

# Congress MPs entered Speaker's chamber, threatened him: Minister shares video

New Delhi.(Agency)

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday alleged that a group of Congress MPs stormed into the chamber of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and abused him and threatened the Prime Minister during the recent confrontation between the Opposition and the government in Parliament. Rijiju shared a video clip of the incident on social media, which he claimed was recorded illegally, triggering a fresh political flashpoint amid ongoing disruptions in Parliament and a war of words outside.

"This is the illegal video clip taken by a Congress MP when 20-25 Congress MPs entered the Chamber of Hon'ble Speaker, abused him and threatened Hon'ble Prime Minister. Our party believes in debate &

discussion and never encourages MPs to threaten physically," Rijiju wrote on X.

The purported video shows several Congress MPs -- many of them women -- inside the Speaker's chamber. The MPs appear to be engaged in a heated exchange with individuals in the room, possibly BJP MPs, while the Speaker remains seated. Kiren Rijiju is also seen standing beside the Speaker.

The incident took place last week following a ruckus in the Lok Sabha after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was disallowed from quoting an unpublished memoir by former Army Chief General MM Naravane on the 2020 India-China standoff. Opposition members were further angered



when BJP MP Nishikant Dubey was permitted to cite historical texts while criticising former Congress prime ministers. After multiple adjournments, a group of Congress MPs went to the

Speaker's chamber to protest what they described as "partisan conduct" and the denial of speaking time to Rahul Gandhi.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Rijiju said the Speaker was "deeply hurt" by the episode.

"As I said, the Speaker is very hurt. I have spoken to him. They (Congress MPs) went to his chamber and abused him, said unpleasant things. The Speaker had given a ruling, which was not followed. Then Rahul Gandhi said he does not need anyone's permission to speak and would speak as he wishes, without rules. Unless permission is granted by the Chair, members cannot speak in the House," Rijiju said. The minister further alleged that senior Congress leaders,

including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and KC Venugopal, were present in the chamber and encouraged the protesting MPs. However, Priyanka Gandhi said that while some MPs were agitated, no one abused anyone. She added that the parliamentarians were merely expressing their grievances and had conveyed their concerns "peacefully."

"We did not abuse anyone. One-two MPs were agitated, and they expressed it. He also said that I was encouraging them, which is a lie. I was sitting quietly. In the end, I said a few things peacefully," she said. On Tuesday, Opposition parties submitted a notice seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla, accusing him of acting in a "blatantly partisan" manner and demanding that he step aside from presiding over the House until the matter is resolved.

## CM Bhagwant Singh Mann Resolves public grievances on spot, describes it as best way to redress people's grievances at single platform

The Sikh Times

Jalandhar, 12th February: Reinforcing his government's emphasis on direct public engagement, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday reached Jalandhar for the second time in a month and held a Lok Milni at his residence in the city, where thousands of people gathered to meet him. The Chief Minister listened to the grievances of residents from Jalandhar and adjoining areas and, by issuing clear directions to officials on the spot, ensured immediate redressal of their concerns. Describing the initiative as the most effective mechanism to address people's complaints at a single platform, the Chief Minister asserted Punjab is the only state where the head of the state personally conducts such a comprehensive exercise to safeguard public welfare. Emphasising that the AAP government is committed to resolving every problem of the people with complete honesty and accountability, he asserted that the Lok Milni programme will continue in the future as a structured bridge between the government and the masses, further strengthening responsive and transparent governance. During this, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "Lok Milnis are the best way to redress the people's grievances at a single platform and to take feedback of the masses for further enhancing good governance. There is hardly any match of the citizen centric Lok Milni across the country. There is no other



matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Punjab is the only state where the head of the state conducts a comprehensive exercise for ensuring the welfare of the public. Lok Milni guarantees holistic development of the state and welfare of people on one hand and enables the government to judge the performance of its officers on the other. This is the first of its kind program in the entire country as no other Chief Minister of any state bothers to take so much pain for the people." Emphasising that the initiative rises above partisan considerations, CM

Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Lok Milnis are not associated with politics. The sole aim of the state government is to usher in development and prosperity. Lok Milni is the best way to redress the people's grievances at a single platform besides ensuring unbridled development in a democratic set up, thereby bridging the communication gap between government and the masses. The state government is working tirelessly for the well-being of the people for which several key initiatives have already been taken in the state."

Highlighting the government's focus on youth empowerment, he said, "The work of any government is to provide wings to the children so that they can script a new success story in life. Every file signed by me is aimed at the benefit of the common man and the state. More than 63,000 jobs have been provided to youth without corruption or recommendation. Every decision of the state government is aimed at the progress of the state and prosperity of its people." On education reforms, the Chief Minister stated, "In the Education sector, Schools of Eminence have been set up across the state to impart quality education to the students. These schools have been equipped with smart classrooms, fully equipped labs and playgrounds for scientific learning. To upscale the expertise of the teachers, a special program has been embarked under which teachers and Principals are being sent abroad for training to make sure that they are well versed with modern teaching practices to prepare the students for future competitions in the international arena.

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## Ahead of Karnataka budget, leadership tussle in Congress back in spotlight

Karnataka .(Agency)

With Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar camping in New Delhi for three days, the leadership tussle between him and CM Siddaramaiah is once again in the spotlight, especially at a time when the latter is all set to present his record 17th budget tentatively on March 6. Shivakumar sensed that after the budget, Siddaramaiah would meet with Congress high command leaders, especially Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, to seek a nod to carry out the long-pending cabinet reshuffle, a party source said. "Which is why Shivakumar is going all out to get a word from the high command over power sharing," the source added. Siddaramaiah has time and again clarified that he will adhere to the decision taken by the Congress high command.

Both Shivakumar and his younger brother, former Bengaluru Rural MP DK Suresh, have said that the "time will answer" everything. "I still have faith that Siddaramaiah will keep his word (on power sharing)," Suresh told reporters. The Shivakumar camp, which initiated the leadership debate as soon as Siddaramaiah completed two and a half years in office last November, is seemingly trying to maintain the momentum until the high command clears the air. The Shivakumar camp also wants to strike at a time when some of the members in the Siddaramaiah camp are sulking. "Former cooperation minister KN Rajanna is unhappy as Siddaramaiah did not rescue him

when he was dismissed from the cabinet. The CM is yet to respond positively to Rajanna's aspiration of becoming the apex bank chairman," a party insider said. Also, Rajanna



did not attend a recent Valmiki community meet event at Rajanahalli, which was attended by Siddaramaiah. Except for CM's son, Congress MCL Dr Yathindra, no other prominent leader like Public Works Minister Satish Jarkhali, are asserting that Siddaramaiah will remain as CM for the full term as they are showing signs of falling in line with the party high command's decision.

the united NCP, while the 85-year-old Sharad Pawar may step back into an advisory role. "This formula can save the Pawar family, retaining its hold in state politics and at the same time, remaining in power," the source said. Sources also revealed that Parth Pawar's recent meetings with Sharad Pawar were crucial in breaking the ice between the two factions.

**'Fadnavis has given positive signal for reunion'**

CM Devendra Fadnavis reportedly discussed with senior BJP leaders about the possible merger of the two NCP factions and adjustments in the state cabinet. "Fadnavis has given positive signal for the merger because a united NCP will bring secular, progressive, and minority votes that the BJP has not been able to get," said a source.



is believed to share a cordial relationship with Sharad Pawar. With the NCP having eight Lok Sabha MPs, their support could help the BJP-led NDA further stabilise the central government. "The key role will be played by DCM Sunetra Pawar and her sons," said a source. In the new power structure, Sunetra Pawar is expected to lead

## Sunetra meets Shah amid buzz over NCP merger talk

Mumbai.(Agency)

Amid talk of a merger between the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on Wednesday. She separately met Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

She came to Delhi after taking charge of the office in Mantralaya, Mumbai, accompanied by sons, Parth and Jay.

According to highly placed sources, if the merger takes place, the united NCP is likely to receive two cabinet ministries at the Centre. One post may go to Working President Praful Patel and another to Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule.

In Maharashtra, the Sharad Pawar-led faction is expected to get two cabinet berths, along with one minister of state, as part of a joint arrangement.

Before moving ahead with the deal, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis reportedly flew to Delhi to meet senior BJP leaders. He discussed the possible merger and adjustments in the state cabinet under his leadership.

"Fadnavis has given the positive signal for the merger because a united NCP will bring the secular, progressive, and minority votes that the BJP has not been able to get," said a source.

The source added, "It will not give the space to Congress to grow anymore. The 35 percent Maratha vote bank that mostly allied with the NCP will remain with the incumbent. So, this merger of NCP has dual benefits for the BJP." Sources said the top BJP leadership is also keen on the move. Prime Minister Modi

the united NCP, while the 85-year-old Sharad Pawar may step back into an advisory role. "This formula can save the Pawar family, retaining its hold in state politics and at the same time, remaining in power," the source said. Sources also revealed that Parth Pawar's recent meetings with Sharad Pawar were crucial in breaking the ice between the two factions.

being reported from different parts of the country. "Had investigations been done timely, future incidents would have been averted," he said. Citing instances from other states, Kharge recalled an incident in Madhya Pradesh a few years ago wherein a person had urinated on an Adivasi person. Last year in Gujarat, he said, a government Dalit officer died by suicide due to caste discrimination. "These incidents show that caste discrimination is not confined to social and political life but is prevalent at workplaces also. This affects the dignity, career progress and personal safety (of people)," he said. Kharge said such caste discrimination against any officer is a violation of Articles 14, 15 and 17 of the Constitution. He urged the government to take the matter seriously and investigate such incidents in a timely manner.

## LoP Kharge raises concern over workplace caste discrimination; cites Odisha anganwadi incident

**In a recent incident in Odisha, members of a particular community refused to let their children eat food cooked by a Dalit anganwadi worker.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, on Thursday raised concerns over caste discrimination at workplaces, citing a recent incident in Odisha where members of a particular community refused to let their children eat food cooked by a Dalit anganwadi worker. Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Upper House, Kharge said, "In the 21st century, when we talk about social development, social reform, and the unity of Hindus, people of a particular community are refusing to let their children eat food cooked by a Dalit woman who is a helper-cum-cook in an anganwadi centre in Odisha. That anganwadi centre has been boycotted for the last three months." The LoP said the anganwadi centre is the foundation of children's physical and



cognitive development. "But if there is such racial discrimination, it will naturally affect children's growth," he said, adding that such incidents directly affect the right to education provided under Article 21A of the Constitution. Kharge said workplace caste discrimination is

## News box

## Call centre that cheated people with job offers on ships busted

## Faridabad.(Agency)

Four men, who targeted people across the country and defrauded them of lakhs of rupees by promising them jobs on ships, were arrested on Wednesday. The accused — Rahul, a resident of Jalaun; Prashant, a resident of Aligarh; Vishal Sharma, a resident of Gautam Budh Nagar; and Saif Warish, a resident of Kanpur Nagar — collected data on young people seeking jobs through the internet and phone calls, according to police. They ran a call centre in the Sector 132 area, which has been busted by Noida's Cyber Crime and Sector 126 police stations in a joint operation. Rahul is the gang leader, who rented the building where the fake call centre — Sea Hire Marine Services Company — was operating for Rs 50,000 per month. The call centre was being run from there for the past year, police said. The four would call the victims and lure them with promises of jobs at "crew-ship companies". By promising them attractive salaries, they extorted between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.6 lakh in the name of registration fees, processing fees and other expenses. After receiving the money, the accused either stopped answering the phone or started demanding more fees. Police said the accused "obtained approximately Rs 1 crore in various bank accounts through this method". Additional DCP Manisha Singh said the police received confidential information that the call centre was extorting money from people under the guise of providing jobs, following which the joint team raided the site and busted the fake company. Police seized three laptops, seven mobile phones, 26 calling data sheets, 21 registers, four seals, four fake joining letters and several bank documents. A case was registered against the accused at the cyber crime police station under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act. According to the police, the accused, most of them graduates, committed the fraud "for a long time".

## Gurgaon traffic police fine over 2k drivers for not wearing uniform

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

The Gurgaon Traffic Police has fined a total of 2,099 auto-rickshaw, e-rickshaw and taxi drivers for operating their vehicles without wearing uniforms. According to officials, despite repeated awareness drives conducted across major intersections and busy traffic points in the city, a significant number of drivers were still found violating uniform rules, prompting authorities to initiate strict legal action. The data released by the traffic police shows that between January 1 and January 31, 2,099 challans were issued specifically for uniform-related violations, resulting in penalties amounting to Rs 14,74,500. Alongside enforcement measures, traffic personnel also conducted awareness campaigns to educate auto-rickshaw, taxi and e-rickshaw drivers about responsible conduct, including maintaining courteous behaviour with passengers, adhering to speed limits, avoiding using phones while driving, refraining from intoxicants, and strictly following traffic regulations. Officials said that drivers were also informed about emergency helpline numbers such as Dial 112 and the traffic helpline 1095 to promote safety and quick assistance. The traffic police emphasised that wearing the prescribed grey uniform is mandatory for drivers operating public transport vehicles and helps ensure accountability and enhance passenger confidence. Officials said the enforcement drive will continue in the coming months.

## Yogi Adityanath set to lay foundation of semiconductor unit off Yamuna e-way on Feb 21



## Noida.(Agency)

The foundation stone of a semiconductor manufacturing unit by a joint venture of HCL Group and Foxconn will be laid in Sector 28 of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) area on Feb 21. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address the gathering via video conferencing. Chief minister Yogi Adityanath and Union IT and electronics minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will attend the event at the project site. The project, to be implemented through a joint venture company, India Chip Pvt Ltd, involves an investment of Rs 3,706 crore. The state govt allotted 48 acres in Sector 28 to the company for setting up the plant.

The facility is among 6 semiconductor manufacturing units approved by the Centre under the India Semiconductor Mission. The unit will manufacture display driver chips used in mobile phones, laptops, personal computers, automobiles, and a range of other devices with display panels. The plant is designed for a capacity of 20,000 wafers per month, with a design output of 36 million display driver chip units a month. Officials said the plant was expected to generate around 3,780 jobs once fully operational.

The unit will require substantial infrastructure support. It will need 19,000 KVA of electricity daily, while water requirement is projected at around 2,000 MLD. The project is expected to catalyse the development of an electronics and semiconductor cluster in YEIDA region, particularly with its proximity to the upcoming Noida airport.

## 24-hour fix order missed: Repairs on Dwarka Expressway link begin after 2 days

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two days after CM Nayab Singh Saini asked agencies to fix 4km stretch between Umang Bhardwaj Chowk and Dwarka Expressway, which is riddled with deep craters, within 24 hours, MCG began repair work on Wednesday, highlighting the gap between political directives and execution of work. MCG officials said the road would be cleared of slush and sewage and then potholes would be filled to make it motorable. On Wednesday, MCG started patchwork repairs. "We are first going to clear the road and then fill potholes using granular sub-base (GSB). Both lanes of Dwarka Expressway stretch will be rectified," an MCG official said. The official added that HSIIDC would carry out full redevelopment within three to six months. On Monday, Saini took cognisance of complaints during a district grievance redressal meeting and

directed officials to fix the road within a day, warning against negligence in public-interest works. However, when TOI visited the stretch on Tuesday, it remained unmotorable, with one carriageway shut, two-way traffic forced into a single lane, sewage water pooling on the surface, and deep craters endangering commuters. As TOI enquired about the condition of the road with agencies, a blame game followed. MCG officials initially said the CM's directions were meant for HSIIDC, claiming the road was no longer under MCG's jurisdiction. HSIIDC responded that while it is responsible for long-term redevelopment, ownership and day-to-day maintenance rest with MCG. "We did not receive any direction to make the road pothole-free within 24 hours," an HSIIDC official said. "Why should CM have to step in for something as basic as road repairs? This is clearly the



responsibility of civic authorities. Unfortunately, it often appears that action is taken only after directions come from the top political leadership. The current condition of this stretch is beyond minor repairs; the road has virtually ceased to exist," said Udaybir

Yadav, ex RWA President of Sector 10A. He added, "Filling potholes with GSB without proper bituminous patchwork only worsens dust pollution and offers no lasting solution. What this road requires is complete redevelopment, and that too without any further delay." On Jan 20, Haryana industry and commerce minister Rao Narbir Singh reviewed key development works. During the review, officials said Pataudi Chowk-Umang Bhardwaj Chowk stretch would be developed by MCG, while the Umang Bhardwaj Chowk-Dwarka Expressway stretch would be constructed by HSIIDC. The road is a key approach to the upcoming 1,000-acre Global City project. Residents in the area said it has not been relaid in over two decades and has remained in poor condition for the past five years, with civic neglect continuing despite repeated complaints.

## Structured monitoring system to fix accountability for civic issues

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city authorities have decided to introduce a structured monitoring system aimed at "fixing accountability" for civic issues on the ground.

The monitoring mechanism includes setting up a committee to be headed by the MCG commissioner. The committee — comprising officials from HSPV, GMDA, the corporation and other concerned departments — will be responsible for fixing clear accountability at the level of junior engineers (JEs).

Repeated complaints of sewer overflows, leaking pipelines, sanitation gaps and uncheckered encroachments have triggered the administrative action. The dedicated monitoring mechanism was mooted at a district coordination committee meeting, chaired by Haryana's principal advisor for urban development DS Dhesi, on Wednesday. The objective of the mechanism is early identification of problems and their "timely resolution" to improve delivery of urban services, Dhesi said.

"The geographical jurisdiction and responsibilities of each JE will be clearly defined, including the specific length of area under their charge."

