

'You won't succeed even in 100 attempts': Amit Shah slams Rahul Gandhi over AI event protest

The Union home minister also took a dig at Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, saying he has failed in 20 launchings. "If you continue with such practices, you won't succeed even in 100 attempts," said Shah.

New Delhi.(Agency) Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday hit out at Congress over the protest at the recently held India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi and accused the party of indulging in 'negative politics'.



mandate. "The BJD stopped Odisha's development while ruling the state for 20 years. The Central government and the BJP government in Odisha will try to complete the undone works of 20 years in just five years," said Shah.

Adhinyam (BSA) — which came into effect on July 1, 2024, replacing colonial-era statutes. Earlier in the day, Shah attended the 57th Raising Day ceremony of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at Mundali in Cuttack district and hailed the role of central forces in providing a secure environment for industrial growth.

The Union home minister also took a dig at Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, saying he has failed in 20 launchings. "If you continue with such practices, you won't succeed even in 100 attempts," said Shah.

Shah, during the visit, inaugurated the Nyaya Sanhita Exhibition organised by the Odisha Police. The exhibition highlights the implementation of the three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya

those who dream of a Red Corridor from Tirupati to Pashupatinath will be fully defeated, with our security forces establishing their dominance. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, this is a very major achievement of our security forces," said the Union home minister.

Delhi CM promises funds for development works, says zero tolerance for laxity

New Delhi.(Agency) Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday issued strict directions to officials of all departments regarding the ongoing development works across the city during a high-level meeting held at the secretariat.



Delhi Village Development Board (DVDB) and the Trans-Yamuna Area Development Board (TYADB). The meeting was attended by DVDB Chairman Shri Rajkumar Chauhan, TYADB Chairman Shri Arvinder Singh Lovely and other senior officials of the departments.

under these three departments. She stated that ensuring that budgetary funds are utilised for development works remains a key priority of her government. The CM has also directed the officials to begin processes related to development works promptly at the start of the new financial year so that projects are completed within the stipulated timeframe.

CM Bhagwant Singh Mann launches Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 to make Punjab No. 1 investment destination

LUDHIANA, 7th March: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Bhagwant Singh Mann on Saturday unveiled the landmark Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 in Ludhiana, asserting that his government is determined to make Punjab the No. 1 investment destination in the country through bold reforms and a flexible incentive framework designed around the needs of industry.

suited to their business models, intro- ers, thereby opening industrial incentives



duces capital subsidy for the first time in Punjab, offers incentives of up to 100% of Fixed Capital Investment and reduces Employment Generation Subsidy eligibility to ₹25 crore investment and 50 work-

Nishant Kumar to enter politics as father Nitish shifts focus to Rajya Sabha

Patna.(Agency) As Nitish Kumar's tenure as Bihar Chief Minister enters twilight following his Rajya Sabha move, his 'son' is all to rise in a major shift in state politics. Nishant Kumar, the only son of Nitish Kumar, will formally enter active politics on March 8 by joining the Janata Dal (United) as questions around the party leadership persist.



the leadership views as a significant organisational milestone. After nearly two decades as Bihar's chief minister, Nitish Kumar's decision to move to the Rajya Sabha has triggered widespread speculation about the party's future leadership.

DK Shivakumar promises contractors meeting with CM over Rs 37,000 crore dues

Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar assured protesting contractors that he and PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi would arrange a meeting with the Chief Minister to address pending payments worth about Rs 37,000 crore.

Bengaluru.(Agency) Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday assured the Karnataka State Contractors' Association that he and Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Satish Jarkiholi would facilitate a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to address their grievances.

Shivakumar said contractors play an important role in the state's development and the government was aware of their concerns. "Contractors are helping the state too. We are aware that you brought our government to power. It is not our intention to withhold the payment," he said.



their concerns more effectively. "Just as representation is given in the Council to teachers, graduates, and those from the cinema and arts sectors, a seat must be given to contractors as well. That could help resolve your problems. A way must be found for this," he said.

Shivakumar also acknowledged the scale of pending payments across departments. "There are pending bills of around Rs 13,000 crore in my department and Rs 3,000 crore in Boseraju's department, taking the total to about Rs 37,000 crore. We know your pain," he said.

