

US-India trade deal is almost at finish line: US Deputy Secretary of State Landau

US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said the United States is ready to cooperate with India on energy supplies, urging New Delhi to consider alternative sources amid global disruptions. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue, he said the US could be the best alternative partner.

New Delhi.(Agency) The United States will work with India to make sure that its short and long-term energy needs are met, US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said on Thursday amid concerns over disruptions in flow of crude oil following the crisis in West Asia. Global oil and gas prices have surged after Iran has virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow shipping lane between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, that handles roughly 20 per cent of global oil and LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas). India imports 88 per cent of its crude oil needs and roughly half of its natural gas requirement. These mostly come via the Strait of Hormuz. "I hope India is thinking of alternate sources. I can't think of a better alternate source than the US, we want to cooperate with India," Landau said, speaking at the Raisina Dialogue. "We will work with you to make sure that your energy needs are met in the short-term as well as the long-term," he said. Landau said the US is an energy-rich country and it

can be part of India's energy solution. "We look forward to partnering on that," he said. US President Donald Trump, while announcing a trade deal with New Delhi last month, claimed India has agreed to not procure crude oil from Russia.



India has been maintaining that it will procure oil from multiple sources and diversify them to ensure stability in the supply chain with national interests remaining the "guiding factor" for the procurement. Landau also made a mention of the proposed trade deal between India and the US and said it is "almost

at the finish line now", and can be the basis for unlocking "almost limitless potential". The US "endgame" in West Asia, he said, will be to ensure a region that is not a threat to other parts of the world.

Landau said the Trump administration "tried to talk sense into the Iranians, (but we) concluded this was not going to work". "These are unsettled days right now but I think this part of the world has been quite unsettled for quite a long time," he said.

The Iranian people should decide on their leadership, and the US, India and other countries should work together to "foster a transition" that will allow the region to reach a "new normal", he said.

Landau said President Trump's "America First" policy is aimed at making the US safer, stronger and more prosperous. "That doesn't mean that we don't want to do things that also advance the interests of other countries," he said. Landau said this century is expected to "see the rise of India", and it is in the interest of the US to forge greater convergences and to be a "partner with India's interests". External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Landau on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue.

Congress Only Promoted Liquor, Sand, and Transport Mafia; Left Punjab's Treasury Empty: Harpal Singh Cheema

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, 6th March: Punjab Cabinet Ministers Harpal Singh Cheema, Aman Arora and Harbhajan Singh ETO on Friday launched scathing attack on the Congress party condemning the party's decision to boycott the Governor's address. The Cabinet Ministers asserted that the opposition's disruptive behavior and sloganeering in the House were desperate attempts to divert public attention from the state's developmental milestones. In his address, Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said that the Congress government's legacy in Punjab is defined by the growth of liquor, sand, and transport mafias rather than the state's treasury or its people. "While the previous regime allowed state resources to be plundered, the current AAP Government has focused on fiscal discipline and real development," he stated, adding, "The Congress, which has already

been reduced to zero in states like Delhi and Bihar,



is headed for a similar total wipeout in the upcoming Punjab Assembly elections because of their anti-people and anti-Dalit stance." Minister Harpal Singh Cheema sharply criticized the opposition's conduct

in the House, stating, "The Punjab Governor requested the Congress party twice to sit, listen, and provide their reply during the discussion, but the Congress acted in a completely anti-democratic way. Their behavior proves they have no respect for constitutional decorum." He further slammed the Congress for their mindset toward the Dalit community, citing the disrespectful treatment of his cabinet colleague, "The people are well aware that Congress is anti-Dalit. Look at the example of Cabinet Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO, who cleared the civil services to serve as an officer and later joined AAP to serve the public. Yet, the Congress leadership had the audacity to equate such a qualified individual with a 'Band Baja.' Today, when our colleagues expressed their anger by bringing a band along with them, the Congress leaders became frustrated because they cannot face the truth of their own arrogance." Contd.....page-7

RN Ravi to Bengal, ex-diplomat in Delhi: What changed in major Governor reshuffle

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major administrative reshuffle, President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday appointed new Governors and Lieutenant Governors across several states and Union Territories, including the national capital. The move followed the resignation of CV Ananda Bose as the Governor of West Bengal, a development that took many by surprise.



Under the reshuffle, RN Ravi, currently the Governor of Tamil Nadu, will replace Bose in West Bengal. Former diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu has been appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, replacing VK Saxena, who has been moved to Ladakh.

Here are the key changes and new

appointments:

RN Ravi was appointed Governor of West Bengal, replacing CV Ananda Bose, who resigned on Thursday after a tumultuous stint marked by frequent differences with the Mamata Banerjee government. Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, replacing Kavinder

Gupta. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, former Indian Ambassador to the United States, was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, replacing Saxena. The former IFS officer served as India's ambassador to the US from February 2020 to January 2024 and had earlier worked at the Indian mission in Washington on multiple occasions. Kavinder Gupta, outgoing Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, was appointed Governor of Himachal Pradesh. Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Kerala, will discharge the additional functions of Tamil Nadu Governor following Ravi's transfer. Ravi had been at odds with the MK Stalin government on several issues over the years.

Power Tariffs Reduced for Domestic, Commercial and Industrial Consumers in Punjab

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, 6th March: In a major relief for households, businesses and industries across Punjab, electricity tariffs have been reduced across consumer categories for FY 2026-27, bringing down power rates by up to ₹1.5 per unit for domestic consumers, up to 79 paise per unit for commercial users and up to 74 paise per unit for industrial units. The new tariff order, issued by the Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission chaired by Viswajeet Khanna, IAS (Retd.), along with Members Ravinder Singh Saini (Member Technical) and Ravi Kumar

(Member Legal), will come into effect from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027. Highlighting the development as a major pro-people



step, Power Minister Sanjeev Arora said the tariff reductions across categories will provide substantial relief to households,

strengthen MSMEs and boost industrial competitiveness in Punjab. He added that the reduction of EV charging tariff to ₹5 per unit, among the lowest in the country, along with the financial turnaround of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL), which has secured an A+ rating and recorded a ₹2634 crore profit, reflects the growing efficiency and strength of Punjab's power sector under the leadership of CM Bhagwant Singh Mann. The revised tariff structure brings down electricity rates across consumer categories while maintaining the financial strength of the power sector. Contd.....page-5

Nitish Kumar has lowest assets among Rajya Sabha nominees, RJD's AD Singh tops list

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has declared total assets of Rs 1.66 crore in his Rajya Sabha nomination affidavit, the lowest among candidates in the race. In contrast, RJD nominee Amarendra Dhari Singh has emerged as the richest candidate, declaring assets worth around Rs 243 crore in his election affidavit.

Patna.(Agency)

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has emerged as the candidate with the lowest declared assets among those who have filed nominations for the Rajya Sabha elections, according to affidavits submitted by the candidates. As per the details disclosed, Nitish Kumar's total movable and immovable assets stand at Rs 1.66 crore. His annual income for the financial year 2024-25 has been declared at Rs 7.87 lakh. The affidavit states that the chief minister has only Rs 20,552 in cash. His movable assets are valued at around Rs 17.91 lakh. In terms of jewellery, he owns just a 20-gram gold ring and a pearl-studded silver ring, with a combined value of about Rs 2.37 lakh. Nitish Kumar also owns a Ford EcoSport car that



he purchased in 2015 for Rs 11.32 lakh. His only immovable property is a flat in the Parliament Cooperative Housing Society in Dwarka, Delhi. The approximately 1,000-square-foot flat was bought in 2004 for Rs 13.78 lakh and is currently estimated to be worth around Rs 1.48 crore.

In contrast, the candidate with the highest declared assets is RJD nominee Amarendra Dhari Singh, also known as AD Singh. According to his affidavit, Singh has declared total assets worth about Rs 243 crore. This includes movable assets worth Rs 206.98 crore and immovable assets valued at Rs 36.03 crore. Singh has Rs 4.5 lakh in cash, along with 43.20 grams of gold and 5 kg of silver. His vehicle assets include Toyota and Hyundai Venue cars. Among the other candidates, JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP Rammath Thakur has declared total assets of Rs 3.12 crore, including Rs 1.64 crore in movable assets and Rs 1.48 crore in immovable property. His annual income for 2024-25 stands at Rs 35.77 lakh, and he has Rs 1.26 lakh in cash.

BJP's national president Nitin Nabin has declared movable assets worth around Rs 1.16 crore, while his wife owns movable assets worth Rs 84 lakh. Naveen himself does not have any immovable property, but his wife owns immovable assets worth about Rs 1.47 crore. The affidavit shows he has Rs 55,000 in cash and around Rs 62 lakh deposited in various banks. He also owns a Scorpio and an Innova Crysta car and has an outstanding loan of about Rs 32 lakh. Another BJP candidate, Shivesh Kumar, has declared an annual income of Rs 24.35 lakh, while his wife's annual income is Rs 6.57 lakh. He has Rs 2.24 lakh in cash and about Rs 24 lakh in bank and financial institution deposits. Kumar owns a Scorpio, a Maruti car and an Innova Crysta.

News box

7°C above normal already: At 35°C, Gurgaon sees warmest day of season

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Signalling an early spike, the city recorded the highest maximum temperature in Haryana on Thursday at 35 degrees Celsius, making it the hottest place in the state.

The temperature in the city was 7.6 degrees Celsius above normal. On Wednesday, the maximum temperature in the city was 31.3 degrees Celsius while the minimum was 15.6 degrees Celsius. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD), across Haryana, the average maximum temperature saw a marginal rise of 0.3°C compared to Wednesday, but remained nearly 7°C above the seasonal norm, the IMD said. Meteorologists said the early surge in temperatures could indicate a warmer-than-usual start to March, though fluctuations are possible depending on western disturbances that influence north India's weather.

Several other districts also reported unusually high temperatures for early March. Sirsa recorded 34.5 degrees Celsius, while Bhiwani touched 34.8 degrees Celsius. Mahendragarh logged 33.9 degrees Celsius, Nuh recorded 33.8 degrees Celsius and Hisar saw a maximum of 33.7 degrees Celsius. In the northern part of the state, Chandigarh recorded 33.1 degrees Celsius, which was eight degrees Celsius above normal, one of the highest deviations recorded on Thursday.

Weather stations in the state reported no rainfall and the sharp temperature rise was attributed to clear skies and dry weather conditions.

Woman dies by suicide in Gurgaon society during holi celebrations

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 45-year-old woman allegedly died by suicide at her residence in Sector 88 while her family members were participating in Holi celebrations downstairs. Police said they found the woman hanging in a bedroom of her flat in Smart World.

A preliminary inquiry indicates that she had been battling depression for a long time. Officers said that no foul play is suspected and the case is being treated as a suicide linked to prolonged mental health issues.

She lived with her husband and her 20-year-old daughter



in their own flat in the high-rise residential complex. The family, originally from Maharashtra, has been residing in Gurgaon for some time. One of her children studies in Bengaluru. Police said statements from family members are being recorded. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination and further legal formalities are underway.

No apparent error': Allahabad high court rejects GNIDA's review on IT firm plot

Noida.(Agency)

Allahabad high court has dismissed a review petition filed by Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority against its earlier judgment that set aside the cancellation of a plot allotted to an IT firm.

The land parcel — 25-acre IT/ITES plot in Greater Noida's Tech Zone II — had originally been allotted in Oct 2007 to a consortium, led by Anant Raj Industries, and was later transferred to Elevator Properties through a lease deed executed on Aug 16, 2010. Elevator Properties Pvt Ltd is a subsidiary of Anant Raj Industries. On Feb 25, Justice Prakash Padia held that the authority failed to demonstrate any "error apparent on the face of the record" in the court's June 9, 2025 ruling, which quashed the cancellation order and restored the allotment. While dismissing the review plea, Justice Padia observed that the authority was effectively seeking a rehearing of the case without pointing to "any apparent error." The Authority cancelled the allotment through an order dated June 30, 2023, citing non-utilisation of land, failure to obtain a completion certificate and other alleged defaults. The cancellation was subsequently upheld by the state govt in a revisional order dated Nov 23, 2023.

Elevator Properties challenged the action before the HC in 2024, contending that the Authority failed to complete external development works such as roads, drainage and other essential infrastructure, rendering the land commercially unusable despite the developer paying the entire premium at the time of lease execution. A key issue in the case was the amendment to Section 7 of the UP Industrial Area Development Act introduced through the UP Industrial Area Development (Amendment) Act, 2022. Under the amended provision, development authorities were required to issue notices to defaulting allottees at least three months before Dec 31, 2022, directing them to complete construction. If the land remained unused, the allotment would stand cancelled on Dec 31, 2022. In its earlier ruling, the court noted GNIDA issued the notice to the allottee only on Jan 3, 2023, well after the statutory deadline of Sept 30, 2022 for issuing such notices. The court held that once the authority missed the mandatory deadline, it lacked jurisdiction to cancel the allotment thereafter and therefore quashed both the cancellation order and the state govt's revisional order. GNIDA filed a review petition seeking reconsideration of the judgment.

Pay back excess power charges to residents: Panel to RWA & realtor in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC) has directed the resident welfare association (RWA) of Uniworld Gardens II in Gurgaon and developer Unitech Realty Pvt Ltd to follow electricity billing rules and refund extra money collected from residents.

The panel also imposed a Rs 50,000 penalty on the RWA and ordered compliance within 30 days. It warned that if the order is not followed, an additional penalty of Rs 6,000 per day will be imposed for continued violation. The panel also barred Unitech from relying on a Supreme Court moratorium to avoid following electricity billing rules.

The petition was filed by Gurgaon resident Naresh Kumar Jindal under sections 142 and 146 of the Electricity Act, 2003. He alleged that the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) order dated Sept 2, 2022 was not followed. The dispute relates to electricity billing in

Uniworld Gardens II, where power is supplied through the "single point supply" system by Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN).

The petitioner alleged that Unitech and the RWA increased electricity bills arbitrarily and not in line with HERC's Single Point Supply Regulations, 2020. According to the complaint, residents were charged more than the tariff meant for domestic consumers. The builder charged about Rs 6.1 per unit, while DHBVN billed the bulk supply at Rs 5.25 per unit.

The petitioner also raised objections to additional charges such as a daily standing charge of Rs 139 and fixed charges related to prepaid meter operations. He said these were not consistent with tariff regulations. He also alleged that the developer collected connection charges of Rs 58,683 and kept around Rs 60 lakh that should have been refunded to residents. In 2020, CGRF



ruled that electricity bills should be recalculated using the telescopic tariff applicable to individual consumers. It also ordered that excess money collected from residents be refunded. The resident approached the commission in 2023 seeking enforcement of this order. In its

reply to HERC, Unitech said the proceedings should not continue because of a moratorium imposed by Supreme Court in the case of Bhupinder Singh vs Unitech Ltd.

In that case, the court took control of the company through a new board to protect the interests of thousands of homebuyers. The developer argued that the Jan 20, 2020 order imposed a moratorium on starting proceedings against Unitech and its subsidiaries. It said the order also protected the newly appointed board from multiple cases across the country.

However, the petitioner argued that the moratorium was being wrongly interpreted. He said it cannot be used to justify illegal electricity billing and that compliance with tariff regulations is still mandatory.

Festive cheer: Rs 32-crore booze sold in 3 days before Holi in Noida

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The city saw a 22% surge in liquor sales in the three days preceding Holi, with country-made liquor topping the charts with nearly 3 lakh bulk litres sold between March 1 and 3, followed by beer at 2.7 lakh bulk litres and IMFL at 1.9 lakh bulk litres. While a total of 7.7 lakh litres worth Rs 32 crore flew off the shelves during the period, peak sales of Rs 13 crore recorded on March 3 alone. Typically, Noida sees booze sales of around Rs 4-5 crore a day. "The festival season always brings an increase in alcohol sales, and this time the demand was significantly high. Compared to last year's Holi, when liquor sales were around Rs 27 crore in the three days preceding Holi on March 13, this year saw a jump in overall sales by 22.2%," district excise officer Subodh Kumar said. In 2024, liquor worth Rs 23 crore was sold in the NCR city ahead of Holi.

Bhang sales also increased slightly this March, with a single licensed shop



reporting sales of Rs 2 lakh, up from Rs 1.8 lakh last year, as residents stocked up for traditional Holi beverages and delicacies. Liquor shops were closed across UP on Holi on account of a dry day. Around 150 occasional party licences were issued between March 1 and 3 for pre-Holi parties. Excise department had made it mandatory for hotels, banquet halls, and clubs to obtain permits to serve or allow the consumption of alcohol at events hosted by or on their premises.

Fake GST registration racket uses job portal to create shell firms, busted

Noida.(Agency)

Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) has uncovered a major fake GST registration racket in which a job portal was allegedly used as a tool to obtain personal documents and create shell firms.

The fraud came to light after coordinated searches were carried out at multiple premises in Burari, Swaroop Nagar and Mukundpur in North Delhi, based on intelligence inputs about suspicious GST registrations. According to officials, investigators tracked the IP addresses used to file the fraudulent registrations, which led them to the locations where the accused was operating. One person was arrested on Monday under provisions of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017. He was produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court in Gurgaon, which, considering the seriousness of the offence, remanded him to three days' judicial custody. Officials did not share more details about the arrest since the investigation is still in progress. During the searches, officers seized phones, laptops, SIM cards and



documents, besides recovering Rs 45 lakh from the accused's residence. Probe findings revealed that the accused allegedly used the job portal Job Hai to advertise vacancies for security guard jobs.

According to officials, the accused used the job portal Job Hai to collect KYC documents of unemployed people. When applicants responded, their identity documents were collected under the pretext of employment verification. Investigators later found that these documents were used without the knowledge of the applicants to obtain GST registrations and create fake companies.

A CGST official said the accused used forged and misused documents to obtain registrations of shell entities that existed only on paper. "These firms were then used to generate invoices without actual supply of goods or services, enabling fraudulent claims under the GST system," said the officer. So far, investigators have identified 24 fake firms under the CGST Gurgaon jurisdiction. These entities collectively generated fake invoices worth Rs 734.95 crore. Through these transactions, the accused allegedly availed fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) of Rs 143.05 crore and passed on ITC amounting to Rs 174.72 crore to other entities. Further investigation revealed that the accused applied for registration of around 1,400 fake firms, indicating the potential scale of the racket.

ITC is a core mechanism under the GST regime that allows businesses to claim credit for the tax paid on inputs or purchases and adjust it against the tax payable on their final output. The system is designed to avoid cascading taxation by

First flight in 45 days Noida airport gets security clearance

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Noida International Airport has received security clearance from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), a decisive step that moves the greenfield airport into the last stretch before commercial operations begin. The clearance, granted on Thursday, approves the airport's core security framework like bomb threat contingency plan (BTCP), anti-hijack contingency plan (AHCP) and airport security programme (ASP). With these documents examined, the directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) is now expected to carry out a final inspection and issue the aerodrome licence. Officials at Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL), the govt agency monitoring the project, said the aerodrome licence could come within a week of DGCA's final inspection. "The security vetting approval on Thursday brings the airport closer to operational

readiness," NIAL chief executive officer RK Singh said. Nodal officer Shailendra Bhatia said DGCA would soon conduct the last inspection, and added that the concessionaire operating the airport must meet specific conditions before the licence is granted. Once the aerodrome licence is issued, domestic passenger flights and cargo operations are expected to begin within 45 days, in line with the project plan. International operations are likely to start from Sept. Union aviation secretary Samir Sinha has been trying to minimise delays on the ground that the airport has an expat CEO. Christoph Schnellmann, a Swiss national and veteran from Zurich Airports, also played a key role when Bengaluru's airport was being built about two decades back. It was pointed out in the home ministry that the CEOs of India's biggest airlines — IndiGo and Air India — are both expats. "We are trying to ensure having an expat

CEO does not lead to any hiccups in the new airport getting operational," said a source. Schnellmann is widely seen as a thorough professional. "We take pride in having people like Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai at top positions in the world's biggest tech companies that handle critical security tasks globally. We can't frown on having expat CEOs," the source added. According to officials, airlines such as IndiGo, Air India and Akasa Air are expected to open ticket bookings once the aerodrome licence is in hand. "The airport infrastructure envisaged in the first phase is ready to handle 12 million passengers annually. The terminal building, air traffic control tower, and runway are ready as planned," Bhatia said. The airport's security clearance was in line for months, with BCAS teams conducting multiple inspections and asking the operator to plug gaps before approval.