A fixed timeline for inspection and reporting will also be established. Each JE will conduct a physical inspection of their assigned area at least once every three days and submit a detailed report to their senior officers regarding sewer overflows, pipeline leakages, encroachments and other engineering and sanitation-related issues," Dhesi added. At the meeting, the road repair programme of 2026 was also reviewed, along with compliance with directions issued by Commission for Air Quality Management, operationalisation of the GMDA boosting station in Sector 72 and progress of the master stormwater drain from Vatika Chowk to NH8.

Officials said that the water supply pipeline along the Dwarka Expressway is being laid and the boosting station is likely to be commissioned by the first week of March. The stormwater drain project along SPR, from Vatika Chowk to NH8, is targeted for completion by May 31. Dhesi directed departments to adhere strictly to the timelines generated.

## Gurgaon imposes on the spot fines for dumping garbage in public places

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

People caught dumping rubbish on roadsides, vacant plots, drains, lakes and other public places in the city will now face on-the-spot fines of Rs 5,000 for a first offence and Rs 10,000 for a second offence, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram announced on Wednesday. Separately, under the new enforcement measures, bulk waste generators, institutions and agencies will face steeper penalties of Rs 25,000 for the first violation and Rs 50,000 for repeat offences. The Haryana govt had earlier directed all municipal bodies in the state to strictly enforce a ban on littering and dumping of solid waste at unauthorised locations, with fines ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000 for violators. The move follows a July 26, 2024 order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which directed a complete ban on dumping solid

waste in public places across Haryana, citing serious environmental and public health concerns. NGT, in its order, observed that uncontrolled dumping of waste contributes significantly to air and water pollution and violates citizens' fundamental right to a clean and healthy environment. Acting on these directions, the civic body initiated strict enforcement across the city. "There shall be complete prohibition on littering/dumping of solid waste at unauthorised places, particularly roadsides, rivers, waterways, wetlands, lakes, nals, panchayat or revenue lands, land owned by PWD or other various authorities in the entire State of Haryana," read the order. "I urge residents, commercial establishments and institutions to dispose of waste only at designated sites and make use of door-to-door collection services... violations will now attract direct financial penalties,"

MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiyai said. The corporation authorised senior officials, including the additional commissioner, joint commissioner, deputy municipal commissioner, executive engineers, assistant engineers, senior sanitation inspectors, junior engineers, sanitation inspectors and assistant sanitation inspectors, to impose penalties for violations. Officials said fines will be collected on the spot. In cases where offenders fail to pay, the amount will be recovered as arrears of land revenue under applicable laws. Officials added that the funds collected through penalties will be used to strengthen solid waste management and processing systems in the city. Last week, the MCM also announced that the civic body will get FIRs registered against individuals and entities, especially residential societies with closed sewage treatment plants.

## Sex racket operating out of Vaishali hotel busted, manager held

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

Three persons were arrested on Wednesday after police busted a sex racket operating from Mahagun Sarovar Portico hotel in Vaishali's Sector 3. During the raid, 11 women were also rescued from the hotel. Among the accused are the hotel's manager, also the mastermind of the racket, Rahul Sharma (46), Sunil Singh (39), employed as a waiter, and Ankit Chauhan (19).

The accused were booked under relevant sections of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956. All accused were sent to judicial custody after being produced in court. An officer said four other persons — Sumit, Rahul, Nirdosh and Afzal — involved in the racket are absconding. ACP Indirapuram Abhishek Srivastava said he received a tip about the racket being run from the hotel. A police team from the Kaushambi police station



raided the hotel around 2pm. "The 11 women who were rescued are all aged between 21 to 31 years and belong to Gujarat, Delhi, West Bengal and Odisha," he said.

One packet of marijuana, some hashish and other objectionable items were also recovered from the possession of the accused. "During interrogation, the women said Rahul lured them to the hotel on the pretext of employment and forced them into sex work. He allegedly charged Rs 15,000-Rs 20,000 from customers and gave Rs 5,000 to each woman for a night," the ACP said. Some of the women have also said foreigners came to the hotel as sex workers, he added. A senior police officer said the manager revealed the names of people who are absconding. According to Rahul, he used to send photos of women to customers' WhatsApp numbers after which they would come to the hotel. On other occasions, the girl used to go to other hotels with the customers. All the rooms were booked online by the accused.

## UP Budget: Rs 750cr set aside for Noida airport, 90% to buy land

## Ghaziabad.(Agency)

UP govt has earmarked Rs 750 crore for the Noida International Airport in its Budget for the 2026-27 financial year, with most of the allocation directed towards land acquisition for the project's expansion.

Of the total, Rs 700 crore has been allocated for land acquisition for the third and fourth phases, which will see the expansion of a proposed aviation hub and add more runways, while Rs 50 crore has been set aside for construction work.

While there was no official announcement on the airport's inauguration, chief minister Yogi Adityanath earlier said the project was nearing completion and was expected to be inaugurated this year.

Land acquisition for the airport project by Yamuna International Airport Private Limited has been carried out in stages, with 1,334 hectares acquired in the first phase at Rs 4,588 crore. Construction of the terminal, designed to handle 12 million passengers a year, and the



runway is complete, and the airport is currently awaiting an aerodrome licence from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to begin commercial operations. For the second phase, covering 1,365 hectares, land acquisition and disbursement of compensation to farmers have already been completed. Additional infrastructure, including a second runway, a

maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility, and allied aviation operations are to come up on the land acquired under this phase. In the third and fourth phases, a combined 2,053 hectares is required. Of this, 1,889 hectares are to be acquired from farmers across 14 villages, while the remaining land is already with the administration. Following the announcement of

compensation at Rs 4,300 per square metre, officials said farmers have expressed willingness to part with their land. These phases will allow for further expansion of the airport, including additional runways, taking the total number planned at full build-out to five. By the completion of the fourth phase, the projected passenger handling capacity is expected to

rise to 70 million passengers per year.

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# CM Bhagwant Singh Mann Resolves public grievances on spot, describes it as best way to redress people's grievances at single platform

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It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Punjab has ranked first in the National Achievement Survey conducted by the Government of India, surpassing even Kerala." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann further said, "Students are being offered specialized coaching for competitive examinations such as Armed Forces Preparation, NEET, JEE, CLAT, and NIFT. It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that students from Schools of Eminence and other government schools have qualified for JEE Mains, JEE Advanced, and NEET exams. In another significant step, the Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna has been launched for cashless treatment upto Rs 10 lakh for all 65 lakh families in the state." Detailing healthcare initiatives, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann

## NAME CHANGE

I Sudhanshu Shekher S/o Krishna Kumar R/o H No 300 NR, Saini Chopal Munkda PO, New Delhi 110041 Changed my name to Sudhanshu Shekher

## NAME CHANGE

I Ali Mohammad S/o Alla Mahar R/o R-18 Nala Road Saurabh Vihar Jaitpur Badarpur Delhi 110044 Changed my name to Ali Mohammad

## NAME CHANGE

I Sita W/o Ali Mohammad R/o R-18 Nala Road Saurabh Vihar Jaitpur Badarpur Delhi 110044 Changed my name to Sita Begum

## NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD HASAN ALI S/O AYY. OOB residing at H No.A-227,3rd Floor,Gali No-1,Babu Nagar DELHI-110044, have changed my name to HASAN ALI

## NAME CHANGE

I, Ankit s/o Dharambir R/o 82/15, F,Kaccha Charma Road, Rajevi Nagar, Rohtak, Haryana-124001 have changed my name to Ankit Kumar for all future purposes.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Suraj Prashad is the absolute owner of Freehold Residential Plot addressing 50 Sq. yds. i.e. 41.80 Sq. Meter, out of Khasra no. 1343A, situated at Silver City, Pavisadakpur, Pargana & Tehsil Loni, Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 19.03.2025 as doc. no. 4810, book no. 1, vol. no. 6833, Page no. 209 to 230, on 19.03.2025, SRO- Loni-Ghaziabad. Till dated lost/ misplaced of Original Sale Deed dated 19.06.2009 executed by Mr. Harish Choudhary attorney of Mr. Frey Singh and Mr. Jitender, Mr. Mehak Singh, Mr. Sonu, Mr. Praveen and Mrs. Veer walt in favour of Mrs. Anita Devi as doc. no. 14057, Book no. 1, vol. no. 13268, Page no. 71 to 86, on 19.06.2009, SRO- IV Ghaziabad, and online FIR LAR no. 202600162857 P.S. Crime Branch HQ, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh Police, now our client is declaring that any other Person does not have any right over the said property and same has been financed by Piramal Finance Ltd. Branch: Gurgaon, Haryana. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained

## [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate

F-211, Sector-3, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 (Contact at 0958871432)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you that Mrs. Seema and Mr. Shyam Kumar intend to purchase a plot of land admeasuring 130 sq. yds., out of Khasra Nos. 173, 218 Min, and 219 Min, situated in Village Salarpur Khadar, Pargana and Tehsil Dadi, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, from Mr. Rajiv Kumar. Mr. Rajiv Kumar purchased the said property from Mrs. Wanti Mala Singh through a Sale Deed dated 11.04.2016. Please note that the original chain documents have been lost, namely the Sale Deed dated 05.09.2017 (Registered No. 4335) and the Sale Deed dated 01.02.2016 (Registered No. 273). Accordingly, the said original documents are not available in respect of the above-mentioned property. An online FIR (Lost Report No. 95594/2026) was registered on 11.02.2026 regarding the loss of the aforementioned documents. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd, Ghaziabad Branch, Uttar Pradesh. If any person(s) objection & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection from the date of the Notice in writing. The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

## [ASHWANI KUMAR] Advocate

Chamber No. 122, Tehsil Compound, Ghaziabad, U.P. (Contact at 0958871432)

said, "Income conditions have been removed under this scheme and now even government employees and pensioners have been included under it. Punjab has become the first state to provide free healthcare to all citizens. 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics are providing free treatment daily. Since the state government has assumed charge in 2022, around 90% households of the state are receiving free electricity." Referring to support for farmers and infrastructure, he said, "For the first time in the history of the state more than eight hours of uninterrupted power has been supplied to farm tube wells during paddy season, that too in the daytime. 6900 km long, 18349 water courses have been revived in the state to

provide water at tail ends. Several public libraries have been opened in the state to ensure that the students can study and excel in life." The Chief Minister added, "Today Punjab is making rapid strides in every field as the state government has taken every step for comprehensive development of Punjab. The state government has taken path breaking initiatives in health, education, power and other sectors. The work on construction of more than 49,000 km of rural roads is going on in full swing and will be accomplished soon." Citing relief measures for the public, he said, "The state government will start the scheme to give 1000 to

closed 19 toll plazas in Punjab which is saving 64 lakh daily from common man's pocket in toll fees. To provide accessible healthcare, 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics have been opened across the state offering free treatment and medicines. The state government has hitherto fulfilled every promise made to the people of state." Concluding, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Now the state government will start the scheme to give 1000 to

every woman for which necessary provision will be kept in the coming budget. Every promise made to the people of the state will be fulfilled by all means as this government is committed for

## NAME CHANGE

I, SNEHLATA KUMARI D/o NANDAL MAHTO R/o B-377 PREM NAGAR-III, KIRARI SULEMAN NAGAR, SULTANPUR C BLOCK, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110086, have changed my name from SNEHLATA KUMARI to SITA for all future purpose.

## NAME CHANGE

I, km Rinki Pal W/o Umesh Chandra R/o J-1, 7051, Sangam Vihar, Deoli, South Delhi, Delhi - 110062 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rinki

## NAME CHANGE

I Shivram Singh Sengar S/o Kaledor Singh Sengar R/o House No. 577, Sector 7, SPO: Gohana, DIST: Sonipat, Haryana-131031, have changed my name to Shivram Singh for all future purposes.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as AFROZ DASTGIR KHAN S/o GHULAM DASTGIR KHAN R/o H No 94593, Gali No 4, NEAR SHIV MANDIR, AJEET NAGAR, GANDHI NAGAR, EAST DELHI, DELHI-110031, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AFROZ KHAN.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as NAUMAN AHMED KHAN S/o MOHD AHMED KHAN, R/o A-43, Rani Garden, Rani Garden, Geeta Colony, East Delhi, Delhi-110033, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as LALAN SINGH and RAJNARAYAN SINGH in my Driving Licence No. DL-082008005030 and as LALAN SINGH and RAJNARAYAN SINGH in my Pan Card No. BTBPS3041L. The actual name of mine and my father are TARUN KUMAR and RAJ NARAYAN SINGH respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Sarif W/o Zakir Hussain R/o Ghaseria (161), Ghaseria, Mewat, Nuh, Haryana-122103 have changed my name to Sarifan.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Mohd Naushad, S/o Mr. Mohd Bundo, R/o 15/7, Block-D, Okhla Vihar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-272410, have changed the name of my minor son Anshu Gupta age 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as ANMOL GUPTA.

## NAME CHANGE

I MOHD MUJAHID S/O MOHAMMAD YASIN R/O A-3/7 B CHANAKAYA PLACE PART-1 UTTAM NAGAR DELHI-110059 I have changed my name to MUHAMMAD ANJUM Permanently for all Future purpose

## NAME CHANGE

I, Mohd Naushad, S/o Mr. Mohd Bundo, R/o 15/7, Block-D, Okhla Vihar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-272410, have changed the name of my minor son Anshu Gupta age 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as ANMOL GUPTA.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Sumanth Kumar Palaparti S/o Srinivasa Rao P. R/o 10/4, Munnangiampalem, Tnsur, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh-523218 have changed my name to Palaparti Sumanth Kumar for all future purposes.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Sumanth Kumar Palaparti S/o Srinivasa Rao P. R/o 10/4, Munnangiampalem, Tnsur, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh-523218 have changed my name to Palaparti Sumanth Kumar for all future purposes.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Riaz Alam S/o Mazharul Haque R/o WZ- 336, NARAINA VILLAGE, South West Delhi, Delhi, 110028, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as WASIUULLAH.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Ram Chhabila Gupta S/o Lal Bihari Gupta R/o H. NO. A-135A, S/BACK SIDE A-BLK, GULAB BAGH, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059, Permanent address - Dhanaut, Karjhan, Deoria, Uttar Pradesh-272410, have changed the name of my minor son Anshu Gupta age 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as Riaz.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as NAUMAN AHMED KHAN S/o MOHD AHMED KHAN, R/o A-43, Rani Garden, Rani Garden, Geeta Colony, East Delhi, Delhi-110033, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as LALAN SINGH and RAJNARAYAN SINGH in my Driving Licence No. DL-082008005030 and as LALAN SINGH and RAJNARAYAN SINGH in my Pan Card No. BTBPS3041L. The actual name of mine and my father are TARUN KUMAR and RAJ NARAYAN SINGH respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

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## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as NAUMAN AHMED KHAN S/o MOHD AHMED KHAN, R/o A-43, Rani

## NEWS BOX

## Many ICE Agents Were Arrested In Recent Months, Showing Risk Of Misconduct

Washington. (Agency)

Investigators said one immigration enforcement official got away with physically assaulting his girlfriend for years. Another admitted he repeatedly sexually abused a woman in his custody. A third is charged with taking bribes to remove detention orders on people targeted for deportation.

At least two dozen U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement employees and contractors have been charged with crimes since 2020, and their documented wrongdoing includes patterns of physical and sexual abuse, corruption and other abuses of authority, a review by The Associated Press found. While most of the cases happened before Congress voted last year to give ICE \$75 billion to hire more agents and detain more people, experts say these kinds of crimes could accelerate given the sheer volume of new employees and their empowerment to use aggressive tactics to arrest and deport people.

The Trump administration has emboldened agents by arguing they have "absolute immunity" for their actions on duty and by weakening oversight. One judge recently suggested that ICE was developing a troubling culture of lawlessness, while experts have questioned whether job applicants are getting enough vetting and training. Once a person is hired, brought on, goes through the training and they are not the right person, it is difficult to get rid of them and there will be a price to be paid later down the road by everyone," said Gil Kerlikowske, who served as commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection from 2014 to 2017. Almost every law enforcement agency contends with bad employees and crimes related to domestic violence and substance abuse are long-standing problems in the field. But ICE's rapid growth and mission to deport millions are unprecedented, and the AP review found that the immense power that officers exercise over vulnerable populations can lead to abuses.

## Canada School Killer, 18-Year-Old Trans Woman, First Shot Mother, Step-Brother At Home

Ottawa. (Agency)

An 18-year-old trans woman with mental health issues has been identified as the killer behind the deadly shooting in British Columbia, Canada, that resulted in nine deaths. Jesse Van Rootselar killed her mother and stepbrother before attacking her former school, police said, without offering a motive for one of the worst mass slayings in Canadian history.

The killer died by suicide after the shooting on Tuesday in Tumbler Ridge, a remote community of 2,400 people in the Pacific province of British Columbia.

About The Shooter

Rootselar was a transgender woman who was born biologically male and dropped out of the targeted high school four years ago, news agency AFP reported, quoting Police Commander Dwayne McDonald. The officer said the shooter had previously held a firearms licence, which had lapsed, and the weapons had previously been confiscated from her residence -- but were subsequently returned. Rootselar also has a history of mental health illness, with police visiting her home more than once to check on her. On more than one occasion, she was apprehended under the provincial Mental Health Act for an assessment, McDonald said. She once attended the school where the attack took place but dropped out four years ago. "Police had attended that (family) residence on multiple occasions over the past several years, dealing with concerns of mental health with respect to our suspect," McDonald said. The shooting

Nine people, including the shooter, were killed in one of the worst mass shootings in Canada, while 24 others were wounded.

