken On 20 March 26
<b>Purushottam Sahu</b> , Divya Bharti Guarantor: Ishvar Sahu (A/C NO.) LNRAI00322-230248855	6 Jun 25 Rs. 1317548/- 4 Jun 25	Property Of Kh.No.-16/105, Situated At Mouza-Birgaon(Banjari Nagar), R.N.M.-Raipur-17, Teh.&Dist.- Raipur (C.G.). <b>Admeasuring 600 Sq.Ft.</b>	Symbolic Possession Taken On 20 March 26
<b>Rajesh Kumar Lahare</b> , Minaraj Lahre, Jagdish Lahre (A/C NO.) 231214203333091	6 Jan 26 Rs. 1394404/- 5 Jan 26	Khasra No- 36/45 New (Part Of Khasra No- 36/30 Old) Situated At Mouza- Ramgarh, P.H.N- 30old, New 17, Tehsil- Mungeli, Dist- Mungeli C.G 495334 <b>Admeasuring 139.4 Sq.Mtr.</b>	Symbolic Possession Taken On 21 March 26

Place : Chattisgarh      Date: 25-03-2026      Authorised Officer Aavas Financiers Limited

"I'm proud of this show not just for its nuanced writing or the way it has been brought to screen but for the people behind it. The sheer talent, the commitment, the heart. These actors have inspired the actor in me to raise my own bar."

HRITHIK ROSHAN



# & Glitters

## O.T.T Watch



### Bhabiji characters return with fun

Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain: Fun on the Run, the spin-off of the beloved sitcom, will premiere on ZEE5 from April 3. The adventure comedy reunites fan-favourite characters, promising laughter, nostalgia, and fun for audiences online.



### Thrills await in Inside Season 3

The Sidemen are back in Inside Season 3, where celebrities share a house and a shrinking prize fund. Tensions rise as strategy, temptation, and unexpected choices create chaos, revealing raw human behavior under high-pressure conditions.



### Bait: Comedy meets cultural chaos

Oscar and Emmy winner Riz Ahmed stars in Bait as Shah Latif, a struggling London actor whose chaotic four-day journey to audition for James Bond tests family, love, and ambition, blending sharp comedy with cultural depth.



### Vijay Sethupathi's thrilling rural tale

Vijay Sethupathi leads as Muthu in Kaattaan, a gripping thriller set in rural Tamil Nadu. When a severed head is found, villagers' conflicting stories blur lines between heroism and menace, keeping audiences on edge.



### Emotional journey in Projapati 2

Mithun Chakraborty and Dev reunite in Projapati 2, a heartfelt spiritual sequel. Amid festival celebrations, family expectations clash with personal dreams, as widower Joy navigates love, duty, and generational bonds in a Bengali household.

CLOSE UP

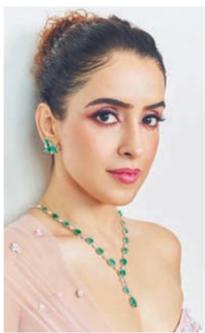
## Sanya is mysterious bride in 'Sundar Poonam'

The romantic thriller promises a gripping story of obsessive love, dark secrets, and unexpected twists.

Central Chronicle News

### Sanya Malhotra takes on her most challenging role yet in Sundar Poonam.

Actress Sanya Malhotra is set to headline the highly anticipated romantic thriller, Sundar Poonam, marking yet another exciting collaboration with Abundantia Entertainment after Shakuntala Devi. Directed by Pulkit, known for his diverse storytelling in films like Bhakshak and Maalik, the project promises a gripping narrative and a role that pushes Sanya into uncharted territory as an actor. Speaking about her character, Sanya revealed, "Sundar Poonam is incredibly exciting as it brings me face-to-face with one of the most challenging roles I've taken on so far. The character is layered, intense, and emotionally demanding. Pulkit's sensitivity towards storytelling adds immense depth, and working again with Abundantia Entertainment and Vikram has been fulfilling. I'm thrilled to explore this new space and share a different side of myself with the audience." The film's teaser, shared recently on Sanya's social media, hints at a suspenseful storyline: on an idyllic honeymoon in Kashmir, a newlywed couple goes missing, revealing chilling truths about Poonam, whose obsessive love, twisted past and shocking secrets drag everyone into a deadly spiral.



"One of the most challenging roles"- Sanya Malhotra



Aditya Rawal co-stars, bringing his acclaimed versatility from roles in Daldal and Subedar. With its layered storytelling, stellar cast, and scenic backdrops, Sundar Poonam is shaping up to be one of 2026's most talked-about cinematic experiences, slated for release later this year.

nic backdrops, Sundar Poonam is shaping up to be one of 2026's most talked-about cinematic experiences, slated for release later this year.

| HOLLYWOOD |

## Barry Keoghan calls fame dark on the online front

Central Chronicle News

The actor shares how social media hate has affected his personal life and young son. Irish actor Barry Keoghan, known for his role in Saltburn, has candidly opened up about the negative side of online fame. While he acknowledges having an "incredible fanbase," the actor admitted that he also faces a significant amount of hate and abuse targeting his appearance. Keoghan revealed that the online negativity has made him more reserved and hesitant to engage with the public. The scru-



Barry Keoghan opens up about online trolling

welcomed in August 2022 with ex-girlfriend Alyson Sandro. "It's disappointing that my little boy has to read all of this stuff when he gets older," he shared. The actor's decision to remove his social media handles in 2024 followed intense online abuse after his breakup with singer Sabrina Carpenter, underscoring the mental toll of digital scrutiny. The actor admitted that such criticism has affected his daily life. "It's made me shy away, it's made me really go inside myself and not want to attend places, not want to go outside," he said.

### HIGHLIGHT

● Barry Keoghan opens up about facing intense online abuse over his appearance.

tiny, he says, has made him hyper-aware of how people perceive him in every setting. Keoghan also expressed concern for his three-year-old son, Brando, whom he

## CineBriefs

BEST OF THE REST

Bollywood

### Nawazuddin Siddiqui joins Sohum Shah for Tumbbad 2

Tumbbad 2 is all set to raise the bar with a massive city-like set being built in Mumbai, bringing together Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sohum Shah for the highly anticipated sequel. Reports suggest a sprawling 7-8 acre set will host the first schedule, promising a scale larger than the original 2018 cult hit. Nawazuddin, who joins Sohum in pivotal roles, expressed excitement about exploring his multilayered character in this immersive universe. Adding to the buzz, international prosthetics experts Shaune Harrison and Paula Anne Booker are on board, contributing their expertise in creature design and practical makeup effects to elevate the film's atmospheric storytelling.