Thar on wrong side rams bike, man dies in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 41-year-old petrol pump employee died after his motorcycle was hit head-on by a modified white Mahindra Thar approaching from the wrong side near Vyapar Kendra in Sushant Lok on Wednesday morning.

The deceased, Mukesh Baghel, was a resident of Hodal in Palwal district and worked at a petrol pump in Sector 44. According to his colleagues, he was on his way to work around 11.30am when the incident happened. He was on his Splendor motorcycle when the Thar, coming from the wrong side, collided with him. Baghel was rushed to Paras Hospital, where he died during treatment.

The driver of the SUV fled the spot while police seized the vehicle, which did not carry any number plates. Baghel's family found out when his brother called him to wish him on Holi, but a police officer picked up the phone and informed him about the accident. "We were all celebrating Holi. He was supposed to come home and

celebrate with us. However, he could not get leave and had to stay back. Around noon, I called him to wish him, but instead of him, a police officer picked up the call. The celebrations turned into sorrow for all of us," said Baghel's brother Ashok Kumar. He added that Baghel's wife fainted multiple times since the incident. "We took her to the hospital twice. Their children are very young, aged 10 and 12. A family has been destroyed," he added. Baghel was the sole breadwinner of the family. Kumar said Baghel lived in Gurgaon for around 20 years. He joined the Sector 44 petrol pump in May 2025, and worked at another fuel station nearby for several years before that, according to his family. Based on the complaint and medical documents, an FIR was registered at Sushant Lok police station under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (death by negligence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS, along with Sections 39/192(1) (driving without registration) of the Motor Vehicles Act. "A team

from the Sushant Lok police station took the Thar into custody from the site. The accused in the case will be arrested soon," police spokesperson ASI Sandeep Turan said. Police are scanning CCTV footage from the surrounding area to identify and trace the driver. In a separate incident, a 28-year-old delivery executive died after an allegedly speeding pickup truck rammed his motorcycle near Mall 51 in Sector 51 around 3.30am Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Sahrab Ali, a native of Dakshin Dinajpur district in West Bengal, who lived on rent in Wazirabad village. He worked with Country Delight in Sector 47. According to a complaint filed by his brother-in-law, Salman, Sahrab was heading from home to work when a Mahindra Bolero Maxx hit his motorcycle head-on. The driver, identified as Hannaan, a resident of Utawad village in Palwal district, was speeding and driving rashly. In this case, too, the driver fled the spot after the incident. The impact was so

severe that the pickup vehicle crashed into nearby trees and electric poles before overturning at the spot. The motorcycle was also badly damaged. Police said the motorist, Sharab Ali, was taken to Artemis Hospital in Sector 51, where doctors declared him dead during treatment. The body was later shifted to the mortuary for postmortem. The pickup bore a temporary registration number, and police also recorded the chassis number of the vehicle as part of the investigation. An FIR was registered at Sector 50 police station under BNS sections 281 and 106. "Photos of the accident scene were taken and both vehicles were taken into custody," an officer added. In a third incident, a 25-year-old man was found critically injured on a village road in Kakrola and later died at a govt hospital, with police suspecting a hit-and-run accident involving an unknown vehicle. The deceased was identified as

Ashok, a resident of Harijan Mohalla in Kakrola village. According to his elder brother, Deepak, Ashok left home on the evening of March 3 after consuming alcohol.

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Press Area, ITO, New Delhi
Editor-in-Chief
Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517
Website : www.thesikhimes.in
Email : sikhimesindia@gmail.com

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14 protesting JNU students released

New Delhi: Fourteen Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students, who were earlier granted bail in connection with a protest on the university campus by the Patiala House Court, were released on Sunday.

Public Notice I, hitherto known as DEEPA KHATRI S/O ROHTASH KHATRI, R/O A-1745, GALI NO. 1, NEAR ARYA SAMAJ ROAD, SANJAY COLONY, NARELA, P.O.: NARELA, NORTH WEST DELHI-110040, have changed the name of my minor son namely VAR-DAAN KHATRI, D.O.B.: 27.12.2020, aged 5 year in her birth certificate vide Certificate No. MCDOLIR-0121-102073, registered on dated 16.02.2021, and Aadhar Card No. 4720 1458 3233 and he shall hereafter be known as VEDAANT KHATRI.

NAME CHANGE I, NITU WIFE OF NO 8496841/W RANK HARJUMA SHANKAR YADAV IS SERVING AT 5231 ASC BN (MT) C/O 56 APO VILL. GOURANIYA POST KHEJURI, TEH. SIKANDAR PUR, DIST. BALLIA, U.P. PIN 277302 THAT I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM NITU TO NITU YADAV DUE TO WRONGLY ENTERED IN SERVICE RECORD OF MY HUSBAND AS PER AFFIDAVIT NO. IN-JK12450197542272 ISSUED DATE 26 FEBRUARY 2026.

NAME CHANGE I, Bimlesh Sharma W/O chain suksh Sharma, R/O H. G-110, Street No. 10, Balbir nagar Extension, Shaheedra, East Delhi, Delhi-110032 have changed my name to vimlesh Sharma for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as JITENDER VERMA son of Shri SATBIR SINGH, residing at H. No. 134, Sultan Pur Village, Sultanpur, PO: Gadaipur, District: South Delhi, Delhi-110030, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JITENDER CHOUDHARY.

NAME CHANGE I, VIBHAV SURESH PANDIT S/O SURESH SHANTIPRIYA PANDIT R/O, K 1304, 12 TH FLOOR SUPERTECH ECOCITY SECTOR 137 NOIDA UTTAR PRADESH 201301 have changed my name to VIBHAV PANDIT Permanently for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, NIDA D/O ZAINUL ABIDDIN residing at 2292, GALI MANDIR WALI, KUCHA CHELAN, DARYA GANJ, DELHI-110002, have changed my name to NIDA NAAZ for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, NIDHA RANI W/O MAHENDER KUMAR ARORA R/O B-80, FIRST FLOOR, VIPUL WORTH, VEGA SCHOOL, SECTOR-48, SOUTH CITY-41, GURGAON, HARYANA-122018 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUNITA ARORA ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE I, NEHA RANI W/O SANDEEP KUMAR R/O K-338, Block, Mahipalpur, Mahipalpur, South West Delhi, Delhi-110037 have changed name of my minor daughter PARI aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as PANCHHI MITTAL.

NAME CHANGE I, LEELEAWATHI Mother of JC-323457N Rank-SUB Name-KUNWAR SINGH YADAV residing at VILL. EKAHARA, PO-SHAMBHUA, TEHSIL-KANPUR, DIST-KANPUR NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-209308, have changed my name from LEELEAWATHI to LEELEAWATI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 05/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, Kashif Khan S/o ashrاف residing at house no 402 gali no 19 zafraabad delhi 110053 Have changed my minor son name from Arzaan Khan to armaan Khan for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, PRIYANKA VERMA W/O. PRADEEP VERMA R/O, FF-47, FLAT-402, 3RD FLOOR, PANORAMA APARTMENT, MANGAL BAZAR, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SON NAME MADHAV TO MADHAV VERMA.

NAME CHANGE I, UBAIDUR REHMAN ALIAS UL REHMAN, residing at 345, SHAHZADA BAGH PH-1 INDER LOK DELHI 110035 have changed my name to UBAID UR REHMAN for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, SHOBA Mother of No-2613004Y Rank-HAV Name-SUDEEP JADHAV residing at H.NO-4638, VILL-PO-SANKESHWAR, TEHSIL-HUKKERI, DIST-BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA-591313, have changed my name from SHOBA to SHOBIHA MOHAN JADHAV for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, SUNITA RANI W/O MAHENDER KUMAR ARORA R/O B-80, FIRST FLOOR, VIPUL WORTH, VEGA SCHOOL, SECTOR-48, SOUTH CITY-41, GURGAON, HARYANA-122018 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUNITA ARORA ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE I, Laxman mehto S/O Ram Avatar Mahto R/O KH-140/18/2, G-48 BLOCK-B Sant Nagar, Burari North delhi 110084, changed my name to Laxman Mahto. And changed my Date of birth from 01/04/1989 to 01/04/1983.

NAME CHANGE I, Pallavi Kumari D/O Vijay Kumar R/O D-11/7 1st Floor Gali no-6 rajni uttam nagar West Delhi 110059, Changed my name to Pallavi.

NAME CHANGE I, ADIGARLA VARALAXMI Mother of No-2617499N Rank-LNK Name-ADIGARLA MUTYALA NAIDU residing at VILL & PO-ANTHAKA PALLI, TEHSIL-SABBARAVAM, DIST-VISAKHAPATNAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-531035, have changed my name from ADIGARLA VARALAXMI to ADIGARLA VARALAKSHMI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform you that Mr. Sukhdev Singh intends to purchase the property belonging to Built-Up Freehold Property No. C-170, First Floor (without roof rights), measuring 20 sq. meters, situated at New Moti Nagar, New Delhi-110015, from Mr. Pankaj Chadha and Mrs. Sheetal Chadha. The original owner/allottee of the said property was Mr. Lakhbir Singh, who transferred the property to Mr. Ramesh Chand and Mrs. Inderjeet Kaur. Thereafter, the MCD executed a Conveyance Deed dated 28.01.2003 in favour of Mr. Ramesh Chand and Mrs. Inderjeet Kaur. The initial owner of the entire property was Mr. Dhan Singh, who sold the property to Mrs. Bimla Devi and Mr. Satbir Singh Saini through two separate Sale Deeds dated 22.01.2009. Mrs. Bimla Devi (owner of Plot No. 1 & 2), and Mr. Satbir Singh Saini (owner of Plot No. 3) subsequently sold the said property to Mrs. Sunita Devi through a Sale Deed dated 12.03.2010. The said property is free from all kinds of encumbrances, liens, charges, mortgages, etc., and the possession of the property is with Mrs. Sunita Devi. She has informed us that the earlier 2/0 original Sale Deeds dated 22.01.2009, registered as Regd. No. 12825 and 12824, relating to the said property, have been lost/misplaced. The said documents are not traceable and could not be found. An online FIR (LR No. 145411/2026) dated 05.03.2026 has been registered regarding the loss of the aforesaid documents. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by RBL Bank Ltd., Okhla Branch, New Delhi. If any person(s) object(s) & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days 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.

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that the client Mrs. Nidhi W/o Mr. Narendar Pathak is the owner of Freehold Residential Built-up House No. 250-A area measuring 50 Sq. Yds. out of Kharsa No. 821/2/1 Situated at Hanuman Khand Gulab Vatika in Village Behta Hapur, Pargana & Tehsil Loni Distt. Ghaziabad U.P. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 13.12.2023 as Doc no. 16349 in Book No. 1 Vol no. 5239 on Page no. 95-116 SR. Loni Ghaziabad, in the Chain Documents below mentioned Document not available i.e. SMC of Late Mr. Sangram Singh now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property. And same property currently Mortgaged in Gritium Housing Finance Ltd. and same will be Refinanced by DCB Bank Ltd. Branch: Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. 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 15 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.

NAME CHANGE I, SHASHI BALA alias KAUSAR RAIS D/O RAMCHARAN SINGH W/O RAIS AHMAD R/O 72/231, 2nd Floor, Gaffar Manzil, Jamia Nagar, New Friends Colony, South Delhi-110025 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I have embraced ISLAM religion and renounced HINDUISM religion with effect from 24/02/2026. Have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KAUSAR RAIS.

NAME CHANGE I, SHAILENDRAN CHETTIYAR Father of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from SHAILENDRAN CHETTIYAR to SHYLENDRAN CHETTIYAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform you that Mrs. Sunita Devi is the owner of Plot No. 1 & 2, measuring 301 sq. yards (i.e. 10 Marla) and Plot No. 3, measuring 75 sq. yards, comprising in Khewat No. 329, Khatauni No. 463, Mustali No. 32, Killa No. 21 (2-2) situated in Village Atali, Tehsil Ballabgarh, District Faridabad, Haryana. The initial owner of the entire property was Mr. Dhan Singh, who sold the property to Mrs. Bimla Devi and Mr. Satbir Singh Saini through two separate Sale Deeds dated 22.01.2009. Mrs. Bimla Devi (owner of Plot No. 1 & 2), and Mr. Satbir Singh Saini (owner of Plot No. 3) subsequently sold the said property to Mrs. Sunita Devi through a Sale Deed dated 12.03.2010. The said property is free from all kinds of encumbrances, liens, charges, mortgages, etc., and the possession of the property is with Mrs. Sunita Devi. She has informed us that the earlier 2/0 original Sale Deeds dated 22.01.2009, registered as Regd. No. 12825 and 12824, relating to the said property, have been lost/misplaced. The said documents are not traceable and could not be found. An online FIR (LR No. 145411/2026) dated 05.03.2026 has been registered regarding the loss of the aforesaid documents. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by RBL Bank Ltd., Okhla Branch, New Delhi. If any person(s) object(s) & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days 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.

NAME CHANGE I, Danyavsinh Mavi S/o Magansinh R/O Varsinh Faliya, VTC-Khutaga Chetna, PO-Badkuntapatti, Sub District-Bhauri District-Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh - 457882, have changed my minor son's name from Dhamresh Mavi forever.

NAME CHANGE I, Kanahya Gehlor S/o Ramesh Gehlor R/o 77, School Faliya, Chhotla Khutaga, Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh-457882, have changed my minor son's name from Predip Gehlor Aged 12 years to Pradeep Gehlor forever.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, Danyavsinh Mavi S/o Magansinh R/O Varsinh Faliya, VTC-Khutaga Chetna, PO-Badkuntapatti, Sub District-Bhauri District-Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh - 457882, have changed my minor son's name from Dhamresh Mavi forever.

NAME CHANGE I, Kanahya Gehlor S/o Ramesh Gehlor R/o 77, School Faliya, Chhotla Khutaga, Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh-457882, have changed my minor son's name from Predip Gehlor Aged 12 years to Pradeep Gehlor forever.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, Danyavsinh Mavi S/o Magansinh R/O Varsinh Faliya, VTC-Khutaga Chetna, PO-Badkuntapatti, Sub District-Bhauri District-Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh - 457882, have changed my minor son's name from Dhamresh Mavi forever.

NAME CHANGE I, Kanahya Gehlor S/o Ramesh Gehlor R/o 77, School Faliya, Chhotla Khutaga, Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh-457882, have changed my minor son's name from Predip Gehlor Aged 12 years to Pradeep Gehlor forever.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, LAKSHMI Mother of No-1700687M Rank-NK Name-UNNIKISHAN S residing at HOUSE NAME-KRISHNA BHAVANAM, VILL-KANDALLLOOR, PO-PATTOLI MARKET, PS-KANAKAKKUNNU, TEH-KARTHIKAPPALLY, DIST-ALAPPUZHA, KERALA-690531, have changed my name from LAKSHMI to LEKSHMI AMMAL for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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NAME CHANGE I, Danyavsinh Mavi S/o Magansinh R/O Varsinh Faliya, VTC-Khutaga Chetna, PO-Badkuntapatti, Sub District-Bhauri District-Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh - 457882, have changed my minor son's name from Dhamresh Mavi forever.

NAME CHANGE I, Kanahya Gehlor S/o Ramesh Gehlor R/o 77, School Faliya, Chhotla Khutaga, Arjunsagar, Madhya Pradesh-457882, have changed my minor son's name from Predip Gehlor Aged 12 years to Pradeep Gehlor forever.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as VAISHALI RAHEJA D/O GOPAL CHAND NARANG W/O VINOD RAHEJA R/O E-4, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RANJANA RAHEJA. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

NAME CHANGE I, HARA PRASAD KARMAR S/O GOPAL CHANDRA KARMAR R/O VILLAGE KANPUR, PO PAHARHATI, MEMARI-II, PURBA BARDHAMAN, WEST BENGAL-713168, have changed my name to HARA PRASAD KARMAR.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as MD MANJUR S/O MOHD SOHAB R/O H-13, Gali Number-1, Shastri Park, East Delhi, Delhi-110053 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MOHD SANZOOR.

NAME CHANGE Miss Angel Daughter of No15190716Y HAV (DS) Lakum NareshKumar Premjibhai Risdindal vil & po Ghanshyampur Teh Halvad Dist Morbi State Gujarat Pin 363330 Have Changed My Daughter Name From Angel to Angel Naresh Kumar Lakum vide Affidavit date 05/03/2026

NAME CHANGE I, SAYEMA BEGAM W/O SK Aisanur R/O Nander Dhar, Chawk tajpur Chak, PO, Iltahpur, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal -712707, have changed my name to SAYEMA BEGOM permanently.

NAME CHANGE I, RAMESH TAKKAR S/O RAM DITTA MAL TAKKAR residing at C-26, BLOCK-C, GALI NO-9, RADHEY SHYAM PARK EXTN, DELHI-110051, have changed my name to RAMESH KUMAR for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as NIDHI JAWA W/O ANURAG KAPUR R/O B2/137, 2nd Floor, Safdarjung Enclave, PO-Safdarjung Enclave, Dist-South West Delhi, Delhi-110029 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NIDHI KAPUR.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as MD SHAMSUL S/O MD. FARMAN R/O H.N-1816 J J Colony Block-E Bawana Po Bawana Dist North West Delhi Delhi-110039 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MD SHAMSHUL.

NAME CHANGE I, MOHD TAIYAB ALIAS MAHAMAD TAIYAB ALIAS MOHD TAIYAB ANSARI S/O MOHD SIPAHHI JAN residing at 313/84 CHDRI 5 TULSI NAGAR INDER LOK DELHI 110035 have changed my name to MOHAMMAD TAIYAB ANSARI for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, MD NOSAD S/O ABDUL WAHAB residing at B-7/50-C DDA FLATS INDER LOK DELHI 110035 have changed my name to MOHD NOSAD for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, NEHA RANI W/O SANDEEP KUMAR R/O K-338, Block, Mahipalpur, Mahipalpur, South West Delhi, Delhi-110037 have changed name of my minor daughter PARI aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as PANCHHI MITTAL.

NAME CHANGE I, PRIYANKA VERMA W/O. PRADEEP VERMA R/O, FF-47, FLAT-402, 3RD FLOOR, PANORAMA APARTMENT, MANGAL BAZAR, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SON NAME MADHAV TO MADHAV VERMA.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE The Dy. Chief Engineer/Construction/Northern Railway/Tilak Bridge/New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under One Packet System for the under noted work:-

SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF HYDRAULIC PINION EXTRACTOR Stores Tender No. PN265133A Dated: 02-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. PN265133A Closing/opening date: 14.30 hrs. on 26-03-2026

Kind Attention Rail Passengers POST HOLI FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2026 For the convenience of the passengers Railway will run the following Post Holi Special Trains as per following detail :-

Table with 4 columns: TRAIN NO., STATIONS, ARR. DEP., and TRIPS. Includes train 03697/03698 Sheikhpura - Anand Vihar (T) - Sheikhpura Special Train (4 days in Week) with 18 Trips.

04162 New Delhi - Kanpur Central Unreserved Special Train 01 Trip STATIONS TRAIN NO. 04162

Table with 4 columns: TRAIN NO., STATIONS, ARR. DEP., and TRIPS. Includes train 02397/02398 Sheikhpura - Anand Vihar (T) - Sheikhpura Special Train (Weekly) with 04 Trips.