News box

Fetus found abandoned at vacant plot in Gurgaon, cops scan CCTV footage

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A one-day-old girl was found dead in a vacant plot in Sector 93 on Thursday. The fetus was found wrapped in green cloth, police said. A passer-by, Sanjay, noticed the fetus around 12.30pm and informed the police, who launched an investigation into the matter. An emergency response vehicle (ERV) team, along with personnel from the Sector 93 police post reached the spot and secured the area. "The crime scene was inspected and residents questioned. We are investigating why the fetus was disposed of at the site and who did it," police said. The fetus was taken into police custody and sent for post-mortem examination. Police are also scanning CCTV footage from nearby areas to trace those involved. Further action will be taken based on the post-mortem findings and evidence collected during the investigation.

One-day-old fetus found wrapped in cloth in vacant Gurgaon plot, cops scan CCTV footage



Gurgaon.(Agency)

A one-day-old fetus was found in a vacant plot in Sector 93 on Thursday. The fetus was found wrapped in green cloth, police said. A passer-by, Sanjay, noticed the fetus around 12.30pm and informed the police, who launched an investigation into the matter. An emergency response vehicle team, along with personnel from the Sector 93 police post reached the spot and secured the area. "The crime scene was inspected and residents questioned. We are investigating why the fetus was disposed of at the site and who did it," police said. The fetus was taken into police custody and sent for post-mortem examination. Police are also scanning CCTV footage from nearby areas to trace those involved. Further action will be taken based on the post-mortem findings and evidence collected during the investigation.

Shots fired outside liquor vend in Badshapur after clash on Holi

Noida.(Agency)

Holi celebrations outside a liquor vend in Badshapur turned violent after a confrontation between two groups led to a firing incident on Wednesday afternoon. Police said one round was fired during the altercation but no injuries were caused in the incident. The complainant, a resident of Mohammadpur Jharsa, alleged that he and his friends went to Savanna Ahata on the day of the incident around 2-3.30pm, where they got into an argument with another group present there. The verbal spat escalated into a physical fight between the two sides. An officer privy to the investigation said, "Before the firing, there was a normal altercation between the two parties. The argument turned into a fight and both sides sustained minor injuries during the scuffle." "One round was fired and it appears to have been aerial firing," the officer added. Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered under relevant sections of BNS and the Arms Act on Wednesday. Police are still verifying details about the weapon used in the incident. "At this stage, we are verifying whether the weapon was licensed or not," the officer said. Investigators are also examining whether the shot was fired inside or outside the premises of the liquor vend. "The complainant said it was fired outside the ahata. We are checking and verifying the facts," the officer added. Details about the accused are still being ascertained. CCTV footage from the area is being analysed and further investigation is underway.

Betting racket running out of Noida highrise busted, 5 arrested

Noida.(Agency)

In a joint operation, the Crime Response Team (CRT) and officials from Sector 113 police station on Thursday arrested five persons for running a betting racket and cheating people of crores of rupees during the India-England match of the ongoing T20 World Cup. According to additional DCP Manisha Singh, police received information that a gang of bookies were operating several phone lines in Noida to take bets on the result of the match. The gang was traced to a flat in Sector 79 and teams were deployed to arrest them. When the officers reached the spot, the 12th over of the second innings was underway and the accused were accepting bets with odds of 50 paise on India's win and Rs 2 on England's win. Police arrested Vinay Sehgal (35), Dev Kumar (24), Navdeep Singh (30), Rajiv Sharma (48), and Salil Seth (25). Police said the accused operated a gang of small-time bookies and got their profits through hawala. The bookies' connections extended from the NCR to Dubai through hawala. Efforts are on to trace other associates of the accused. Police station in-charge Vipin Kumar said that three laptops, three tablets, three desktop monitors, 32 mobiles, two IC recorders, six notepads, three line boxes, one CPU, one printer, three extension boards, six mobile stands,

Dwarka Expressway to get Rs 923-crore 4-lane underground trumpet interchange for Global City, Vision City in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

NHAI has planned to develop a four-lane trumpet interchange along Dwarka Expressway to connect the upcoming Global City and Vision City projects. The underground trumpet interchange will provide signal-free connectivity between the expressway and the two upcoming residential and commercial hubs. The interchange, which will come up near the Pataudi Road junction on Dwarka Expressway (NH-248BB), has been proposed by Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC). HSIIDC has agreed to bear the project cost — estimated at Rs 923 crore — to facilitate access to the two upcoming residential and commercial hubs. According to a senior HSIIDC official, the interchange will play "a key role" in supporting this expansion by ensuring direct connectivity between the expressway and the upcoming developments, "while also improving access for traffic coming from Manesar

and nearby industrial areas".