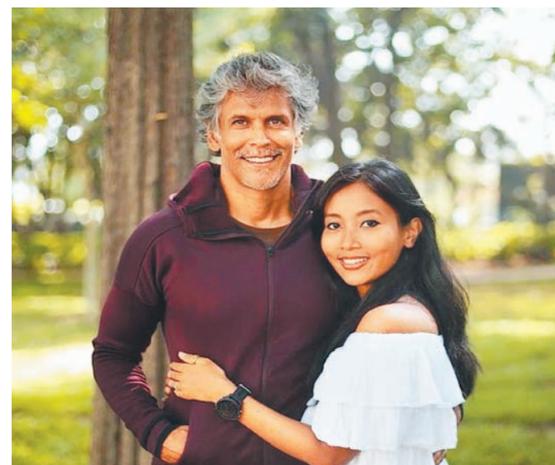
Web Series

### High-stakes strategy series The Alliance Launches India

Banijay Asia, in collaboration with Prime Video India, is bringing the global reality hit The Alliance to Indian audiences. The Hindi adaptation of Talpa Studios' acclaimed format promises high-stakes strategy, shifting loyalties, and intense social gameplay, reimagined for Indian viewers. Participants must balance trust and betrayal, forging alliances while navigating constant twists, making it a true test of character. Originally a long-running success in the Netherlands, the show has broken records with top ratings and strong online engagement. Banijay Asia emphasizes culturally relevant storytelling, while Prime Video India provides the perfect platform to showcase this addictive reality series to millions.

The Bollywood hot pair

### Milind Soman reflects on age difference and marriage



Milind Soman recently addressed the trolling he and his wife Ankit Konwar faced due to their 26-year age gap. While Milind admitted the criticism never really bothered him, he acknowledged it initially affected Ankit because of her limited exposure. The couple navigated this phase through open communication, mutual understanding, and trust. Highlighting

their differences Ankit being Assamese and Milind Maharashtrian, and from different generations he said these contrasts strengthened rather than hindered their bond. Married since 2018, their relationship has lasted over 13 years, showing that empathy, clarity, and respect can help couples thrive despite societal scrutiny and unconventional norms.

Fashion

### Sreeleela balances bold florals with sleek modernity

Sreeleela stuns in a navy and red saree by Rishi and Vibhuti, effortlessly blending modern styling with traditional elegance. Styled by Kunal Mundhe, her look balances bold florals against a fluid, weightless drape that moves gracefully with every step.



## Trending on Insta



@pulkitsamrat

### Kriti cheers Pulkit's workout motivation video

Kriti Kharbanda praised husband Pulkit Samrat's gym session, saying "So proud of u," as he shared a motivational Monday workout video on inspiring fans with snippets from his intense fitness routine.

@harshvardhanrane

### Harshvardhan Rane's rise from streets to stardom

Actor Harshvardhan Rane reflected on his journey from delivery boy to star in an Instagram post, praising John Abraham as "the world's best producer" while highlighting patience, resilience, and hard work shaping his career.



"I don't have any alternative thoughts about marriage. I've left everything to God. I don't think you need to get married to build a family. I've frozen my eggs, so I can become a mother whenever I want. I can have my own child."  
Daisy Shah



# Bella



New age parents are planning for pregnancy like a race.

THE BEAUTIFUL ME

## Parenting journey ought to be stress free

Welcome to "trimester zero," where awareness meets rising pressure to get everything perfectly right.

Before the cravings, scans and baby names, there's a new phase quietly redefining modern motherhood "trimester zero." It's the time before conception, now framed as a period of planning, prepping and, increasingly, pressure. What was once simple eat well, rest, and let nature take its course has evolved into a carefully curated routine. Think fertility tracking apps, supplement stacks, clean eating, and pre-pregnancy workout plans. For many women, especially in urban India, preparing for a baby now feels less instinctive and more



like a goal to achieve. This shift reflects changing realities. Women are choosing motherhood later, conversations around fertility are more open, and medical science encourages early intervention. Pre-conception care today includes screening for hormonal imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, and conditions like PCOS or thyroid disorders. At its best, this awareness is empowering it allows women

**HIGHLIGHT**

● **Pregnancy planning has a new beginning long before conception even happens.**

cies, and conditions like PCOS or thyroid disorders. At its best, this awareness is empowering it allows women



to understand their bodies better and make informed choices. It also brings partners into the conversation, making pregnancy preparation more shared than ever before.

But somewhere between awareness and optimisation, anxiety slips in. Social media has turned pregnancy prep into an aesthetic glowing skin, perfect routines, and "ideal" timelines. The question quietly changes from "Am I ready?" to "Am I doing enough?" The pressure to get everything right can feel overwhelming, making women second-guess even the smallest decisions.

## Dolphin skin nails define minimal glam in 2026



"Dolphin skin nails" are emerging as one of 2026's most refined beauty trends, blending subtle colour with high-impact shine. Inspired by Demi Lovato, the look features cool-toned grey hues finished with an ultra-glossy, almost wet-like sheen that mirrors a dolphin's smooth skin. Unlike bold chrome or glitter styles, this trend leans into minimalism, offering a soft yet luxurious appeal. Nail artists achieve the effect using gel polish, layered shine and sometimes magnetic detailing for depth. Typically shaped in a squoval style, these nails are both practical and polished, making them a go-to choice for those seeking understated elegance with a modern, trend-forward twist.