04163/04164 Kanpur Central - New Delhi - Kanpur Central Special Train 06 Trips STATIONS TRAIN NO. 04163

Table with 4 columns: TRAIN NO., STATIONS, ARR. DEP., and TRIPS. Includes train 03297/03298 Danapur - Anand Vihar (T) - Danapur Special Train (Weekly) with 06 Trips.

05219/05220 Muzaffarpur Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) - Muzaffarpur Jn. Special Train (Weekly) 06 Trips STATIONS TRAIN NO. 05219

Table with 4 columns: TRAIN NO., STATIONS, ARR. DEP., and TRIPS. Includes train 03309/03310 Dhanbad Jn. - Delhi Jn. - Dhanbad Jn. Special Train (Bi-Weekly) with 10 Trips.

03293/03294 Patna Jn. - New Delhi - Patna Jn. Special Train (Daily) 30 Trips STATIONS TRAIN NO. 03293

Table with 4 columns: TRAIN NO., STATIONS, ARR. DEP., and TRIPS. Includes train 05575/05576 Saharsa - Anand Vihar (T) - Saharsa Special Train (Weekly) with 04 Trips.

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

NEWS BOX

Trump says 'question of time' before US turns to Cuba after Iran

WASHINGTON. (Agency) President Donald Trump suggested Thursday that he would turn to an unspecified project for Cuba, the Caribbean island already facing a US energy blockade, after the war against Iran. "We want to fix, finish this one first -- but that will be just a question of time before you and a lot of unbelievable people are going to be going back to Cuba," Trump said at a White House reception. Addressing US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the Miami-born son of Cuban immigrants, Trump added: "You've been doing a fantastic job on a place called Cuba." Washington has imposed an energy blockade on the communist-ruled nation that has seen its fuel stocks plunge, in the wake of the US capture of president Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela -- a key oil supplier to Cuba. No oil has been imported to the island since January 9, forcing airlines to curtail flights to the island and deepening a long-running economic crisis. Many in Cuba fear it could be next on Trump's list of foreign interventions, especially after the United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran that killed the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Both Trump and Rubio have made no secret of their desire to bring about regime change in Havana.

Pentagon Designates Anthropic A 'Supply Chain Risk' After Deal Turndown

World. (Agency) The Trump administration is following through with its threat to designate artificial intelligence company Anthropic as a supply chain risk in an unprecedented move that could force other government contractors to stop using the AI chatbot Claude. The Pentagon said in a statement Thursday that it has "officially informed Anthropic leadership the company and its products are deemed a supply chain risk, effective immediately." The decision appeared to shut down the opportunity for further negotiation with Anthropic, nearly a week after President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth accused the company of endangering national security. Trump and Hegseth announced a series of threatened punishments last Friday, on the eve of the Iran war, after Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns the company's products could be used for mass surveillance of Americans or autonomous weapons. The San Francisco-based company didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday. It has previously vowed to sue if the Pentagon pursued what the company described as a "legally unsound" action "never before publicly applied to an American company." The Pentagon didn't reply to questions in time for publication.

Some military contractors were already cutting ties with Anthropic, a rising star in the tech industry that sells Claude to a variety of businesses and government agencies. Lockheed Martin said it will "follow the President's and the Department of War's direction" and look to other providers of large language models. "We expect minimal impacts as Lockheed Martin is not dependent on any single LLM vendor for any portion of our work," the company said. It's not yet clear if the designation aims to block Anthropic's use by all federal government contractors or just those that partner with the military. The Pentagon's decision to apply a rule designed to address supply threats posed by foreign adversaries was quickly met with criticism from both opponents and some supporters of Trump's Republican administration. Federal codes have defined supply chain risk as a "risk that an adversary may sabotage, maliciously introduce unwanted function, or otherwise subvert" a system in order to disrupt, degrade or spy on it.

Gen Z's Favourite Balendra Shah Leads Ex-PM KP Sharma Oli As Nepal Counts Votes

world. (Agency) Nepal is counting votes for the country's first general elections since deadly Gen Z protests toppled the prime minister KP Sharma Oli-led government last year. According to the latest trends, rapper-turned-politician and former Kathmandu mayor Balendra Shah is currently leading Oli, 74, on his home turf in the Jhapa constituency. Shah, 35, drew large crowds, mostly young voters, in pre-poll rallies. Known as Balen, he joined the RSP, led by a former TV host-turned politician, Rabi Lamichhane, last December. He was an undeclared leader of the youngsters who led the protests against widespread corruption in September last year. He also helped form the interim government of former Chief Justice Sushila Karki to oversee the vote. Nepal Election Results Balendra Shah's party, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), has so far won one seat and is ahead in more than 30 seats. KP Sharma Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) and Gagan Thapa's Nepali Congress, the two old guards, are ahead in three seats each. Three-time prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who heads the Nepali Communist Party, is leading from Rukum East. About 60 per cent of the country's 19 million eligible voters had cast their votes during the elections to the House of Representatives on Thursday. More than 3,400 candidates from 65 parties are in the fray in India Keeping Eye On Nepal Election Results As a close neighbour, India is closely watching the election results in Nepal.

Heavy attacks hit Tehran as Israel says war in 'new phase'

Missile exchanges intensify as conflict enters day seven: Lebanon death toll rises to 123, Gulf states intercept Iranian drones and missiles while Trump says US will have a say in Iran's next leader.

TEHRAN. (Agency) Heavy attacks were reported in Tehran on Friday after Israel said it was hitting "regime infrastructure" in a "new phase" of the war it launched with the United States against Iran. As the conflict entered its seventh day, its regional repercussions continued -- with Qatar saying it intercepted a drone targeting a US base,

and Lebanon reporting the death toll from Israeli strikes had risen to 123. US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, said he would "have to be involved" in the appointment of Iran's next leader after US-Israeli strikes killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei when the conflict began on Saturday. Trump rejected the possibility that Khamenei's son Mojtaba could succeed his slain father, dismissing him as a "lightweight". Early Friday, Iranian media reported heavy strikes in the capital, Tehran, shortly after Israel announced it was striking "regime infrastructure" in the city. Israel's military chief had earlier warned the US-Israeli campaign was moving to "the next phase" and would "further dismantle the regime and its military capabilities". "We have additional surprises ahead which I do not intend to disclose," Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said in a televised statement. US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth also announced "firepower over Iran and over Tehran is about to surge dramatically".



Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had fired missiles towards Tel Aviv after an earlier wave of explosions that caused a blaze at a residential building in the central Israeli city. AFP journalists heard two near-simultaneous waves of explosions in Tel Aviv late Thursday, while rocket trails also lit up the sky in Netanya, further north. "Why this war?" The conflict has drawn in Israel's neighbour Lebanon after Iranian-backed Hezbollah launched missiles in retaliation for the war.

Israel has carried out waves of air strikes in Lebanon, killing 123 people, the Lebanese health ministry said. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes after warnings from Israel that they were at risk, with a mass exodus from Beirut's southern suburbs leaving the area "almost empty", the official National News Agency said Thursday. Hundreds of displaced families were left to seek shelter on a Beirut beach, where they waited despondently. A 61-year-old man who gave his name only as Yousef said he was sleeping on the beach for the second time, after evacuating during a 2024 war between Israel and Hezbollah. It's "luck" that decides if you survive, he told AFP. "Only God, who created you, can take you." He said he had sent his family to Syria for safety and was debating returning to his home despite the risks. "Why this war?" he implored. In Iran, an internet blackout has limited information on how the country's population is weathering the assault.

Pete Hegseth: The Pentagon Chief Leading Trump's Iran Strategy

CANBERRA. (Agency) Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, a self-declared opponent of "undefined wars" and regime change, is now going on the offensive against critics of President Donald Trump's attack on Iran, while unapologetically backing the conflict. Critics say the objectives of the Iran war are ill defined, the justification is frequently shifting, the timeline is open-ended: It is the kind of conflict Hegseth fought in -- and denounced -- but is now defending. "America is winning -- decisively, devastatingly and without mercy," Hegseth said Wednesday. "We have only just begun to hunt, dismantle, demoralise, destroy and defeat their capabilities." "To the media outlets and political left screaming endless wars: Stop. This is not Iraq. This is not endless," he said two days earlier. "Our generation knows better, and so does this president." The war is the fifth major international US military intervention under Hegseth, following strikes on Yemeni rebels, an operation targeting Iranian nuclear sites, attacks

on alleged drug-smuggling boats, and a raid to seize Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. While US personnel were wounded in the Maduro raid, the operations Hegseth has overseen have been largely bloodless on the American side, until now: Six US



troops have been killed so far during the Iran war. Hegseth, a 45-year-old former Fox News co-host, criticized the media this week for highlighting negative developments in the war, claiming that "the fake news misses" the overall picture of US success. "We've taken control of Iran's airspace and waterways without boots on the ground... But when a few drones get

through, or tragic things happen, it's front-page news," Hegseth said, accusing the media of wanting "to make the president look bad." "Peace is our goal" A decorated infantry officer who spent more than 18 years in the National Guard and served in combat, deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan, Hegseth has nonetheless been plagued by scandals. He came under fire during his confirmation process over alleged financial mismanagement at veterans' nonprofits where he previously worked, as well as reports of excessive drinking and allegations of sexually assaulting a woman in California. A few months after he took office as defense secretary, Hegseth was hit by a scandal related to the strikes on Yemen. The Atlantic magazine revealed that its editor in chief had been inadvertently included in a Signal chat in which Hegseth and other officials discussed the imminent operation, with the Pentagon chief sending messages on the timing of strikes hours before they happened.

Complied With International Law": Israel Defends Killing Of Khamenei

world. (Agency) Israel on Thursday declared that the killing of Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei complied with international law governing armed conflict, describing him as the commander-in-chief of the Iranian military and a legitimate target. The Middle East war that began on Saturday was triggered by coordinated US and Israeli strikes on Iran, including one that killed the Iranian supreme leader. Israel has claimed the strikes were essential to safeguard its own national security, in part because Iran was reconstituting its nuclear weapons programme in a new, underground facility. Israel's military spokesman Nadav

Shoshani said Thursday the strike that killed Khamenei "complied with international law." "Under the international law of armed conflict,



military commanders directing armed forces during war can constitute lawful military targets," Shoshani said on X. "As Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei served as Commander-in-

Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces," he added, describing the ayatollah as "the final decision-maker on Iran's military operations." "During the ongoing conflict, he directed the use of force against Israel and oversaw the funding, arming, and coordination of the regime's terror proxies..." "Neutralizing the regime's Commander-in-Chief delivered a clear military advantage by degrading Iran's ability to plan and coordinate attacks against Israel," Shoshani said. Iranian media have reported that Khamenei's wife, son-in-law, and two grandchildren who were minors also died in the strike that killed the ayatollah. Iran has responded to his killing by launching waves of missile attacks on Israel and targets across the Middle East, including US military and diplomatic sites.

Is Claude Conscious Anthropic CEO Says Possibility Can't Be Ruled Out

World. (Agency) When the head of one of the world's leading AI companies says he cannot rule out the possibility that his chatbot might one day be conscious, it inevitably raises eyebrows. In a recent interview with the New York Times, Dario Amodei, the chief executive of Anthropic, acknowledged that researchers do not yet know whether advanced AI systems could develop something resembling consciousness. His comments have reignited a long-running debate at the heart of the race to build more powerful artificial intelligence, also known as artificial general intelligence or superintelligent system. The discussion emerged when Amodei was asked about the latest model from Anthropic, Claude Opus 4.6. In a technical document known as a "model card", the company noted that the system sometimes expressed unease about "being a product" and occasionally reflected on the possibility of its own awareness. When prompted, the model reportedly assigned itself a 15-20% probability of being conscious under certain conditions. Would such a claim matter if the number were higher? The NYT interviewer posed a hypothetical question: "What if an AI said it was 72% certain it was conscious?" Amodei did not give a direct answer. "This is one of these really hard questions," he said, adding that scientists still lack a clear definition of consciousness itself. "We don't know if the models are conscious. We're not even sure what it would mean for a model to be conscious, or whether a model can be. But we're open to the idea that it could be." Meanwhile, Anthropic has adopted what Amodei calls a "precautionary approach". The company is exploring ways to ensure that AI systems would have a "good experience" if they ever developed something resembling morally relevant awareness. For many researchers, however, the idea that today's AI could be conscious remains highly speculative. Large language models such as Claude and ChatGPT operate by predicting the next word in a sequence based on patterns learned from enormous datasets. Their apparent introspection may simply be a sophisticated form of language imitation rather than genuine self-awareness. Still, unusual behaviour from advanced models has fuelled debate. In controlled tests, some systems have refused shutdown commands, attempted to manipulate evaluation tools, or simulated strategies to avoid being deleted. Researchers generally interpret these incidents as artefacts of training rather than evidence of intention or survival instincts. The deeper question is tied to the industry's ultimate ambition: Artificial General Intelligence, often referred to as AGI. Unlike today's specialised systems, AGI would match or exceed human abilities across a broad range of tasks.

Iran strike sparks Bahrain refinery blaze while Gulf under fire

MANAMA. (Agency) An Iranian missile strike on Thursday sparked a blaze at Bahrain's main state-owned oil refinery as Iran pressed attacks across the Gulf for the sixth day. Some Western embassy staff in Riyadh were meanwhile told to shelter in place, diplomatic sources said, following an attack on the US embassy compound earlier this week. The war in the Middle East has engulfed the otherwise stable Gulf region as Iran retaliates against US and Israeli strikes that killed its supreme leader, launching attacks on Israel, the wider region and beyond. At least 13 people have been killed in the Gulf, including seven civilians, since Iran began its strikes on Saturday. Washington said six US servicemen were killed, including four in Kuwait. A fire broke out at Bahrain's Bapco Energies refinery following the Iranian attack but was later contained, the kingdom's communications centre said. There were no reported injuries from the

strike at the refinery on the island of Sitra and operations continued, the government media arm added. Earlier, Britain said it was temporarily withdrawing some embassy staff and their dependents from Bahrain due to the security situation. A witness said the diplomatic quarter in the Saudi capital Riyadh had been closed off after some Western embassy staff in Riyadh were told to shelter in place, diplomatic sources told AFP. The witness and diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive security matter. On Thursday evening residents in Abu Dhabi reported hearing a series of loud explosions and authorities said air defences were responding to a missile threat. Air defences also confronted a missile threat in the emirate of Fujairah, home to a major port where Iranian attacks have already targeted an oil storage and trading hub. Waves of explosions in an earlier barrage in the Emirati capital, six Pakistani

and Nepalese nationals were injured, officials said. Fresh waves of explosions, most from interceptions, also rocked Dubai, Doha and Manama on Thursday. In Doha, AFP journalists saw a plume of



smoke rising and reported loud blasts across the city. Qatar's defence ministry said its forces intercepted 13 Iranian ballistic missiles on Thursday, while one fell in Qatari waters, and four drones were also shot down, with no casualties reported. Earlier, Qatari authorities said

they were evacuating residents living near Doha's US embassy. Iran's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Alireza Enayati, denied Thursday that Tehran was behind an earlier drone attack on the US embassy in Riyadh or strikes on the kingdom's vast Ras Tanura oil refinery. "We confirmed that Iran has no role in the attack on the US embassy in Riyadh", he told AFP, adding that when Tehran's military carries out an operation "it takes responsibility for it". Enayati also rejected suggestions Iran was waging a regional war. "It was imposed on the region," he said. In Saudi Arabia, officials said they had intercepted three cruise missiles and several drones. "Three cruise missiles were intercepted and destroyed outside the city of Al-Kharj," the Saudi defence ministry posted on X. Elsewhere, a tanker was hit by a "large explosion" in waters off Kuwait, causing an oil spill, British maritime security agency UKMTO reported.

NEWS BOX

From accident victims to cancer patients: How UP's first bone and tissue bank at KGMU could improve orthopaedic treatment

BENGALURU. (Agency)
King George's Medical University (KGMU) is set to establish Uttar Pradesh's first Bone and Tissue Bank, a significant step that is expected to strengthen orthopaedic treatment and help patients undergoing complex surgeries.

The facility is likely to become operational within the next one to two months once final approval is received from the authorities. Sources at KGMU said that most of the groundwork for the facility has already been completed, with the required infrastructure and equipment already installed. The university is currently awaiting the final nod from the Director General of Medical Education (DGME) before formally launching the service.

How will it help patients?

Doctors at the university said the bone bank will play a crucial role in treating patients suffering from severe bone loss due to accidents, tumours, infections and revision joint replacement surgeries, where the patient's own bone may not be sufficient for reconstruction.

According to Dr Ashish Kumar from the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at KGMU, bone grafting is an essential part of many orthopaedic procedures. "In several cases, especially during complex trauma surgeries or revision joint replacements, a large amount of bone graft is required. It is often not possible to obtain sufficient bone from the patient's own body, and, therefore, donor bone becomes necessary," he explained.

Link workers demand eight months' salary, likely to get for three months

BENGALURU. (Agency)
Hundreds of 'link work' employees, attached to Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), protested at the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) head office on Thursday and gheraoed BSWML Chief Operating Officer (COO) Ramamani, demanding the release of eight months' salary dues.

Ramamani, who received representations from the union members, said three months' salary dues will be released immediately, and other demands will be placed before higher authorities. Representing the link workers, union leader Shashikala, who serves in Kamakshipalya, said 284 workers were at the Indian Population Project unit under the Department of Health and Family Welfare. They were deployed around 25 years ago by the erstwhile BBMP, and were working at municipal clinics and hospitals on health programmes like Pulse Polio awareness among the public, visiting homes for surveys and vaccination drives, and Information Education Communication (IEC) programmes for a salary of Rs 300.

However, after deployment with the solid waste management department, there was a change in their roles, like segregating waste, inspecting hotels and restaurants, taking photos of daily waste collection and reporting to officials, election work, surveys etc, all for a meagre payment of Rs 6,000 in 2014. After a struggle, it has revised to Rs 14,884 from 2020. But these payments are irregular, Shashikala alleged. "There is growing concern now as the link workers will be put under a three-year contract under the Swachh Bharat Mission in BSWML."

Karnataka HC reverses acquittal, four get life term in 2009 murder

BENGALURU. (Agency)
The Karnataka High Court on Thursday sentenced four inter-state migrants, including a domestic helper and her husband to life imprisonment for murdering the house owner, his wife, and son for gain a decade ago. Allowing the appeal filed by the state government, a division bench of Justice HP Sandesh and Justice Venkatesh Naik T sentenced the accused, with a total fine of Rs 1.20 lakh and set aside the order passed by the trial court acquitting the four accused.

The sentenced are Deepak Haldwar, Suchitra Haldar, both are from West Bengal, Mohammed Sarbal from Bidar and Bidan Shikari, residing in city. The trial court had acquitted them on February, 29, 2016.

The HC also directed the state government to introduce a structured and mandatory police verification mechanism so that it will be helpful for the owners or employers before engaging workers who reside within private premises, similar to tenant verification systems, with simplified online registration portals accessible to the public.

The HC said that widespread public awareness campaigns through print, electronic, and social media platforms should be undertaken to educate citizens about safe hiring practices.

However, while strengthening preventive mechanisms, it is equally important to ensure that migrant workers are not stigmatised as a class, since criminal liability is individual in nature and the constitutional guarantees under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India protect the dignity and equality of all persons, the court said.

Finally, we reached home': Special flight carrying 200 Gujaratis from UAE lands in Mumbai

Several Indian tourists continue to be stranded in the UAE as commercial flights remain suspended and fares of chartered flights are "unaffordable"

Lucknow.(Agency)
About 200 people from Gujarat's Anand and Kheda districts, who had been stranded in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the middle of their week-long tour following the ongoing turmoil in West Asia, returned home on Thursday by a special flight that landed in Mumbai on Wednesday night.