A senior NHAI official said, "The proposal was finalised and we are working out the modality for the execution of the project. We hope to start the work within the next three months." The interchange is expected to take around 30 months to complete. "The layout has been designed to ensure that vehicles can enter or exit the developments without crossing high-speed expressway traffic, improving safety and maintaining uninterrupted movement on the main corridor," the NHAI official added. Under the plan, around 3.2km of approach roads and ramps will connect the underpass with the internal roads of Global City and Vision City. The curved loop ramp, typical of a trumpet interchange, will allow smooth turning movements, particularly for vehicles approaching from the Manesar side. NHAI officials said the interchange will allow vehicles travelling from Manesar and other parts of the city to directly enter Global City and Vision City

through grade-separated ramps without interfering with through traffic on the



expressway. The interchange will also create direct connectivity between Global City and Vision City, allowing vehicles to move between the two developments without entering the main carriageway of the expressway. NHAI officials said the four-lane underground vehicular underpass will be constructed using precast reinforced cement concrete (RCC) box structures. The underpass will be built using the box-pushing technique, a method that allows large concrete

structures to be inserted beneath a functioning expressway with minimal disruption to surface traffic. Two precast RCC boxes — measuring 11 metres by 6 metres and about 150 metres in length each — will be pushed beneath the expressway under an eight-nine metre soil surcharge, the official explained. "The interchange will be constructed nearly 30 feet below the surface. There are pillars of the expressway and the Badshapur drain is passing below the surface. For the execution of the work, it would require deep excavation and earth-retention systems to keep the soil stable, along with continuous dewatering at the site. A thrust bed will be constructed to push large concrete boxes beneath the expressway structure with precision," the NHAI official said, adding that the existing utilities such as sewer lines, pipelines and overhead electrical lines in the area will be protected and strengthened during the construction process.

195% more groundwater drawn by Guragon than it replenished last year

Noida.(Agency)

The city continues to extract far more groundwater than it can naturally replenish, with withdrawals reaching 194.6% more than the permissible limit, according to the latest National Compilation on Dynamic Ground Water Resources of India, 2025, released by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). While this is a slight improvement from 2024, when extraction stood at 195%, the change is negligible—a concerning trend given the persistent gap between extraction and natural replenishment. In 2023, the figure was even higher, at 212%. The report shows that the city drew 40,396 hectare-metres (ham) of groundwater against a sustainable extractable resource of 22,923 ham. This comes despite repeated warnings from National Green Tribunal and environmental activists about the depletion of the natural resource. Nearly two weeks ago, the tribunal criticised the Haryana govt for failing to curb rampant illegal groundwater extraction. It ordered inspections of construction sites, farmhouses, industrial units, educational institutions and pharmaceutical units to check for illegal borewells. Groundwater

extraction beyond 100% is categorised as "over-exploited", meaning aquifers are being used faster than they can refill. A hectare metre (ham) is a unit used to measure large volumes of water. One ham equals 10 million litres of water. This means the city is extracting roughly 403 billion litres every year, double what its aquifers can sustainably provide. Across Haryana, several districts reported severe groundwater stress. Karnal recorded one of the highest extraction levels at 273.5%, followed by Kurukshetra at 225.5% and Panipat at 217.8%. Other districts with high extraction levels include Fatehabad (177.9%), Faridabad (175.4%), Mahendragarh (156.9%) and Ambala (130.2%), according to the report. Some districts, however, remain in relatively safer categories. Rohtak recorded an extraction stage of 48.8%, Panchkula 62%, Jhajjar 72.7% and Nuh 72.3%, indicating comparatively lower groundwater stress. The data also shows that industrial demand forms a significant share of groundwater extraction in the city. Of the total withdrawal, about 17,142 ham is attributed to industrial use, while around 5,191 ham is used for domestic