## "Deeply Sorry": US Attorney General Apologises To Epstein Survivors In Fiery Hearing

World. (Agency)

Attorney General Pam Bondi launched into a passionate defense of President Donald Trump Wednesday as she tried to turn the page from relentless criticism of the Justice Department's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein files, repeatedly shouting at Democrats during a combative hearing in which she postured herself as the Republican president's chief protector. Besieged by questions over Epstein and accusations of a weaponized Justice Department, Bondi aggressively pivoted in an extraordinary speech in which she mocked her Democratic questioners, praised Trump over the performance of the stock market and openly aligned herself as in sync with a president whom she painted as a victim of past impeachments and investigations.

"You sit here and you attack the president and I'm not going to have it," Bondi told lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee. "I am not going to put up with it." With victims of Epstein seated behind her in the hearing room, Bondi forcefully defended the department's handling of the files related to the well-connected financier that have dogged her tenure. She accused Democrats of using the Epstein files to distract from Trump's successes, when it was Republicans who initiated the furor over the files and Bondi herself fanned the flames by distributing binders to conservative influencers at the White House last year. The hearing quickly devolved into a partisan brawl, with Bondi repeatedly lobbing insults at Democrats while insisting she was not "going to get in the gutter" with them. In one particularly fiery exchange, Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland accused Bondi of refusing to answer his questions.

## Police said they have provided a list of risk-prone polling centres to the EC, which showed that out of 2,131 polling centres in Dhaka, 1,614 were risk-prone.

World. (Agency)

Voting has begun in Bangladesh for the crucial general elections, the first since a massive student-led nationwide protest led to the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. The voting started in 299 out of the total 300 parliamentary constituencies across the country from 7:30 am (local time). It has been cancelled in one constituency and has been cancelled due to the death of a candidate. A total of 1,755 candidates from 50 political parties and 273 independents are contesting the election. There are 83 female candidates. The Election Commission has

made elaborate security arrangements, deploying nearly 1 million security personnel -- the largest-ever in the country's electoral history.

Voting will conclude around 4:30 pm, following which counting of votes will begin. The contest is mainly between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its once ally Jamaat-e-Islami as Hasina's Awami League was disbanded by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim government last year. The BNP has fielded the highest number of 291 candidates.

The 13th parliamentary elections are being held simultaneously along with a referendum on a complex 84-point reform package. The political reforms include prime ministerial term limits, stronger checks on executive power and other safeguards preventing parliamentary power consolidation. Yunus, who has promised to quickly transfer power to the elected government, has urged the political parties, candidates and other concerned parties to maintain restraint, tolerance and democratic behaviour on the polling day.



In a televised address to the nation on the eve of the polling, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin called upon the voters to cast their votes freely. He urged political parties, candidates, and voters to maintain a peaceful and cordial environment. He said that representatives from 45 countries and organisations, including election management bodies and international institutions, are observing the polls. Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmeh Machud said nearly 9,00,000 law enforcement personnel have been deployed to ensure security during the

election, state-run BSS news agency reported. Authorities have deployed Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) and Rapid Action Teams (RATs) across key areas of the capital. Police said they have provided a list of risk-prone polling centres to the EC, which showed that out of 2,131 polling centres in Dhaka, 1,614 were risk-prone. However, the army said they have identified two centres in Dhaka city to be "risky." For the first time, drones and body-worn cameras are being used for election security.

EC data showed that first-time voters made up some 3.58 per cent of the nearly 127 million voters. For the first time, nearly 8,00,000 expatriate Bangladeshis, who have registered with the poll body, will be able to vote through an IT-based postal ballot system. The election could reshape the domestic stability of Bangladesh, a country whose post-1971 history since gaining independence from Pakistan has been marked by entrenched political parties, military coups and allegations of vote rigging.

## Deaths in Iran's crackdown on protests reach at least 7,000, activists say

DUBAI. (Agency)

The death toll from a crackdown over Iran's nationwide protests last month has reached at least 7,000 people killed with many more still feared dead, activists said Thursday. The slow rise in the number of dead from the demonstrations adds to the overall tensions facing Iran both inside the country and abroad as it tries to negotiate with the United States over its nuclear program. A second round of talks remains up in the air as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pressed his case directly with U.S. President Donald Trump to intensify his demands on Tehran in the negotiations. "There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a Deal can be consummated. If it can, I let the Prime Minister know that will be a preference," Trump wrote afterward on his TruthSocial website. "Last time Iran decided that they were better off not making a Deal, and they were hit.... That did not work well for them. Hopefully this time they will be more

reasonable and responsible." Meanwhile, Iran at home faces still-simmering anger over its wide-ranging suppression of all dissent in the Islamic Republic. That rage may intensify in



the coming days as families of the dead begin marking the traditional 40-day mourning for the loved ones.

### Activists' death toll slowly rises

The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which offered the latest figures, has been accurate in counting deaths during previous rounds of unrest in Iran and relies on a network of activists in Iran to verify deaths. The slow rise in the death toll has come as the agency slowly is able to crosscheck

information as communication remains difficult with those inside of the Islamic Republic. Iran's government offered its only death toll on Jan. 21, saying 3,117 people were killed. Iran's theocracy in the past has undercounted or not reported fatalities from past unrest. The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll, given authorities have disrupted internet access and international calls in Iran. The rise in the death toll comes as Iran tries to negotiate with the United States over its nuclear program.

### Diplomacy over Iran continues

Senior Iranian security official Ali Larijani met Wednesday in Qatar with Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. Qatar hosts a major U.S. military installation that Iran attacked in June, after the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear sites during the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June. Larijani also met with officials of the Palestinian Hamas militant group, and in Oman with Tehran-backed Houthi rebels from Yemen on Tuesday.

## Amid hope laced with anxiety, Bangladesh goes to polls on Thursday for first time after Hasina's exit

DHAKA. (Agency)

Bangladesh heads to the polls on Thursday under an unprecedented political landscape, following the sudden exit of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after a mass upsurge in August 2024. The election is set to be a unique experience for voters, many of whom are casting ballots for the first time. Alongside electing members of parliament, citizens will also vote in a referendum on constitutional reforms. The main contest is between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. The newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP), which emerged from the mass movement against Hasina, has joined the race as part of an 11-party alliance with the Jamaat. The BNP, a seasoned political force with past stints in power, was expected to dominate in the absence of the Awami

League. However, the Jamaat claims it has built a strong political base and is positioning itself as a formidable



challenger. In previous elections, the Jamaat's support hovered below 10%, while the BNP secured over 30%. With the Awami League out of the contest, many believed the BNP would secure a comfortable majority. But the Jamaat's renewed presence has complicated the

electoral arithmetic, raising the prospect of a close fight.

The NCP, despite leading the recent movement, has struggled to maintain its earlier momentum. It is contesting just 30 out of 300 parliamentary seats under its alliance with the Jamaat. In total, around 50 parties are participating, including several left-leaning and Islamic groups. Some of these parties are aligned with the Jamaat-NCP alliance, which has also demanded a referendum on the proposed constitutional reforms. The referendum and general election will take place on the same day. Voters will cast two ballots -- one for parliament and one for the referendum. The absence of the Awami League has left many feeling uncertain, and the referendum issue adds further complexity.

## Fake Police Sign, Gandhi Photo: How Scammers In Cambodia "Arrested" Indians

Phnom Penh. (Agency)

Fake signboards with logos of the Mumbai police and of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), with pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and BR Ambedkar on either side, along with the Indian flag, were found inside an abandoned compound used by scammers for "digital arrest" operations in Cambodia. Authorities in Phnom Penh believe a China-born tycoon is the alleged kingpin of the scam. Cambodian authorities have closed almost 200 such scam centers in a crackdown on global transnational fraud hubs in recent weeks. "There are about 190 locations that we have sealed off now," Chhay Sinarith, senior minister and chair of Cambodia's Commission for Combating Online Scams, told Reuters in Phnom Penh. Chhay said 173 senior crime figures linked to the centers had been arrested and 11,000 workers deported in a campaign that began late last year after the US indicted and then China extradited Ly Kuong, a China-born alleged scam kingpin, in the strongest international move so far against the criminal networks.

### What Visuals Showed

News agency Reuters shared rare visuals from one center, showing how scammers were tackling the sophisticated operations targeting people across the globe. The visuals from a sprawling complex in Kampot province near the Vietnam border showed scammers were using fake signboards, the Indian flag, and even pictures of Gandhi and Ambedkar to defraud Indians from abroad in "digital arrests." Cambodian police said that thousands of scam workers, some of them trafficking victims confined in brutal conditions, have fled compounds in recent weeks seeking to return home, in what Amnesty International has called a "humanitarian crisis."

### Thousands Flee Amid Crackdown

At the Kampot compound, large workrooms were seen with rows of computer stations and desks strewn with documents instructing how to scam Thai victims, as well as studio booths for phone calls and a fake Indian police station. Authorities said there were no arrests made inside the Kampot casino complex known as My Casino. Workers fled after the detention of alleged boss and tycoon Ly Kuong, and police said they lacked the manpower to detain those leaving.

"We have only about 1,000 policemen in the entire province, and there are about 300 military policemen," said Kampot provincial police chief Mao Chamrothirith. "Even with both forces combined, we still can't stop them because there were about 6,000 to 7,000 of them when they left this place," he said.

### What Led To The Crackdown

The visit came a week after Thai officials led media and foreign delegates to see a separate compound in Cambodian territory that Thai troops bombed and occupied during a border conflict in December. Similar materials, including fake police stations from multiple countries, as well as reams of documents, were also found there.

## U.S. House votes to slap back Trump's tariffs on Canada

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

The House has voted to slap back President Donald Trump's tariffs on Canada, a rare if largely symbolic rebuke of the White House agenda as Republicans joined Democrats over the objections of GOP leadership. Wednesday's tally, 219-211, was among the first times the House, controlled by Republicans, has confronted the President over a signature policy. The resolution seeks to end the national emergency Mr. Trump declared to impose the tariffs, though actually undoing the policy would require support from Mr. Trump himself, which is highly unlikely. The resolution next goes to the Senate. Mr. Trump believes in the power of tariffs to force U.S. trade partners to the negotiating table. But lawmakers are facing unrest back home from businesses caught in the trade wars and constituents navigating pocketbook issues and high prices. "Today's vote is simple, very simple: Will you vote to lower the cost of living for the American family or will you keep prices

high out of loyalty to one person — Donald J. Trump?" said Rep. Gregory Meeks of New York, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who authored the resolution. The high-stakes moment provides a snapshot of the House's unease with the president's direction, especially ahead of the midterm elections as economic issues resonate among voters. The Senate has already voted to reject Trump's tariffs on Canada and other countries in a show of displeasure. But both chambers would have to approve the tariff rollbacks and send the resolution to Trump for the president's signature — or veto. Mr. Trump recently threatened to impose a 100% tariff on goods imported from Canada over that country's proposed China trade deal, intensifying a feud with the long-time U.S. ally and Prime Minister Mark Carney. House Speaker Mike Johnson tried to prevent this showdown.

Johnson insisted lawmakers wait for a pending Supreme Court ruling in a lawsuit about the tariffs. He engineered a complicated rules change to prevent floor action. But Johnson's strategy collapsed on late Tuesday (February 10, 2026), as Republicans peeled off during a

procedural vote to ensure the Democratic measure was able to advance. "The President's trade policies have been of great benefit," Johnson, R-La., had said. "And I think the sentiment is that we allow a little more runway for this to be worked out between the executive branch and the judicial branch." On late Tuesday evening (February 10, 2026), Johnson could be seen speaking to holdout Republican

lawmakers as the GOP leadership team struggled to shore up support during a lengthy procedural vote, but the numbers lined up against him. "We're disappointed in what the people have done," Kevin Hassett, the director of the White House's National Economic Council, told reporters at the White House on Wednesday morning (February 11, 2026). "The president will make sure they don't repeal his tariffs."

The resolution put forward by Mr. Meeks would terminate the national emergency that Mr. Trump declared a year ago as one of his executive orders. The administration claimed illicit drug flow from Canada constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat that allows the president to slap on tariffs on imported goods outside the terms of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement. The Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Brian Mast of Florida, said the drug flow of fentanyl into the U.S. is a dire national emergency and the policy.



procedural vote to ensure the Democratic measure was able to advance. "The President's trade policies have been of great benefit," Johnson, R-La., had said. "And I think the sentiment is that we allow a little more runway for this to be worked out between the executive branch and the judicial branch." On late Tuesday evening (February 10, 2026), Johnson could be seen speaking to holdout Republican

## NEWS BOX

SP MLA urges Konkan Commissioner to expedite Bhiwandi mayor poll ahead of Ramadan

Mumbai. (Agency)

Samajwadi Party MLA Rais Shaikh on Thursday urged authorities to expedite the process of holding the mayoral election at the Bhiwandi-Nizampur City Municipal Corporation (BNMCC), arguing that the prolonged delay is fuelling the risk of political horse-trading.

Shaikh, who represents Bhiwandi East in Maharashtra's state assembly, called on Konkan Divisional Commissioner Vijay Suryawanshi to immediately announce the date for the mayoral poll, which has remained pending for a long period. "The continued delay is leading to horse-trading and damaging our democracy," Shaikh said in a statement.

With the holy month of Ramadan set to begin on Feb. 18, I urge you to act swiftly to notify the date for the mayoral election," he added. The legislator said he had been consistently following up with the divisional commissioner on the issue and described the delay as "unreasonable." He added that holding the election without further postponement would help uphold democratic values and ensure transparency in the functioning of the civic body. Shaikh also expressed confidence that the authorities would take necessary steps to address the matter promptly.

### Nationwide strike against labour codes brings Kerala to standstill

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

Kerala came to a near standstill on Thursday as the 24-hour nationwide general strike called by central trade unions against the Centre's labour codes and other policy decisions disrupted normal life across the state.

From midnight onwards, the impact of the strike was visible in cities, towns, and rural areas, with transport services halted, shops shuttered, and offices functioning with minimal attendance.

Public transport services were among the worst affected. Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses remained off the roads in most depots, while private buses, autorickshaws, and taxi services also joined the strike, leaving roads in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kozhikode, and other major centres largely deserted.

With transport paralysed, commuters struggled to reach workplaces, and many government offices and institutions reported poor attendance.

Banks, government offices, and several public sector establishments either remained closed or operated with skeletal staff. Many educational institutions, including schools and colleges, suspended classes in view of the disruptions. Some scheduled examinations were postponed as students found it difficult to travel.

Commercial establishments, markets, and small-scale industries across the state largely downed shutters in solidarity with the strike call. The plantation sector and sections of the industrial workforce also participated in the protest.

The disruption extended to state-run services as well, with the Karunya Plus lottery draw scheduled for February 12 postponed to the following day due to logistical constraints.

Anticipating the large-scale participation of employees, the Kerala government had declared the strike day as "dies non" for state government staff, warning that unauthorised absence would result in loss of pay.

Leave was permitted only under specific categories such as medical grounds, maternity leave, or pre-approved examinations. Authorities also directed department heads to ensure protection for employees willing to report for duty.

Despite the widespread shutdown, essential services were exempted from the strike. Hospitals, pharmacies, ambulance services, milk distribution, fire and rescue services, and newspaper circulation functioned without interruption.

Special consideration was given to pilgrims travelling to Sabarimala and participants attending the Marmon Convention, ensuring their movement was not obstructed.

### Maha: Five injured as lift of Mumbai high-rise bldg collapses, condition stabley

Mumbai. (Agency)

At least five people were injured after a lift in a Mumbai high-rise residential building collapsed suddenly tonight.

According to sources in the Mumbai Fire Brigade, the lift collapsed from the fourth floor of an 18-storey residential building, Jay Krupa Tower, located at Ghodapdeo Cross Lane No. 1, in Byculla area of south-central Mumbai at around 10 pm.

The lift collapsed due to a cable failure or breakage. The injured are admitted to different nearby hospitals.

Out of five injured, three are admitted at government-run J J Hospital.

They are identified as

1. Kalpita Pawar - Female / 38 yrs,
2. Yash Balvikar - Male / 24 yrs,
3. Usha Gupta - Female / 56 yrs

While two other injured -- Jamuna Prasad Shivhare - Female / 50 yrs and Shilpa More - F / 54 yrs -- are undergoing treatment in private Balaji hospital and Jaslok hospital, respectively. The condition of all injured persons is reportedly stable, officials added.

# Financier cannot object to seizure of stolen property used as security: Karnataka HC

Such an interpretation would frustrate investigation, embolden economic offenders, and erode public confidence in the criminal justice system, he said.

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by IIFL Finance Limited, questioning the legality of notices issued by the Kengeri police for providing details of stolen gold pledged to raise loans, and to produce the gold pledged by an officer of Karur Vysya Bank for investigation.

Claiming that it became aware of the alleged fraudulent activities of the accused after receiving the notice, IIFL Finance Limited contended that if the pledged gold is handed over and seized by the investigating agency, it would be left without any subsisting security in respect of the outstanding loan amounts.

"A pledged or financier holding alleged stolen property cannot object to seizure on the basis of contractual security interest, commercial hardship, or apprehended financial loss, as no person can acquire a better title than that possessed by the pledger. Stolen property does not acquire immunity from seizure by being routed through commercial transactions," said Justice Suraj Govindaraj, dismissing the petition questioning the notices issued in October 2025. The judge also said that

acceptance of the petitioners' contentions would set a dangerous precedent whereby stolen property could be shielded from seizure merely by being pledged with financial institutions. Such an interpretation would

investigating officer to examine whether the gold articles produced are said to have been stolen from Karur Vysya Bank, and if so stolen, to comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the BNSS. Further, it would be for the

petitioner to answer all the queries raised by Kengeri police during the course of investigation," the judge said.