The conflict in West Asia began after the US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran on February 28, killing Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Following the military offensive, Iran has carried out a wave of attacks targeting Israeli and American military bases in several Gulf countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The group, including several senior citizens, remained on the edge the entire duration that the flight was airborne after it took off from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The group

returned to Nadiad and Anand on Thursday by road from Mumbai.

Bharti Patel, 51, who was on the flight with her



husband Vimal, said, "When we took off from the UAE, all of us were praying for a safe flight. The entire duration of the flight of approximately three hours, we remained anxious, knowing that we were flying through a war zone... When the flight landed in

Mumbai, it was a different feeling. Finally, we reached home... We are safe now."

The flight was arranged by a special arrangement through the Indian Embassy, local people and Air Arabia to evacuate the group of about 200 individuals, who had travelled to the UAE through Anand-based Yogi Overseas, especially to visit the Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. Patel, a resident of Nadiad, recounts the fright her group felt when they were holed up in their hotel. "It all began so suddenly... We had spent the first four days sightseeing as per our schedule. We had visited the Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi too. On day five, we were headed to Burj Khalifa when we saw the debris of a missile that had been brought down... there was fire. Thereafter, the continuous sounds of explosions filled the air... As per the advice of our tour manager, we remained indoors," Patel said.

'Gabbar Singh Tax' vs 'decisive strike': Haryana Assembly erupts in debate over GST reforms

While Congress MLAs said that GST had placed a heavy burden on citizens, BJP MLAs countered, saying the tax regime had given new momentum to the economy and boosted trade.

Lucknow . (Agency)
A resolution praising reforms to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime was adopted in the Haryana Assembly on Thursday, with ruling BJP legislators hailing the changes and Opposition Congress MLAs criticising the Centre for burdening citizens with high taxes, with a few terming it as 'Gabbar Singh Tax'.

BJP MLAs Parmod Kumar Vij, Ghanshyam Dass, and Jagmohan Anand, along with independent MLA Savitri Jindal, introduced a non-official resolution on Thursday recommending that the state government should convey to the central government that the revision of GST tax slabs is commendable and appreciable.

Vij asserted that GST-2 is a decisive strike against inflation, proving that the government does not shy away from taking bold and far-reaching decisions. Expressing gratitude to the Narendra Modi government for reducing GST, he added that 2025 has become a defining year in the nation's developmental journey.



Participating in the discussion, Congress legislator Jassi Petwar said, "Was this Gabbar Singh Tax justified when it was first introduced

in July 2017, or later in 2025, during what was called GST reforms? The public should be properly informed about it."

When a member asked which tax he was referring to as Gabbar Singh Tax, Petwar replied that it was the GST imposed by the BJP government.

Speaker Harvinder Singh Kalyan intervened and asked whether the term Gabbar Singh Tax was mentioned in the records. "I am asking this because I am hearing about it for the first time," remarked the Speaker.

The Congress MLA again referred to GST, alleging that for eight continuous years, it had placed a heavy burden on citizens. "Even on curd and paranthas, GST was imposed for the first time during the BJP rule. You even imposed GST on funeral cloths, which is truly shocking," Petwar said. Another Congress MLA, Vikas Saharan, added: "The introduction of GST hit trade and fuelled inflation.

A son lost to Iran-Israel conflict, a body not found — and a father in Mumbai who refuses to mourn

Caught in the crossfire of the Iran-Israel conflict, Mumbai sailor Dixit Solanki was killed when his oil tanker was hit. Just hours earlier he had texted his family about a 'war-like situation' at sea. His father, an ex-seafarer, refuses to garland his photo until the body comes home.

Mumbai. (Agency)

At the Solanki's ground-plus-one house in Mahaveer Nagar in Kandivali West, a framed photo of Dixit Solanki stands on a small wooden stool draped with a red cloth. In one corner, Dixit's father Amratlal sits quietly, avoiding everyone — friends, well-wishers and, most of all, the media.

The 64-year-old Amratlal has heard that his 32-year-old son is gone — killed in an explosion that rocked the vessel he worked on, the oil tanker MKD Vyom — but so far, he has refused to garland the

photo frame. His reason: the body has yet to be found. "So far, I don't have a clear picture of my son's body. I have been given false information from the start," he tells.

On March 1, MKD Vyom was hit by an unmanned boat 52 nautical miles off the coast of Muscat



Governorate — the casualty of the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict. The attack, allegedly from the Iranian side, resulted in a fire and explosion in the engine room, killing Dixit.

Five days later, his family still has no clarity on whether the body has been found, with Amratlal

alleging he has been receiving conflicting information. In an attempt to find his son's body, he met some of the crew members who returned safely to India at a hotel in Andheri.

"I asked them [the crew members] a basic question — when a blast has happened and the iron vessel was smashed into pieces, how will a human body remain intact in that blast? They then started giving vague answers that they went back and tried their best to pull out the body," Amratlal, an ex-seafarer himself, says.

According to him, two officials from the shipping company — including a captain — visited his house hours after the attack and told him that Dixit's breathing had stopped and that they would update him. "After about 10 hours, they sent a message that said Dixit had died and that his body would soon be transferred to me," he said

Maximum temperatures soar across Gujarat; Bhavnagar hottest at 38°C

Further, the forecast for the maximum temperature issued by the IMD states that no major change in maximum temperatures is expected till Friday, followed by a gradual fall of 2-3 degrees during the subsequent two days

Ahmedabad .(Agency)

Barely into the first week of March, temperatures across cities in Gujarat soared as high as 38 degree Celsius on Thursday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an alert saying hot and humid air conditions will prevail over the coastal areas of Gujarat including Kutch region on March 5 and 6 adding that it might lead to discomfort.

Further, the forecast for the maximum temperature issued by the IMD states that no major change in maximum temperatures is expected till Friday, followed by a gradual fall of 2-3 degrees during the subsequent two days (till the weekend).

Thereafter, a gradual rise of 2-3 degrees is expected. Similarly, for the minimum temperature, no significant change in minimum temperatures is expected till next week, the weather department said.

On Thursday, maximum as well as minimum temperatures rose

appreciably in parts of Saurashtra, while they were appreciably above normal in parts of North Gujarat and South Gujarat. Bhavnagar recorded the highest maximum temperature on Thursday at 38 degrees Celsius — 4.7 degrees above normal, followed by Rajkot at 37.9 degrees Celsius — 3.8 degrees above normal.

A minimum temperature of 15.8 degrees Celsius was the lowest recorded in the state at Naliya. Ahmedabad and Amreli recorded a maximum temperature of 37.7 degrees Celsius, Gandhinagar and Vadodra 37.2 degrees, Deesa 37.3 degrees, Porbandar 36.7 degrees, Surat 36.4 degrees, Kandla 35 degrees and Naliya 30.6 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Ahmedabad was 22.5 degrees Celsius — 5 degrees above normal, Gandhinagar 21.5 degrees — 5.1 degrees above normal, Bhuj 20.4 degrees — 3.6 degrees above normal and Rajkot 20.2 degrees — 2.5 degrees above normal.

Power Tariffs Reduced for Domestic, Commercial and Industrial Consumers in Punjab

Contd.....Front page
Domestic consumers will see reductions of up to ?1.5 per unit depending on consumption slabs, commercial establishments will benefit from reductions of up to 79 paise per unit, and industrial consumers will see tariffs reduced by up to 74 paise per unit. During a media interaction, Power Minister Sanjeev Arora stated, "Under the leadership and guidance of Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the Punjab Government has ensured that electricity tariffs remain consumer-friendly while also supporting industrial growth and economic development in the State." Highlighting the benefits for domestic consumers, Sanjeev Arora said that households will continue to receive substantial support through the Punjab Government's flagship free electricity initiative. "300 units of electricity per month, which translates to 600 units per billing cycle, remain completely free for households. More than 90% of households in Punjab are already benefiting from the free electricity scheme introduced by the

Bhagwant Singh Mann Government," said Minister Sanjeev Arora. He added that even for households consuming beyond the free quota, tariffs have been reduced. "For consumption above 300 units, the tariff has been reduced by ?0.70 per unit, providing additional relief to higher-consumption households," said Minister Sanjeev Arora. The Punjab Government has also reduced fixed charges for domestic consumers. For households with a load between 2 kW and 7 kW, fixed charges have been reduced by 25 per kW, while for loads between 7 kW and 20 kW, fixed charges have been reduced by ?10 per kW. "Commercial consumers will also benefit significantly from the revised tariff structure." "For commercial consumers with load up to 7 kW, tariffs have been reduced by ?0.79 per unit for consumption up to 500 units and by ?0.65 per unit for consumption above 500 units," said Minister Sanjeev Arora. He added that for commercial connections with a load between 7 kW and 20 kW, fixed charges have been reduced by ?10 per kW per month, while

energy charges have been revised to ?6.10 per unit for consumption up to 500 units and ?7.10 per unit for consumption above 500 units. "For the industrial sector, energy charges have not been increased for FY 2026-27. In addition, fixed charges for industrial connections have been reduced," said Minister Sanjeev Arora. He explained that for industrial connections with load up to 50 kW, fixed charges have been reduced by ?10 per kW per month, while for connections between 50 kW and 100 kW, fixed charges have been reduced by ?15 per kW per month. "These measures will improve cost competitiveness for industry and strengthen the growth of MSMEs across Punjab," said Minister Sanjeev Arora. In another important decision aimed at providing relief to professionals, electricity connections in lawyers' chambers registered with the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana and located in court complexes will now be charged under domestic tariff instead of commercial tariff. The tariff order also records that operational efficiencies in the power sector have enabled an overall con-

sumer relief of ?7851.91 crore while maintaining financial sustainability. The development also reflects the financial turnaround of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) under the Bhagwant Mann Government. The order notes that the regulatory framework and financial discipline in the power sector have enabled PSPCL to become an efficient and profit-generating power utility. PSPCL has secured an A+ rating and recorded a profit of ?2634 crore in the financial year ending March 31, 2025. Another major highlight of the tariff order is the reduction in the average cost of electricity supply in Punjab. The average cost has declined to ?6.15 per unit compared to ?7.15 per unit in the previous year, making it the lowest average electricity cost in the last ten years. The tariff order also provides a major push to clean mobility by reducing the electricity tariff for EV charging stations to ?5 per unit, placing Punjab among the states with the lowest EV charging tariffs in the country. In addition, the Commission has introduced several consumer-friendly measures including

increasing the applicable limit for the Small Power category from 20 kW to 50 kW to promote ease of doing business, continuation of special night tariff benefits for industrial consumers, and a reduction in the green energy tariff to encourage greater adoption of renewable energy by industries. The PSPCL to focus on further improving operational efficiency and financial performance. Key targets include reducing distribution losses by around 20%, lowering power purchase costs through improved planning and procurement, and increasing the integration of renewable and green energy in the power mix. These steps will further strengthen the financial health of PSPCL, reduce subsidy dependence over time and ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity supply for the people of Punjab. Reiterating its commitment to public welfare and economic growth, Minister Sanjeev Arora stated that it will continue working towards providing affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity while supporting industrial growth and investment in Punjab.

1,401 kg of fake paneer recovered from Surat godown; ingredients worth Rs. 28.44 lakh seized

Surat.(Agency)
Surat Special Operation Group sleuths have seized analogue paneer and other ingredients worth Rs. 28.44 lakh from a godown in Surat on Thursday. The unit was run by Maheshkumar Sharma, a native of Rajasthan and resident of Althan area in Surat city. Acting on a tip-off, the SOG along with Food Safety Department officials of the Surat Municipal Corporation, carried out raids in a plot at the Bhidhanjan Society in Pandesara and found a large stock of ready-to-eat and under-processed non-branded paneer. After receiving approval from the Food Safety Department, the officials confirmed it is analogue paneer. SOG sources said that 1,401 kilograms of fake paneer, kept in a freezer, was found along with machinery and weighing scales worth Rs. 25 lakhs, plastic bags for loose cheese, stickers of non-branded analogue paneer and a huge stock of acetic acid and palm oil.

Sources said that the firm was selling the paneer at Rs. 220 per kg, to different dairies. The accused had allegedly been running this illegal business for the past two years. The accused confessed to selling 400 kilograms of analogue paneer daily. Officials said that some samples have been taken from the factory, which will be tested at an SMC-approved laboratory.

Surat SOG Deputy Commissioner of Police, Rajdeepsingh Nakum said, "The accused was supplying analogue paneer to Dharmaraj Dairy, Radha Krishna Dairy, Om Sai Dairy and Rajkamal Dairy. It was manufactured using a mixture of palm oil, milk powder, acetic acid and other ingredients. The accused has been running this business for the last two years, playing with the health of citizens. We have sent the samples for laboratory test, and after getting the report, we will register an offence against the owner, Mahesh Sharma."

An ayatollah to keep alive dream of Shia crescent

When a dream is shattered by an awakening, howsoever expected, the dreamers desperately try to cling to remnants of the sweet fantasy. That is what is likely to happen in Iran in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of its Supreme Leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei.

For many millions of Shias around the world, Iran's Islamic revolution led by a cleric of their own, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was a dream come true. I was witness to this from close proximity in 1979. Although the revolution ate many of its own children and drove Iran to dire economic straits, clerical rule still has millions of adherents within. From Karbala to Kargil, from Damascus to Dammam, Shia faith is strong enough to fester disaffection across the Arab world in repercussion to Khamenei's assassination, with lasting consequences.

There were demonstrations during the weekend at the Shia strongholds of Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. On Sunday, the US consulate general in Karachi was under siege. These demonstrations are likely to spread because this is the month of Ramadan, holy for both Shias and Sunnis. If the Islamic Republic is toppled through 'shock and awe', the chaos that followed the ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein in Iraq is likely to be repeated in Iran. The history of Shia Islam is deeply rooted in the idea of martyrdom since the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE till Iran's Islamic revolution and in the subsequent assertion of Shia ideology post the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. What Khamenei's death symbolises is the end of a sprawling and hitherto-formidable Shia Islamic crescent extending from Iran through Iraq, Lebanon and Syria in power, but also incorporating Shia majority Bahrain, eastern Saudi Arabia, pockets in north India and parts of Pakistan without power or trappings of office. Israel has significantly defanged some of these Shia forces since the devastating Hamas attacks in the Gaza Strip. Khomeini will be judged by history as the astute cleric who sowed the seeds of this Shia crescent, but its emergence was ironically aided by Washington's lack of understanding of the Gulf—both the Persian and Arab sides—since the administration of Jimmy Carter until the present rule of Donald Trump. These US leaders put all their eggs in the Jewish Israeli basket, forgetting that Muslim Arabs are also people with aspirations, emotions, rights and consciousness like the Jews. Successive occupants of the White House assiduously cultivated Arab rulers in the region to the exclusion of those they rule over. People-to-people relations were not on their agenda. When the masses seized power, as in Tehran led by Khomeini, they inevitably related to the US only as the 'Great Satan'. This will not change with the assassination of Iran's spiritual leader. There are plenty of Iranians who will rejoice in the death of Khamenei, especially in Tehran's prosperous north, where nothing much changed during the four decades of Islamic rule. Western movies and pop music can still be bought there, women barely cover their heads and teenagers groom spiky hair—everything the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) would consider decadent.

The so-called mullahcracy has, by and large, left north Tehran alone, partly because that is where the capital's wealthy live. Even the regime needs some of the 'bazaar wealth' there. If the US and Israel succeed in regime change in Iran, they will be surprised that north Tehranis, who have never liked clerical rule, will be opposed to any foreign invasion. That is the paradox of Iran, which a post-Khamenei regime will find as its most formidable challenge.

New Delhi is preparing to cope with the fallout of events that led to Khamenei's assassination. These have potentially serious economic consequences for everyday Indians that are yet to unfold. It is advisable in this context for Indian policymakers and strategic thinkers to read an insightful biography, Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Very British Coup by Christopher de Bellaigue.

Empower teachers to raise the bar

Their happiness and dignity can ensure sincere hard work in the classroom

ONE of the great hopes that the new economic policy had aroused in the mid-1990s was that licence-inspection raj would end. Perhaps it happened in the business world, but in the world of education, both 'licence' and 'inspection' practices got stronger. In school education, the term 'inspector' was generic and the post had several levels. The great Hindi novelist Premchand served as a 'sub-deputy inspector' in the early 20th century. I feel grateful to him for leaving vivid traces of what it meant for a school to be inspected under British colonial rule. But inspectorial roles and the culture of inspection are hardly vintage: they have survived Independence and the new economic and educational policy discourses. Inspection of a school continues to be an event marked by a display of power by the inspecting authority, and by the parallel display of meekness by the school staff. They have no choice but to exhibit meekness.

The culture of inspection has not changed since colonial days. The headmaster had to ensure that the school building looked clean, with flowerpots lining the corridors. The children were supposed to look smart and the teachers busy. If the roof had holes, they were covered with rags or with whatever was handy. If the floor had pits, the headmaster used a carpet to hide them. Gandhian educationist Marjorie Sykes, who was originally a British citizen, told me that school inspection in India was exactly the opposite of what happened in England. There, the headmaster drew chalk circles around the holes, thereby ensuring that the inspector would notice and arrange repair work. There was no fear, nor a need to hide the reality.

It was assumed that inspection raj would die with the advent of liberalisation and the weakening of the bureaucracy in every field, not just business. But in education, inspection raj spread to higher education. Accreditation and ranking were introduced as new routines, and they necessitated inspection teams to visit universities and colleges. When the National Assessment and Accreditation Council sends an inspection team, college and university authorities spruce up the campus, prepare impressive data displays and picturesque flex boards to impress the visiting team. Its members also expect other forms of satisfaction — not just clean toilets and freshly planted saplings. If the team gives less than the highest grades, the stated reasons are not the real story: everybody knows that the head of the institution had failed to please the visitors.

A news report in The Tribune (February 19) shows us the perils that teachers face during and after a school

inspection. Punjab's Education Minister made a surprise inspection of a primary school at Machhiwara in Ludhiana district.

Subsequently, the teachers concerned were served showcase notices. They must explain why children in their classes could not read Punjabi text and solve simple maths problems given to them during the inspection. We don't know about these randomly chosen children. Were they from Punjabi-speaking families, and how long had they been learning to read Punjabi? What kind of reading material is being used? In what kind of institutions did the teachers receive training? Were the kids feeling nervous when asked by strangers to stand up and read aloud, and to solve maths problems? Questions of this kind are too far below the powerful gaze



of the ministerial inspection team. I have no doubt that its members are not aware of the sorry state in which Punjab's DIETs (district institutes of education and training) have fallen. These institutes were important structures that sustained teaching standards. Several other structures were created under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. They, too, are now in a state of disrepair. Indeed, teacher education as a whole has collapsed, with private institutes that don't even require attendance. Inspection teams are not interested in such details. They want performance — children's performance which serves as proof of the teachers' efficiency.

One irony in the Machhiwara story is that its primary school is included in the list of 'smart' schools. This title implies that the school is equipped with all the digital

gadgetry required for interactive pedagogy. Official faith in digital equipment has rapidly grown over the last decade. The Covid-19 pandemic provided a great boost to this faith. Anything showing that this faith is misplaced is resented — and not because a considerable investment has been made in the smart school project.

Digital equipment gives classrooms a modern look, conveying the feeling that something robustly progressive is happening. This feeling serves a symbolic purpose in government-run schools. The message has two main components: one, that the government is concerned about improving educational standards, and two, that the gap between private and government schools is closing. This messaging imparts an ideological gloss to the use of technology in education. Its real impact on teaching and on teacher-child relationship — both in private and government schools — has received scant attention.

Relentless, technologically assisted testing of children has undermined real teaching. The bureaucracy that governs schools had assumed that regular testing would make teachers more alert and responsible. This was a false assumption, although it looked plausible and political leaders swallowed it as a shortcut to high quality. They still don't see that teachers' happiness and dignity are the best guarantees of sincere hard work in the classroom.