consumption. Irrigation accounts for over 21,267 ham, largely in peri-urban villages of the district. The report highlights that groundwater recharge in the region is heavily dependent on rainfall. Monsoon rains contribute about 9,567 ham of recharge, while other sources such as canals and return flows add around 7,002 ham. During the non-monsoon period, rainfall contributes only around 3,206 ham. Haryana has an annual extractable groundwater resource of about 9.3 lakh ham, but actual extraction is estimated at around 12 lakh ham. CGWB assessment evaluated 143 groundwater assessment units across Haryana, of which 88 (61.5%) were classified as "over-exploited", 11 as "critical" and eight as "semi-critical". Only 36 units (25.1%) fell in the "safe" category, according to the report. Experts attribute the pressure on aquifers in the city to rapid urbanisation, industrial activity and a rising population, which sharply increased water demand. Large parts of the city continue to rely on private borewells, particularly in industrial areas, commercial establishments and residential colonies where piped water supply remains inadequate.

Now, Digital Saheli to help women combat deepfakes and sextortion in Gurgaon

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Deepfake misuse, sextortion and circulation of morphed or objectionable photos and videos on social media platforms — women facing any of these cyber crimes have a friend in need: Digital Saheli. They can seek help "without fear or hesitation" now, said police, who launched, on Friday, the "special anti-deepfake and sextortion rapid response cell", along with a dedicated helpline — 9999981002 — where they can report cyber crimes from the safety of their homes. Digital Saheli will operate round the clock with a team of eight women police personnel, "with an aim to strengthen women's safety". The cell, which was inaugurated by

commissioner of police Vikas Kumar Arora at Women police station in Sector 51, has been set up in collaboration with a private foundation, Reet. Officials added that other services of local police, including information related to the Digital Saheli initiative, can also be accessed through the department's chatbot number, +91 95999 64777. According to police, the cell was created to "provide immediate assistance to women facing cyber crimes". Women can lodge complaints by calling the helpline number or filing a cybercrime complaint, following which the unit will initiate swift action to get the content removed and begin legal proceedings where required. Cyber Crime ACP

Priyanshu Dewan told TOI, "In case a victim wishes not to get an FIR registered, she can still reach out to Digital Saheli. The dedicated team will ensure action within 24 hours by getting the objectionable content removed from the concerned social media platforms." Police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said, "The identity of victims and complainants will be kept strictly confidential. The platform was also designed to offer a secure and accountable digital reporting mechanism. Apart from legal assistance, the cell will also provide counselling, mental healthcare and emotional support to victims to help them recover from the trauma associated with online exploitation.

Nuh plans drive to bring children back to school, cut dropout rate

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Newly appointed Nuh district education officer (DEO) Rajender Sharma said the department will intensify ground-level efforts to reduce the district's dropout rate by at least 10% in the coming academic session. The department will launch a campaign from April 1 to bring out-of-school children back into classrooms and prevent enrolled students from dropping out. The department will identify children not enrolled in schools and provide them with bridge courses. For students who left school after enrolment, officials will focus on community outreach and counselling parents so that children return to classes. "We will not rely only on paperwork. Our focus will be on direct engagement with communities and convincing parents about the importance of education," the officer said. Recalling a recent interaction with residents during a BPL ration distribution event, the DEO said he used the opportunity to speak to families about the importance of sending their children to school. "Whenever we meet people in villages, we try to remind them that education is the strongest tool for improving their children's future," he said. "Many parents feel their responsibility ends with providing food for their children, but education is equally important for their future. Unless society changes its thinking, the problem will continue," the DEO added.

The renewed push comes as Nuh continues to record one of the highest dropout rates in Haryana. According to figures from the UDISE portal, the district reported a dropout rate of 12.8% in 2025-26 (classes VI-VIII), significantly higher than the state average of 3.05%.

The issue was raised in the Haryana Assembly after Congress MLA Aftab Ahmad from Nuh posed a question on dropout rates across districts. Data presented in the House showed that besides Nuh, other districts with relatively high dropout rates include Panchkula (6.03%), Palwal (5.8%), Ambala (4.39%) and Sirsa (3.39%). Districts such as Bhiwani, Panipat, Yamunanagar, Fatehabad and Faridabad also feature among the top 10 districts with higher dropout levels. Education officials say the reasons behind dropouts in the Mewat region are complex and rooted in social as well as infrastructural challenges.