**Myth or Truth: Don't fall for the bamboo massage weight loss myth**

The viral bamboo massage trend may promise easy weight loss, but it doesn't actually burn fat. This therapy uses heated bamboo sticks to relax muscles, improve circulation and reduce tension. While it can make you feel lighter by easing bloating or water retention, the results are temporary. There is no scientific evidence link-

ing bamboo massage to real fat loss. Its benefits are mainly limited to relaxation and stress relief. For lasting weight loss, experts stress the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits. Bamboo therapy can complement wellness routines, but it should not be seen as a quick fix for shedding extra kilos.

| FASHION |

## Spring summer 2026 fashion brings a wardrobe update

Central Chronicle News

Spring-Summer 2026 fashion is all about ease, elevated with a smarter, more mindful approach to style. As temperatures rise, wardrobes are leaning into breathable fabrics like cotton, linen and airy blends that keep you cool while looking polished. Flowy dresses, relaxed co-ord sets, oversized shirts and wide-leg trousers define the season, offering comfort without compromising on style. Soft pastels, sun-washed neutrals and playful checks dominate the palette, bringing a fresh, effortless charm to everyday



dressing. But beyond what you wear, how you shop is evolving too. Women are moving away from impulse buys and embracing intentional

fashion choosing versatile pieces that can be styled in multiple ways. A breezy dress can take you from brunch to evening with a quick switch

of accessories, while a classic linen shirt pairs just as well with denims as it does with tailored pants. Building a capsule wardrobe is becoming

**HIGHLIGHT**

Spring Summer 2026 brings effortless fashion into sharp focus this season today.

a preferred approach, focusing on quality over quantity. This shift also encourages more sustainable fashion choices and mindful consumption. Accessories are doing the heavy lifting this season. Statement sunglasses, structured mini bags and comfortable sneakers instantly elevate minimal outfits. Jewellery remains delicate and layered, adding just the right amount of sparkle without overpowering the look.

## Divas Dazzle

BEST OF THE REST

Celebs

### Athiya Shetty proves tie-dye can be festive and chic

Athiya Shetty brings a refreshing twist to festive fashion in a stunning rani pink tie-dye ensemble by Heena Kochhar. Moving away from heavy, traditional silhouettes, the actor embraces a fluid choga-style kurta crafted in luminous tissue and layered with tie-dye textures. The vibrant pink palette is balanced with a yellow dupatta, adding warmth and dimension to the look. Intricate zari, aari and sitara embroidery on the yoke elevates the outfit, lending it a jewellery-like finish. Styled minimally with statement accessories, Athiya's look beautifully redefines tie-dye as festive-ready, blending comfort, elegance and craftsmanship with effortless grace.

Achiever

### Tamannaah Bhatia's 21-year journey of stardom

Tamannaah Bhatia completing 21 years in Indian cinema is a testament to her enduring talent, adaptability and grace. From her early beginnings to becoming a pan-India star, she has consistently reinvented herself across languages and genres. Her journey reflects resilience, discipline and an unwavering passion for performance. Over the years, Tamannaah has balanced commercial entertainers with strong, character-driven roles, earning both popularity and respect. As she continues to evolve with projects like Vvan, her milestone stands as an inspiring reminder that longevity in the film industry comes with hard work, perseverance and a fearless approach to growth, making her a true achiever.

The Inspirors

### Shilpa Shetty inspires healthy living at every age



Even at 50, Shilpa Shetty sets a remarkable example of fitness and balance. She manages a disciplined daily routine that seamlessly combines intense workouts, yoga, and mindful nutrition with her professional and personal commitments. One exercise she swears by is Reverse Hypers, which she calls one of the most underrated glute builders, effectively strength-

ening the lower back while sculpting the glutes. Alongside strength training and cardio, her approach focuses on flexibility, core strength, and overall wellness. Shilpa's consistency and dedication inspire women to prioritise health, showing that with the right habits and discipline, one can maintain vitality, energy, and a toned physique well into their 50s.

Wellness

### It's not Pizza, your hormones are affecting your skin

Blaming junk food or a bad skincare routine for breakouts is easy, but your hormones might be the real reason behind acne, pigmentation or sudden skin changes. When hormones like androgens rise, they increase oil production, leading to clogged pores and stubborn pimples that don't go away easily. At the same time, fluctuations in estrogen can trigger excess melanin production, causing dark patches, uneven skin tone and conditions like melasma. Even stress plays a bigger role than you think high cortisol levels can lead to puffiness, dullness and tired-looking skin. Conditions such as PCOS or thyroid imbalances can further disrupt how your skin behaves over time.



## Divas on Insta

Viral Cleaning hack

### Plump skin naturally with chia seed mask

Soak chia seeds in water until they form a gel-like texture, then apply on your face. Leave for 15 minutes before rinsing. This mask deeply hydrates, plumps skin and improves overall texture.



Viral Beauty hack

### Onion juice remedy for stronger hair roots

Extract fresh onion juice and apply it directly to your scalp using a cotton pad. Leave it on for 20 minutes before rinsing with a mild shampoo. This remedy helps strengthen hair roots, improve blood circulation and reduce hair fall naturally.



## Sports



I dismiss it as “nonsense” a suggestion I could take over as Real Madrid coach next season.

**Jürgen Klopp**  
Former Liverpool manager

# ‘Invested approx 7 crore to improve crowd management’

RCB and the KSCA were forced to enhance security measures after the stampede on June 4, 2025 near the stadium.

Press Trust Of India

Menon said the entry points to the stadium have also been reworked to manage the rush at the gates.

**BENGALURU:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru CEO Rajesh Menon on Tuesday said the franchise has invested nearly Rs seven crore to enhance the crowd management infrastructure in and around the M Chinnaswamy Stadium which witnessed the death of 11 fans in a stampede during the team's IPL trophy celebrations last year.

During the upcoming IPL, the reigning champions are scheduled to play five matches here, starting with this season's inaugural match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday. “We have invested approximately Rs 7 crore towards enhancing crowd management infrastructure, including multiple baggage scanners and command centres,” Menon said in the pre-season press meet here.

He said the RCB will ensure a safe and seamless match-day experience for fans at the stadium, even though the hugely popular pre-season ‘Unbox’ event has been cancelled.

“We have significantly strengthened crowd man-



A man looks at the map of M Chinnaswamy Stadium after its security and infrastructural improvements, ahead of IPL 2026, in Bengaluru. | Photo PTI

## To honour stampede victims, RCB players to wear jersey No. 11 for practice

**BENGALURU:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru players will train wearing jersey No.11 on match days during the upcoming IPL and the franchise also plans to keep 11 seats empty in honour of the fans who died in a stampede outside the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here last year. The fans had lost their lives here on June 4 in a stampede that was triggered by chaos during RCB's celebratory events after the team's maiden IPL trophy win. The franchise had copped massive criticism for its handling of the celebrations which drew lakhs to the streets without requisite security clearances. “The players will be wearing jersey No.11 for the practice on the game day -- the practice time before the match,” RCB CEO Rajesh Menon told reporters here on Tuesday. “All the players will have jersey No.11 on their back; not for the game, but for the practice. This is a tribute to our fans, who will always remain a part of our journey,” he said. “Apart from that, they will be also wearing black armbands on that day. We are also looking at having 11 permanent seats empty in Chinnaswamy Stadium. This is for the 11 fans who will be with us forever,” he added. The defending champions will be playing their season-opener here on March 28 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in what will be the first of their five home matches at this venue. RCB are set to play their remaining two home matches at Raipur's Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium this IPL.

agement measures. We have implemented AI-led CCTV solutions across the stadium, including inside, the concourse, and surrounding areas, thing has been executed on a war footing. We have worked to follow

powered by an AI tool called Jarvis.