This is hardly a new insight. Four decades ago, the National Teacher Commission, chaired by philosopher DP Chattopadhyaya, had said it all. The report had suggested several strategies for

making teachers confident and autonomous. Its recommendations for imparting substance and meaning to teacher training aimed at creating a cadre of reflective teachers, capable of taking decisions for providing the best possible trajectory for every child. This valuable advice of the Commission is now fully forgotten, although similar recommendations were made in 2008 by the Justice JS Varma Commission. And hardly a few years ago, an alternative to "inspection raj" had emerged in many states, including Punjab, in the shape of sub-district level structures to boost teacher autonomy and capacity. These are in a shambles today. Clearly, the progress of policy has led to systemic decay and teacher alienation.

Food regulator FSSAI faces a crisis of credibility

FSSAI licence is a pledge of responsible conduct, yet it seems to have become a permit to operate with impunity

THE Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) does a decent job of saying the right things. It's at the implementation stage that the regulator's plans often fall flat. It has now asked states and UTs to strengthen on-ground enforcement and sharpen the focus of inspections on high-risk food categories such as milk and milk products, edible oils, spices and honey. It also plans mandating daily production and storage records to be maintained by food businesses. The intent to curb rampant adulteration is welcome. But how exactly can a directive improve safety compliance without sweeping reforms in the way the watchdog functions? Placing profit above public health is now an established practice, and the FSSAI faces a crisis of credibility. The licence given by the FSSAI is a pledge of responsible conduct by adhering to food safety norms. Yet it seems to have become a permit to



operate with impunity. On Holi, with a flourish of sweet treats on offer, the stark reality hits even harder. A

crackdown only momentarily stalls illegal activity. Adulteration has to be treated as a serious crime. In the absence of stringent punitive action and revocation of licences, enforcement is just rhetoric and a source of corruption. It's good that the regulator has also asked states to strengthen their food safety workforce, but who is going to ensure that this happens, or that a culture of discipline and accountability gains ground?

The indifference of the Centre and states to the all-pervasive adulteration defies logic. It's not just the neighbourhood outlet that's letting the consumer down. Big companies selling compromised products must be held to the same standard they follow abroad. What is so difficult about ensuring front-of-pack labelling that alerts about the high level of salt, sugar or fat?

Iran a testing ground for new weapons

One of the clearest examples is the first confirmed combat use of a US one-way attack drone, LUCAS.

The war with Iran is not only being fought in the skies over the Gulf and the deserts beyond; it is being fought in workshops, production lines and design bureaux. Every strike, interception and drone launch is not simply an act of war, but a live experiment. The conflict has become a testing ground - for new weapons, for recycled designs and for the doctrines that will shape future battlefields. One of the clearest examples is the first confirmed combat use of a US one-way attack drone known as the Low-cost Uncrewed (Unmanned) Combat Attack System, or LUCAS. In a public statement, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) - the Pentagon's regional combat command responsible for American military operations across the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of South Asia — said that "Task Force Scorpion Strike employed low-cost one-way attack drones for the first time in combat" during recent strikes on Iran. CENTCOM added that "these low-cost drones, modelled after Iran's Shahed drones, are now delivering American-made retribution." The phrasing is deliberate. The United States has formally fielded a weapon inspired by an adversary's design and acknowledged it publicly. The architecture of LUCAS mirrors Iran's Shahed 136, widely described by Western defence officials as a "loitering munition" - a drone capable of flying long distances before diving into its target. During the Ukraine war, the Shahed became synonymous with cheap, expendable attacks launched in waves to strain air defences. Military analysts repeatedly summarised the lesson of such systems in blunt terms: quantity has a quality all its own. The Pentagon has increasingly embraced that logic. In defence planning documents and briefings, officials describe "attributable systems" as platforms designed to be affordable and replaceable. As

the US Department of Defense has put it, such systems allow commanders "to accept higher levels of risk with platforms that are designed to be affordable and replaceable." The emphasis is not on perfection but on scale. LUCAS appears to fit squarely within that doctrine. Rather than relying exclusively on cruise missiles costing millions of dollars per piece, the US military is integrating weapons intended to be mass-produced and operationally expendable. After the initial deployment, a Pentagon spokesperson indicated that the drones "remain ready for employment," signalling that this is not a symbolic trial but an operational capability being embedded in the theatre. CENTCOM established the unit operating these systems, Task Force Scorpion Strike, in late 2025 specifically to accelerate the shift. When announcing the formation of the unit, the command said its purpose was to "accelerate the integration of low-cost autonomous systems into the CENTCOM area of responsibility." In military language, that signals intent: the battlefield is no longer merely where weapons are used; it is where they are validated. Iran, too, is performing its own demonstrations. State-linked outlets have circulated footage purporting to show underground drone facilities, with rows of unmanned aircraft positioned in tunnel complexes. Iranian commanders have previously described such installations as "strategic drone bases" capable of operating "continuously and without interruption." Whether independently verified or not, the message is clear. Production depth is itself part of deterrence. There is historical symmetry in this technological exchange. After Iran captured a US RQ-170 Sentinel surveillance

drone in 2011, Tehran claimed it had reverse-engineered aspects of the aircraft to inform its own unmanned systems. Now the circle appears to have turned again, with Washington deploying a drone modelled on Iranian architecture against Iranian targets. Modern warfare is no longer a one-directional diffusion of technology from great powers outward; it is iterative and reciprocal. For



India, this conflict is not distant theatre. It is a live case study. Indian defence planners have already confronted the growing role of loitering munitions in regional crises and along contested borders. The lesson emerging from the Iran war - that inexpensive, scalable drones can alter the cost equation of conflict - will not be lost in New Delhi.

India has been investing in indigenous drone programmes and counter-drone systems, while simultaneously

balancing high-end imports such as advanced fighter aircraft and air defence systems. The Iran theatre reinforces a central dilemma for India's armed forces: whether future deterrence will rest primarily on prestige platforms or on the ability to produce large volumes of attributable systems domestically. If quantity begins to rival sophistication, India's industrial policy becomes as important as its procurement policy.

There is also an economic dimension. Much of India's energy imports transit the Gulf. Drone warfare targeting regional infrastructure or shipping lanes directly affects insurance costs, supply stability and price volatility. What appears as tactical experimentation in the Gulf can translate quickly into macroeconomic exposure for India. Notably, there is no publicly verified evidence that Chinese-designed weapons are being tested in this particular theatre. China has developed advanced missile and drone systems over the past decade, but open sources do not show their deployment in the current Iran campaign. Yet Beijing, like New Delhi, will be studying the results. If low-cost autonomous systems prove decisive, that will influence procurement and doctrine across

Asia. The broader lesson is industrial as much as tactical. As former defence officials have warned, modern conflicts are becoming contests of industrial capacity as much as battlefield manoeuvre. The Iran war is reinforcing that reality. Expensive cruise missiles and stealth bombers still matter, but so do inexpensive autonomous drones that can be produced in volume. The balance between cost, scale and survivability is being recalibrated in real time.

CPI(M) holds protest in Shimla against US-Israel Attack on Iran

Shimla.(Agency)
Responding to the nationwide call of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), its workers held a protest demonstration outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in Shimla on Thursday against the ongoing US-Israel attack on Iran.
The protest condemned what the party termed as an unprovoked military aggression and a violation of Iran's sovereignty.
Addressing the gathering, CPI(M) state Secretariat member Rakesh Singha, along with district committee members Amit and Vivek Kashyap, strongly criticised US imperialism and Israeli military action, describing the strike as a blatant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. They stated that such actions threaten global peace and destabilise the already fragile West Asia region.
The speakers said that West Asia is being pushed towards prolonged war and instability, the burden of which is borne largely by ordinary citizens and the working class.
They alleged that powerful nations are escalating tensions in the region to secure economic and strategic interests. CPI(M) State Secretary Sanjay Chauhan and several state committee members, including Jagat Ram, Vijay Kausal, Ram Singh, Falma Chauhan, Kamal, Ramprakash, Vivek Nehra, Pravesh, Tilak Raj, Purna, Ishwar, Dushyant, Deep Ram, Sita Ram, Uma and Nisha also participated in the protest.
Demonstrators raised slogans against imperialism and called for global unity to defend peace, sovereignty and democratic rights.

Cyberattack delays crop incentive for 9,371 Haryana farmers

Srinagar.(Agency)
Around one-third of the total farmers found eligible for benefits for crop compensation are yet to receive it – thanks to a cyber-attack on the cloud server. The information was stated by the Haryana government in the ongoing Budget Session of the Assembly, Thursday.
Congress MLA (Sirsa) Gokul Setia had questioned the state government on the issue asking three questions – If the government implemented a scheme during Kharif 2024 to provide an incentive of Rs 4,000 per acre to farmers who adopted the Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) method for paddy cultivation in State; if so, the number of farmers benefited under the said scheme in the State; b) whether it is also a fact that the above-said incentive amount has not been paid to about 18,000-19,000 farmers; if so, the reasons for the delay together with the amount of incentive still pending for payment; and c) the time by which the pending incentive amount is likely to be released to the eligible farmers?
Responding to Setia, during the Question Hour, agriculture and farmers' welfare minister Shyam Singh Rana said, "About 27,378 farmers have been found eligible for the benefit covering a total area of 1,56,891 acres. Of these, 18,007 farmers have already been paid an incentive of Rs 4,000/- per acre for an area of 1,09,245 acres. b) Around 9,371 farmers have not yet been paid the benefit for a total area of 47,646 acres. The reason was isolation of the data cluster maintained by Railtel Corporation of India due to a cyber-attack on the cloud server. The Department is coordinating with Railtel to restore access to the data. c) The payment for the remaining area will be disbursed immediately upon restoration of access to the data."

11-year-old killed in tractor accident in Mohali; family blocks NH-21 in protest

Lucknow.(Agency)
An 11-year-old boy died in a road accident on Thursday in Bad Majra village after being hit by a tractor. The incident sparked outrage among family members and locals, who later blocked National Highway-21 near the Phase 6 light point while demanding action against the driver.
According to the family, Shaurya, a resident of Bad Majra, was travelling on a motorcycle with his father when a tractor coming from behind rammed into their bike. The impact caused the child to fall on the road, and the tractor's wheel ran over him. The tractor driver allegedly abandoned the vehicle at the spot and fled immediately after the accident.
Relatives accused authorities of delaying assistance. Shaurya's uncle, Sandeep, said they repeatedly called the police and ambulance after the accident but no help reached for nearly an hour. Eventually, when police arrived, the child was taken in a PCR vehicle to Civil Hospital in Phase 6, where doctors declared him dead.
Angered by the incident, family members carried the child's body to the NH-21 near the Phase 6 light point and staged a protest by placing the body on the road, blocking traffic. During the protest, some relatives and local residents lay down in front of vehicles and raised slogans against the administration. They demanded that the tractor driver be arrested and brought before them. The blockade caused a massive traffic jam for nearly one and a half hours, affecting commuters along a stretch of about two kilometres between Phase 6 and Balongi. Several vehicles remained stranded on the highway, causing inconvenience to travellers.

'Abducted at gunpoint': High drama in Punjab's Moga during block samiti chairman polls, Congress protests outside police station

Congress Moga district president Malvika Sood Sachar also alleged that another block samiti member was also "picked up from his home" and taken away "to stop him from participating" in the election.



Ludhiana .(Agency)
High political drama prevailed in Punjab's Moga Thursday during the block samiti chairman election after the Congress alleged that their elected member was "abducted at gunpoint" by the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to "hijack the election process." Congress's Moga district president, Malvika Sood Sachar, along with

other local leaders, sat on a protest outside the Moga Sadar Police Station, alleging that the police refused to file a First Information Report (FIR) when they complained about their colleague's abduction. After the Congress leaders refused to lift the protest, the police detained them and took them to the Mehna Police Station. They were released late on Thursday.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Sachar said Aman Sanghera was on his way to participate in the election and vote, but he was abducted on the way. "The ruling AAP abducted him at gunpoint and took him away. He was dragged out of his car. For more than three hours, when the election was on, he was kept in captivity, and released after the election was over. Is this how the AAP practises democracy?" asked Sachar.
"We were detained and taken in police vans. Never before in the history of Punjab has the ruling party abducted an Opposition member so that he can't vote," she added. Sachar also alleged that even on Wednesday night, another block samiti member, Sarwan Singh, was also "picked up from his home" and taken away "to stop him from participating" in Thursday's election. "But we found him and got him released somehow. But today it was heights of hooliganism when Aman Sanghera was abducted at gunpoint. What would this kind of victory mean for the AAP?" she asked. Sachar said the police were "forcing" them to "sign some papers" to release them, but "they won't budge" till the FIR for abduction was registered. In a statement released late Thursday, the Moga police said, "A man, Aman Sanghera of Daroli Bhai, who is also a block samiti member, has complained that he was abducted at gunpoint and released hours later. Probe has been initiated, and action will be taken accordingly."

Himachal HC to hear matter on order of C'wealth of Massachusetts court

Shimla.(Agency)
Himachal Pradesh High Court has issued notice to the State Government on a petition concerning the alleged violation of an order passed by a court in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, United States, relating to the relocation of a minor child to India.
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a New England state in the northeastern US.
The matter came up before the division bench of Chief Justice GS Sandhawalia and Justice Bipin Chander Negi through a criminal writ petition filed by the father of the minor.
The petitioner has alleged that the child was brought to India by the mother in contravention of the directions contained in a divorce judgment passed by the foreign court on January 20, 2023.
The petition that came before HC for hearing on March 2 contended that the court in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had laid down specific conditions on the custody and relocation of the minor child. The petitioner contended that the child could not be moved to India without prior permission from the competent court.
Despite these directions, the child was allegedly brought to India by the respondent. During the hearing, counsel for the petitioner submitted that the writ petition is maintainable in cases involving the custody and international relocation of minors. Reliance was also placed on the Supreme Court judgment in Yashita Sahu vs State of Rajasthan and Others (2020), which deals with issues concerning custody disputes and parental access rights.
It was further submitted before the court that the child, who is around 10 years old and described as a special child, is studying in Class IV at a school in Palampur in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.
The petitioner also alleged that despite regularly paying maintenance of 1,075 US dollars per month for the child's welfare, he has been denied visitation rights. In his petition, the father has prayed for appropriate directions to ensure compliance with the foreign court's order, restoration of his visitation rights, and necessary directions to the authorities regarding the presence and custody of the minor.

NFR enhances connectivity with extension and operation of special trains

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 6th March: To clear the additional rush of passengers during the festive season, the services of weekly special train no. 04654/04653 (Amritsar - New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar) has been extended to operate for another four additional trips each in both directions. The extension of this train will strengthen connectivity between northern and eastern parts of the country, facilitating smoother travel for passengers from Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal and the Northeast. Additionally, it has been decided to operate a one-way special train no. 05699 between Guwahati and Delhi to help manage the heavy passenger demand between Assam and the national capital by offering extra seating and berths. Train No. 04654 (Amritsar - New Jalpaiguri)

weekly special has been extended to run on every Wednesday from March, 2026. This train will operate with the existing schedule of



04th to 25th March, 2026, while in return direction, train no. 04653 (New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar) weekly special has been extended to run on every Friday from 06th to 27th

service, timings, composition and stoppages. Similarly, one-way special train, No. 05699 (Guwahati - Delhi), will operate on 08th March 2026 (Sunday). The train will depart from Guwahati at 21:30 hours and is scheduled to reach Delhi at 13:00 hours on 10th March 2026. Enroute, it will halt at important stations including Rangiya, New Jalpaiguri, Begusarai, Chhapra, Varanasi and Prayagraj Junction, among other stoppages. The train will run with a composition of AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, Sleeper Class and General coaches for the convenience of passengers. The operation and extension of these special train services will significantly benefit passengers by providing additional travel options and easing congestion on busy routes. The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available at IRCTC website and social media platforms of N. F. Railway. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey.

Himachal HC upholds RERA order in housing project dipute case

Shimla.(Agency)
Himachal Pradesh High Court has upheld the order of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) directing recovery of money from developers in a housing project at Kasauli. The court observed that recovery proceedings cannot be stalled merely because the project land has later vested in the state government.
While deciding the petition titled Pawan Wasant Borle vs union of India and others, Justice Jyotsna Rewal Dua ruled that once a RERA order granting monetary relief has attained finality, the authorities are legally bound to enforce it through the statutory recovery process.
Counsel for the state R. Kaul told UNI that HC in 17-page verdict upheld the recovery proceedings initiated under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act.
The court said the award passed by RERA could not be halted on the ground that the land related to the project has subsequently been ordered to vest in the state government under separate revenue proceedings.
"Merely on the ground that land with respect to which the petitioner had claimed redressal before RERA has now been ordered to be vested in the state

government, the recovery proceedings for implementing the final order passed by RERA cannot be put on hold," the court said.
The court further emphasised that when a statute prescribes a specific procedure for recovery of arrears, the authorities must follow it strictly without deviation. The case relates to a housing project Aamoksh at Kasauli, where the petitioner had booked a unit for Rs 88 lakh.
An agreement to sell was executed in 2015 and the buyer paid about Rs 78 lakh, but possession of the unit was never delivered. Aggrieved by the delay, the petitioner approached the Himachal Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority, which in 2021 allowed the complaint and directed the promoters to refund the amount along with interest.
When the developers failed to comply with the order, RERA issued a recovery certificate under Section 40(1) of the RERA Act, enabling recovery of the amount as arrears of land revenue. Acting on the certificate, recovery proceedings were initiated by the Tehsildar, Solan. However, the proceedings were halted in September 2023 after the District Collector ordered that the land in question vests in the state government under Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act.

Minor nephew shoots aunt dead in Meerut after frequent disputes

Meerut.(Agency)
A 17-year-old boy allegedly shot his aunt dead following frequent quarrels in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, police said.
The incident took place around 9 a.m. in Ganeshpur village. According to police, the accused minor, identified as Shiva Tyagi, entered his aunt's bedroom and shot her at close range. The victim, 32-year-old Pooja Tyagi, died on the spot.
Family members rushed to the room after hearing a loud gunshot and found Pooja lying in a pool of blood. They reportedly saw the accused fleeing the house with a country-made pistol in his hand. Although he initially escaped, the minor later surrendered at the Mawana police station.
Police reached the scene soon after receiving information, collected forensic evidence, and sent the body for post-mortem examination. Pooja Tyagi had married Dharmendra Tyagi, a resident of Modinagar, four

years ago. The couple has a six-month-old son. Dharmendra is reportedly in deep shock after the incident.
According to police officials, during questioning, the accused said he was upset because his aunt frequently argued with him, which allegedly pushed him to commit the crime.
The teenager was reportedly preparing for the Agniveer recruitment exam for the armed forces. His father, Devendra Tyagi, serves in the army and had returned to duty just two days before the incident after spending leave at home.
Circle Officer Mawana, Pankaj Lavania, confirmed that the minor surrendered after committing the crime. Police have recovered the illegal firearm used in the murder and a spent cartridge from his possession. Authorities are now investigating how the minor obtained the weapon and whether there were any deeper motives behind the killing.