According to the complaint, the accused, Ashwini, was functioning as assistant manager as well as customer service officer/jewellery loan officer with Karur Vysya Bank, Kengeri branch, since 2022. During a surprise re-appraisal conducted in October 2025, serious irregularities were detected in relation to gold loan accounts handled by Ashwini. Upon verification, it was allegedly found that she had indulged in acts that amounted to theft and criminal

breach of trust by clandestinely removing genuine gold ornaments pledged by customers and replacing them with spurious articles. Such fake articles were found in 34 gold loan packets, involving approximately 3.398kg of gold ornaments, valued at Rs 3 crore, on the basis of which the complainant bank had disbursed loans aggregating Rs 1.73 crore.



frustrate investigation, embolden economic offenders, and erode public confidence in the criminal justice system, he said.

"I am of the considered opinion that no grounds having been made out by the petitioner to grant reliefs which have been sought for, it would be for the petitioner to produce the gold articles before the investigating officer, and for the

## PM Museum to get replicas of Morarji's Nishan-e-Pakistan, Bharat Ratna from Gujarat Vidyapith

Morarji Desai willed his books, personal items to the institution in 1991.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The Mahatma Gandhi-founded Gujarat Vidyapith will be sharing replicas of the highest civilian awards of India and Pakistan — the Bharat Ratna and the Nishan-e-Pakistan — awarded to the late Prime Minister Morarji Desai, with the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML) at the Teen Murti Bhavan, Delhi as part of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions in 2024. The original awards are displayed at a gallery dedicated to the late PM at the Gujarat Vidyapith, where Desai was Chancellor from 1963 until his death in 1995. Mahatma Gandhi, who founded the Vidyapith in 1920 was its first chancellor followed by Sardar Patel, the third being Morarji Desai. Vice-Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith Dr Harshad Patel told The Indian Express: "As per the MoU, we will be

making replicas of the Bharat Ratna and Nishan-e-Pakistan and sending it to be displayed at the PMML. While our museum is



also open to visitors, footfalls are naturally lower than what it is at PMML." The decision is said to have been taken after Director of the PMML Ashwani Lohani visited the Morarji

Desai gallery at the Vidyapith on February 2 and a meeting was held between him and the vice-chancellor. Desai is the only Indian PM to have been awarded the Nishan-e-Pakistan, given to him on May 18, 1991, a few months after he was conferred the Bharat Ratna in March that year.

The Gujarat Vidyapith is the sole custodian of all the original personal effects, awards, state gifts, letters of honour, books and papers belonging to Desai after he willed it to the institution that he headed for over three decades. The exhibits include his clothes, over a dozen walking sticks including one carved in ivory, scrolls, his phone book, acupressure equipment, a box charkha, a miniature copy of the Quran, a pair of gold scissors when he inaugurated the Delhi branch of Tokyo bank and several gifts from countries he visited.

### BBMB Workers Union (Reg) to hold general meeting on February 19

New office bearers to be elected

The Sikh Times  
Malabar khamano

Nangal, February 12: A special meeting of BBMB Workers Union Reg Nangal, the apex organization of Bhakra Beas Management Board employees, was held under the chairmanship of Mangat Ram. Releasing the proceedings of the meeting to the press, General Secretary Dayanand Joshi said that the workers union, which has been fighting continuously for a long time against the anti-employee policies of the management, will



hold a special election meeting on February 19. In which the entire families who have been with us on the journey until regularization will also be involved, in which a detailed discussion will be held on the impact of the national and international conditions on the working class, and further discussion will be held on strengthening the joint struggle against the four pro-corporate labor codes being implemented by the central government, the Electricity Bill 2025, and the anti-employee policies of the management. In the meeting, it was demanded from the BBMB management that the arrears of the commissioner should be paid to the employees in one installment so that the employees can use them for the essential needs of their lives, instead of recruiting through retired employees, the daily wage workers who have been working continuously for a long time should be regularized with continuous work, equal work, equal pay. On this occasion, leaders like Sikander Singh, Gur Prasad, Rajinder Singh Mann, Gurvinder Singh, Rajinder Singh, Gurcharan Singh etc. were present.

### Realtor's decomposed body found hanging at home

New Delhi: A partially decomposed body of a 49-year-old man was found hanging at his residence in Vasant Kunj area of Southwest Delhi, the police said on Tuesday. Officials said they received information regarding the incident at the Vasant Kunj South police station around 6:19 pm from E-2, Vasant Kunj. After getting information, the emergency officer, along with beat staff, reached the spot and found the house locked from the inside. The police took help from the Delhi Fire Service to open the door. Inside, the police found a partially decomposed body of a man hanging from a ceiling fan with the help of a plastic rope. The Crime Team and the Scene of Crime (SOC) unit inspected the spot. The body was sent to Safdarjung Hospital for post-mortem examination, an official said. The deceased was identified by family members. Statements of family members and neighbours were recorded, the official elaborated. Prima facie, no suspicion has been raised so far regarding the death, the police said. The deceased was a property dealer and was living alone in the house away from his family, the police said.

Kerala's RT Mission sets global model for women empowerment in tourism

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

Kerala's Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission has emerged as a global model for women's empowerment while strengthening the rural economy through sustainable and inclusive initiatives, Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said.

The Minister noted that with 26,000 RT units operating across Kerala, nearly 1.5 lakh families are direct beneficiaries of various projects under the RT Mission. "The fact that 80 percent of RT units are led by women reflects the success of Kerala's gender-inclusive tourism model and the state's commitment to the UN's Gender Inclusive Tourism policy," Riyas said.

In the 2025-26 State Budget, an amount of Rs 4 crore has been earmarked for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to avail loans of up to Rs 15 lakh at an interest rate of four percent, he added. Additionally, 50 percent of the total budget allocation for the RT Mission has been set aside for women.

Responsible Tourism has become an integral component of Kerala Tourism's accelerated growth in recent years. Kerala Tourism has received around 14 national and international awards for its RT initiatives, the Minister said.

The RT Mission has facilitated diverse travel experiences such as agri-farm tourism, food tourism, and projects linking tourism with cultural and ecological conservation. These initiatives have helped elevate rural destinations like Kanthalloor and Bepore to global prominence, he noted.

Inaugurating the five-day Kerala Responsible Tourism Festival at Kanakakkunnu Palace grounds, Riyas said the event is organised by the Responsible Tourism Mission Society with the support of the State Department of Tourism. The festival aims to provide strong market support to RT units, enabling them to sell their products and explore new business opportunities through collaboration with tour operators, vloggers, and resort owners.

**STOPPAGES:** Tulsipur, Balrampur, Gonda Jn., Burhwal, Sitapur Jn., Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur Jn., Yamunagar Jagadhari, Ambala Cantt, Dhandari Kalan, Jalandhar City & Beas Stations.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Sleeper & General.

**Train No. 05023/05024 Gomti Nagar - Khatipura - 08 Trips**

| Train No. 05023 | ARR. DEP. | STATIONS    | ARR. DEP.   |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| ---             | 23:55     | Gomti Nagar | 11:45       |
| 12:10           | 12:20     | Delhi Jn.   | 00:25 00:35 |
| 17:30           | ---       | Khatipura   | 18:50       |

**DAYS OF RUN:** 05023 Ex. Gomti Nagar on every Tuesday from 03.03.2026 to 24.03.2026 and 05024 Ex. Khatipura on every Wednesday from 04.03.2026 to 25.03.2026.

**STOPPAGES:** Badshah Nagar, Daligunj, Sitapur Jn., Bareilly, Moradabad Jn., Ghaziabad Jn., Delhi Jn., Delhi Cantt, Gurgaon, Rewari, Alwar & Bandikui Stations.

**ACCOMMODATION:** AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.

**Train No. 05045/05046 Lalkuan - Rajkot - Lalkuan - 10 Trips**

| Train No. 05045 | ARR. DEP. | STATIONS     | ARR. DEP.   |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| ---             | 12:35     | Lalkuan      | 05:15       |
| 14:45           | 14:50     | Bareilly Jn. | 02:50 02:55 |
| 18:10           | ---       | Rajkot       | 22:30       |

**DAYS OF RUN:** 05045 Ex. Lalkuan on every Sunday from 01.03.2026 to 29.03.2026 and 05046 Ex. Rajkot on every Monday from 02.03.2026 to 30.03.2026.

**STOPPAGES:** Kichha, Baheri, Bhoji Pura, Izzatnagar, Bareilly City, Bareilly Jn., Badaun, Soron Shukar Kshetra, Kasganj, Hathras City, Mathura Cantt, Mathura Jn., Bharatpur, Dausa, Jaipur Jn., Phulera, Nawa City, Kuchaman City, Makrana Jn., Degana Jn., Merta Road Jn., Gotan, Jodhpur Jn., Luni, Samdhari Jn., Mokalsar, Jalor, Modran, Marwar Bihmal, Raniwara, Dhanera, Bihdi Jn., Patan, Mahesana Jn., Viramgam Jn., Surendranagar & Wankaner Jn. Stations.

**ACCOMMODATION:** AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.

**Train No. 05301/05302 Mau - Ambala Cantt - Mau - 08 Trips**

| Train No. 05301 | ARR. DEP. | STATIONS     | ARR. DEP.   |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| ---             | 04:00     | Mau          | 23:00       |
| 20:20           | 20:30     | Delhi Jn.    | 05:00 05:10 |
| 00:30           | ---       | Ambala Cantt | 01:40       |

## Caste vs outcasts: Who is left out in the politics of rights

Nearly a hundred years after Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar's famous treatise, The Annihilation of Caste, who would have thought that India would turn a full circle, or should I say turn turtle? For today, Indian society, by and large, wants to leave caste behind. It wants to move on. But it cannot. Because the government of the day will not let it.

Yes, ordinary Indians cannot ever forget or move beyond their caste. The Indian State and the political classes that run it will never let us. It is they who have reinforced, again and again, how casteist we are.

As Neha Das, a self-proclaimed general caste rights activist, posted on her X account: "Beauty of Reservation Republic of India: If you demand caste-based reservation, caste-based fees, caste-based hostels, caste-based scholarships, caste-based A to Z things, you are called 'anti-caste'! And if you oppose such caste-based policies, you are called 'casteist'!"

In other words, today, those who want the annihilation of caste are casteist, while those who want everything on the basis of caste are anti-caste. Here's another bon mot from X: "Free coaching / SC ST OBC higher age limit / SC ST OBC cheapest forms / SC ST OBC reservation in results / SC ST OBC departmental promotions. Govt signs MoU with PhysicsWallah for free coaching to SC, ST, OBCs. For the general category, there is no quota, no scheme, no policy, no help from the government—only tax." (sic) The recent protests over the University Grants Commission's equity regulations underscore the point. Its draft as late as February 2025 did not include OBCs in the "oppressed" group of students. How and why were they inserted into the regulations? This is worth examining separately. But it is surely fascinating, sociologically and politically, how the traditional varna system of India has thus been upended, even superseded, by the new governmental caste system.

Remember the furore over the economically weaker sections (EWS) category? Introduced through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 2019, it raised the hackles of several caste crusaders, because for the first time economic—and not merely social—criteria were recognised as markers of backwardness. So, what do we have by way of the State varna system? SC/ST, OBC, EWS and of course, by default, GC. The last, general category, includes all those left out from the deprived classification. A new four-fold government-sanctioned and enforced caste quota system, which many would deem even more iron-clad and oppressive than the one it supersedes.

But sitting above all of them is the super-caste of PCs—permanent category government servants, those who cannot be fired. Among these too, as in the traditional caste system, are multiple gradations and hierarchies. Those in the coveted—and much maligned—Indian Administrative Service are, evidently, on the top. You can't get any higher, at least on Earth. Naturally, all the others, SC, ST, OBC and GCs, want to crash into the ranks of the PCs. If we include women as a deprived section of society by virtue of their sex, we have a category by itself, superadded and overlapping with all of the above. In Jawaharlal Nehru University, where I taught for 25 years, female students receive 5 percent deprivation points. In 'feminine gender' subjects like English, where most students are girls in the first place, the extra 5 percent deprivation points ensure that very few boys make it. As a former chair of the Centre for English Studies, when I suggested half-jocularly that in English it is boys who should get deprivation points, the JNU administration wasn't amused.

Two soldiers injured in the same operation must not be treated differently for taxation merely because one continued to serve longer.

The Finance Bill, 2026 has proposed to terminate income-tax benefits accruing from disability pension to those soldiers who have served and superannuated with disabilities. According to the proposal, I-T exemption for disability pension will only be provided to a soldier who is invalided out of service on account of bodily disability attributable to or aggravated by service.

The tax exemption for disability pension which was provided for in the Income-Tax Act, 1922, was continued in the Income-Tax Act, 1961. In June 2019, a circular issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) dropped a Finance Bill-like bombshell, but the Supreme Court stayed it on the grounds that a mere administrative circular cannot override established pension rules. Now, by amending the Income Tax Act itself, the government has had its way. This is in effect a declaration of abandonment by the government that such soldiers who sacrificed their well-being in the line of duty

are no longer worthy of support. The rigours of military service are because the soldier follows orders and faces danger and extreme conditions of service subject to various difficult facets and areas where personnel are deployed in defence of the country. The very fact that the law caters to disability is proof of the recognition of the need to compensate a serviceman or woman for the bodily disability attributable or aggravated by her or his service.

A disabled veteran lives with a lifetime of limitations due to his medical condition. There are two clear outcomes of a disability: First, the disability that causes a soldier to be invalided out of service as the disability was so severe that he/she could no longer serve in the forces.

Second is the disability that is caused due to service but the individual is yet capable of serving (albeit under restrictions due to medical reasons) in what is called a 'medical category' in military parlance.

It is the second category that is being now taxed for their disability pension after they superannuate. The armed forces look after their own, especially their heroes who are incapacitated due to operations and even in peace-

time service. The case of a vehicle mechanic who lost his limb due to a vehicle toppling on him when he was repairing it is no less attributable than that of a soldier

treated differently for taxation merely because one continued to serve longer. Penalising perseverance by a disabled soldier by taxing his disability pension is both

petty for a government and damaging for morale of those serving. Cases of tax evasion in other spheres of economic and financial activities need to keep the tax lawmakers occupied. To say that it has been done to plug loopholes being exploited in the taxation of disability pension due to cases of misrepresentation and misuse by the military hierarchy is an administrative failure of the system. Such cases must be dealt with departmentally and accountability of the defaulters must be fixed. This institutional failure must not be shifted onto those who have served the nation and paid a very high price. Veterans are not opposing reform, but they do not deserve retribution by way of law. The average citizen needs to be aware of the ever-increasing animosity being generated by seemingly innocuous steps being initiated by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Many instances exist, some glaring but others innocuous in their introduction yet damaging the

standing of the Armed forces. The case of the orders of opening of cantonment roads some years ago by a missive from the MoD created a messy debate.

Accusations of political favours and selective decision making aggravated the fissures in a strained civil bureaucracy-military relationship. The present follow-up action to ensure that the stayed 2019 CBDT circular gets legally implemented seems to be yet another instance in the same vein as with numerous other pinpricks such as One Rank One Pay anomalies and ration money disallowment (and its subsequent reinstatement). The government should look at the larger picture. Efforts to accelerate procurement of arms and ammunition must be in sync with measures that are not detrimental to morale, training and risk-taking by soldiers. On their part, the armed forces have to clearly differentiate those cases of disability attributable to and aggravated by military service and unambiguously lay down the criteria for grant of disability pension. Any misuse must be addressed through stricter scrutiny. Once the disability is granted, it must be honoured by bureaucrats and ministries alike as a service to the nation which must not be taxed.

who gets shot by the enemy or terrorist and is termed a 'Battle Casualty'. These individuals are considered on case-to-case basis and permitted to serve their full tenure. It is a matter of pride that some such heroes have risen to top ranks and are held in deep regard by the military fraternity. The new condition seemingly denies the exemption from tax to the disability pension of these soldiers. The case of Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, who self-amputated his leg during the 1971 war, is a sterling example of raw courage.

However, his (or similar) sacrifice will now be taxable. How prudent is this recovery of tax from the disability pension of a person who never thought about severing his own limb for the security of the country? His words, "There is not apathy in bureaucratic circles but antipathy", reverberate profoundly in military circles and will resonate with many a self-respecting patriotic Indian. Disability pension is a compensation for permanent impairment attributable to military service. By linking its taxability to the mode of retirement violates the principle of equality.

Two soldiers injured in the same operation must not be



## Surajkund swing collapse : A national safety framework is essential

### Haryana has promised a stricter, no-nonsense approach going forward

THE Haryana government's decision to formulate a comprehensive policy to regulate fair and adventure rides underscores the urgent need for a national safety framework to address lapses and risks. The collapse of a giant swing at the Surajkund International Crafts Mela revived memories of similar incidents—all preventable—at amusement parks, fairs and ropeway facilities in various parts of the country. The Surajkund tragedy puts the spotlight on what is common practice. Ride safety protocols are restricted to paperwork, and most of the time are nothing more than self-attested affidavits assuring adherence. The essential pre-event inspection exercise is rarely carried out. Standard operating procedures lose meaning in the absence of serious repercussions for non-compliance. Responsibility and accountability have to be the non-negotiable benchmarks for the vendors as well as the officials. On January 26, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the devastating



Bhuj earthquake, the National Disaster Management Authority released a document on the role of all

stakeholders in identifying victims of mass fatality incidents. The guidelines highlight critical shortcomings such as the lack of manpower and training, logistical lacunae and problems with coordination and leadership. Such gaps are visible even in the response mechanism whenever disaster strikes anywhere across the country. A basic requirement of the day is administrative and civic preparedness through training camps by professionals, clear delegation of tasks and mass-scale awareness drives as well as regular mock drills. Disaster management must be prioritised both as a career and volunteer service.