“This system provides real-time alerts, including stand-specific crowd counts, to ensure better monitoring and control. These CCTV feeds will also be accessible to the Commissioner's office for real-time monitoring,” he said.

Menon said the franchise has adhered to all the parameters laid down by the Karnataka state government and the High Court.

“I would like to thank the government for making this possible. It has been a long journey since June 4, and every-

the SOPs provided by the court and ensure all protocols are in place,” he assured. Menon then gave details of the revised framework governing the stadium.

“Under the updated agreements between the BCCI, KSCA and RCB, the state association will serve as the lead organiser along with the franchise, and will implement the standard operating procedures, including emergency planning protocols, and indemnify any breach of the stadium agreement.

“These SOPs will be followed by both the franchise and the state association, with specific guidelines also in place for victory parades,” he said. In the previous agreement, the IPL franchise was solely responsible for organising the event while the KSCA acted as venue provider.

Menon said the entry points to the stadium have also been reworked to manage the rush at the gates. “The stadium will also see reworked entry, exit and fan movement protocols based on recommendations from local authorities. Ticket holders will also be entitled to metro access on match days. Parking can be pre-booked, and all stadium gates will open four hours prior to the match,” he added.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### THE SALE IS SUBJECT TO APPROVAL FROM THE BCCI

## US-based-led consortium to acquire Rajasthan Royals for USD 1.63 billion



**NEW DELHI:** IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals is set to be sold to US-based Kal Somani-led consortium for a whopping USD 1.63 billion (approx Rs 15,290 crore). The Somani-led consortium includes Rob Walton from the Walmart family and Hamp family (Ford). Somani is an Arizona-based tech entrepreneur who has founded IntraEdge, Truyo.AI and Academian.

The other contenders were Times Internet-led consortium, the Aditya Birla Group and the Mittal family led

by ArcelorMittal CEO Aditya Mittal.

The sale of Rajasthan Royals is subject to approval from the BCCI and will come into effect after the 2026 edition. British-Indian Manoj Badale held a 65 per cent stake in the Royals. “Kal is an existing investor in the franchise. The deal is subject to approval from the BCCI and will be signed soon. The price of USD 1.63 billion reflects how far the IPL has come as a brand,” a well-placed source told PTI.

### LATEST ICC WOMEN'S T20I RANKINGS

## Mandhana retains 2nd spot, Harmanpreet rises to 14th in T20I



**DUBAI:** Swashbuckling India batter Smriti Mandhana retained her second spot, while skipper Harmanpreet Kaur moved up to 14th in the latest ICC women's T20I rankings for batters released here on Tuesday. Apart from Mandhana, the big-hitting Shafali Verma was the other Indian in the top

10, holding on to her sixth position, while Jemimah Rodrigues remained joint 11th. Among bowlers, spin all-rounder Deepti Sharma climbed one spot to third with pacer Renuka Singh Thakur retaining her sixth place. Seamer Arundhati Reddy, however, slipped out of the top 10 to 11th. PTI

## Asian CL matches rescheduled for April

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Four Asian Champions League Elite series that were postponed due to the war in the Middle East will be moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and played on a single-leg basis next month, the Asian Football Confederation said Tuesday. The last-16 matches had originally been scheduled to be played in Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on a home-and-away basis in the first two weeks of March. Those matches will now be held on April 13 and 14 as single legs ahead of the tournament's finals stage. Defending champions Al-Ahli are scheduled to take on Al-Duhail from Qatar while four-time champions Al-Hilal face Al-Sadd. Shabab Al-Ahli from the UAE plays Iran's Tractor FC and Al-Wahda meets Saudi Pro League champions Al-Ittihad.

### | AFC ASIAN CUP |

## Ryan Williams likely for India debut; Jamil names squad for qualifier

Press Trust Of India

He had earlier been part of India's preparatory camp for the Bangladesh qualifier but missed out on the lineup due to pending documentation.



**NEW DELHI:** Australian-born forward Ryan Williams could make his much-anticipated India debut after being named in a 23-member squad for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifier against Hong Kong on March 31 in Kochi. Williams was included in the squad after FIFA cleared his change of association, paving the way for the 31-year-old winger to represent India at the senior international level.

With all formalities now complete, he is in line to make his debut against

Hong Kong. Already ruled out of qualification for the Asian Cup, India will look to sign off their campaign on a positive note with a blend of experience and youth in the squad.

Williams, whose mother hails from an Anglo-Indian family in Mumbai, will thus become only the second foreign-born footballer of Indian origin to play for the country after Japan-born Arata Izumi, who represented India between 2013 and 2014.

A versatile attacker cur-

rently playing for Indian Super League side Bengaluru FC, Williams relinquished his Australian passport last year to play for India.

Born in Perth in 1993, Williams began his professional journey in England after joining Portsmouth's academy in 2010.

He broke into the senior side a year later, making his debut against Middlesbrough, before going on to have stints with clubs such as Fulham and Barnsley.

On the international stage, Williams represented Australia at the youth level, featuring in the 2012 AFC U-19 Championship and the 2013 FIFA U-20 World Cup. His only senior appearance for Australia came in a 2019 friendly against South Korea, a non-competitive fixture that allowed him to

switch national allegiance under FIFA rules.

The Blue Tigers began their camp in Kochi on Tuesday where 20 players along with the staff, have assembled. Defender Anwar Ali, midfielder Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, and forward Edmund Lalrindika, who played their last ISL match against Mohammedan Sporting Club on Monday will join the squad later on Tuesday. “This is a good opportunity for us to build for the future,” India head coach Khalid Jamil stated in a release.

“We have a lot of promising players coming through, who are currently with the U20 and U23 national teams, playing in the SAFF U20 Championship in Maldives, and the U23 Tri-Nation in Arunachal Pradesh.