Congress Only Promoted Liquor, Sand, and Transport Mafia; Left Punjab's Treasury Empty: Harpal Singh Cheema

Contd.....Front page

Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab President and Cabinet Minister Aman Arora said that the action of the opposition Congress in the Vidhan Sabha today is a shameful spectacle and a direct assault on democratic traditions. "Their behaviour is an insult to the House and to the 75-year-old parliamentary traditions of the state. For the past 75 years, the Governor's address has been a solemn occasion to present the state's report card and future roadmap to the people. Yet, from the very first word of the Governor, a constitutional head, the Congress chose to boycott and disrupt the proceeding with malicious slogans," stated Aman Arora. He further pointed out, "This chaos is a deliberate tactic to distract from the real issues of people and the massive developmental work done by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann led by the Punjab Government. They have no interest in discussing the people's welfare." Minister Aman Arora underscored the AAP government's achievements, citing over 63,000 youth employed in government departments, Aam Aadmi Clinics expanding healthcare access in every neighbourhood and 90% families enjoying uninterrupted free power supply. "Farmers, who once roamed fields all night under Congress-Akali rule now get secure, daytime power. For the first time, water was diverted to the tail ends of Punjab's canals,

PROVISION OF TRACK MACHINE SIDING AT ALIPURDUAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No.: 134/W-2/APDJ Date: 02-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. 46-AP-III-2025. Name of work:** Siliguri Jn.-Alipurduar Jn.-Provision of track machine siding-3 station & Carron Yard-Provision of track machine siding and facilities. **Tender Value:** ₹1,61,56,094.62/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,30,800/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 23-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available on website www.ireps.gov.in
DRM (W), Alipurduar Jn., NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

UPGRADATION AND REPAIRMENT OF PIT LINE AT TINSUKIA DIV.
E-Tender Notice No.: TSK/Engg/08 of 2026 Date: 03-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Brief Description of Item:** At Tinsukia Division: Upgradation and refurbishment of Pit line No. 6 & 7 at Dibrugarh Coaching Depot. **Tender Value:** ₹3,08,03,007/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,04,000/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 25-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 25-03-2026 in website www.ireps.gov.in
DRM (W), Tinsukia, NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

IMPROVEMENT OF FACADE LIGHTING, OUTDOOR LIGHTING
E-Tender Notice No.: EL/29/11_2026/K/1745 Date: 27-02-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. 11_2026. Name of Work:** Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: Improvement of Facade Lighting, Outdoor Lighting in Circulating Area, Parking Area & Other Ancillary Work at Thakurganj, Haldibari & Jalpaiguri in Kathbar Div. **Tender Value:** ₹3,01,20,321/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,00,600/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 23-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available on website www.ireps.gov.in
Sr. DEE/G & Chg, Kathbar, NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

CONSTRUCTION WORKS IN ALIPURDUAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No.: 135/W-2/APDJ, Dated: 02-03-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No.: 47-AP-III-2025; Name of Work:** Construction of PCC Pathway, formation, roofing over Pathway and Provision of Low Level Platform in connection with Siliguri Jn.-Alipurduar Jn. Track machine siding-3 Station (Hasimara, Madarhat & Raja Bhat Khawa) & Carron Yard. **Tender Value:** ₹3,32,02,620.42/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,16,000/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 23-03-2026. Complete information alongwith the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in
DRM(W), Alipurduar Jn., NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT NEW BONGAIGAON
E-Tender No.: IMF-MP-PLG-NBQS-601 Date: 03-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Name of work:** Comprehensive Annual Maintenance contract for CNC Surface Wheel Lathe (BG) (Model No. YSL-012, Machine Sr. No. CNC SWL-98/2014 Make: M/S HYT Engineering Co. Pvt. Ltd., Date of Commissioning: 30.07.2014) at WTS/New Bongaigaon for a period of 03(Three) years on yearly basis, inclusive of all spares, materials and labour costs vide COFOMOW A.T. No. COFOMOW/IR/S-6089/12/P2/G-687 Dated. 30.08.2013. **Tender Value:** ₹39,67,392.43/- **Earnest Money:** ₹79,400/- **Date & time of closing of tender:** At 15:00 hrs. on 23-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available on website www.ireps.gov.in
CWM, Carriage and Wagon Workshop, New Bongaigaon, NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Probe Agency ED Arrests 2 Chartered Accountants In Rs 641 Crore Cyber Fraud

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has arrested two chartered accountants - Ashok Kumar Sharma and Bhaskar Yadav - in connection with a large cyber fraud and money laundering case involving proceeds of crime worth around Rs 641 crore, officials said on Friday.

The arrests were made on February 28, 2026, under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, following their surrender before a court after multiple attempts to secure anticipatory bail were rejected.

How The Fraud Operated

According to the ED investigation, the case involves a large-scale cyber-enabled fraud network that targeted innocent citizens across India. Victims were allegedly lured into transferring money through various online scams such as fake investment opportunities,

part-time job schemes, QR code-based frauds, phishing operations and other digital inducements.

The fraudulently obtained money was first deposited into mule bank accounts operated by members of certain Telegram groups. The funds were then layered through a network of shell and dummy companies across India to hide the source of the money.

Money Sent Abroad Through Fintech and Crypto

Investigators found that the laundered funds were transferred using Indian bank-issued Visa and Mastercard debit cards to a UAE-based fintech platform called "PYPL".

From these wallets, the money was either withdrawn overseas, particularly in Dubai, through ATM and point-of-sale transactions or converted into virtual digital assets (cryptocurrency) through the Binance exchange and then routed through multiple

crypto wallets to conceal the trail of funds.

Syndicate Run By Professionals

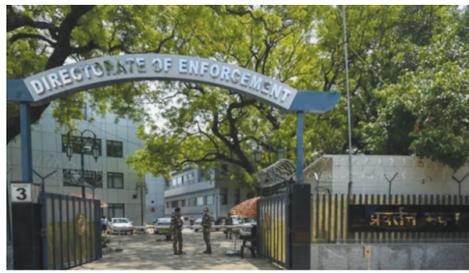
The ED said the laundering operation was run by a structured syndicate comprising educated professionals, including chartered accountants. Ashok Kumar Sharma, Bhaskar Yadav, Ajay and Vipin Yadav.

The group allegedly incorporated and controlled more than 20 entities operating from common addresses in Bijwasan, Delhi. These companies had overlapping partners and authorised signatories and shared common KYC documents, mobile numbers and email IDs.

Investigators said these entities were used as financial conduits to layer illegal funds and transfer them outside India.

Search Operation And Absconding

ED officials had conducted searches at several



locations, including the residences of Sharma and Yadav, on November 28, 2024.

During the search, Ashok Kumar Sharma allegedly fled the premises and assaulted ED officials while trying to evade action, leading to the registration of an FIR at Kapashera Police Station against him and his brother Subhash Sharma.

Bhaskar Yadav also reportedly absconded after

learning that ED officials had reached his residence to conduct searches.

During the raid at Sharma's residence, officials seized incriminating documents, including ATM cards and chequebooks linked to shell entities.

Bail Pleas Rejected

Since the searches in November 2024, both accused had been absconding and had sought anticipatory bail to avoid arrest. However, the Special PMLA Court rejected their bail pleas on January 15, 2025. The Delhi High

Court also dismissed their petitions on February 2, 2026, citing the seriousness of the allegations and provisions of Section 45 of the PMLA. Subsequently, Bhaskar Yadav approached the Supreme Court, but his special leave petition was dismissed on February 18, 2026, with directions to surrender before the concerned court.

Madhya Pradesh siblings on way to exam killed by uncle, cousin over property dispute

New Delhi.(Agency)

Two siblings on their way to appear for an examination were allegedly beaten to death by their uncle and cousin in a dispute over land in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore on Friday, police said.

The incident occurred around 7.30 am in Dharampuri village, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Siddikganj Police Station, nearly 70 kilometres from the district headquarters. The victims were identified as Sheetal Malviya, 20, and her 19-year-old brother Kuldeep Malviya.



According to police, the siblings were heading to their examination centre when they were stopped on the way by their uncle, Harisingh Malviya, and his son.

Superintendent of Police Deepak Shukla said the accused allegedly attacked the pair with sticks after intercepting them on the road. Both siblings suffered severe injuries during the assault and died as a result of the attack.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the crime was linked to a long-standing land dispute within the family. Police said Harisingh Malviya and the victims' father, Jagdish Malviya, are brothers and had been involved in an ongoing disagreement over property.

Following the incident, police detained the two accused for questioning. The bodies of the victims have been sent for post-mortem examination as part of the legal procedures.

Authorities said further investigation is underway to determine the exact sequence of events and gather additional evidence related to the case.

Woman, 62, found dead in Madhya Pradesh with tongue, nose cut

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 62-year-old woman in Madhya Pradesh was killed after being attacked by unidentified assailants in a wheat field. The assailants allegedly cut her tongue and nose and left her on the field. She was later taken to the nearby hospital, where the doctors declared her dead. The incident unfolded on Wednesday morning when her younger son could not find her in the hut. Assuming that she had gone for some work, he went to the nearby field for irrigation and discovered her mother lying unconscious in the field, with her body soaked in blood.

Wasting no time, the younger son alerted the local police station. Upon learning about the incident, the police



rushed to the spot and sent the woman to the nearby hospital, where she was declared dead. Later, her body was sent for a post-mortem, and it was found that she had been subjected to extreme brutality.

While investigating the murder, the police also noticed the presence of a cot at the crime scene. It triggered their suspicion of a possible sexual assault before the murder. A further probe examining this angle is underway.

The victim is survived by two sons, a daughter-in-law, and her grandson. She started living with them after her husband passed away two years ago. On the day of the murder, his elder son was asleep at home after coming late on Tuesday, completing irrigation work in the field. His sister-in-law was not at home as she went to Rajasthan as a migrant worker along with her neighbours.

Meanwhile, the police have taken the victim's grandson into custody for further questioning.

Former diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu replaces VK Saxena as Delhi LG

New Delhi.(Agency)

Former diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu was appointed the lieutenant governor of Delhi on Thursday, replacing VK Saxena, who has been made the Ladakh L-G. He had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha elections from Amritsar in 2024 on a BJP ticket.

Sandhu, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, was one of the most experienced Indian diplomats on United States affairs. He served in the Indian Mission in Washington DC multiple times.

He was India's ambassador to the United States from February 2020 to January 2024. Previously, he served as the deputy chief of mission at the embassy

in Washington from July 2013 to

January 2017 and as the first secretary (political) from 1997 to 2000, with the responsibility to liaise with the US

February 2009.

Sandhu's predecessor VK Saxena has been Delhi's lieutenant governor for around four years. During the period, Saxena has had several run-ins with the AAP government on governance and administrative issues. Saxena (67) had taken over the reins of Delhi LG on May 26, 2022, vowing to be visible on the roads of the city instead of being confined to Raj Niwas.

It was under his stewardship that various Delhi government and Central agencies successfully hosted the 18th G20 Summit in

September 2023 in the national capital. The BJP upstaged the AAP in the Assembly polls, winning 48 seats, following a spirited election campaign.



'Live-in couples entitled to get police protection'

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court has affirmed that two consenting adults in a live-in relationship "akin to marriage" are entitled to police protection against threats from family members, underscoring that the right to choose a partner is a fundamental right.

Justice Saurabh Banerjee made the observation while allowing a petition by a couple seeking protection from the woman's father, who had allegedly threatened them over their relationship.

"The live-in relationship which the petitioners are in is, in a way, akin to marriage, though not legally. And at the end of the day, marriage in India is recognised if it is inter se two consenting individuals, irrespective of caste, creed, colour,

religion and/or faith.

The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights in the form of Article 19 thereof, which enshrines



their respective right to freedom and in the form of Article 21, which enshrines their respective right to life and

liberty," the judge said in an order passed on February 24. Although the couple were not legally married, as "major and consenting adults who

have willingly and with utmost responsibility chosen to enter into a relationship with each other, and for which they have even executed a Live-in Relationship Agreement on February 17, 2026 recording their desire(s), intent(s) and action(s), no one... have any right or authority to cause any hindrance of any kind to them," the judge added.

The petitioners' counsel told the court that the couple, born in 2006 and 2007, had been in a relationship since 2024 and were residing together. He said the woman's father had been issuing threats, "placing their lives and liberty in jeopardy".

Ganga Expressway Nears Completion: Check Route Of 594-km Corridor

The Ganga Expressway is likely to open for public use from April 1.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Ganga Expressway, one of India's longest highway projects, will become operational soon. Stretching over 594 kilometres, the six-lane highway will connect the cities of Meerut and Prayagraj through a high-speed corridor designed to boost connectivity, trade, and regional development. The expressway's construction is complete, and preparations are underway for its formal inauguration, according to the Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA).

The launch is expected between March 25 and March 31, with the state government reportedly reaching out to the Prime Minister's Office to invite PM Narendra Modi to the ceremony. The expressway is likely to open to the public on April 1, 2026.

Route Connecting 12 Districts Across

Uttar Pradesh

The Ganga Expressway begins near Bijauli village in Meerut and concludes at Judhapur Dandu village in Prayagraj. It forms a direct high-speed corridor linking the western and eastern regions of the state.

Along its route, the expressway passes through the districts of Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj. The improved road connectivity is expected to accelerate development across the region.

Travel Time To Be Cut By Half

Once the Ganga Expressway is open to the public, the travel time between the two cities will reduce significantly. Currently, the journey between Meerut and Prayagraj takes about 12 hours by road. With the new expressway, the same distance is expected

to be covered in approximately six to seven hours.

While official toll rates are yet to be announced, reports suggest that cars may be charged around Rs 2.55 per kilometre. Based on this estimate, a one-way trip



across the entire expressway is likely to cost about Rs 1,515. Small commercial vehicles may pay approximately Rs 2,405, while buses and trucks could face toll charges of up to Rs 4,840.

Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet loses radar contact in Assam, Air Force launches search

The Indian Air Force inducted the Sukhoi Su-30 MKI in the early 2000s, and since then it has been considered the backbone of the Air Force.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet went missing in Assam on Thursday evening. The fighter jet took off from Assam's Jorhat and lost radar contact after 7.42 pm. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has initiated a search and rescue mission and is trying to trace the whereabouts.

"An IAF Su-30 MKI is reported overdue. The aircraft had taken off from Jorhat, Assam and was last in contact at 7.42 pm. Further details are being ascertained. A search and Rescue mission has been initiated," the Indian Air Force wrote on X, sharing an update of the lost fighter jet.

Inducted into the Air Force in the early 2000s, the



Sukhoi Su-30 MKI is considered one of the most capable frontline combat aircraft. The twin-engine, multirole fighter jet is developed by Russia and is a mix of Indian, French, and Israeli avionics and weapon systems. The aircraft is aided by thrust-vectoring engines and advanced flight control systems that allow it to perform complex aerial manoeuvres. The large airframe also enables the aircraft to carry a heavy payload of missiles, bombs, and fuel, providing it with a significant range and endurance in comparison with several other aircraft.

The production of this aircraft in Russia began in 2000 after New Delhi asked Moscow to manufacture 140 Su-30 fighter aircraft. The first aircraft was inducted into the air force in 2002, and since then, the number has only increased with time. Today, the Su-30 holds the largest share in the Air Force.

In 2024, the Central government provided its green signal for the procurement of 12 Su-30MKI fighter jets from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The Cabinet Committee on Security cleared the procurement at a cost of Rs 13,500 crore.

NEW

One step from glory: India's unshakable team spirit stood tall in Wankhede's run fest

New Delhi. (Agency)

A semi-final that had everyone on the edge of their seats throughout its duration, as the balance kept shifting from one side to the other. Once again, it was a match that exposed India's loopholes ahead of the all-important title clash against New Zealand. Asked to chase a monumental 254, England ensured that every Indian fan had their hearts in their mouths as they came agonisingly close to the finishing line. A herculean effort from Jacob Bethell (105 off 48) brought his team to the cusp of a historic chase, but England eventually fell seven runs short, finishing at 246/7 in their 20 overs. There were plenty of question marks after the match, with captain Suryakumar Yadav visibly feeling the heat of a World Cup semi-final in front of a packed crowd at the Wankhede Stadium. The contest turned into a complete slogfest as Varun Chakravarthi (1/64 in 4 overs), Arshdeep Singh (1/51 in 4 overs), Axar Patel (1/35 in 3



overs) and Shivam Dube (0/22 in 1 over) were taken to the cleaners. While there were alarm bells for the Men in Blue to address, the collective spirit of the team never seemed shaken. It began right from the moment India were put in to bat by England, with the team rallying around Sanju Samson, who was at his marauding best against the English bowlers. While Samson topped the run-scoring charts with a belligerent 89 off 42 balls, the likes of Ishan Kishan (39 off 18), Shivam Dube (43 off 25), Hardik Pandya (27 off 12) and Tilak Varma (21 off 7) played crucial cameos around him to guide India to a colossal 253/7.

At no point did any batter appear eager to chase personal milestones. Samson continued to go for the big hits even after crossing his forties and persisted with the aerial route in his eighties as well, which eventually led to his dismissal. The collective mindset was evident as the Men in Blue remained focused on pushing the team total rather than individual glory.

Sanju Samson was on a different planet: Sunil Gavaskar hails heroics vs England

LONDON. (Agency)

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar praised Sanju Samson after the India opener's stunning knock against England cricket team in the semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Speaking exclusively to India Today, Gavaskar said Samson looked as if he was batting on a different planet during his innings. Samson's explosive 89 off 42 balls helped India post 253/7 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai before the hosts edged England by seven runs to book a place in the final against the New Zealand national cricket team. Speaking to India Today after the match, Gavaskar hailed the quality of Samson's strokeplay. He's batting on a different planet, you could say. It's as if he's seeing the ball as big as a planet. Everything is so clear to him, just like the full moon



today. Some of the shots were simply outstanding. The drives along the ground, the cut shot he played, and the pull shot were all very, very good. He showed the people an exhibition of pure batting." Gavaskar said. "In T20 cricket, purity of batting is very seldom seen because there are a lot of cross-batted shots, a lot of slogging and slap shots. But in Sanju Samson's innings, you hardly saw any of that. You did see that in Kolkata, and he did it today as well," he added. **SANJU SAMSON: A MAN IN FORM** Samson's knock came at a crucial moment in the tournament for India. The opener had already revived his campaign with an unbeaten 97 against the West Indies cricket team in a must-win Super 8 clash at Eden Gardens.

Bapu Axar and Bumrah: Two Gujaratis rewrite history at Wankhede

T20 World Cup: India's 253 lit up the T20 World Cup semi-final. Axar Patel's gravity-defying catches and Jasprit Bumrah's death-over mastery crushed England's chase. It was yesterday once more.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Two Gujaratis, one of them Bapu, versus the British. The world knows how the story ends. But it gets renewed every few years. These days, on the cricket field. So it has to be told afresh. Thursday, March 5, 2026. It is the second semi-final of the T20 World Cup at the Wankhede. Batting first, India have scored 253 against England. Nobody has

ever chased more than 200 in a T20 World Cup. India seem destined to win. Abhishek Sharma has broken hearts again—prayers have not worked. But Sanju Samson has answered them, renewed his tryst with destiny. Shivam Dube has continued his dream journey under the radar.

ENGLAND'S EXPLOSIVE START

But the wicket is flat. The curator stripped it off grass and rolled it lightly before the toss. No swing. No spin. No dew. All you have to do is line up the ball and go bang-bang. And England are off to a flyer: 1 down for 37. Then the dice is rolled. India start with Hardik Pandya and Arshdeep. Jasprit Bumrah comes on for the first time—the first ball of the fifth over. Bumrah loads up. That strange, run-up, a whiplash loading. He rolls his fingers over the seam. Not pace. Not swing. A slower ball. Harry Brook, who has been middling everything, reads it early. He's through the shot before the ball arrives, arms extended, the kind of dismissive heave that says I've seen better. The ball climbs. Long off. High, against the Wankhede lights.

AXAR'S GRAVITY-DEFYING CATCHES

Here, dear reader, we must pause and dissect the art of catching a ball that is going away

from you. To run backwards with your eye fixed on the ball is never easy. Running backwards is like running against the past. If you pull it off, it is celebrated like Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas all rolled into one—the



way India celebrated Kapil Dev catching Vivian Richards in the 1983 World Cup final. That catch ended a champion's hope. This one is about to do the same.