Shaken by the swing collapse, the authorities have been swift in taking action. Haryana has promised a stricter, no-nonsense approach going forward. Ensuring full compliance would be the best tribute to Inspector Jagdish Prasad, who died in the line of duty.

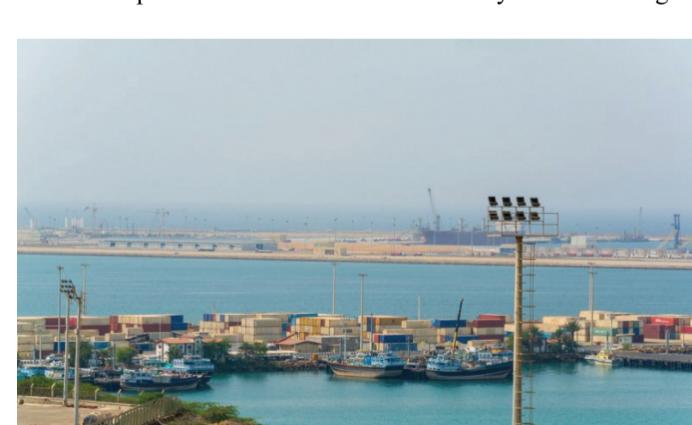
## Tightrope walk for India on Chabahar

### Looming American sanctions have put Iranian port project in jeopardy

INDIA's Chabahar initiative has finally faltered after US President Donald Trump's recent warning of additional tariffs on countries doing trade with Iran. The US annulled the 2018 sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port in September last year, but granted exemption to India till April 26, 2026, putting New Delhi's long-term agreement for the Shahid Beheshti terminal at risk. Post-Soviet efforts by India to access Afghanistan and Central Asia included the Sarakhs railway project in 1996-97 and the Chabahar project, which was first proposed by New Delhi and Tehran in 2002. The initiative, however, lacked feasibility and relied solely on Chabahar's proximity to the Indian Ocean, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Despite the sanctions on Iran, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expedited the project, aimed at establishing India's foothold in Afghanistan, reducing Kabul's reliance on Pakistan and supporting the Ashraf Ghani government against the Taliban with \$2 billion invested since 2001. Chabahar was set to lower shipping costs and times, and boost trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, while connecting to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In 2016, amid improved US-Iran relations post-JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tehran; he secured a transit agreement and committed \$500 million to the Chabahar port to enhance Eurasian ties. India's decision again emphasised geopolitical benefits with Eurasia over a realistic assessment of US and Iran strategies. In 2017, Iran opened the Shahid Beheshti terminal, funded by an \$85-million Indian investment, enabling India's shipments to Afghanistan. In 2018, despite limited regional support due to US sanctions, India received a waiver under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act, allowing port work without penalties;

this emphasised shared US-India interests in stabilising Afghanistan and countering China. In 2018, India sought to join the TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) Convention and the Ashgabat Agreement, but faced limited regional support due to concerns over US sanctions. These developments led to India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) signing a 10-year \$370-million deal with Iran to manage the Shahid Beheshti terminal and enhance the regional trade route to Central Asia, linking to Afghan cities through the India-built Zarjan road and facilitating access to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan by developing a rail line from Chabahar to Zahedan. More than a year after India finalised the Chabahar port contract in May 2024, the US revoked the sanctions waiver, cautioning nations about dealing with Iran. India ignored the warnings, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar promoting the regional benefits of Chabahar and leveraging US narratives on democracy and anti-China sentiment while appealing to Iran's cultural ties with India. Things didn't go as planned. India overlooked shifting US views on Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, missing implications beyond the India-US partnership. New Delhi also didn't realise that Tehran's Chabahar plan aimed to counter American sanctions and stabilise Sistan-Baluchestan. Indian policymakers did not fully appreciate Iran's capacity for disruption; they laid too much emphasis on cultural connections and ignored Tehran's strategic balancing that complicated India's position. After the terminal's inauguration, then Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif travelled to Islamabad and suggested collaboration on Chabahar and the CPEC with Pakistan and China, alarming India, which aimed to bypass Pakistan. America's crippling of India's Persian Gulf investments was expected, but it's puzzling that India transferred \$120 million to Iran despite warnings about the revival of US sanctions. Opposition leaders in India are accusing the

government of yielding to US pressure. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) claims that it is engaging with the US to protect India's interests. India may consider



concession to Trump; the project was flawed from the start, with past governments overselling its benefits and ignoring geopolitical realities. Engaging with any Islamic regime poses risks as Central Asian nations don't view India as a viable energy partner. Since the Chabahar operation, India's trade with Eurasia remains stagnant; Central Asian countries prefer sea routes through Turkey, China or Russia. It's also a misconception that they want access to the Indian Ocean through Iran; they prefer land routes through China or traditional Russian ports. Concerns about the BRI and the CPEC causing disruptions in the Gulf are exaggerated; Iran is wary of Chinese dominance. However, India's delay in Chabahar led Iran to ally with China, which has invested significantly there. Frustrated by India's limited contributions and compliance with US sanctions, Iran fears China may control Chabahar near the Gwadar port. The belief that Chabahar is the only western corridor should be re-evaluated as India's rationale for accessing Afghanistan and Central Asia through it is weak. While direct maritime access to Afghanistan and Central Asia would always remain an option, depending on the geopolitical barriers, India should explore more viable and reliable connectivity routes to the region. An example is the rise in trade between India and Russia through the INSTC, which shows the benefits of stable trade routes. The Ukraine crisis is driving Eurasian states to seek Asian connectivity. Kazakhstan has already developed the Mundra port for access to the Indian Ocean. India should propose linking the Kandla port to Almaty and Kashgar, bypassing Pakistan. Improved connectivity via China can enhance India's access to Afghanistan and Central Asia and beyond, but a border agreement is needed to get things going.

## Rs 50,000 rewarded criminal Amzad killed in police encounter in Muzaffarnagar

Muzaffarnagar.(Agency)

A Rs 50,000 reward-carrying criminal, identified as 40-year-old Amzad, was killed in a police encounter in the Budhana police station area of Muzaffarnagar district early Thursday morning.

According to police, they received information around 3:30 am that Amzad was on his way to his native village. Acting on the tip-off, a police team laid a siege to intercept him. When officers attempted to stop him and repeatedly warned him to surrender, Amzad allegedly opened indiscriminate fire using a carbine and a pistol.

During the exchange of fire, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Aditya Bansal, Circle Officer Gajendra Singh, and Station House Officer Subhash Atri narrowly escaped as bullets struck their bulletproof jackets. Sub-Inspector Sandeep Chaudhary and Constable Ashfaq sustained bullet injuries to their hands.

Police retaliated, and Amzad was shot during the encounter, which lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. Officials said he continued firing at the police team until he ran out of ammunition. He was later taken to the Budhana Community Health Centre (CHC), where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

However, his accomplice managed to flee the scene under the cover of darkness. Amzad, a resident of Shahpur in Muzaffarnagar, had around 40 criminal cases registered against him across Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Uttarakhand. In 2021, he was allegedly involved in the robbery of 5 kilograms of gold from a Muthoot Finance branch in Churu, Rajasthan. Police said he often carried out crimes while dressed in a police uniform. He was recently wanted in connection with a robbery in the Budhana police station area, and authorities had been actively searching for him.

## Indo-Malaysia Art Exhibition showcases cultural synergy in Dharamshala

Dharamshala.(Agency)

A special three-day Indo-Malaysia Art Exhibition at the Kangra Art Museum in Dharamshala is offering a vibrant glimpse into the rich cultural heritage and contemporary art forms of both nations.

The exhibition, inaugurated by Dharamshala Congress candidate Devendra Jaggi, features paintings, installations and traditional art forms by nearly 35 artists from India and Malaysia. Fourteen artists from Malaysia are participating, along with artists from Dharamshala, Pathankot, Chandigarh, Jaipur and other parts of the country.

Museum Curator Ritu Malkotia said the exhibition aims to strengthen cultural ties between India and Malaysia and provide artists with an international platform. She noted that such initiatives help promote dialogue and mutual understanding between nations through art.

Chief guest Devendra Jaggi said the exhibition provides a unique opportunity to understand the cultural bonds between India and Malaysia. "The diverse artworks displayed here clearly reflect the cultural richness and shared values of both countries," he said after viewing the exhibits. Artist Neelu Kanwaria from Rajasthan, who has displayed three of her works, said her paintings explore human thoughts and emotions. With over 30 years of experience in the field, she has showcased her art across the country and has received several accolades for her work.

## After Ranveer, Aayush Sharma gets threat email linked to Bishnoi Gang

Mumbai.(Agency)

Following a WhatsApp threat received by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, Salman Khan's brother-in-law, Aayush Sharma, has reportedly received a threat via email, allegedly linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The Mumbai Police have stepped up security measures, an official confirmed on Thursday.

Sources said the email, sent to Aayush's office in Bandra, demanded a large sum of money and warned of severe consequences if the demand was not met.

This follows recent threats to Salman Khan, including a shooting outside his Mumbai home, also connected to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. The latest threat adds to a series of alarming incidents targeting Bollywood celebrities, including a recent firing outside filmmaker Rohit Shetty's home.

The police are investigating the email's origin and examining digital footprints.

Aayush, married to Salman Khan's sister Arpita Khan, has been advised to remain vigilant.

The threat has sparked concerns about the safety of celebrities and their families.

The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) has written to CM Devendra Fadnavis, seeking an urgent meeting to discuss the issue and ensure the safety of the entertainment community.

## MP raises HP's poor BSNL connectivity in Lok Sabha, flags staff crunch, network gaps

The MP highlighted a severe shortage of technical staff in BSNL across the state.

Shimla.(Agency)

BJP Member of Parliament from Shimla Suresh Kashyap Wednesday raised serious concerns in the Lok Sabha over poor telecom connectivity in Himachal Pradesh, particularly the deteriorating BSNL network and acute staff shortages affecting services in remote and tribal regions of the state. Raising the issue during Question Hour, Kashyap said Himachal Pradesh's difficult mountainous terrain, coupled with heavy rainfall, snowfall, and frequent natural disruptions, often damages telecom infrastructure and hampers service delivery. He pointed out that restoration teams are frequently forced to trek long distances to repair faults in far-flung areas, leading to prolonged outages.

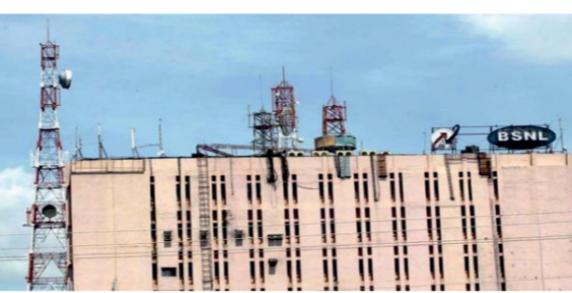
The MP highlighted a severe shortage of technical staff in BSNL across the state. Citing official figures, he informed the House that against 192 sanctioned posts of Senior Sub-Divisional Engineers (SDEs), only 81 are currently in position. Similarly, only 165 Junior Telecom

Officers (JTOs) are working against 282 sanctioned posts, while just 110 Junior Engineers (JEs) are available against 177 posts. This manpower deficit, he said, is causing serious difficulties in network maintenance and

questioned the government on concrete steps being taken to fill vacancies and improve telecom infrastructure, and also sought clarity on the expansion of 5G services in the hill state.

Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia informed the House that, for the first time, monthly and quarterly performance reviews of BSNL circles are being undertaken. These reviews cover both operational and financial parameters, monitoring nearly ten key indicators such as cable cut incidents, average repair time, and BTS uptime. The government has set a target of ensuring at least 95% uptime, with provisions for redeployment and resource adjustments wherever manpower shortages are identified.

The Minister added that under special connectivity initiatives funded through Digital Bharat Nidhi, the government aims to provide world-class connectivity even in economically unviable and geographically challenging regions.



timely restoration of services in remote regions. Kashyap also raised the issue of extremely poor connectivity in several parts of his parliamentary constituency, stating that even 2G services are not functioning properly in many remote areas despite installation of mobile towers. He

## He claimed his wife and son were murdered. Then came an OTP

In 2024, a trader in UP's Basti accused his in-laws of killing his wife and son. Two years later, he got an OTP for an Aadhaar modification. What happened next?

Ludhiana.(Agency)

It was an OTP message about a change in Aadhaar card details that helped police in Uttar Pradesh's Basti crack what was believed to be a murder case, only to discover that no crime had taken place at all. The case dates back to November 4, 2024. Police said the complainant, Sandeep Kumar, claimed his wife left their home in Basti's Paikolia, taking her jewellery and their son, and had not returned. Suspecting his in-laws, the 35-year-old trader lodged a complaint accusing them of allegedly murdering the duo and dumping their bodies in a river.

Based on his complaint, police said a case was registered under charges of murder and causing disappearance of evidence. Police then launched an extensive search



operation, questioned several persons, and conducted raids but to no avail. They could not establish a motive for the alleged crime either. Then came a breakthrough a month ago — in the form of a One-Time Password. Sandeep informed

police that someone had attempted to change the mobile number linked to his wife's Aadhaar card. Since his number was registered, he received an OTP alert about the modification attempt. Station House Officer (SHO) of

Captainganj police station, Atul Srivastava, said the complainant received a message that certain details on the Aadhaar card were being modified. "Based on the updated information reflected on the Aadhaar card, we intensified our investigation," he said.

Using technical surveillance, police tracked the mobile number used to update the Aadhaar card to Sikar district in Rajasthan. On the instructions of senior officials, a police team was dispatched — and what they found left them stumped.

Sandeep's wife, aged 29, was alive. Police said she was living with another man. The team subsequently brought her back to Basti along with her two sons — aged 5 and a three-month-old.

## Shahpur MLA distributes desks, school bags ahead of birthday

Shahpur (Kangra).(Agency)

Shahpur MLA and Deputy Chief Whip Kewal Singh Pathania distributed 150 desks and 158 school bags to students at Government Senior Secondary School, Boh, in Dharakandi area, a day ahead of his birthday.

The items, worth around Rs 3.5 lakh, were presented as a special gift to the students. Children expressed their gratitude by singing "Happy Birthday" for the MLA during the event. Pathania said he had promised the students assistance during the school's annual prize distribution function and was pleased to fulfill his commitment.

He added that the state government is continuously working to improve educational facilities and ensure better opportunities for children.

Highlighting development initiatives in the Dharakandi region, he said the Bhanala-Rulehara road is being constructed at a cost of about Rs 20 crore. The area holds immense potential for horticulture and tourism, and awareness camps for farmers will

soon be organised. He also spoke about exploring the feasibility of a ropeway project for the Khabra area and plans to start four new bus services for Dharakandi. Pathania expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for granting district-level status to the Boh Valley cultural programme.

On the occasion, the MLA inaugurated a stage shed built for Rs 1.75 lakh in Boh and a boundary wall of the primary school constructed at Rs 2.42 lakh. He also announced Rs 21,000 for Youth Club Dharakandi and felicitated the winner and runner-up teams of a cricket tournament.

School Principal Vachan Singh thanked the MLA for his support. A portrait made by Lovely Sharma was also presented to Pathania.

Several senior officials from the agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, education, Jal Shakti, electricity, and public works departments, along with local representatives, school staff, and residents, were present at the function.

## ED summons Punjab ex-CM, Raninder: Foreign assets case back to haunt Amarinder, son

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned former Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh and his son Raninder Singh for questioning in connection with a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violation case, officials said on Wednesday. The father-son duo have been accused of being the beneficiaries of certain foreign assets, including a Swiss bank account, as per the Income Tax department findings in 2016.

While Amarinder has been asked to appear before the ED at its Jalandhar office on Thursday, his son has been asked to depose the next day, the officials said. Amarinder, however, is unlikely to appear before the federal probe agency as he remains admitted to a private hospital in Mohali where he underwent a knee replacement surgery on Tuesday. Following the procedure, the 83-year-old was shifted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for monitoring by the doctors. The ED may give him a fresh date to appear and record his statement under FEMA.

Raninder, meanwhile, wrote on X: "As law-abiding citizens, we will cooperate fully with every investigation agency. We have absolute faith in the rule of law and are confident that truth and justice will prevail". The case dates back to 2016, when Amarinder was in the Congress party. The IT department had then said that it had "received

credible information from foreign authorities through official channels that the accused is the beneficiary of foreign assets maintained and controlled through foreign business entities... including bank accounts with HSBC Private Bank (Suisse S.A., Geneva, Switzerland)".

The complaint filed on November 18, 2016 in a



Ludhiana court detailed the data that was received by FT&TR (Foreign Tax and Tax Research) division from 2011, first from France and, subsequently, from Dubai, Switzerland and the British Virgin Islands. The tax chase led authorities from the HSBC account to various entities incorporated by Raninder, namely Jacaranda Trust and the Mulwala Holding Limited where the former CM was also a beneficiary holder.

## Contaminated drinking water supply dominates Chandigarh MC's General House meeting

Witnesses heated exchanges, protests and political clashes; F&CC members declared, key projects, including Dog Pound, cleared by House

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation's General House meeting Wednesday witnessed heated exchanges, protests and political clashes, with the issue of contaminated drinking water supply overshadowing proceedings and delaying agenda business for hours.

The councillors raised allegations of prolonged civic failures while officials ordered fresh testing, disciplinary action and reviews of field operations. The meeting, which struggled to move to agenda items until mid-afternoon because councillors kept raising constituency complaints, reflected intensifying political friction within the civic body, even as Mayor Saurabh Joshi appealed for decorum and cooperation.