### | ENGLAND TEST CAPTAIN BEN STOKES |

## ‘Last 3 months have been the hardest period’

Press Trust Of India

**LONDON:** England Test captain Ben Stokes has described the past three months, which involved a difficult Ashes campaign, as the “hardest period” of his leadership journey while reiterating his commitment to rebuild the side with coach Brendon McCullum.

After the England

and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed that Stokes, McCullum and managing director Rob Key would continue in their roles despite England's 4-1 drubbing in the Ashes, the 34-year-old shared an emotional open letter on social media on Monday.

“Being England captain is the greatest honour a player can be given



and I do not take it for granted. It has its highs and it has its lows, it makes you want to smile

It has its highs and it has its lows, it makes you want to smile it makes you want to cry.” Stokes said in post with a picture of himself, Key

**Ben Stokes**  
England Test captain

and McCullum on Instagram. “It completely and utterly consumes you and feels like it's the only thing in your life at times. The last 3 months has without a doubt been the hardest period of my captaincy journey, it's tested me in so many different ways and I'm sure every other captain has gone through this as well,” he wrote.

### INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

## Dubey, Payne named replacements for Akash Deep and Edwards

**NEW DELHI:** Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have named Saurabh Dubey and David Payne as replacements for the injured Akash Deep and Jack Edwards respectively ahead of the IPL beginning on March 28.

India pacer Akash Deep has been ruled out of the tournament with a lumbar stress injury. He will remain under the supervision of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) medical team at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. “Saurabh, a left-arm pacer, will replace Akash at KKR. He will join KKR for Rs 30 lakh,” an IPL media advisory stated. Saurabh, the 28-year-old Vidarbha bowler, who is yet to make his IPL debut, was previously part of the SRH squad. Meanwhile, England pacer Payne has been signed by SRH as



a replacement for Jack Edwards, who has been sidelined with a foot injury. Edwards had earlier been picked up by SRH for Rs 3 crore following a bidding contest with Chennai Super Kings.

Payne, who has featured in one ODI for England and played 233 T20 matches, claiming 304 wickets, will join SRH for Rs 1.5 crore. PTI

### A NARROW LOSS

## Yuki and Venus lose tight first round contest in Miami Open

**MIAMI:** India's Yuki Bhambri and his Kiwi partner Michael Venus made a first round exit from the Miami Open following a narrow loss to John-Patrick Smith and Sander Arends here.

Yuki and Venus went down 6-4, 5-7, 13-15 in a round of 32 contest to the Australian-Dutch combine in one hour 52 minutes.

There was little separating the two teams. Smith and Arends converted half of their four break points while Yuki and Venus were able to convert the couple of break points they earned in the match.

It was the first meeting between Arends and Smit, and, Yuki and Venus. Yuki had reached the semifinals of the Indian Wells alongside Andre Goransson earlier this month. The 33-year-old Indian had famously



made the semifinals of the US Open last year with Venus. PTI

## Sports News

# Langer backs Pant to excel in second year as LSG skipper

Pant became the costliest player in IPL history when he was bought by LSG for a whopping price of Rs 27 crore last year.

Press Trust Of India

The former Australian opener said Mohammed Shami's presence is vital for all young bowlers in the team.

**LUCKNOW:** Rishabh Pant becomes unmatched as a cricketer when he plays with a smile on his face says, Lucknow Super Giants head coach Justin Langer, backing the Indian wicketkeeper-batter to have a better year at the helm of the franchise in IPL 2026. But there wasn't much to cheer for Pant and LSG in IPL 2025 as they finished at seventh position on the points table.

Langer said while Pant was "trying hard to impress" last year, the stint also helped the franchise and their coaching staff understand more about him. "If we see Rishabh laughing, smiling and having fun, he'll be a brilliant captain, and that's what we learned last year. He (had) joined a new franchise, trying hard to impress, which is natural," Langer told Jio-Hotstar.

"But we're already seeing a lighter Rishabh (now). He knows the players now and we have got his back. He's smiling a



lot and dancing. When he's like that and starts playing cricket, there's no one more exciting to watch in the world," he added. With a top order consisting Australia T20I captain Mitchell Marsh, his South African counterpart Aiden Markram and former West Indies skipper Nicholas Pooran, Langer said LSG's batting was "No.1" last year but they still could not go the distance which led to the team making amends in the auction.

"We had a very good

auction and that's where it starts. We had a great base last year. I think our batting was No.1 in the competition last year. (But) we weren't able to capitalise on that," he said. "But this year, we've added to our squad. There will be some really tough selection calls. But if our batting can keep firing and our bowling can keep developing, then we've got a very good team."

The former Australian opener said Mohammed Shami's presence is vital

for all young bowlers in the team.

"During the team lunch, Mohammed Shami was speaking and all the boys were hanging on his every word, their eyes never left him," Langer remarked.

"He's incredibly experienced (and) a true warrior. We often discuss big brother-little brother or master-apprentice dynamics in coaching, and that's exactly what we have here."

Langer expressed confidence in coaching staff's work behind the scenes with bowlers who are coming off injury lay-off. India speedster Mayank Yadav is one of those who has had a considerable time away from the game.

## IPL captains' meeting to discuss impact sub rule, code of conduct

**Mumbai:** The IPL captains' meeting with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will be held here on Wednesday ahead of the 19th edition of the tournament, and the confab will hold discussion on matters such as impact substitute rule and code of conduct. The captains' meeting with the BCCI is a norm and the meeting here will be addressed by former India player Javagal Srinath and Nitin Menon, who are the heads of match referees and umpires panels respectively. "There is nothing new in the regulations this year. Some of the captains and coaches are new and it is important to inform them about the rules," a BCCI official told PTL. Among the points to be discussed also are two bouncers per over, checks for the size of the bat, replacement of the ball when it is lost or unfit for play, retired out calls, and use of saliva.

## RCB pacer Yash Dayal to miss IPL 2026 but remains in contract with team: Mo Bobat

**BENGALURU:** Controversial pacer Yash Dayal will not join the Royal Challengers Bengaluru squad for the upcoming IPL but he remains contracted to the squad, the franchise's Director of Cricket Mo Bobat said on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old Dayal, who is facing two cases of alleged sexual exploitation, has not played any competitive cricket since appearing in the IPL 2025 final that RCB won to be crowned champions for the first time.