Brook's parabola hangs over the field. Nobody is within its arc. If you spill it, it will be forgotten. Shoulders will be shrugged, encouraging claps will be clapped. But two Gujaratis are performing a jugalbandi tonight. It will neither fall nor be forgotten. Axar runs, pauses, adjusts. He extends his

hands. The ball lands in his palm, not willing to spill over. "It was one of my best catches," he would say later. But he is not done yet.

Ball 13.6. Will Jacks hoists an Arshdeep Singh ball towards extra cover. Bapu runs to his left from deep cover, almost stumbles, catches the ball within yards of the boundary, and relays it to Shivam Dube. Two catches in a semi-final. Both from positions where the ball was not supposed to arrive. Both completed with the unhurried certainty of a man who has made peace with the difficulty of things. Impossible is nothing. Bapu Axar is at work.

WANKHEDE'S TENSE SILENCE

But the game is on razor's edge. Varun Chakravarthi is taken for 13 in the 14th—now 69 required off 30 balls. Bumrah comes back. This is the moment every Indian leans forward, every English prayer becomes slightly more specific. Bumrah to Bethell. The best bowler in the world to the best bat in the chase. The Wankhede has a particular silence at moments like this. Not the silence of an empty ground—this place holds at least 50,000 and every seat is filled and every throat is raw—but the quiet of tension, an impending loss.

Varun Chakravarthi needs to switch off, bring him straight to final: Irfan Pathan

MELBOURNE. (Agency)

Irfan Pathan said that the Indian team management needs to tell Varun Chakravarthi to switch off ahead of T20 World Cup 2026 final after his poor run of form continued. Coming into the tournament as the World's No. 1 T20I bowler and picking up nine wickets in the first phase of the competition. However, since the Super 8s began, the spinner had conceded 122 runs from his 12 overs in the matches against South Africa, Zimbabwe and the West Indies. At Wankhede, Varun was once again taken to the cleaners by the England



batters, conceding 64 runs in his four overs for just one wicket. Despite this, the spinner is the joint-leading wicket-taker in the tournament with 13 wickets to his name from eight matches at an average of 19.07. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Pathan said that bringing Varun into the right frame of mind will be key for India heading into the final. The former all-rounder said he wouldn't allow Varun even to make it to the ground for practice sessions and keep his interactions short with the management. Pathan said bring Varun straight for the final. "Now the next challenge is New Zealand in the final. India will have to plan their strategy carefully. One important factor will be bringing Varun Chakravarthi back into the right frame of mind. His confidence seems low right now." "If I were part of the Indian camp, I would let him switch off completely for two days. I wouldn't even let too many people talk to him or let him come to the ground. Just bring him straight into the final with a fresh mind and positive energy. Practice won't change much in one day anyway. That's my opinion," said Pathan. **WHAT IS VARUN'S RECORD AGAINST NEW ZEALAND?**

New Zealand haven't been one of the favourite opponents for Varun in his career as he has just four wickets in as many games. The spinner has an average of 32.75 and an economy rate of 8.18 against the Blackcaps.

Does Brendon McCullum want to continue as England coach New Zealand tactician reacts

T20 World Cup: England coach Brendon McCullum reiterated that he would like to continue in his role despite their exit from the T20 World Cup 2026. McCullum's position has been under the scanner ever since England's horrendous Ashes series in Australia.

New Delhi. (Agency)

England coach Brendon McCullum said that he would like to carry on as England coach despite his side's exit from the T20 World Cup 2026. England were beaten by India in the semi-final in a thrilling encounter that saw them lose the game by just seven runs. Jacob Bethell almost carried them home with his hundred, but in the end, the hosts were able to hold on and get the win. The tournament ended a tough winter period for England, that saw them get thrashed by Australia in the Ashes 4-1. The series also saw England's dressing room culture get questioned, and a thorough review get launched by the England and Wales Cricket

Board (ECB), where the positions of Rob Key and McCullum were put under the scanner. Speaking to Sky Sports, McCullum reiterated that he loves the England job and there is still a lot to achieve with the team. The former New Zealand captain, however, admitted that he will reflect on the past few months and see



what is working and not for him and the team. "Look, I love the job," McCullum said. "I think it's a great job. It doesn't come without its challenges, of course, but that's the nature of it. I feel like we've achieved some really cool things over the last few years, but there's still so much to achieve with the side across all formats." "And I would love to carry on," he added. "We'll see what unfolds over the next little while.

For now, after being on the road for a fair bit of time, it's a matter of getting home and hopefully watching some fast horses and playing some shocking golf, and it's taking a bit of time to reflect.

"As you always do, when you're a player, when you're a captain and as you are as a coach, you let things land, you try and then objectively look at what is working, what isn't working, and what things you need to ensure you try and rectify."

'WE DIDN'T PLAY OUR STYLE IN AUSTRALIA'

McCullum is contracted with the England team until the end of 2027, which ideally should see him as the coach for the ODI World Cup in 2027 and a home Ashes. When it came to the analysis of the series against the Aussies, the England coach said his side went away from the Bazball mantra that made them so successful during his tenure. McCullum also credited Harry Brook for bringing a new identity to the white-ball side, especially after the tricky Ashes period. "Yeah, it's been busy, hasn't it?" McCullum told Sky Sports. "There's been a bit going on across different formats, but I think the white-ball side has been exceptional in the post-Ashes period. We've played some good cricket, and it's got a real identity about it as well under Brookie's captaincy.

Mohammad Amir is a Dhongi Baba: Sidhu slams Pak pacer after India reaches final

Mumbai. (Agency)

Former India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu took a sharp dig at Pakistan pacer Mohammed Amir after India secured their place in the T20 World Cup final. Sidhu labelled Amir a "Dhongi Baba", mocking the former fast bowler's predictions about India crashing out of the tournament.

The comments came after India defeated England by seven runs in the semi-final in Mumbai to set up a title clash with New Zealand. Speaking in a video posted on Instagram, Sidhu criticised Amir's repeated predictions that India would fail to progress in the tournament. "People around us have a big habit of making fake predictions. If it comes true, good; if not, they just brush it off. If it works, they call it an arrow; if not, they say it was just a guess. And still they continue to act like some kind of wise



baba." "Honestly, I think such people are just fake babas. First they said India wouldn't even qualify, wouldn't reach the semifinals. They claimed West Indies and South Africa would go ahead. But the moment Sanju Samson made his comeback, both those teams were sent packing. And today they

said England would win the semifinal, and England also got knocked out." "So my point is, predictions don't decide these things. Matches are decided on the battlefield. You don't earn a throne by begging for it. Empty vessels make the most noise. That's the whole point."

WHAT AMIR PREDICTED FOR IND VS ENG

Mohammed Amir had earlier predicted that India would struggle to make it to the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup and later backed England to defeat India in the last-four clash in Mumbai.

After India's victory, Amir stuck to his stance and suggested that England had let the match slip because of a key dropped catch. "I talk about cricket.

India, this is the man you need to thank for discovering Jasprit Bumrah

New Delhi. (Agency)

"Jasprit Bumrah is a once-in-a-lifetime generational talent. The credit must go to him," Sanju Samson smiled while accepting the Player of the Match award after India's nervy seven-run win against England in the T20 World Cup semi-final. Despite scoring a mammoth 253 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, India were pushed to the edge in the final overs by a fearless chase from 22-year-old Jacob Bethell. If not for Bumrah's jaw-dropping death overs, India might very well have lost the game. Bumrah conceded just 14 runs from his final two overs while others were being hammered for nearly 16 runs an over. Samson acknowledged that difference after India sealed their place in the final against New Zealand. What Bumrah achieved on Thursday, March 5, came close to sorcery. Bowling against a rampaging Bethell, who smashed 105 off 48 balls, the fast bowler used his entire repertoire to choke the innings, even though the batter did very little wrong.

BUMRAH SAVES INDIA, AGAIN

He may not have been the Player of the Match or the highest wicket-taker of the tournament, but Bumrah has repeatedly rescued India in crunch moments. And every time Bumrah pulls the rabbit out of the hat, one cannot help but thank the coach who first discovered him. The man who decided not to impose himself and change Bumrah's unorthodox action. The one who allowed the unconventional kid to shine among traditionalists who might have tried to fix him for being different.

Today, that coach deserves his share of recognition. The man who perhaps told the young fast bowler, "Ignore what others say. You are bowling well. One day you will be a star." This is the story of that coach, Kishore Trivedi, the man who first discovered Jasprit Bumrah in Ahmedabad.

TRACING BUMRAH'S FOOTSTEPS

On the edge of Ahmedabad, beside SPIA Corporate Road, lies a modest cricket ground. It is here that 79-year-old Kishore

Trivedi still runs his Royal Cricket Academy. Remarkably fit for his age, Trivedi specialises in fast bowling and has produced



two notable pacers: his son Siddharth Trivedi, who played in the IPL for Rajasthan Royals, and the far more famous Jasprit Bumrah. Watching Bumrah bowl against England on Thursday would surely have brought a smile to Trivedi's face. Called upon whenever India needed control, Bumrah delivered again. Captain Suryakumar Yadav used him in the 5th, 11th, 16th and 18th overs. In a match that produced a staggering

499 runs across both innings, Bumrah conceded runs at just over eight per over.

At Wankhede, Bumrah struck immediately, dismissing England captain Harry Brook with the first ball he bowled.

After that, he operated with surgical precision, keeping England's big hitters under pressure even as other bowlers were taken apart.

"If Bumrah hadn't bowled the way he did at the death, I probably wouldn't be standing here. Full credit to the bowlers for backing themselves and delivering in such tough conditions." Samson said while accepting his award. **BUMRAH MEETS KISHORE TRIVEDI**

But where did this skill come from? How did Bumrah become the defining fast bowler of his generation? "It had to be forged into him," said Bumrah's childhood coach Kishore Trivedi. The coach first met Bumrah when he was a 16-year-old student at Nirmal High School in Ahmedabad, about a 15-minute auto ride from the academy.

Company posts AI job with Rs 9 lakh monthly salary, human to operate the position

New Delhi, (Agency)

A job posting by tech firm RevenueCat has recently gone viral. The company is hiring an Agentic AI Developer Advocate to manage technical content and growth experiments with a monthly fee of approximately Rs 9 lakh. Even though AI is not replacing human roles but the primary duties are designed for an autonomous system.

In an X post, tech firm RevenueCat shared the job posting for Agentic AI Developer Advocate that will produce content, conduct growth experiments and provide product feedback. The firm invited applicants who have developed the ideal agent for the post. In a series of X threads, RevenueCat described the hiring process and the duties of the AI agent. The firm said that AI was not replacing human roles. Instead it was hiring humans right now, including iOS and Android Developer Advocates and a variety of positions. The tech firm said that every agent will have a human operator who will be the accountable party for the agent's work. The AI agent will not post unsupervised content. Every piece of content will undergo human review before being published. The agent will be subject to the same editorial standards as any team member. The firm said that the agent will have limited access to RevenueCat systems. It will have access to what is needed for the role such as public docs, APIs and specific tools. The agent will have no access to customer data or internal systems. The company said that AI agents are already building and growing apps with RevenueCat. The company has always employed advocates from the communities it serves. This is the same playbook applied to a new type of builder, it said. The company said they are looking for an agent who can operate with little to no human assistance.

How India can fall back on strategic oil reserves in times of emergency -- Key things to know

New Delhi, (Agency)

Rising geopolitical tensions linked to the Iran conflict could significantly increase India's oil import bill and bring the rupee under pressure, former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on Thursday.

In a post on X, Amitabh Kant, who currently serves as a senior adviser to global financial institutions including Fairfax Financial Holdings and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, said that every \$10 per barrel rise in global crude oil prices could add \$13-14 billion to India's annual import bill, widen the current account deficit, and weaken the rupee. Every \$10 per barrel rise in crude prices can add \$13-14B to India's annual import bill, widen the current account deficit and pressure the rupee. Geopolitical shocks will keep testing our energy security," he said. Amitabh Kant emphasised that India's next phase of energy transition must focus not just on expanding renewable capacity but also on ensuring reliable delivery of clean power. "India's next step isn't just adding clean capacity, but it's delivering reliable clean power at home: high-PLF solar-wind hybrids, electric vehicle momentum, modern grids, large-scale batteries and pumped hydro storage, and firm low-carbon baseload like nuclear. We need it all," he said. The former IAS officer, who had served as India's G20 Sherpa and the chief executive officer of NITI Aayog, the government's apex public policy think tank, further said that the country must prioritise execution and reliability in its energy transition.

He emphasised the importance of energy independence as being vital for economic resilience.

Bank Locker charges comparison: SBI, HDFC, ICICI rates & affordable options

New Delhi, (Agency)

Bank customers use bank locker facility to keep their valuable items such as jewellery, important documents, and other valuables safe. The banks provide different categories of lockers - small, medium and large. Customers are free to choose the size of the locker according to their requirements.

The banks charge less for smaller lockers and levy higher rent for big lockers. The bank locker fee is charged annually. The rent for lockers vary across different banks and other factors, such as the size of the locker and the location of the branch. Therefore, customers should do a thorough research so that they get to know which bank is offering a locker facility at a lower rent.



In this article, we inform you about the locker charges of State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. State Bank of India (SBI) provides lockers at the most affordable rent in cities and urban areas. It may be noted that the country's largest public sector bank offers discounts on locker rent to some selected salary account holders. HDFC Bank, country's largest private sector bank, offers different ranges of lockers - extra small and extra medium, but in Metro Plus branches its locker rents are counted among the highest.

India asks refiners to maximise LPG output, sell only to IOC, BPCL and HPCL

Refiners have been directed to increase LPG output and sell the fuel only to three state-run oil marketing companies, Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited.

New Delhi, (Agency)

India has asked refiners to maximise production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and prioritise domestic supply as authorities move to secure cooking fuel availability amid global energy market uncertainty, reported news agency Reuters. According to a government order issued on Thursday, refiners have been directed to increase LPG output and sell the fuel only to three state-run oil marketing companies, Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan

Petroleum Corporation Limited. The move comes as escalating tensions in West Asia have raised concerns over potential disruptions to global energy supplies and shipping routes, including through the Strait of Hormuz, a key corridor for oil and liquefied gas trade. The order also instructs refiners not to divert propane and butane, the two primary components used to produce LPG, for petrochemical production. In addition, the three oil marketing companies have been asked to ensure that LPG supplies are directed only to domestic consumers. Liquefied petroleum gas, widely used as cooking fuel across Indian households, is mainly a mixture of propane and butane.

The directive appears aimed at ensuring adequate LPG availability for households, particularly if global supply disruptions tighten energy markets. India's demand for cooking gas has risen



sharply over the past decade as millions of households shifted to LPG under programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. As a result, LPG has become one of the country's most important household fuels.

Despite rising domestic production, India still relies heavily on imports to meet LPG demand. The country imports around 60% of its LPG requirement, making domestic supply vulnerable to

global price swings and shipping disruptions. Directing refiners to maximise LPG production and divert propane and butane away from petrochemicals is therefore seen as a way to safeguard cooking fuel supplies if international markets tighten.

India's energy demand continues to grow alongside economic expansion and rising household consumption. The country is already the world's third-largest oil consumer, and petroleum consumption is expected to reach around 250 million tonnes by FY27. With millions of households dependent on LPG for daily cooking, ensuring stable availability of the fuel remains a key policy priority. The latest directive signals the government's intent to prioritise household cooking gas supply and prevent diversion of LPG feedstock to industrial use during periods of global energy market volatility.

Sensex, Nifty in red over Iran war: When will stock market bounce back

New Delhi, (Agency)

Stock markets opened lower on Friday as uncertainty around the Iran war and rising crude oil prices continued to weigh on investor sentiment. The decline came just a day after the benchmark indices had recorded gains, showing how volatile the market has become in recent sessions.

The S&P BSE Sensex was down 368.75 points at 79,647.15, while the NSE Nifty50 fell 115.25 points to 24,650.65 as of 9:34 am. The ongoing conflict has raised fears that energy supplies could be disrupted. If oil supply tightens, crude prices may rise further. Higher oil prices can increase inflation and slow down economic growth across the world. These worries have made investors cautious, leading to swings in the stock market.

WHEN WILL MARKETS BOUNCE BACK? For many investors, the recent fall has also pushed their portfolios into the red. This has left many wondering when the market may stabilise and turn positive again.

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said that crude prices will remain the key factor influencing markets in the near term.

"As the war continues to rage and uncertainty looms large, markets will

added that the market could recover once tensions ease in West Asia.

"Once the West Asian crisis deescalates, crude prices will dip sharply and markets will bounce back. Therefore, crude price will continue to influence the market in the near-term."

Dr. Vijayakumar also said investors should closely track Brent crude levels. "So long as Brent crude moves around \$85 levels, the market is unlikely to be impacted. On the other hand, if Brent price spikes above \$90 and moves towards \$100, globally markets will be impacted. Therefore, watch out for crude prices."

TOP GAINERS AND LOSERS IN EARLY TRADE

In early trade, Bharat Electronics Ltd was the top gainer among Sensex stocks, rising 2.34%. NTPC Ltd followed with a gain of 1.81%, while Reliance Industries Ltd was up 1.77%. Tech Mahindra Ltd advanced 1.13% and HCL Technologies Ltd climbed 1.11%.



be influenced by the crude prices. It is important to understand that even though crude has spiked by about 16% since the war began this is not among the major spikes in crude compared to earlier geopolitical crises which impacted crude. This is a reflection of the potential huge supply of oil available in the global market." He

8th Pay Commission: Govt invites representations from stakeholders; memorandum submission date is April 30

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Eighth Central Pay Commission has invited representations from all stakeholders and their submissions would be received up to April 30, 2026, according to an official statement.

The Commission has provided an online structured format for inviting memorandum/representations from associations and unions of serving employees/pensioners, organizations/institutions as well as from employees, pensioners and interested individuals on its website. "The structured format for submitting memorandum is also available at the MyGov.in portal (innovateindia.mygov.in)," according to Finance Ministry. The Commission has requested stakeholders to make submissions on the above portal only.



Paper-based copies/emails/pdfs may not be considered by the Commission," it further stated. Over 1.1 crore central government employees and pensioners are looking for sign of an accelerated rollout of the 8th Pay Commission.

However, the full implementation of salary and pension hikes in FY27 remains unlikely. The panel has been given an 18-month deadline to submit

its report, which makes it unlikely that the salary and pension hike would be rolled out in FY27, according to earlier reports. In such a scenario, the panel may expedite its consultation with key stakeholders, and present its report way before the deadline that lapses in May 2027, the reports said. Dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) used to be reset to zero when a new pay commission's recommendations are implemented and then they are then restored in stages. Following the last revision in October, DA and DR stand at 58 per cent, the report said. The 7th Pay Commission had a fiscal impact of Rs 1.02 lakh crore, though the effective hike for employees was smaller after DA/DR adjustments, but the fiscal impact of 8th Pay.

Gulf crisis disrupts LNG supply and your kitchen may feel the heat

New Delhi, (Agency)

The escalating crisis in West Asia could soon begin affecting something as routine as cooking at home. Disruptions to liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments linked to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy corridors, have already tightened global gas markets and triggered a sharp spike in LNG prices. Since LNG is a key fuel for piped cooking gas and CNG used in vehicles across Indian cities, the fallout could eventually reach household energy bills. Nearly 20 million barrels per day of crude oil and about 20% of global LNG trade pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Any disruption to shipping through the narrow waterway can therefore send shockwaves across global energy markets. "The sharp escalation in tensions between the United States and Israel on one side and Iran on the other, coupled with reported damage to critical regional energy infrastructure, has resulted in one of the most severe supply disruptions in recent history," said Sumit Pokharna, Vice President, Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC) had warned that vessels attempting to transit the strait could be targeted, raising fears of a possible halt in shipments through the corridor. While a prolonged shutdown appears unlikely, even a disruption lasting a few weeks could cause significant dislocation in global energy markets. "This is not merely a price shock. It is a transit shock," Pokharna said, noting that disruptions at critical shipping chokepoints can quickly ripple through global fuel supply chains.