8ft-deep ditch left open for 15 days on Surajpur road

Noida.(Agency)

Just two months after software engineer Yuvraj Mehta drowned in an unsecured, water-filled trench along a sharp turn in Sector 150, residents have flagged another large ditch near the Vishwa Bharti School intersection on Surajpur Road that has been left uncovered for over two weeks, warning that it is an accident waiting to happen. The ditch, estimated to be more than eight feet deep and stretching roughly seven metres, was initially dug to access the leaking pipeline. Residents claim it has since been left unsecured and was gradually expanding as water eroded the surrounding soil. Harinder Bhati, general secretary of the Beta-1 residents' welfare association, said the pit is located next to a busy stretch used daily by commuters and students from the nearby school, raising

concerns about pedestrian safety. "Is the Authority waiting for another tragedy before acting?" he asked. Residents said the absence of barricades or warning signs makes the situation even more dangerous, particularly during evenings when traffic remains heavy. Nidhi Sharma, another resident who frequently travels along the stretch, said it appeared that little had been learnt from past incidents. "Every day we hear about accidents caused by open pits or potholes," she said. "Yet authorities seem indifferent until something serious happens." Om Tiwari, a resident of Sector Beta 1, said gate number 1 of the area lies close to the site, and he passes through the stretch daily while commuting to Sector Alpha 2. The risk of an accident, he said, is constant. "Since there is no barricading around the spot where the pipeline has leaked, I

drive very cautiously. Any wrong turn or moment of distraction could lead to an accident," Tiwari said. Another resident noted that Gate No. 2 of Vishwa Bharti School, located right next to the pit, is usually kept shut, with entry and exit restricted to Gate No. 1 about 200 metres away. "But students still tend to walk along this road, which makes the situation even more worrying," the resident said. Locals have urged the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) to not only repair the pipeline but also address what they say is a broader pattern of poor infrastructure maintenance across the city. Officials acknowledged the issue but offered little clarity on when the site would be fully secured. Senior manager Vinod Sharma later said repair work on the water pipeline was underway

and could be completed by late Friday. Residents, however, remain sceptical, noting that the pit has remained exposed for more than two weeks despite repeated complaints. TOI had earlier reported how pits dug for laying cables, sewer lines or water pipelines, and often left open for weeks, sometimes even months, had emerged as a major public safety hazard across several sectors, including Beta 1, Beta 2, Xu 1, Alpha and Delta. Residents had blamed poor coordination between departments and lax enforcement by the Authority for the persistence of open pits and uncovered drains. Ironically, days after Mehta's death, the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) had ordered an immediate review of road safety measures across its jurisdiction.

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009
Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

CM Bhagwant Singh Mann launches Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 to make Punjab No. 1 investment destination

Contd.....Front page
Addressing the gathering, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the policy represents a major shift in the way industrial incentives are structured in Punjab. "Every other state in India hands investors a fixed menu and says take it or leave it, but Punjab has changed that. Now an investor can pick up to 20 incentives and build a package around their own business model." Explaining the rationale behind this approach, the Chief Minister said that different industries have different operational realities and cost structures. "Pharmaceutical companies need different support than an EV manufacturer, a data centre has different costs than a textile plant. The new policy acknowledges that and builds around it." He said the framework allows investors to optimise incentives according to their sector, cost structure and scale of operations. "The incentive package can be optimised for their specific cost structure, their specific sector and their specific scale. That is money on the table that wasn't there before." Highlighting another major feature of the policy, the Chief Minister stated that for the first time in Punjab's history the government has introduced a capital subsidy. "If someone is planning a 100 crore plant, without capital subsidy 2100 crore is their risk. With capital subsidy, the government co-invests a portion upfront and their capital at risk drops." He added this significantly improves investment economics.