"So just to confirm that Yash will not be joining up with the squad. As you know, he is going through a personal situation currently, and just to clarify, we've been very supportive of Yash to date, and that's reflected in the opportunity to

either retain or release players," said Bobat in the season-opening press meet here on Tuesday.

"We wanted to retain him, and he remains under contract and will continue, you know, in the short term, foreseeable to remain under contract," he added.

Dayal, who got married recently, has been accused of sexual exploitation by two women, one of them a minor teenager. Bobat said the franchise has kept the line of communication open with him.

"We are communicating with him regularly, you know, I spoke to him earlier today as well. But it has been decided that it is not in his best interest, or in the franchise's best interest, for him to join up with us at this point.

| INAUGURAL NATIONAL INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS |

# Learning curve for both athletes and officials

By Philem Dipak Singh

The National Indoor Championships is using shot put landing mats of Malaysia-based company AFN Sports. This company provides portable throwing circles made of wood in six pieces and netting systems.

**BHUBANESWAR:** Young shot putter Omkar Prasad Nanda resorted to using a worn-out shoe, while runner C Priyanka relied on her experience of training on a curvy track, as athletes and officials adjusted to an unfamiliar setting at the inaugural National Indoor Championships, which began here on Tuesday.

Nanda was among the fortunate few who had been training at the state-of-the-art indoor stadium hosting the championships, as he resides at the residential hostel attached to the facility.

He has been training here for the last 10-14 days but is still mindful of the possibility of slipping on the throwing circle made of wood.

"The throwing circle in outdoor events is made of cement and so there is grip with your shoe and you have more confidence. But in indoor events, the throwing circle is made of wood and

is a little bit slippery. So, you have to be careful that you don't slip and get injured," said Nanda, who won gold in U-20 section with a throw of 17.77m.

"It can be slippery when you start rotating. If everything is OK at the start of rotation, I get good ascent and distance.

"Luckily, I did not slip today, may be because I have gotten used to it as I've been training here for the last 10 to 14 days," said the Odisha athlete who made his debut indoor competition.

"I also wore an old shoe which I have been using for around two and a half years so that the sole is little worn out and thus has grip. A new shoe may be more slippery," added Nanda, whose father works in the police department.

On the difference between indoor and outdoor events, he said, "Competition environment is same. But as a thrower, we get wind support outdoors and not in indoors."

Nanda has an outdoor personal best of 18.23m.

"It is the same technique, no different approach for indoor events while training but the platform is different."

For senior women's 3000m run gold winner Priyanka, past training experience on 200m

tracks, though outdoor, helped.

"The track here was a very nice experience. I did not get any tightness. Since we normally run in 400m track, the 200m track was little more curvy. For that we have to adjust," said the Karnataka athlete who emerged winner with a time of 9 minute 42.05 seconds.

"I had trained at 200m track at the SAI Bengaluru and there is one more 200m track at the Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru. When I was a junior, I used to train there, it helped me."

"Middle and long distance run is about patience, tactics and 120-150m acceleration. For middle and long distance, we don't use lane number 5 and 6 as these have slopes. Usually, we use lane number 1 obviously."

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has a vast experience of organising national and international events, but it was also a learning experience for the officials while organising the National Indoor Championships.

"I will not say that it is a very challenging but a learning experience for us also as it is the first indoor event in the country. The rules and regulations are the same, the logistics are almost the same."

| ISSF SHOTGUN WORLD CUP |

# Indian shooters set for season-opening shotgun World Cup

Press Trust Of India

**TANGIER (MOROCCO):** Bhowneesh Mendiratta will aim to put the Paris Olympics heartbreak behind him when he leads the Indian charge at the season-opening ISSF Shotgun World Cup here, eyeing a strong start to a busy calendar that features the Asian Games and the World Championships later this year.

Trap shooter Bhowneesh, who had secured India's first quota for the Paris Olympics but missed out in the trials, will be keen to hit the ground running here from Wednesday as the qualification cycle for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics gets underway. Bhowneesh didn't



## Team:

Trap (men) Prithviraj Tondaiman, Kynan Chenai, Bhowneesh Mendiratta. (women) Kirti Gupta, Rajeshwari Kumari, Aashima Ahlawat. Skeet: (men) Man Singh, Jyotiraditya Singh Sisodiya, Parampal Singh. (women) Yashasvi Rathore, Darshana Rathore, Maheshwari Chauhan. Mixed team: Prithviraj Tondaiman & Kirti Gupta. Kynan Chenai & Rajeshwari Kumari.

drop his guard after the setback in 2024, clinching individual silver at the Asian Championship

in Shymkent late last year to reaffirm his status as the country's top trap shooter.

## RCB pacer Yash Dayal to miss IPL 2026 but remains in contract with team: Mo Bobat

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# Lakshya set to headline India's Thomas Cup campaign

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Lakshya Sen, fresh from his All England runner-up finish, will spearhead India's challenge in the Thomas Cup, while former world champion PV Sindhu and rising star Unnati Hooda will lead the women's team in the Uber Cup next month. The Badminton Association of India has largely retained the core of the side that scripted a historic triumph

at the Thomas Cup in 2022, naming Sen, Kidambi Srikanth, H.S. Prannoy and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty for the upcoming edition in Horsens, Denmark, from April 24 to May 3. Young shuttler Ayush Shetty has earned a maiden call-up after consistent performances on the senior circuit. Dhruv Kapila, part of the 2022 doubles squad, will add experience to the doubles

lineup, while Kiran George will bring added depth to the singles. In the Uber Cup, 2019 world champion Sindhu will spearhead India's challenge alongside the top doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly, as the team looks to better its previous semifinal finishes. Unnati Hooda is joined by a group of in-form youngsters, including Devika Sihag, Isharani Baruah, and teenager Tanvi Sharma.

| SHUBMAN GILL SAYS |

# 'Belief and security key to his calmness'

Press Trust Of India

**AHMEDABAD:** Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill has said that the calmness in his game comes from being himself and having belief and security within his group here on Monday ahead of IPL 2026.

Gill, who was not part of India's T20 World Cup-winning side, will return to the shortest format for Gujarat Titans -- the 2022 champions and 2023 finalists -- as the franchise looks to add to its solitary title.

"I'm just being myself, and the calmness comes from a sense of belief and security that I have within



my group and in my own game," Gill said during Gujarat Titans' "Shubharambh 2026" event featuring the squad, owners and partners here.

Gujarat Titans will take on last year's runners-up Punjab Kings in an away game on March 31 in their tournament opener.