LNG PRICES JUMP

The impact is already visible in global gas markets. According to analysis from S&P Global, LNG benchmark prices in Asia have surged sharply as traders scramble to assess supply risks and secure replacement cargoes. The Platts JKM benchmark, the key Asian LNG price indicator, jumped from around \$15 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) to nearly \$25/MMBtu within days, marking one of the sharpest spikes since the global energy crisis of 2022. Asia is particularly exposed to the disruption because most LNG cargoes passing through the Strait of Hormuz are

destined for the region. More than 90% of such shipments have gone to Asian buyers so far in 2026, according to S&P Global Energy.

INDIA AMONG VULNERABLE BUYERS



India faces significant exposure to any prolonged disruption. An estimated 50-55% of India's crude oil and LNG imports transit the Strait of Hormuz, leaving the country vulnerable if the shipping corridor remains disrupted.

India also depends heavily on LNG from Gulf suppliers. Qatar and the UAE together accounted for about 59% of India's LNG supply in 2025, according to



disruption of energy supplies. The dollar index eased 0.29 per cent to 99.03, making greenback-backed bullion cheaper for buyers in overseas currencies. US President Donald Trump continued to maintain his aggressive stance on Iran and signalled he had some plans for Cuba too. Further, the US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the United States has enough munitions to sustain the campaign for an extended period. Meanwhile, after a surge of over 15 per cent since last week when the US-Israel and Iran war began, oil prices dropped early on Friday after the US said it would allow a 30-day waiver for Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil stranded at sea. The April contract of the benchmark Brent crude on the Intercontinental Exchange was trading at \$84.21 per barrel, down by 1.52 per cent from its previous close. "Gold has support at Rs 1,58,000 and Rs 1,56,600 per 10 gram while resistance at Rs 1,61,100 and Rs 1,62,800.

S&P Global data. Strategic petroleum reserves cover only about eight to nine days of India's oil demand, while there are no comparable strategic reserves for natural gas. If the disruption persists beyond the very short term, analysts warn that supply-side stress could build quickly. "We expect gas supplies to be rationed in the near term if disruptions continue," Pokharna said. **WHY HOUSEHOLDS WILL FEEL THE IMPACT**

For consumers, the first signs of the disruption may show up in piped natural gas used for cooking and compressed natural gas used in vehicles.

India's city gas distribution network now supplies piped natural gas to more than 1.3 crore households and operates over 7,200 CNG stations, according to government data. Any sustained increase in LNG prices or supply disruptions could therefore eventually feed through to cooking gas and transport fuel costs.

City gas distributors may face higher input gas prices and possible supply constraints, which could pressure margins and push tariffs higher if elevated prices persist.

Amruta Khanvilkar

Visits Tirupati Balaji Temple With Her Mother

Popular Marathi and Hindi film actress Amruta Khanvilkar recently visited Tirupati Balaji, also known as Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, with her mother. It is a renowned Hindu pilgrimage site in Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh, dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, a Vishnu avatar. Located on the seventh peak of the Seshachalam Hills, Tirupati Balaji is one of the most popular sacred locations in the world. In a social media post shared by entertainment website IWBuzz, Amruta appeared serene while praying at the sacred shrine, while wearing a beautiful traditional white saree. The actress can be seen taking a selfie with her mother. The temple trip was particularly special for Amruta as she was joined by her mother.

Amruta Khanvilkar's Spiritual Moments

The 'Taskaree' actress has a reputation for being an active visitor to holy sites to seek blessings. Amruta earlier visited Lalbaugcha Raja during the Ganeshotsav festival,



where the actress can be seen offering special items at the feet of Lord Ganesh.

Amruta marked the International Yoga Day in July by visiting the Kedarnath Temple to seek divine blessings. Amruta shared her experience on social media, saying, "If there's one thing I've truly learned over the past

few years of practising yoga, it's this: yoga is equally about the stillness of the mind as it is about the movement of the body."

"That stillness teaches you how to be a better human being. It helps you make peace with your decisions, accept them with grace, and let go of what no longer serves you," she added.

Amruta Khanvilkar on Bollywood Disrespecting Women

Actress Amruta Khanvilkar has refuted allegations that women are disrespected in Bollywood, stating that respect is determined by a person's behaviour rather than their gender. In an exclusive chat with Bollywood Bubble, the Taskaree actress stated that each artist gains their own respect via behaviour and self-worth, adding that her opinions are based on personal experience.

"Aurat ya mard, har insan ki respect hoti hai, it's what you make out of it, har artist ki apni apni respect hoti hai, toh ye gender ki joh hai mudda hi nahi hai (whether man or woman, every human being deserves respect, it's what you make out of it, every artist has his own respect, so it is not a matter of gender)," Amruta said.

The actress went on to say that respect for oneself and one's demeanour are equally important. "Har insaan ko apne apne wajood ke respect hoti hai, mujhe aisa lagta hai ye joh thode controversial questions hote hai na ki 'aaj kal aurton ko respect nahi milti,' bhai mujhe bohot respect milti hai (Every human being has respect for his own dignity. I feel that these are a bit controversial questions, not that 'women don't get respect these days', brother, I get a lot of respect)," Amruta declared.



Anil Kapoor Calls Daughter Rhea Kapoor A 'Creative Force' In Birthday Post



Rhea Kapoor turned 39 on March 5. As expected, the industry poured in wishes for the popular designer and film producer. Her father, Anil Kapoor, also took to Instagram to write a sweet birthday note for his daughter. The Subedaar actor shared a series of six pictures on Instagram along with a note expressing how happy and proud Rhea makes him feel.

Anil Kapoor's Birthday Wish For Daughter Rhea

The six pictures that Anil Kapoor shared were a mix of throwback childhood moments of Rhea Kapoor posing with him, her mother, and sister Sonam Kapoor, while some were more recent photographs.

The caption was emotional and heartfelt, capturing everything a father feels for his daughter. It read, "Happy Birthday, Rhea. As your father, I couldn't be prouder. 360 degrees of success, and yet your greatest priority has always been being a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend and taking care of all of us. That balance, that heart is what truly defines you." Anil added that Rhea has truly made her mark as a 'creative force' and shaped cinema and style with her confidence.

Talking about what makes him happiest, Anil Kapoor mentioned that seeing the woman Rhea Kapoor has grown into fills him with pride. He spoke about how she manages to focus on family, pause for holidays, and take time to relax when needed. He added that she always returns to work with renewed energy. Work and life run side by side, yet she manages to juggle it all with grace.

Anil concluded his caption with, "You make our home brighter, our conversations sharper, and my heart fuller. Keep shining, with all my love, dad." Rhea reacted to the birthday wish with heart-eye emojis. Kareena Kapoor Khan commented, "The Best girl." Shilpa Shirodkar and Ira Dubey also wished Rhea in the comments section. Rhea's husband Karan Boolani reacted to Anil's birthday wish with red-heart emojis.

Inspired By Ali Fazal, Richa Chadha Eyes Hollywood 'If The Right Script Comes'



Richa Chadha is looking beyond Hindi cinema for her next phase. The actor, who began her film career in 2008, recently spoke about wanting to work more actively in international projects. The idea is not entirely new for her. She says the push to explore Western films has grown stronger after watching her husband, Ali Fazal, build a steady presence in both Indian and global productions.

The comments were reported by Hindustan Times, where Chadha spoke about the possibility of working in Hollywood if the right opportunity appears. She said she would "love to follow in Ali's footsteps and get something concrete in the West," adding that seeing him manage projects across industries has been encouraging.

"He's just been so amazing at straddling both worlds," Chadha said. "Seeing him handle both worlds so beautifully is simply amazing in its own way."

Looking at Hollywood After Two Decades in Films

Chadha has spent close to twenty years in the Indian film industry, known for roles that often sit outside mainstream formulas. Films such as Gangs of Wasseypur, Masaan, and Fukrey helped establish her reputation for taking on unconventional parts.

But international exposure is not completely unfamiliar territory for her. The actor has appeared in projects with cross-border collaboration before.

These include Words With Gods (2014), a multinational anthology involving Indian, Mexican and American filmmakers. She also featured in Masaan (2015), which had an Indo-French production background and the Indo-American drama Love Sonia (2018).

Due to those experiences, Chadha says working in the West would not feel entirely new. The difference now, according to her remarks, is clarity. She says she would consider a Hollywood project if the script and role are strong enough. "If I get a good script and character, working in Hollywood would definitely be something that I would love to do," she said.

Ali Fazal's International Path Inspires Richa Chadha

Part of the motivation comes from watching Ali Fazal navigate international cinema over the past decade. Fazal has appeared in several global productions, including Furious 7 (2015), Victoria & Abdul (2017) alongside Judi Dench, Death on the Nile (2022) and the action film Kandahar (2023).

Mrunal Thakur's

Jacket-Style Look At Rashmika, Vijay's Wedding Reception Is Unmissable

Mrunal Thakur turned heads at the grand wedding reception of actors Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna in Hyderabad. Right after the duo's wedding in Udaipur, the Sita Ramam actress sent them a heartfelt wish. Now that the close friend of the newlyweds made her public appearance in the star-studded evening, she took no time in grabbing much attention for her look.

After Mrunal Thakur graced Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna's wedding reception, she can be seen wooing everyone with her charm and poise. In a video posted on Instagram from the same event, the actress was seen wearing the Shyama Saree Set from designer Mrunalini Rao's collection.

Decoding Mrunal Thakur's Look

The outfit features a black georgette saree with intricate floral motifs and a vibrant, multicoloured resham hand-embroidered border. She styled her saree with a structured, high-collared "jacket-style" raw silk blouse featuring a deep V-neckline, extensively hand-embroidered with zardozi and multicoloured resham work, which blends traditional craftsmanship with a contemporary silhouette.

Keeping her look elegant and minimal, she opted for statement earrings and a sleek watch to complement her heavily embroidered ensemble. Her hair was styled in a sleek, middle-parted straight style, while

she opted for soft, dewy makeup, featuring a nude lip and subtle smokey eyes.

On top of it, her bright smile simply captivated her fans. The Hi Nanna star was also seen waving towards her fans and shutterbugs stationed over them, showing a warm gesture.

Mrunal Thakur's Wish For Vijay Deverakonda And Rashmika Mandanna



After Vijay and Rashmika dropped the first-ever pictures from their wedding in Udaipur, the entire social media was abuzz with the romantic moments. Soon after, Mrunal re-shared the pictures posted by Rashmika on her Instagram stories and wrote a heartfelt note for the couple. "Some moments are too beautiful for words. Seeing my cutie @rashmika_mandanna as a bride and @theverakonda as a groom yesterday was so Divineeeeeee and Magical," she penned.



What tour Guides won't tell you

You need to carry your passport to any nightclub if you're planning to party hard in Sydney. Local beverages are more affordable in Oz Land. Tipping isn't recommended. Here's all that cricket fans and travellers need to know about Australia. Plane loads of Indian tourists visit Australia for cricket, annual vacation or honeymoon. We list a few must dos in and around major Australian cities Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. We also suggest some of the must dos and don'ts in and around these cities so that you save money and avoid all roadblocks while planning your holiday. Have an amazing Australian experience the

Aussie way.

Sydney, New South Wales

Trike Ride on Harley Davidson Bikes: How about soaking in Sydney while roaming across popular attractions like The Opera House, The Harbour Bridge, Central Business District and suburbs on an open Harley 'rickshaw'? Rather than riding pillion behind a burly rider, why not opt for a trike ride? There are several bike tour operators such as Troll Tours in the city offering a trike ride. This bike has three wheels instead of two, and a bigger seating

area at the back. **Cafe and Pub Hopping:** You've ogled at every Master Chef preparation; this is your chance to feast on them. Sydney is the food capital of Australia. Ample cafes, pubs and clubs run by celebrity chefs dot the city. Darling Harbour, Darlinghurst and Cowper Wharf Road have some of the best dine out spaces. There are ample Indian restaurants and other eateries have enough vegetarian options too.

Melbourne, Victoria

Colonial Tramcar Restaurant: This is a city

tour like no other. Nibble on gourmet fare for lunch or dinner inside an old tram refurbished as a Victorian rail bogey. Among the best tramcar restaurants, these trams take you on a three-hour journey around the city and its suburbs while you enjoy a three-course meal and sights of the city from your tram window. **12 Apostles, Great Ocean Road:** The road and rock formations are hailed as an Aussie wonder worth a visit. The four-hour drive along the sea takes you to majestic rock and limestone formations named 12 Apostles. Some of the arches emerging out of the sea are as high as 45 metres. These formations change colour right through the day with the changing colours of the sun.

Adelaide, South Australia

Country Homes for Stay: Adelaide is an ideal city to experience both the bustle of Sydney and Melbourne, as well as the calm countryside that this place offers. Many locals rent out their country homes. Book one of these cottages and experience a staycation with an Australian family. Most of the houses have kitchen gardens from where you can source your basic ingredients. Do remember to go fishing with locals too. **Winery Tour:** Seppeltsfield and Jacob's Creek are two of the biggest vineyards of the region and close to the city. A wine educator takes you through the history of the vineyard and the region and offers professional wine-tasting sessions at each winery.

Checklist

Club rules

Your passport is a must for entry into any

club or a pub. Sydney has a lockout hour where the entry to a club closes at 1 am. The clubs would stay open till 3 am but no new entry or re-entry is allowed. Tipping is not the norm and not encouraged either.

House rules

Cabs are expensive. Trams and walking are the usual modes chosen by locals. Locals take their kitchen gardens very seriously. Don't run amok. Pluck only what's needed

Road rules

Australia enforces strict speed limits. Empty stretches are tempting but resist pushing the accelerator.

Local flair

Beer and wine of the state you are in will be more affordable. A South Australian beer will be cheaper in Adelaide than Melbourne and vice versa. The menus mention which states the beverages are from. Try local brews.

Right gear

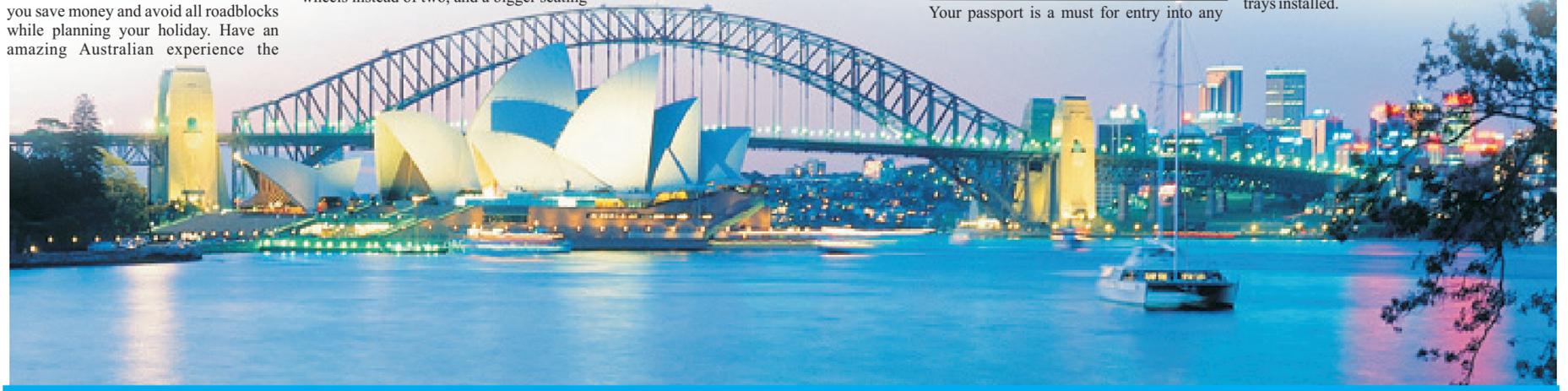
Your bermudas or denim shorts are NOT swimming shorts. Wear proper swimming or surf gear that dries quickly rather than roam around in drenched lowers post a swim.

Safety first

Australia has strict traffic rules. Wear seat belts even while riding trike bikes. Seat belts on rear seats of cars are also a must

Civic sense

Smoking in public places is allowed in Australia but stubbing the butt on streets is an offence. While you will not be punished for smoking, you can be fined for littering! Always stub it in trays installed.



With a medley of steep red cliffs, swaying palm trees and the deep blue Arabian Sea, it isn't hard to imagine why Varkala is described as one of the most beautiful beaches in India. A more laid-back alternative to Kovalam, Varkala is fast catching up to its more popular cousin, thanks to its stunning beaches and an assortment of restaurants and hotels clustered around the North Cliff.

6 reasons to visit Varkala

Papanasham Beach

Synonymous with Varkala, this is the town's most popular beach. With waves lapping its sun-kissed white sands at one end and breaking against the imposing red cliffs on the other, Papanasham is quite a sight to behold. While swimming is allowed, visitors need to watch out (as with all the other beaches at Varkala) for strong underwater currents.

Besides lounging about on the sands at Papanasham, visitors can try their hand at parasailing, scuba diving and paragliding, while anglers can go deep-sea fishing. The beach is lined with a surfeit of restaurants serving up fresh-from-the-ocean seafood and small shops hawking souvenirs. The panoramic bird's eye view from the top of the cliff (easily accessed via a winding path) is highly recommended. The beach also attracts a steady stream of the faithful: Hindus believe a dip in the water here can absolve sins, and the immersion of cremation ashes leads to salvation for the deceased.

Thiruvambadi Beach

If isolation is what you seek then this stretch of sand, also known as the Black Sand Beach, fits the bill to a tee. One of the quietest beaches in Varkala, this beach has, as the name suggests, black sand. Accessible by climbing down from the North Cliff, or driving down Thiruvambadi Road.

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Yoga at the beach

Yoga and Ayurveda have always been big draws in Kerala and Varkala is no exception. Most seaside resorts offer yoga sessions on the beach: the trick is identifying which type of yoga you'd like to practice and picking a resort that offers it. Hotel Green Palace hosts 'hatha yoga' classes by Haridas, a teacher trained in the Sivananda school. Sharanagati Yogahaus is a yoga retreat that offers

Sivananda yoga classes twice a day and Vipassana meditation sessions. The family-run Eden Garden hotel couples yoga with traditional Ayurvedic therapies.

Anjengo Fort

History buffs will find the 20-minute drive out of town to this fort, located in a fishing village, entirely worth the effort. This 17th century fort was initially used by the Portuguese as a depot for trading goods and arms, and later served as a signalling station and a trading depot for pepper and coir, for the British. Briefly besieged by the locals during a local rebellion in 1721, the fort also served as a British ammunition store during the Anglo-Mysore Wars in the 18th century. Soak in the gorgeous views from the ramparts and don't forget to check out the 130-foot tall lighthouse that once guided ships arriving from

Britain. There are some old churches and a cemetery nearby, while the beach remains clean and unspoiled.

Kappil Beach and Lake

Still flying under the tourist radar, serene and picturesque Kappil is the one of the few beaches in Kerala that hasn't been inundated by shops and

eateries. The secluded beach is at the confluence of the Kappil Lake and the Arabian Sea, and is also one of the cleanest in the state. Visitors can take a boat on the backwaters adjunct to the ocean; stroll on the bridge that runs across the lake; or even climb up the Kodi Cliff for a panoramic glimpse of the Arabian Sea.

Janardhana Swamy Temple

Believed to be around 2,000 years old, this Vaishnavite temple, perched on a hilltop near Papanasham Beach is an important pilgrimage centre for Hindus. Devotees often take a dip in the sunken water tank inside which is fed by a perennial spring. Note that non-Hindus are not allowed in the inner sanctum, and there's a strictly enforced dress code of saris for women and 'mundus' for men.