"This means the same revenue with lower investment. Punjab is the first state in the country to offer that." The Chief Minister further observed that most industrial policies in other states are largely designed to attract new investors while existing businesses often receive little attention. "Most industrial policies in other states are drafted for outsiders with new investors, greenfield projects and companies being wooed from other states. Businesses already operating, already paying taxes and already employing people are usually an afterthought." He said the new policy corrects this imbalance by extending incentives to modernisation and expansion projects as well. "Punjab's new policy changes that as modernisation and expansion projects are now eligible for incentives. A Ludhiana manufacturer who wants to upgrade machinery, add a production line or expand capacity now gets policy support alongside new investors." The Chief Minister also highlighted that the policy provides long-term stability to investors through an extended incentive period. "Incentive support has been extended up to 15 years whereas most state policies run five to 10 years." He said this provision is particularly important for capital-intensive sectors. "This is a big boon for heavy industry, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, data centres and others as these are not businesses that return profit in year two but they are decade-long commitments." Explaining the financial significance

of this provision, he stated, "Fifteen years changes the Net Present Value along with the total present value of all future incentives dramatically. For capital-intensive sectors this could be the single most important number in the entire policy." The Chief Minister further asserted that the definition of Fixed Capital Investment has been expanded, which will increase the base on which incentives are calculated. "Fixed Capital Investment has been redefined as the base on which all incentives are calculated and it now includes land, labour housing, R&D facilities, effluent treatment plants, sewage treatment plants and zero liquid discharge systems." He said this ensures that investments in sustainability and compliance are financially supported. "Every rupee the investors spend on building a compliant, sustainable facility now works harder for them. Incentives will now be calculated on a larger base. Punjab has made compliance financially rewarding." The Chief Minister noted the policy also focuses on making industrial incentives more accessible to smaller businesses. "Employment Generation Subsidy eligibility has been reduced to 225 crore investment and 50 workers." He explained that earlier thresholds excluded many small and medium enterprises. "Previously the threshold was higher keeping many small and medium businesses outside the subsidy framework." Emphasising the importance of smaller industries to Punjab's econo-

my, he said, "Punjab's industrial backbone is not only large plants. It is the thousands of small manufacturers in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Batala and Gobindgarh who employ 30, 40 or 50 people on their margins." "By bringing them inside the EGS framework, we are putting real money into the businesses that employ the most workers per rupee of investment," he added. The Chief Minister said the policy also promotes inclusive employment practices. "Punjab has made inclusion a financial decision, not just a social one by ensuring higher Employment Generation Subsidy for businesses employing women, SC/ST and Persons with Disabilities workers and for IT/ITeS and GCC units." He added that this aligns with the expectations of global investors. "For companies with ESG commitments and global investors watching diversity metrics, this is a policy feature that speaks directly to boardroom priorities in 2026." The Chief Minister further said that the government has introduced additional incentives to promote industrialisation in regions that require greater investment. "Twenty-five percent additional incentives have been provided for nine thrust sectors and for industries located in border and Kandi areas." He said border districts such as Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Ferozepur and Fazilka have historically seen lower levels of investment. "These districts have historically seen lower investment because of perceived geographical risk.

Punjab is now compensating investors for that risk in rupees, not reassurances." "For a first-mover willing to set up in these areas, the incentive stack becomes genuinely compelling," he added. The Chief Minister also announced that several key sectors will now have dedicated policy frameworks. "IT/ITeS, GCC, EVs, ESDM, semiconductor, filmmaking, tourism and others each get a dedicated sectoral policy." He said these policies have been prepared through extensive industry consultations. "Not a paragraph in an omnibus document but a stand-alone framework built by an industry committee chaired by a sector expert. This means the government has consulted the industry and built incentives that fit their cost structure." Highlighting Punjab's growing investment momentum, the Chief Minister said that since 2022 Punjab has attracted 21.55 lakh crore in investment, of which 755,000 crore came in the last year alone. "Tata, Infosys, Vardhman, Trident, HMEI and Fortis are all committing investment in the same twelve month window," he said. He further said that under the policy investors can avail incentives up to 100 percent of their Fixed Capital Investment including land, machinery, buildings, R&D and ETP. "The policy is designed so that the Punjab Government's growth and the investor's return move together." The Chief Minister said that the policy was launched in the presence of nearly 200 leading industrialists,

industry leaders and representatives from various sectors, reflecting strong industry participation and confidence in Punjab's industrial growth trajectory. Describing the initiative as one of the most progressive industrial policy frameworks in the country, he added that the policy will significantly strengthen Punjab's position as a leading destination for manufacturing, services and emerging technology sectors. The Chief Minister said the policy also strengthens the startup ecosystem through enhanced startup seed grants and the establishment of a Government Startup Hub in Mohali. He further said that freight and marketing subsidy support has been introduced to promote exports from Punjab and that a customised package committee has been established to facilitate mega investment projects. The Chief Minister added that major reforms have also been introduced in power supply, labour regulations and building approvals to further improve ease of doing business. "This policy sends a clear message to investors across India and the world that Punjab is open for business. With one of the most comprehensive incentive frameworks in the country, the state is creating the right ecosystem for industry to grow, invest and generate employment." The Chief Minister said the policy represents a significant shift in empowering investors. "For the first time this policy truly puts the power in the hands of investors.