Members from several wards, including Mauli Jagran, Dadu Majra, Dhanas and Sector 52, alleged that residents have been facing dirty

water supply for years without permanent resolution. Congress councillors entered the House carrying banners and raised slogans, accusing the authorities of ignoring repeated complaints. Mauli Jagran councillor Manoj Sonkar said residents in his area were struggling for every drop of water and claimed that even the available supply was contaminated. He questioned the purpose of holding House meetings if public grievances were not addressed.

Municipal Commissioner Amit Kumar said water samples collected earlier by the corporation had tested normal, but acknowledged that complaints persisted. He announced that samples would now be examined by a third-party agency, and action would follow based on its findings. The matter intensified when the councillors raised concerns about tubewell motors frequently breaking down and not being



repaired promptly. Senior Deputy Mayor Jasmanpreet Singh alleged that residents often call councillors because officials do not answer their phones. The commissioner said

names of such officials should be provided and directed the Chief Engineer to suspend the officials concerned, stating that primary responsibility lies with field engineers. Jasmanpreet later clarified that the lapse might not be theirs.

The debate took a dramatic turn when Congress councillor Sachin Galav displayed two glasses — one with clear water and another resembling green tea to demonstrate alleged contamination in his area, triggering sharp exchanges and briefly disrupting proceedings. Mayor Joshi termed reports of polluted water, including an incident in which a child allegedly died and several residents fell ill after consuming contaminated supply, "extremely shameful". He said he had sought a detailed report within 72 hours to fix accountability and warned of strict action against any negligent official.

## HP School Education Board Chief submits reform Blueprint to CM Sukhu

Dharamshala/New Delhi.(Agency)

Himachal Pradesh School Education Board (HPSEB) Chairman Dr Rajesh Sharma met Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu at Himachal Sadan in New Delhi and presented a comprehensive blueprint of reforms aimed at overhauling the Board's functioning.

The high-profile meeting is being seen as significant in view of the state's upcoming educational policy initiatives and proposed structural changes in the Board's operations. During the detailed discussion, Dr Sharma shared his vision of elevating the standard of education in the state to new heights.

The talks primarily focused on education reforms. Dr Sharma apprised the Chief Minister of recent innovations and administrative measures undertaken by the Board. He said modern technology is being leveraged to enhance transparency in board examinations, ensure accuracy in evaluation, and declare results in a time-bound manner.

The Chief Minister appreciated these efforts and directed that student welfare must remain the top priority in all reform measures. Emphasising digital transformation, Sukhu instructed the Board to make its services fully digital and user-friendly in line with the evolving information technology landscape.

He stressed that students from remote areas should not have to visit the Dharamshala headquarters for certificates, migration documents, or corrections, and called for the expansion of online and doorstep services.

Dr Sharma assured that several services would soon be made available through a 'one-click' system. The meeting also reviewed preparations for the upcoming board examinations, including security of question papers and strict arrangements at examination centres.

## Peeragarhi flyover murders

# Baba who served 'poisoned sweets' before fleeing with cash, was earlier arrested for two murders, say cops

It was on Sunday morning that the bodies of Randhir Singh (76), Shiv Naresh Singh (47) and Laxmi Devi (40) were discovered in the car.

**New Delhi.(Agency)** Days after two men and a woman were found dead in a car on Outer Delhi's Peeragarhi flyover, a self-styled godman was arrested in connection with the case Wednesday, police said. They said the accused, Kamruddin alias 'Baba', allegedly fed the trio sweets laced with poison and fled with their cash amounting to Rs 2 lakh. The police added that Baba had in May last year killed two men using the same modus operandi in Makkhanpur, in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad. Police said in that case too he had promised he had taken Rs 5 lakh from the victims. A resident of Firozabad, police said the accused operated a 'tantric' centre in Loni and Firozabad. He has been remanded in five-day police custody, they said.

It was on Sunday morning that the bodies of Randhir Singh (76), Shiv Naresh Singh (47) and Laxmi Devi (40) were discovered in the car. Randhir and Shiv, both property dealers from Najafgarh's Baprola village, knew each other. Their relatives claimed they had never heard of Laxmi. Laxmi's family said she was in touch with a 'godman'. "Her second husband was sick and she thought Baba could help. She told Naresh about Baba," an officer said. The accused allegedly convinced them to perform a 'pooja', promising financial gain, and asked them to bring Rs 2 lakh in cash, liquor and cold drinks for the ritual. "Laxmi and Naresh introduced him to Baba. In the last couple of months they met him four times," the officer



added. On the day of the incident, they met him and went to Peeragarhi as they wanted to carry out the ritual at their choice of place, police said. "He prepared laddoos laced with poison and accompanied the three in their car. During the journey, he allegedly persuaded them to consume liquor, cold drinks and sweets. After they lost consciousness, he allegedly took the cash and fled," said DCP (Outer Delhi) Sachin Sharma. In the 2025 case too, police said, Baba

fed the victims — identified as Ram Nath and Puran — sweets laced with poison. Nath's younger brother Ram Singh had filed a police complaint, alleging that it was the Baba who had coaxed the victims to "commit suicide", said officers. As per the FIR filed in the case on May 13 last year, Baba had taken money from Nath and his relative multiple times.

"On May 8, Kamruddin called my brother Ram Nath and Puran to his house. He convinced them that through special rituals he would help recover a large amount of hidden wealth.

He told them to trust him and follow his instructions. During these rituals, he allegedly gave them some poisonous substance and instigated them to commit suicide," Singh stated in the FIR.

## Delhi cop accepts Rs 10-lakh bribe to settle property dispute, arrested



**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A Delhi Police assistant sub-inspector (ASI) was caught red-handed by the CBI on Tuesday when he was accepting a bribe of Rs 10 lakh to "settle" a property dispute, officers said. The amount was part of a Rs 25-lakh bribe that the ASI had demanded from a resident of South Delhi's Kailash Colony, CBI said.

The ASI, Sunder Pal Singh, is posted at C R Park police station. "The CBI lodged an FIR after it received a complaint filed on February 7 from one Prem Sood, a legal consultant. Sood alleged that Singh had sought a bribe to resolve a dispute between him and one Davinder Salwan," a CBI officer said. According to the FIR, the dispute pertained to a property in Kailash Colony.

"Sood, who resides on the first floor of the property, claimed that Singh coerced him into selling the property and later introduced Salwan, a buyer. While Rs 1.5 crore was credited to Sood's account, Salwan did not transfer the complete amount and thus the agreement could not be finalised," the FIR said.

When the initial transaction fell through, Singh allegedly started threatening Sood with false legal action if he refused to pay. "On Tuesday, the CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red-handed while he was demanding and accepting the illegal gratification/undue advantage of Rs 10 lakh as a part payment of the Rs 25-lakh bribe from the complainant," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

## Safety measures mandatory at all construction, repair sites: MCD after West Delhi biker death

**It stated that no work should proceed without ensuring work on scaffolding, fencing, railing and safe excavation procedures are done, and that life-saving equipment should be present at sites involving risk of drowning.**



**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Days after the death of a 25-year-old man, who fell into a pit dug by the Delhi Jal board in Janakpuri on Friday, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Tuesday issued a circular making enforcement of safety measures mandatory at all construction, repair and maintenance work sites falling under its jurisdiction.

"It has been observed that safety protocols at construction and maintenance sites are not being followed uniformly, thereby endangering public life, pedestrians, vulnerable road users and construction workers. This is unacceptable," it read. It stated that no work should proceed without ensuring work on scaffolding, fencing, railing and safe excavation procedures are done, and that life-saving equipment should be present at sites involving risk of drowning. It has also sought a compliance report from all zonal deputy commissioners and departmental heads within three days.

It also underlined 'Manhole and Pit Safety', a circular issued in September 2006, while stating that all junior engineers and sanitary inspectors have to ensure that no manhole or pit remains uncovered and that broken covers are replaced on the same day.

## Inequality extreme, govt weakening rights, Budget for privileged: Opp

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Opposition, led by Congress and TMC on Wednesday, targeted the Narendra Modi government in Lok Sabha over rising inequality, job distress, weakening of states' finances and bias in implementation of central schemes.

During a discussion on the Union Budget, Congress MP K C Venugopal built his remarks around the concerns raised earlier by LoP Rahul Gandhi, saying, "... This Budget is not a blueprint for an inclusive and confident India. It is a carefully crafted presentation that wants to hide distress, rewards the privileged, and ignores the pain of the common people." He said inequality had reached "extreme levels" as "top 10% controls nearly 58% of our total GDP and the bottom half survives on just 15%". "Nearly 34% of Indians survive on less than Rs 100 a day. This is the Modi era,"

he said. He flagged that "youth unemployment has reached 15% and regular salaried employment has declined from 22.8% to 22.7%."

The situation for women was "worse", he said, adding, "Only 10.5% of rural

Right to Employment, Right to Food, Right to Education, Right to Information. This government is dismantling all these rights.

MGNREGA scrapped, RTI diluted, food security has been cut and forest rights violated."

"No economy can grow sustainably in an atmosphere of fear and hatred... State-sponsored terror in the name bulldozer raj has become a new political tool," he said. TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said the Budget speech was "full of sound and fury" but lacked in delivery.

"West Bengal was denied due fiscal allocation in central schemes such as MGNREGA and Samagra

Shiksha Abhiyan on irrational grounds," he said. "The West Bengal CM has written letters to the PM, but none have been answered." He added, "Bengal has been ignored, Bengalis have been ignored."

women work in the service sector. And one in four urban women who want to work cannot find a job."

Comparing the parameters with that of UPA years, he said, "UPA believed in citizens' rights. We gave Right to Work,

Right to Employment, Right to Food, Right to Education, Right to Information. This government is dismantling all these rights.

MGNREGA scrapped, RTI diluted, food security has been cut and forest rights violated."

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## At 13.2°C, Delhi sees warmer nights early; AQI slips back to 'Very Poor' category

**Data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) show that in both 2024 and 2025, the minimum temperature did not cross the 13°C mark during the first 11 days of February.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Delhi is experiencing warmer nights earlier than usual this February, with Sardarjung recording a minimum temperature of 13.2°C on Wednesday—three notch notches above the season's normal of 10.2°C. This marks one of the earliest such mid-month spikes in temperature in at least the past two years. Data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) show that in both 2024 and 2025, the minimum temperature did not cross the 13°C mark during the first 11 days of February.

The rise in night time temperature aligns with the IMD's broader forecast for a warmer February, with above-normal day and night temperatures and fewer cold wave days than usual.

The minimum temperature could rise to 15°C from February 15-17, the IMD

forecast shows, marking a departure from usual patterns. Historically, IMD data since 2011 show that minimum temperatures of around 15°C are

night time temperatures this month is attributed to approaching western disturbances, the IMD said.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality slipped back to the 'Very Poor' category (301 to 400) from the 'Poor' category (201 to 300) for the first time in the last week. The Capital's average Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 305 on Wednesday, up from 271 on Tuesday. Delhi had logged an AQI of 339 on February 4.

Similar trends prevailed in Noida, with the AQI climbing to 311 (Very Poor) on Wednesday from 261 (Poor) a day earlier. Gurgaon recorded an AQI of 297 in the 'Poor' category on Wednesday. According to Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) forecasts, air quality is likely to remain in the 'Poor' category over the coming days.

Typically recorded towards the last week of February. Such early rise in night temperatures during February have been rare, with 2017 being an exception when the minimum temperature touched 15.5°C early February. The early rise in

night time temperatures this month is attributed to approaching western disturbances, the IMD said.

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The police said the car was coming from the Ghaziabad side when the accident occurred. Two women occupants, identified as Deepanjali, 38, and Neelam Garg, 55, were found dead at the scene. One of the victims was lying outside the vehicle, while the other was trapped in the front left passenger seat, said the police. The driver of the car, Deepanshu Garg, along with two minor passengers—Vivan, 5, and Vashu, 3—sustained injuries in the collision. All three were shifted to Max Hospital for medical treatment, the police said.

The crime team was called to the scene and conducted a detailed inspection. The bodies of the deceased were shifted to the Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) mortuary for post-mortem examination.

The police said further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events and the circumstances leading to the accident.

## 'He was stuck for 18 hours': Kin of Bihar worker who died after falling into DDA manhole in Delhi

**Police have added sections 285 (danger in public way) and 106 (death by negligence) of BNS against unknown people in the FIR.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The last time Jai Kishore Rai saw his cousin Birju Kumar Rai (32) was about a year ago, at their village in Bihar's Samastipur district. Around 3.30 pm on Wednesday, Jai saw Birju again, as his body was taken out from the mortuary of Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, two days after he fell to his death in an open manhole on a vacant Delhi Development Authority (DDA) plot in Rohini's Begumpur. "Birju came to Delhi to work when he was 15-16 (years old). I work as a painter in Najafgarh, and he used to work on a plot in Begumpur. But we did not get to meet a lot," said Jai.

He added that Birju's wife and his three children—boys aged 6 and 4 years and a 2-year-old girl—all live in Bihar. The four, along with Birju's 75-year-old mother, all depend on Birju's income, he said. "I got a call last night. They told me that he was stuck in the pothole since Monday," Jai added. Police have said that Begumpur police station had received a

PCR call at 2.36 pm on Tuesday from Amir Hussain—a fellow worker of Birju—reporting a missing person, suspected to have fallen into a sewer in Rohini's Sector 32.

Birju, police said, was drinking with Budhan Das alias Suraj, another fellow worker, on Monday evening. "They were returning to their makeshift jhuggis located near an under construction building. About 200 m from his room, jhuggi 57, Birju lost his balance and fell in an open manhole," an officer said.

"(During questioning), Budhan Das said that he did not inform anyone at night, as he was intoxicated and informed Amir Hussain as soon as he regained his senses on Tuesday afternoon," said DCP (Rohini) Rajeev Ranjan. Police said that while Das told Amir that Birju had fallen in a manhole, he couldn't



remember where.

Following the PCR call, teams from Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Service, and DDA were informed. Police claimed they immediately reached the spot, but it was another three hours before fire brigade personnel could retrieve the body from the manhole. Birju was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead.

On Wednesday, the manhole in which

Birju fell was found covered. According to local residents, late Tuesday, the manhole, along with a few more on the same road, were covered.

They added that people often avoid this particular two-lane road in Begampur, surrounded by under-construction buildings and vacant plots on both sides, after sunset. "The manholes are open, only one lamp post works... The chowk ahead is known as 'chakku chowk', as many instances of stabbing and snatching have been reported here," said Braham Dutt Sharma, a member of Resident Welfare Association of Ward 27 in Begampur. He added that multiple instances of animals falling in manholes have also been reported. Police, meanwhile, have added sections 285 (danger in public way) and 106 (death by negligence) of BNS against unknown people in the FIR. The DDA did not respond to queries on the matter.

## NEWS BOX

**Namibia first, Pakistan already on mind: India's Sunday plans in motion**

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

India plays Namibia tonight, but Pakistan is already on everyone's mind. It's the reality of tournament cricket—you can't ignore what's coming next, even when there's a game to win right now. Suryakumar Yadav's men will insist they're focused only on Namibia, and they should be. But the Pakistan clash looms large, and tonight is also about preparation for that. Respectfully, Namibia might not be the biggest threat to India right now, but the defending champions haven't been at their best. Even against an associate nation like the USA, India found itself tested. The batting unit struggled to get accustomed to the conditions at Wankhede, and it took a captain's knock to get them out of that fire. Tonight's challenge is clear: beat Namibia convincingly while figuring out the best combinations for bigger battles ahead. Do they experiment? Do they play it safe? The team selection and approach will reveal how much India is thinking beyond just the



next two points.

## AN OPENING CONUNDRUM

The biggest question mark hangs over the opening slot. Abhishek Sharma looked off-colour during the USA game, and his subsequent hospitalisation—though he's since been discharged—has raised concerns about his fitness. Can he dig deep and get back to his best? A rest might be on the cards, but then the question becomes whether he'll be ready for the rest of the tournament. The thought of not having Abhishek seemed far-fetched initially. Now it's a real possibility that he could miss tonight's game and potentially the Pakistan match if he doesn't recover in time. That would be a significant blow—Abhishek had the better of Pakistan during their Asia Cup encounter, and India would prefer having that firepower available. "You want to make sure that Abhishek Sharma is really, really fresh and fit for the 15th game, which is very important for the country," Irfan Pathan said on Star Sports, hinting at the management's priorities.

So who steps in? Sanju Samson is the obvious choice as the other opener in the squad, but he hasn't been in great form lately.

**Matchday Preview: Nepal look to bounce back after England heartbreak**

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Day 5 of the T20 World Cup 2026 promises another action-packed triple-header as teams look to build early momentum in the tournament. Sri Lanka will aim for back-to-back wins when they take on Oman at the Pallekele International Stadium. After a confident start to their campaign against Ireland, the hosts will look to tighten their grip on the group, while Oman face a crucial fixture in their bid to stay in contention. At the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, Nepal return to action following their heartbreaking four-run loss to England. The Rhinos pushed a former T20 World Champion to the brink and will now look to channel that belief into a strong performance against Italy. The day concludes with India facing Namibia. After a nervy outing against the USA, the defending champions will seek a more clinical display, while Namibia aim to bounce back from their opening defeat to the Netherlands. Nepal vs Italy in Mumbai in a



Group C match at 3 pm IST

India vs Namibia in Delhi in a Group A match at 7 pm IST. All matches will be telecast on Star Sports, with live streaming available on JioHotstar. Here is a quick preview of the three games scheduled on Day 4 of the T20 World Cup.