"Staying calm in any situation gives you an eagle-eye view, you're able to look beyond the moment, see the bigger picture, and have a much clearer, long-term vision," Gill said, adding that calmness is also the biggest strength for the team's head coach and

former India pacer Ashish Nehra.

Gujarat Titans had lost to Mumbai Indians in the Eliminator last season, and Nehra said there is no need to think differently other than focusing on winning the trophy.

"I don't think there's a need to think differently this season. In fact, I don't have to think, the players do. They (players) have to think. They have to play; I'm sitting outside," Nehra said.

"From day one, our mindset has been clear, we are not here to participate, we are here to compete and win. For a new team, it's easy to think it might take time, but that

was never our approach. This belief was shared by everyone, not just me.

"You're talking about a captain who has been with the team from day one and has seen that journey. I don't think we are looking to do anything different this season," Nehra added.

Former England player and GT's director of cricket Vikram Solanki also chipped in saying there was no need to change a lot from last year where they fell at the "final hurdle".

"As far as this season is concerned and putting a squad together, we had a really good year last year," Solanki said.

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"Trump believes there is a chance for an agreement... we continue to strike."

Benjamin Netanyahu  
Israeli Prime Minister

# Strikes escalate as US and Iran signal conflict

Heavy airstrikes hit Iran while Iranian drones and missiles targeted Israel and the Gulf, even as more U.S. Marines deployed to the region.

Press Trust Of India

**DUBAI:** Airstrikes battered Iran and Iranian missiles and drones targeted Israel's Tel Aviv and sites across the Middle East on Tuesday, even as President Donald Trump said the United States was in talks with the Islamic Republic to end the war.

With thousands more U.S. Marines on their way to the Gulf, both sides firing barrages and Iran denying any negotiations are taking place, the war's tempo remained high a day after Trump delayed his self-imposed deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran's chokehold on that crucial waterway has snarled international shipping, sent fuel prices skyrocketing, and threatened the world economy.

Pakistan has offered to host diplomatic talks, according to officials from there and two other countries, but Iran remained defiant, vowing to fight "until complete victory." Any talks between the U.S. and Iran would face monumental challenges. Many of Washington's shifting list of objectives – particularly over Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programs – remain difficult to achieve. Meanwhile, it's not clear who in Iran's



A man stands on the rubble of a destroyed building that was hit by an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon, Tuesday, March 24, 2026. | File PTI

government would have the authority to negotiate – or be willing to, as Israel has vowed to continue taking out leaders after killing several.

Iran remains highly suspicious of the United States, which twice under the Trump administration has attacked during high-level diplomatic talks, including with the Feb. 28 strikes that started the current war. The U.S. had agreed "in principle" to join talks in Pakistan, according to three Pakistani officials, one Egyptian official and a Gulf diplomat, while mediators were still working to convince Iran. The

Pakistani officials said the "quiet diplomacy" had grown more complicated since news of it leaked.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to provide the details to the media. Requests for comment were sent to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the White House.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's office said he has been talking about the war this week with his counterparts in several countries. But Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf called the idea of negotiations "fak-

enews" – and the spokesman of Iran's top military command issued a newly defiant statement.

"Iran's powerful armed forces are proud, victorious and steadfast in defending Iran's integrity, and this path will continue until complete victory," Iranian state television quoting Maj. Gen. Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi as saying Tuesday. Aliabadi did not say what victory would look like, but Iran's military could be trying to warn against offering concessions in any possible negotiations.

The Egyptian official said efforts are centered on "trust-building" between the U.S. and Iran, with the aim of bringing about a pause in fighting. Israel is not involved. The official, who is involved in the efforts, said the priority is to prevent attacks on both Iran's and Gulf Arab countries' energy infrastructure and that they were working on a "mechanism" for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

## HIGHLIGHT

● President Trump claims talks are underway in Pakistan to end the war, but Iranian officials have dismissed these reports as "fake news" and vowed to fight until victory.

● The ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz has pushed Brent crude oil prices over USD 100 a barrel, threatening global economic stability and energy infrastructure.

between the U.S. and Iran, with the aim of bringing about a pause in fighting. Israel is not involved. The official, who is involved in the efforts, said the priority is to prevent attacks on both Iran's and Gulf Arab countries' energy infrastructure and that they were working on a "mechanism" for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Talk of negotiations briefly drove down oil prices and boosted stocks. But that respite was short-lived, with the price of Brent crude, the international standard, nudging back over \$100 a barrel Tuesday, up nearly 40% since the war started.

## Briefs

BEST OF THE REST

### WORLD MARKET'S

US markets inch back, oil prices rise as Iran war continues despite Trump's claims of progress



**NEW YORK:** US markets ticked slightly lower and oil prices rose early Tuesday as the war in the Middle East continued a day after President Donald Trump said the United States had made progress in talks with the Islamic Republic to end the conflict.

Futures for the Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 each fell 0.1 per cent before the opening bell, while Nasdaq futures were unchanged. Airstrikes battered Iran's capital and Iranian missiles and drones targeted Israel's Tel Aviv and sites across the Mideast on Tuesday. With thousands more US marines on their way to the Gulf, both sides firing intense barrages and Iran denying any negotiations are taking place, the war's tempo remained high a day after Trump delayed his self-imposed deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran's chokehold on that crucial waterway has snarled international shipping, sent fuel prices skyrocketing, and threatened the world economy. On Monday, markets rebounded and oil prices fell 10 per cent after Trump posted on social media that the US and Iran held productive talks "regarding a complete and total resolution of our hostilities in the Middle East" over the last two days. Iran denied such talks took place, with Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf saying in a post on X that "fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets". "Still, while there's clearly a long way to go until some sort of ceasefire is agreed, and peace restored, we do at least seem to have taken the first step towards those ends," said Michael Brown, senior research strategist at Pepperstone. PTI

**IRAN-SPEAKER-QALIBAH**  
Iran's parliament speaker floated as possible US negotiation partner

**DUBAI:** Long before he became Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf went on a charm offensive for almost two decades, portraying himself as a hard-liner the West could do business with in the Islamic Republic.

"I would like the West to change its attitude to Iran and trust Iran, and rest assured that there's an attitude in Iran to advance issues through dialogue," he told The Times newspaper of London in 2008.