Siblings arrested red-handed in Nuh extortion case

Gurugram: The police have arrested a brother and sister for allegedly blackmailing a resident of Adbar village in Nuh and demanding Rs 5 lakh. The duo were caught red-handed while allegedly attempting to extort Rs 75,000 from the complainant by threatening to file a false rape case against him. According to a complaint filed by Soyeb, a resident of Adbar village, the incident dates back to last year when he had gone to a school in Tapkan village for his nephew's examination. While he was sitting in his car, a woman took his mobile phone on the pretext of calling her brother and did not return it. A few days later, the woman allegedly began calling him from his phone to his other mobile number. Despite repeatedly asking for his phone back, Soyeb said the woman refused

and continued calling him, pressuring him to meet her. "It was on February 4 that the woman told me over the phone that she was coming to my house. Fearing this, I went to Sonkh village, where I followed the woman. Soon after, her brother arrived and assaulted me. After this, the brother and sister threatened that I must either pay Rs 5 lakh or they

would file a false rape case against me," Soyeb said in a complaint. After receiving the complaint, police swung into action. On Thursday, a police team laid a trap and handed Rs 75,000 in cash to the complainant's brother. When he reached the location indicated by the accused, near a tile company on the road from Nalhar to Saunkh village, he signalled the police team. Police then moved in and arrested the siblings red-handed with Rs 75,000 in their possession. "An FIR has been registered against the siblings at Sadar Nuh police station. Both were produced in a local court today, from where the woman was sent to judicial custody while her brother was granted bail," a spokesperson for Nuh Police said.



Man held for killing 5-year-old cousin to teach his mother 'lesson'

The Sikh Times
New Delhi: A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly strangling his 5-year-old cousin and slitting his throat to "teach the boy's mother a lesson" over frequent disputes with her husband, officials said on Saturday. The accused has been identified as Ravi Kumar, a labourer who sold fish by the roadside, they said. "A PCR call was received at 12.20 pm on March 5 reporting that the body of a five-year-old child with sharp injuries on the neck had been found in an under-construction building in Mohan Garden, about 50 yards from his house," a senior police officer said. The victim's father, Pachu Mahto, told

the police that his son had been missing since March 3, and Ravi Kumar had first noticed the body around noon on March 5. Initially, Mahto suspected his wife of having killed their son as she had recently left the house following family disputes. Police analysed her call detail records and traced her to Chhapra in Bihar, where she was questioned. She denied any involvement and said she had left home due to frequent quarrels. Investigators later analysed CCTV footage from the area and spoke to local vendors and shopkeepers. The footage showed the child last seen with Ravi Kumar at around 3.24 pm on March 3, raising suspicion against him, officials said. He told the police that he was angry at the boy's mother over frequent disputes with his maternal uncle (her husband) and wanted to teach her a lesson. On March 3, after consuming alcohol, he took the child to an under-construction building, pushed him to the ground and strangled him. He then slit the boy's throat with a kitchen knife, police said. He covered the body with a jacket and left the spot. Two days later, he returned to the building under the pretext of collecting firewood, brought the body to his house and falsely told family members that the child had been found dead there, they said.

Police chief Satish Golchha visits staff on duty on Holi celebrations

New Delhi: Commissioner Satish Golchha visited several duty points across the national capital to review security arrangements and interact with personnel deployed during Holi celebrations. During the visits, Golchha extended festive greetings to officers and field staff and appreciated their dedication to maintain law and order while ensuring public safety during the festivities. He commended the personnel for performing their duties away from their families on an important festival and encouraged them to continue their work with commitment. As part of the inspection, the commissioner visited duty points at several prominent areas, including Connaught Place, Lajpat Nagar Market, South Extension Market, Peera Garhi Chowk, Mukarba Chowk, ISBT Kashmere Gate and Welcome Metro Station, among others. Golchha also distributed sweets among the deployed personnel and acknowledged their efforts in ensuring peaceful celebrations across the city. Senior officers, including Special Commissioners of Police (Law and Order), Joint Commissioners of Police (Ranges), Additional Commissioners of Police and Deputy Commissioners of Police from respective districts, accompanied the commissioner during the inspections in their jurisdictions.