MATCH 1 Prediction: Sri Lanka vs Oman in Pallekele

Sri Lanka will aim to build on their promising start to the T20 World Cup 2026 when they take on Oman in a key Group B clash at the Pallekele International Stadium. The co-hosts opened their campaign with a solid 20-run victory over Ireland, posting 163 for six and then holding the visitors to 143. The spin duo of Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana were instrumental in restricting Ireland, while Kamindu Mendis's 56 anchored the innings and provided stability. However, Sri Lanka have suffered a blow ahead of this match with Hasaranga ruled out due to a hamstring injury.

**A confession out of sync: Sturla Holm Laegreid and the art of misreading the room**

**A moment to win the heart of the 'gold medal of his life' has found Sturla Holm Laegreid deliver one of the most bizarre and controversial athlete interviews of all time. By putting his partner in a rough spot and stealing the thunder from his teammate, Laegreid's words were right but delivered at the wrong moment.**

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

A few days ago, the name Sturla Holm Laegreid may not have struck a chord with many sports enthusiasts around the globe. In the early hours of Wednesday, February 11, those closely following the Winter Olympics would have known him simply as the bronze medallist in the men's 20-kilometre individual biathlon. By the time the day drew to a close, however, he was known for something entirely different—the Norwegian biathlete who confessed on live television to cheating on his partner. Team Norway had just clinched two biathlon medals, gold and bronze, at the Milan-

Cortina Games—a moment filled with pride and emotion. Not long ago, one of the team's stars, Sivert Guttorm Bakken, had passed away, and the performance was meant to be a tribute to him. The gold medallist, Johan-Olav Botn, reflected that sentiment perfectly, pointing to the sky in remembrance of his fallen teammate.

When it came to Laegreid, similar emotions were expected to surface. After all, this was his first individual Olympic medal, and Norwegian media anticipated the usual post-podium responses—gratitude for family, coaches, or perhaps a special person in his life. There was someone special that Laegreid chose to mention. And that choice would define his infamy. Speaking to Norwegian media, just seconds into the interview, Laegreid confessed to cheating on his girlfriend—the "love of his life," as he called her. "Six months ago, I met the love of my life. The world's most beautiful, sweetest person. And three months ago, I made the biggest mistake of my life and cheated on her," said Laegreid as he burst into tears.

"I'm not quite sure what I'm trying to say by

saying this now, but sport has taken a back seat in recent days. I wish I could share this with her." At least that last part, he managed—in what was arguably the worst way



possible. From a journalistic standpoint, it was a gold mine. The video went viral. The clicks soared. But when the sporting achievement is stripped away, Laegreid came across as someone who simply could not read the room.

## READ THE ROOM, STURLA

First, let's address why Laegreid was in the wrong, starting with the act itself. Without playing moral compass, cheating is hardly

something to be defended—particularly when you describe someone as the "love of your life." No public confession, however emotional, cleanses that image.

More troubling was how his confession dragged his partner into unwanted global attention. While people attempt many things to reconcile with former partners, emotionally cornering someone through a public platform is not one of them. Laegreid's partner did not choose this spotlight, and her response made that clear. "I didn't choose to be put in this position, and it's painful to have to endure it," she told VG. "We've been in contact, and he's aware of my feelings about this."

Then came the sporting cost.

This was supposed to be a day celebrating Botn's gold and Norway's dominance in a sport deeply ingrained in the country's culture. Instead, the narrative shifted entirely—away from athletic excellence and toward a personal confession framed as a grand romantic gesture. Laegreid did apologise for stealing the spotlight from Botn and later paid tribute to Bakken, but by then, it felt more like damage control than reflection.

**Smashed for 90 in 8, yet Jofra Archer finds support from England captain Harry Brook**

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO. (Agency)

Jofra Archer hasn't had the best of starts to his T20 World Cup campaign, but has found support from England captain Harry Brook after the game against West Indies in Mumbai. Archer, who is expected to lead England's pace spearhead and strike bowler, has been expensive in the two matches he has had so far, leaking runs at an economy-rate over 10. In the thriller against Nepal, the pacer finished with figures of 42 runs in four overs for just one wicket. Against the West Indies, Archer once again failed to find his radar, conceding 48 runs in the four overs he bowled for a single wicket as England lost the match by 30 runs. Despite the poor returns, Brook has confidence that the pacer will bounce back in the coming games. The England skipper said that the pacer is bowling rapidly, a positive sign after the first two matches. No, not really (concerned about Archer). Everybody knows how good Jof is. He'll bounce back for sure. He's bowling rapid and I'm sure he'll execute better in the coming games," said Brook.

## TAKING CONFIDENCE FROM MUMBAI



England have had a challenging time in Mumbai, being pushed to the limit by Nepal and then the loss on Wednesday. However, Brook feels that there is a lot of positives to take from their first two games as they head to Kolkata for their remaining two games.

"I think we can take a lot of confidence from not only the Nepal game, but the last T20 in Sri Lanka when they were both tight games. We can take a lot of confidence from them and in the depth with the batting that we have as well, we were stood up in the changing room and we still needed 50 off four overs and we still had faith. So I think we can take a lot of confidence going forward. Obviously, it didn't pay off today, but another day it would work," said Brook.

**Hero entry delayed. Can India deliver in Delhi before clash with the main villain**

Now the caravan moves to Delhi, where the February air carries the scent of runs. The hype machine is still in overdrive. Broadcasters are selling carnage, promising a record-breaking 300. Even pundits are convinced India can breach it. But pressure does not always produce spectacle. Sometimes, it produces panic. In the rush to script a blockbuster fire a warning shot at Pakistan, are India trying too hard to manufacture the moment? Perhaps under the Kotla floodlights, the real statement is not about breaching 250 or flirting with 300. Perhaps it is about rediscovering rhythm and letting the fireworks arrive unforced.

And that is where Namibia enter the frame.

Ranked outsiders against Suryakumar's well-oiled machine, Gerhard Erasmus and his men have nothing to lose as they attempt to

unsettle the team to beat. They mustered 156 in 20 overs in Delhi on February 10 and were brushed aside in a seven-wicket defeat by the Netherlands—a result that barely disturbed the tournament narrative.

But context matters. Namibia have now had more time to acclimatise to the capital's conditions, and a sharper, more assured performance should follow. Erasmus, however, did not hold back off the field. The skipper questioned the International Cricket Council's scheduling, pointing out that India were granted two training sessions under lights, while Namibia did not receive even one in the lead-up to the New Delhi clash. India and Namibia have met only once before in T20Is. At the T20 World Cup in 2021, India restricted Namibia to 132 in Dubai before chasing it down in just 15.2 overs.

## India Team News

The Men in Blue face a forced reshuffle at the top. The world's No. 1 T20I batter, Abhishek Sharma, is likely to miss out following a hospital stay due to a stomach infection. That opens the door for Sanju Samson to return to the opening slot, while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is expected to rejoin the XI after recovering from a viral fever.

**Rohit Sharma lays down roadmap for ODI World Cup 2027: Will do everything to win it**

want that trophy so I'm gonna try and do everything in my power and capacity to work hard and get it," said Rohit Sharma in the "I will definitely want to go out there and win the World Cup for my country that is something that I've always looked upon. I've grown up watching this 50-over WC.

Rohit's remarks come at a time when his place and longevity in India's ODI setup have been the subject of intense scrutiny. However, his comments indicate that he is not yet ready to step away from the format and instead sees the 2027 World Cup in South Africa as unfinished business. Having led India to the final of the ODI World Cup in 2023, where they suffered a heartbreaking defeat at home against Australia, the veteran opener appears driven by the desire to have one final shot at glory on the biggest stage.

**From JJ Smit to Jan Frylinck: 5 Namibia stars who can derail India's charge**

brilliance when they come up against the two-time champions. Namibia's only previous meeting with India came in the 2021 T20 World Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, where they suffered a nine-wicket defeat after India chased down 133 in just 15.2 overs. That edition marked Namibia's maiden T20 World Cup appearance, and the 2026 tournament is now their fourth successive outing on the global stage. Several members from the 2021 squad remain part of the current setup, including Gerhard Erasmus, Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton, JJ Smit, Bernard Scholtz and Ruben Trumpelmann. Although they endured a tough outing against the Netherlands in New Delhi on Tuesday, Namibia now have an opportunity to regroup and deliver a spirited performance against one of the tournament favourites.

## Head to Head

Matches - 1, India - 1, Namibia - 0. Here are 5 Namibia players who can pose India a threat in their upcoming game.

## New Delhi, (Agency)

Namibia will not start as favourites when they take on Suryakumar Yadav's India in their T20 World Cup clash on Thursday, February 12, at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. However, considering their steady rise and competitive performances over the years, they are capable of producing moments of

against Namibia, will need to be particularly cautious. Fortunately for India, they have several in-form left-handers, including Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma at the top of the order, who can help neutralize Trumpelmann's threat. Out of his 50 wickets in T20 internationals, 14 of those have come in T20 World Cups, highlighting his ability to perform on the big stage.

To counter him, India's top-four trained against a local left-arm pacer from Delhi on Tuesday. With a slightly side-arm action, the Delhi cricketer bowled medium pace in the nets alongside Arshdeep Singh, Hardik Pandya, and Shivam Dube.

## JJ Smit

JJ Smit is Namibia's premier all-rounder and a key match-winner for his side. A right-handed batter and left-arm fast-medium bowler, Smit has been a mainstay in the national team since making his T20I debut in 2019. He has scored 1,211 runs at an average of 33.63 and a strike rate of 147.46, including four fifties and a top score of 111 not out against Kenya last year.

## UBS to hire 3,000 roles in India as Credit Suisse takeover triggers Swiss job cuts

New Delhi.(Agency)

UBS expects to hire up to 3,000 people in India, the Swiss bank said on Wednesday, a figure similar to the number of jobs set to disappear in Switzerland as a result of its integration with former rival Credit Suisse. UBS declined to say whether the two developments were connected, and sources close to the bank said there was no link. UBS bought Credit Suisse in a state-engineered rescue in 2023, leaving it as Switzerland's sole major banking group. It has said around 3,000 Swiss jobs will be cut, most likely later this year. Most roles are expected to go through natural attrition or early retirements, according to CEO Sergio Ermotti, who has said the bank aims to limit the social impact. In India, where UBS already has several offices, the bank is opening an additional site in Hyderabad, where it plans to add 2,000 to 3,000 roles in the coming months.

The hiring push would double UBS's workforce in the city, it said.

"We're looking forward to further expanding our tech capabilities, including AI, while enhancing our operations footprint in the location," said Matthias Schacke, who heads UBS's operations in India. Natalia Ferrara, vice president of the Swiss Bank Employees Association, declined to comment on developments in India but said Swiss rules should not make the country unattractive for UBS.

"It is extremely important to us that as many jobs as possible remain in Switzerland," she said.

## Are Banks open or closed today for Bharat Bandh? SBI, Bank of Baroda, UCO Bank and others...

New Delhi.(Agency)

New Delhi: Major banking unions -- All India Bank Employee's Association - AIBEA, All India Bank Officers Association - AIBOA and Bank Employees Federation of India - BEFI -- have announced decision to participate in the nationwide Bharat Bandh on Thursday, 12 February 2026.

Though official bank holiday has not been declared so far, PSU Banks like SBI, UCO Bank and Bank of Baroda have informed regulators regarding possible service disruptions owing to the Bandh. Meanwhile other banks, mostly private banks, have not mentioned anything specifically or categorically regarding banking operations for today. In a filing to the BSE, SBI has said "We have been advised by the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) that All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA), Bank Employees' Federation of India (BEFI) and All India Bank Officers' Association (AIBOA) have served a notice, informing their decision to go on a nationwide bank strike on Thursday, 12th February 2026."

In this connection, SBI has advised that while the Bank has made necessary arrangements to ensure normal functioning in its branches and offices on the day of strike, it is likely that work in the Bank may be impacted to a limited extent. Though the Bank is taking necessary steps for smooth functioning of Bank's Branches and Offices on the day of strike, in the event the strike materializes, the functioning of the branches and offices may be affected. We inform you that the All India Bank Employee's Association - AIBEA, All India Bank Officers Association - AIBOA and Bank Employees Federation of India - BEFI has served notice informing their decision to go on Strike on Thursday February 12, 2026, on various issues/demands," BoB said in a regulatory filing.

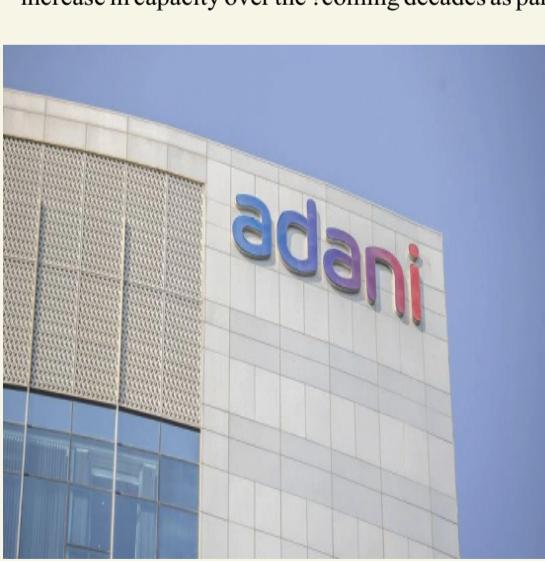
The Bank said that it is taking all the necessary steps for smooth functioning of Bank's branches and Offices on the day of Strike, in the event the strike materializes, the functioning of the branches and offices may be affected.

## Adani Power sets up nuclear-focussed unit as govt moves to open sector

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's Adani Power said on Thursday it has formed an atomic energy-focussed unit, becoming one of the first privately-held utilities to disclose publicly their interest in the newly-opened nuclear sector.

Adani Atomic Energy Ltd, will generate, transmit and distribute electric power derived from nuclear energy sources, the company said, without giving other details. The move comes as India opens its nuclear power sector to greater private participation to meet rising electricity demand and curb carbon emissions, with the government targeting a sharp increase in capacity over the coming decades as part



of its clean energy push. So far, state-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India owns and operates the country's fleet of nuclear power plants that have a total capacity of 8.8 gigawatts. Tata Power's CEO said last week on a post-earnings call that the company was evaluating three sites for nuclear projects.

## Many taxpayers expecting quick refunds are finding themselves stuck in a long wait. With several income tax returns pending for over 90 days, concerns are growing about delays and what they mean for ordinary filers.

Mumbai.(Agency)

Gold and silver recently hit record highs. Then they corrected sharply. Now prices are moving in a narrower range. That may sound worrying, but according to Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, this phase looks more like a pause after a strong rally rather than the end of the trend. Let us break it down in the simplest way possible. Gold on the Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX)

had climbed close to Rs 1,80,000 to Rs 1,81,000 before correcting to the Rs 1,55,000 to Rs 1,60,000 range. A correction simply means prices have cooled off after rising too quickly. Ponmudi says strong buying interest is seen around Rs 1,45,000 to Rs 1,50,000. In market language, this is called a support zone. In simple terms, it is a price band where buyers usually step in and prevent further fall. If gold moves decisively above Rs 1,60,800 again, it could attempt another rally towards Rs 1,65,000 to Rs 1,75,000.

The broader trend, for now, still looks positive.

Silver has seen even sharper swings. On the MCX, it had surged to nearly Rs 4,20,000 before correcting to around Rs 2,50,000 to Rs 2,70,000. That is a steep fall, and naturally it makes investors nervous.

Here too, Ponmudi points to a strong support band between Rs 2,25,000 and Rs

2,60,000. If silver holds above this level and demand returns, it could gradually move towards Rs 3,00,000 to Rs

often influences Indian rates. Gold there corrected from around \$5,500 to the \$5,000 to \$5,150 range, while silver fell from above \$121 to about \$80 to \$87.

According to Ponmudi, this pullback appears to be profit-booking. That simply means investors who bought at lower levels are selling to lock in gains. It does not automatically signal a long-term breakdown.

So what does all this mean for a regular investor? It means this is not a panic phase. It is a consolidation phase. Prices are adjusting after a historic rally. Gold appears relatively stable with steady demand at lower levels. Silver offers higher upside potential but comes with sharper volatility. For jewellery buyers or long-term investors in gold ETFs or digital gold, this correction could offer better entry levels compared to the recent peaks. For traders, the key is whether these support zones hold.



## RBI finally takes note of mis-selling, banks to refund if complaint is proved

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India has issued draft rules to stop mis-selling of financial products by banks and to protect customers from being forced to buy unwanted products.

The draft, called the Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks - Responsible Business Conduct) Amendment Directions, 2026, will come into effect from July 1, 2026.

Under the proposal, banks will have to refund customers in full if mis-selling is proved. They will also have to compensate customers for any losses caused due to such mis-selling, as per their approved policies.

WHY RBI HAS ISSUED THESE DRAFT RULES

The new draft rules are aimed at improving how banks advertise, market and sell financial products and services. Over the past few years, concerns have been raised about customers being pushed into buying insurance, mutual funds or other third-party products without fully understanding them. In November last

year, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had asked banks to curb

their products. "It shall be ensured specifically that no incentive is

directly/indirectly received by the employees engaged in marketing/sales of third-party products/services from the third party," the draft norms said. This could affect banks, insurance firms and mutual fund houses, as banks earn fees by selling these products. Many of these companies depend heavily on banks for distribution.

### NO FORCED BUNDLING OF PRODUCTS

The draft rules clearly state that a bank cannot bundle the sale of a third-party product with its own product.

If the sale of a bank's own product depends on buying a third-party product, customers must be given the option to buy that third-party product from any provider of their choice.

The regulator also said a bank should not advertise or market any third-party product or service as its own.

mis-selling and protect public trust in the banking system. The Reserve Bank of India has also flagged this issue many times and said banks should focus on their core banking activities.