With the US and Israel's war with Iran in its fourth week, the 64-year-old pilot and former Revolutionary Guard commander has denied there have been talks with the United States amid reports that he was floated as Washington's negotiating partner in talks. Questions also remain as to what power Qalibaf has within Iran's theocracy, shattered after the Feb. 28 Israeli airstrike that killed 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. PTI

**CONGO DETENTIONS**  
Congo rebels used containers to hold journalists in brutal conditions

**DAKAR:** A rebel group in eastern Congo has detained civilians, including two journalists, in metal shipping containers without light or ventilation, an advocacy group said Tuesday.

Reporters Without Borders, or RSF, said the Rwanda-backed M23, which controls parts of eastern Congo, used the containers in the city of Goma as makeshift detention cells under "inhumane" and "degrading" conditions.

Using witness accounts, satellite imagery and photos collected in 2025, RSF said at least two journalists were among those detained in the containers, which were installed at the compound of the province's legislative assembly in Goma. Witnesses' identities have been withheld for security reasons. As many as 80 detainees at a time were placed inside a container, without light or ventilation and allowed out only once a day.

Witnesses said they received minimal food, while some reported routine beatings. PTI

**Russia fires nearly 400 drones at Ukraine**

**KYIV:** A major Russian drone and missile attack on civilian areas of Ukraine killed four people and injured at least 27, officials said Tuesday. Moscow's army stepped up efforts to break through Ukrainian front-line defence in what could be the start of an anticipated spring ground offensive. Russia fired almost 400 long-range drones at Ukraine overnight, Ukraine's air force said, in its biggest attack in weeks. The onslaught continued into Tuesday morning as dozens of drones targeted the capital Kyiv during daylight.

Russia also launched 23 cruise missiles and seven ballistic missiles at Ukraine during the night, hitting at least 10 locations across the country, according to the air force. Ukrainian civilians have endured relentless barrages since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbour more than four years ago.

## DENMARK POLLS

# Danish voters head to polls following crisis over Greenland territory

Press Trust Of India

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen triggered early elections to capitalize on her "resolute image" following a diplomatic standoff with the U.S. over Greenland's future.

**COPENHAGEN:** Danish voters went to the polls Tuesday in a general election, with Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen seeking a third term at the helm of the Scandinavian country after a standoff with US President Donald Trump over the future of the kingdom's semiautonomous territory of Greenland. More than 4.3 million people are eligible to have their say in the vote for the new Folketing or parliament, in Copenhagen, which is elected for a



Danish party leaders debate at Christiansborg ahead of elections. | File AP

four-year term. Frederiksen called the election in February, several months before she had to in apparent hopes that her resolute image in the crisis over Greenland would help her with voters in the European Union and NATO member country.

In her second term, her support had waned as the cost of living rose, something that, along with pensions and a poten-

tial wealth tax, has been a prominent campaign issue.

The 48-year-old centre-left Social Democrat is known for strong support of Ukraine in its defence against Russia's invasion and for a restrictive approach to migration, continuing a tradition in Danish politics that now goes back two decades.

Seeking to counter pressure from the right

## FACTFILE

● While foreign policy and migration remain central, domestic concerns like the rising cost of living, pension reform, and potential wealth taxes are driving voter sentiment.

and pointing to a possible surge in migration because of the Iran war, Frederiksen announced proposals this month that include a potential "emergency brake" on asylum and tighter controls on criminals who lack legal residence.

Her government had already unveiled a plan to allow the deportation of foreigners who have been sentenced to at least one year in prison for serious crimes.

## NKOREA KIM NUCLEAR

# Kim vows to 'irreversibly' cement nuclear status

Press Trust Of India

**SEOUL:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has pledged to irreversibly cement his country's status as a nuclear power while maintaining a hard-line stance toward South Korea, which he called the "most hostile" state, state media said Tuesday.

In a speech Monday to Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament,

Kim accused the United States of global "state terrorism and aggression," in an apparent reference to the war in the Middle East, and said the North will play a more forceful role in a united front against Washington amid rising anti-American sentiment. But Kim didn't call out US President Donald Trump by name and said whether his adversaries "choose



confrontation or peaceful coexistence is up to them, and we are prepared to respond to any

"The North will play a more forceful role in a united front against Washington."

Kim Jong Un,  
Leader of North Korea

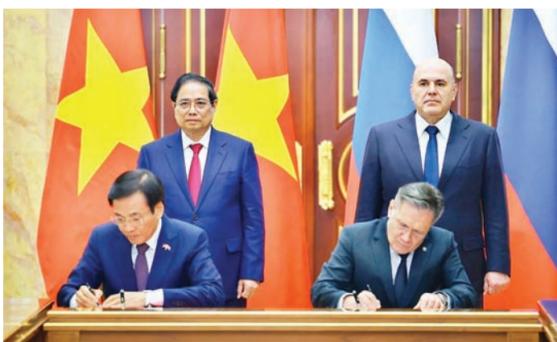
choice." His comments largely aligned with his statements at last month's ruling Workers' Party Congress, where

he vilified Seoul but left open the door for dialogue with the Trump administration, urging Washington to drop its demands for the North's nuclear disarmament as a precondition for talks.

State media said the Supreme People's Assembly, which concluded its two-day session Monday, passed a revised constitution but did not specify the changes.

## VIETNAM RUSSIA NUCLEAR

Vietnam and Russia advance nuclear power deal as energy security concerns grow in Southeast Asia



**HANOI:** Vietnam and Russia signed a deal to build a nuclear power plant in Vietnam as the Southeast Asian country revives its nuclear plans with hopes of boosting energy security while curbing greenhouse gas emissions. The deal for the Ninh Thuan 1 plant, reported by Vietnamese state media, comes after two similar projects were shelved in 2016 over rising costs and safety issues.

The agreement was signed Monday during Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's visit to Moscow, where he met his Russian counterpart Mikhail Mishustin. The two countries described the plant as a "symbolic project" of their friendship, according

to Vietnam's official government newspaper. The new plant also fits with Vietnam's ambitions to become rich by 2050 by growing into Asia's next "tiger economy." The deal outlines plans to build two Russian-designed reactors with a combined capacity of 2,400 megawatts, which are based on an existing plant in Russia. Concerns over energy security have sharpened since the war in Iran triggered a global energy shortage, raising the cost of imported fossil fuels and adding urgency to Hanoi's search for stable, long-term power sources. Across Southeast Asia, fast-growing economies are turning to nuclear power for cleaner, more reliable energy.