### BAN ON THIRD-PARTY INCENTIVES

One of the key proposals is a ban on incentives paid by third parties such as insurance companies and mutual fund houses to bank employees for selling

uncertain, but growth stopped being fixed. The biggest shift wasn't money, it was ownership and accountability," she



she wrote. Meenal's post has struck a chord with several online. Netizens were quick enough to participate on her post, and share their thoughts on the dilemma that many face in their career too.

### Netizens react

"The key takeaway is self-awareness. Income structure should match personality, responsibility, and long-term goals. Freedom sounds exciting, but resilience funds it," said one user. This isn't about quitting jobs. It's about understanding risk appetite. Some people sleep better with certainty, others with ownership and unlimited upside potential," another commented.

"Really honest take on growth and comfort. The part about trading predictability for ownership hits hard because most people underestimate how much accountability accelerates learning."

## Bengaluru CA explains why she quit her Rs 28 LPA job for 'unstable income' freelance career

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Job security and worrying about job is a natural thought that keeps crossing the minds of salaried individuals. While, on one hand several people have posted about the difficult times being faced by them in their respective careers on account of job loss, a Chartered Accountant has done quite the opposite.

Bengaluru-based CA Meenal Goel has shared in a LinkedIn post that she has rather quit her high paying job and taken the path which may face uncertainty. In her LinkedIn post, the CA who formerly worked in big companies like KPMG and Deloitte, shared why she gave up her Rs 28 LPA job for unstable income growth. "The salary was predictable and money came on time, but growth had a ceiling and effort didn't always change outcomes," she wrote. "Some months paid well, some paid nothing. Income became

added. She further argued that while stable job offers certainty, freelancing forces learning and resilience. Meenal also agrees that Neither path is better because one trades comfort for predictability, the other trades predictability for potential. But she asks a very poignant question. "The real question is how much uncertainty you're willing to live with for growth,"

she wrote. Meenal's post has struck a chord with several online. Netizens were quick enough to participate on her post, and share their thoughts on the dilemma that many face in their career too.

### Netizens react

"The key takeaway is self-awareness. Income structure should match personality, responsibility, and long-term goals. Freedom sounds exciting, but resilience funds it," said one user. This isn't about quitting jobs. It's about understanding risk appetite. Some people sleep better with certainty, others with ownership and unlimited upside potential," another commented.

"Really honest take on growth and comfort. The part about trading predictability for ownership hits hard because most people underestimate how much accountability accelerates learning."

## Inflation data reset: Why your groceries will matter less than your rent

Digital subscriptions were rare. App-based services were minimal. Urban housing patterns were different. Consumption habits have evolved significantly in 12 years, and the new series aims to capture that shift. FOOD GETS A SMALLER ROLE

Under the older CPI structure, food accounted for nearly 46% of the total basket. That meant almost half of the inflation number depended on what was happening to vegetables, cereals, milk and other essentials. Under the new series, food's weight has been reduced to roughly 37%. But, what does this mean in practice?

If tomato or onion prices surge sharply for a month, the overall inflation number may not spike as dramatically as it would have earlier. Food still matters. It remains the single largest category. But it no longer dominates the headline number the way it once did. For years, sharp movements in vegetable prices often drove inflation headlines. That influence is now smaller.



YOUR RENT MATTERS MORE NOW

At the same time, categories such as housing and services have been given relatively higher weight in the new basket. Housing typically includes rent and related costs. Services cover expenses such as healthcare, education, transport and other household services. This means rent increases in urban areas or rising service costs could now influence inflation more

strongly than before. If you live in a metro city and spend a large portion of your income on rent, school fees, medical bills or other services, the new inflation reading may feel closer to your actual cost of living. In simple terms, what you eat will matter slightly less in the calculation. Where you live and how you spend will matter more.

MORE ITEMS, EXPANDED CATEGORIES

The CPI basket has also been expanded.

The number of items tracked has increased from around 299 in the earlier series to about 358 in the new one. The number of groups has expanded from six broad categories to twelve. The weights have been revised using data from the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey. That survey captures how households across rural and urban India are spending today, not how they spent more than a decade ago.



# Nia Sharma

## On Getting Trolled For Her Style: 'In From One Ear, Out From The Other'

**N**ia Sharma is one of the popular faces in the television world. With a career spanning over ten years, Nia has built a huge fan base on the strength of her fearless attitude and bold on-screen presence. However, the television star often attracts negative comments and trolls for her fashion choices. During an interview with Filmygyan, the Laughter Chefs star opened up about how she handles negative comments on her outfit choices.

### Nia Sharma Opens Up On Fashion Trolls

For the interview, Nia appeared in her signature bold look. She was seen wearing a baby blue coloured co-ord set featuring a bralette and a pleated long skirt. While talking about her fashion choices, she shared, "I like to dress up. It ends there. Abhi usme kisiki chahi kya bolne wali hai, meri mami mujhe kya bolegi ya phir bahar nikalte mere chaar dost kya bolne wale hai – if I'm gonna be so bothered about all that, I'd never be able to wear clothes." She continued, "Jab aapko pehnna hai toh pehno. Then you don't bother, right? I have never been bothered by any of these things."

Nia did admit it bothers her a little that when people call her bad words for wearing something. Calling the comments "cheap", she shared, "You don't feel very nice about it, but also, is it impacting your career in any way? The answer is no. You just move past it." She also added, "India has the largest population in the world, and you're not going to hear every comment there is, every noise there is. You shut it. You just turn a blind eye. In from one ear, out from the other."

### Nia Sharma's Career

Nia Sharma started her acting career with the 2010 television series *Kaali – Ek Agnipariksha*. She got her first big break in 2011's *Ek Hazaaron Mein Meri Behna Hai*. Over the years, Nia has appeared in various popular television shows, including *Suhagan Chudail*, *Jamai Raja*, and *Naagin 4*, among others. Nia Sharma has also entertained audiences in the digital space with web series like *Jamai 2.0* and *Twisted*. In 2017, she participated in *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi* season 8 and later appeared in *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi – Made in India* and emerged as a winner. The actress is currently impressing audiences in the dating-based reality show *MTV Splitsvilla X6*, hosted by Sunny Leone and Karan Kundrra. She is also seen in the celebrity comedy cooking show *Laughter Chefs Season 3*.



# Nora Fatehi

## Creates History, Becomes Only Artist To Perform At FIFA And Cricket World Cups

**I**n an era where global representation matters more than ever, Nora Fatehi has achieved a milestone few from Bollywood can claim. She has become the only Bollywood artist to have performed at both the FIFA World Cup event and a Cricket World Cup ceremony. At the FIFA World Cup 2022, Nora didn't just make an

Performing live at the closing ceremony, she stood as a symbol of Indian representation on a platform that unites millions across continents. Nora's global moment was matched on home turf when she performed at the opening ceremony of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in Mumbai. Energising a packed stadium ahead of the tournament, Nora once again proved her ability to command massive live audiences with ease. The diva had also shared several videos from the event on her Instagram handle with a caption that read, "T20 Worldcup opening ceremony and my birthday celebration damn... I'm feeling lucky! Jai hind!"

Beyond stadium spectacles, Nora's international footprint continues to expand across mainstream pop culture. She delivered a high-energy performance of her hit track *Just A Girl (What Do I Know)* on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* alongside Jamaican dancehall star Shenseea, marking another breakthrough moment on American television. She also took over the stage at *UNTOLD Dubai*, performing in front of a massive international crowd and further cementing her place as a global live performer.

appearance; she sang and danced at the closing ceremony, captivating a worldwide audience. As part of the official anthem *Light The Sky*, she brought her signature stage presence to one of the most-watched sporting events on the planet. She also proudly represented India by singing in Hindi in the FIFA anthem, adding a powerful cultural touch to the global celebration.



**Nikki Tamboli SLAMS 'So-Called Husband, Father' Prince Narula For Body Shaming Her: 'Your Daughter...'**



**A**ctress Nikki Tamboli, who is currently seen in the reality show "The 50", has strongly called out reality TV show star Prince Narula over an alleged body-shaming remark, questioning his conduct as a "so-called husband, father and public figure."

It was during an episode of *The 50*, when Prince reportedly commented on Nikki's appearance. She has shared the clip on X, formerly called Twitter, and said that mocking someone behind their back isn't power. She wrote on X: "So-called husband, father, public figure. If someone spoke about your daughter's body like this, would you laugh too? This isn't strategy. This isn't a game. This is body-shaming done quietly—the coward's way."

Nikki added: "Cameras don't cancel character. Influence doesn't excuse disrespect. Mocking someone behind their back isn't power. If you have something to say, say it to the face. Behind-the-back mocking isn't strength – it's fear pretending to be confidence. And influence without responsibility? That's not leadership. That's failure. That's weakness with an audience."

Produced by Banijay Asia, *The 50* is India's upcoming large-scale reality show. Streaming on JioHotstar and Colors, *The 50* promises a bold new format set to disrupt the Indian reality TV playbook.

The JioHotstar show, adapted from the popular French series *Les Cinquante*, features 50 contestants in a lavish palace setting with no fixed rules for unpredictable drama, strategy, and politics.

Nikki made her acting debut with the Telugu horror comedy film *Chikati Gadilo Chithakotudu*. She later made her Tamil debut in the action horror film *Kanchana 3* as Divya. *Kanchana 3* grossed over ₹130 crore worldwide. Her third film was *Thippara Meesam* in Telugu, where she played Mounika.

The actress made her television debut by participating in the Hindi reality show *Bigg Boss 14*, where she emerged as the second runner-up.

## Ravi Dubey, Sargun Mehta Step Out For A Cosy Dinner Date In Mumbai



**The much-loved television couple stepped out for a cosy dinner date in Mumbai, turning heads with their effortless style and sweet chemistry.**

**I**ndian television's popular couple, Ravi Dubey and Sargun Mehta, were recently seen enjoying a relaxed dinner date at a restaurant in Bandra, Mumbai. The duo arrived together and greeted the paparazzi with bright smiles before heading inside.

For the evening, Ravi Dubey kept his look simple and stylish. He wore a fitted black T-shirt with dark jeans and white sneakers with neon details. Sargun Mehta opted for a relaxed yet trendy ensemble. She wore a maroon top with wide-leg denim jeans and layered it with a light shrug. With her hair left open and makeup kept minimal, she completed her look with a handbag.

### Ravi Dubey's Big Bollywood Debut

On the professional front, Ravi Dubey is gearing up for a major milestone, his Bollywood debut in Nitesh Tiwari's ambitious film *Ramayana*. He will play the role of Lakshman, alongside Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash will play Ravana, and Sunny Deol as Hanuman. The epic drama will be released in two parts. Part 1 will come out on Diwali 2026, and Part 2 will release on Diwali 2027. Ravi has said before that he feels very thankful and amazed to play such an iconic and important character.

### Sargun Reveals She Didn't Know About Ramayana

Interestingly, Sargun Mehta recently revealed on Ranveer Allahbadia's podcast that she was unaware of Ravi's casting in *Ramayana* for a long time. She shared that the couple does not discuss work at home and only finds out about each other's projects once they are officially announced.

Recalling the moment she found out, Sargun said someone congratulated her about Ravi's role, but she initially brushed it off because she hadn't been told anything. Ravi later confirmed the news after he was permitted to speak about it. On the other hand, Sargun was last seen in the Punjabi film *Saunkan Saunkanay 2* opposite Ammy Virk.

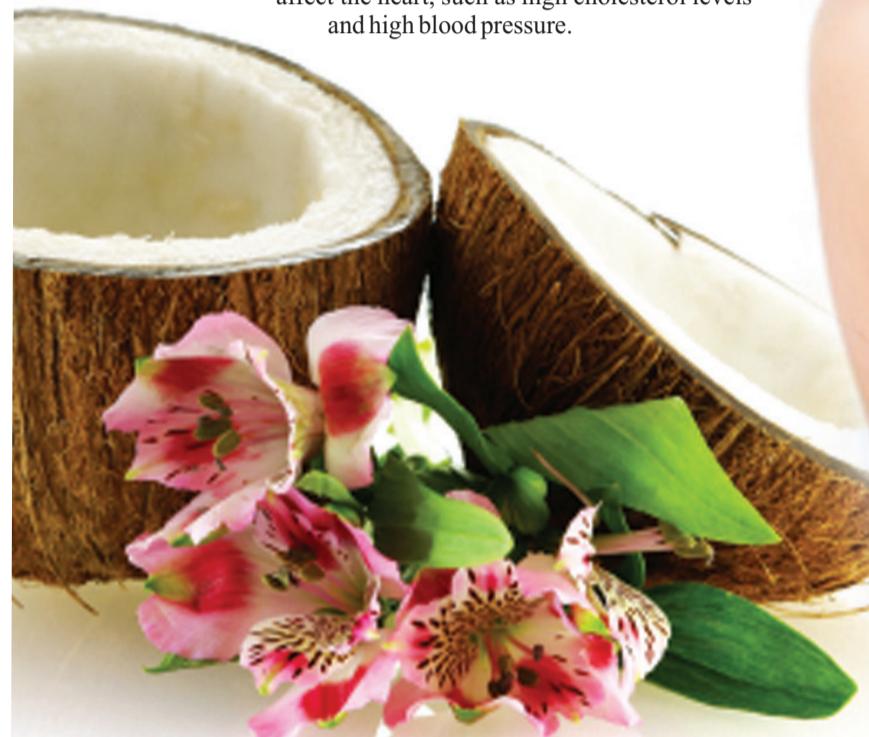
# The many benefits of raw

# Coconut oil

Coconut oil is also an effective makeup remover. Regularly using coconut oil on your body not only helps lighten the skin, but also helps rid scars and dark patches. Massage it onto your skin after a bath every day and you can do without a body cream.

It's also an excellent hair tonic. A massage with warm coconut oil brings back lost shine and makes hair soft and manageable. It also helps reduce protein loss, which makes your hair healthy and attractive. Trying to grow your hair? Then use coconut oil regularly.

This oil is also good for losing weight, maintaining cholesterol level, boosting the immune system, aiding in proper digestion and regulating metabolism. There is a misconception that coconut oil is not good for the heart because it contains large quantities of saturated fats. But this is far from the truth. Coconut oil contains about 50% lauric acid, which actively prevents various problems that affect the heart, such as high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure.



If you are struggling with dry skin and hair, a jar of coconut oil could be your best friend. Its light texture, moisturizing properties and easy availability make it one of the best remedies to dry skin.

## Home remedies for bright White teeth



### Banana peels:

Bananas are considered to be a wholesome fruit that houses loads of nutrients. But do you know that banana peels are a great source of teeth whitening as well. So the next time preserve that banana peel to get a pearly white teeth. Rub the peel on your teeth for about a minute or two twice daily. The minerals in bananas such as potassium, manganese and magnesium, are absorbed into your teeth, which keeps your pearly whites in their best health. Orange peels are also considered to be a great source of teeth whiteners.

### Berry berry strawberry:

Did you know that those bright red strawberries are a great source of teeth whiteners? Well, now that you know it, start stocking up fresh strawberries. All you have to do is take one or two strawberries, mash them up and apply them on your teeth for 2 to 3 minutes. Rinse properly after this procedure or you can even brush your teeth. Strawberries being a rich source of natural enzyme known as malic acid, helps in whitening teeth, while the fiber found in strawberries act as a natural cleanser that helps in removing the bacteria especially, from the mouth and teeth.

### Munch in the crunchy carrots:

The next time you see those crunchy carrots, simply wash them well and eat them raw. Raw carrots are very beneficial in scrapping off plaque from your teeth and are also known as natural cleaner. Also rubbing raw carrot sticks on your teeth will brighten them up. They also kill the bacteria while giving you healthy gums and whiter teeth. Apart from carrots,

apples and celery are also considered equally important sources of teeth whiteners. which prevents gum disease and gingivitis and kills odor-causing bacteria.

### Quit smoking:

Surely it is easy to say than actually doing it and sticking to it. But, all said and done, quitting smoking has more benefits. Smoking, yellows your teeth along with imparting you with other deadly diseases. So if you want to bring back the pearly white shines, quit smoking.

### Use a straw:

Sipping anything extremely hot or cold is not good for your teeth. So as far as possible try sipping your tea or cold coffee through a straw as it cuts down the direct contact of your teeth and hot beverages.



**Pearly whites gone pale!**  
One of the most common problems that every dentist comes across. Though we all wish to have pearly white smile, going for crazy expensive treatments definitely burns a hole in our pockets, thank goodness there are some home remedies which are not only easy but very reasonable.

## How to hide dark circles with Makeup

Dark circles make your eyes and the skin around look dull. Here are a few tips to hide those marks.

Makeup not only highlights your best features, but hides blemishes and marks. However, makeup can also hide dark circles and eye bags. Here's how you can conceal those dark patches around your eyes...



your eye make-up. These are safe to use and also stay on for a longer duration of time.

Apply a bit of translucent powder before you do your eye makeup so that it stays on.

Go in for water-proof makeup that does not wash out easily. These products are available in most cosmetic stores.

Before going to bed every night, massage the eye area with a lightweight moisturiser to keep it hydrated.

### Use a concealer:

Dot a few drops of liquid concealer under your eyes and blend it well. Choose one that corresponds well with your skin tone.

### Apply a mousse or foundation:

Set your concealer using a lightweight mousse or a compact powder. Take a brush to dust little powder under your eyes. Use your fingers to blend it well. If the area is looking too stark, use a tissue to wipe the area.

### Play with your eye makeup:

Sweep a thick eye liner on your upper and lower lids. Blend a heavy coloured eye shadow. Apply a mascara on your upper as well as your lower lash lines. How to keep eye makeup intact Choose a liquid eyeliner while doing