Man in Rs 1.37cr cheating case lands in police net

New Delhi: In a major breakthrough, the Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested Mohsin Mohammed (36) from New Rajendra Nagar, Delhi, in a high-profile cheating and fraud case involving Rs 1.37 crore and USD 80,000. The accused allegedly duped victims by posing as a large-scale meat exporter with international operations, including Dubai. The case was registered under at Crime Branch police station following a complaint by Arjun Arora, who alleged that Mohsin Mohammed, along with his associates, induced him to invest large sums by promising profits from a non-existent meat export business. Investigations revealed that the accused siphoned Rs 67.70 lakh via bank transfers from the complainant's father and arranged USD 80,000 through Dubai-based associates. Mohsin also issued cheques knowing there were insufficient funds, intending to deceive and delay legal action. The accused was tracked to a double-storey residential block in New Rajendra Nagar after credible intelligence was developed by the Crime Branch. A raiding team comprising SI Mohit, SI Dinesh, ASI Deepak, HC Pankaj and HC Ashwini apprehended him following the confirmation of his identity. The Crime Branch said Mohsin Mohammed had previously been involved in a fraud case registered at the EOW police station.

NAME CHANGE
I, ABDUL TAWWAB S/O Shri Abdul Rehman Resident of House No. C-16, Abhimanyu Gali, Near Babu Ram Chowk, Arjun Mohalla, Moulpur, Delhi-110053 have changed my name as ABDUL TAWWAB S/O ABDUL TAWWAB for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, SIDDHARTH RANA S/O BHAGWAN RANA residing at H No-1074, SIRASPUR, DELHI-110042, have changed my name to SIDDHARTH RANA for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Kapil Kumar Yadav S/O Dinesh Yadav R/O House No-523 P, Sector-14, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001, Have Changed My Name To Kapil Yadav For All Purpose

NAME CHANGE
I, Pradeep Kumar S/o Prem Chand R/O D-754/A, Gali No.1, Ashok Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed the name of my minor son from Arjun to Arjun Vaidwan.

NAME CHANGE
I, Anupama D/o Pradeep Kumar R/O D-754/A, Gali No.1, Ashok Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed my name to Anupama Chaudhary.

NAME CHANGE
I, VINOD KUMAR S/O UDAY SINGH residing at FLAT NO-3/8, NEAR DDA WATER TANK, SECTOR-4, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name to VINOD KUMAR KUSHWAHA for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Manoj Ram S/o Ram Bilash Ram R/O Flat No-6, Tower-8, Harmela Street, IRIS, Vatika City, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana-122018, Have Changed My Name To Manoj Kumar For All Purpose

NAME CHANGE
I Taran Preet Singh Kochhar S/O Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Taranpreet Singh and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, DEEPAK KUMAR VERMA S/O PARTAP SINGH residing at H.No.16, Tara Nagar Main Karkola Road, Karkola, South West Delhi, Delhi-110078 have changed the name of my minor daughter SHREYA ALIAS SHREYA VERMA aged 13 years, and she shall hereafter be known as SHREYA VERMA.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as SAMEERA SINGH D/O SUDHIR KUMAR SINGH residing at Flat No.E-1058, River Heights, Raj Nagar, Extension, Tower-15, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SAMEERA SINGH AMETHIA.

NAME CHANGE
I, Sushma D/O Shambu Prasad Dharama W/O Vinod Kumar R/O B-6 Police Colony Mandir Marg New Delhi 110001 Have changed my name to Sushma Badola for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name to Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, Rahul Vishwakarma S/o H.P. Vishwakarma R/O J-4, Ground Floor Gandhiji Market, Mir Dard Road, Ninto Road, Indraprastha, Central Delhi, Delhi-110002 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Rahul Kumar Vishwakarma in my minor daughter namely Anika Vishwakarma aged 5 years in his School Records. The actual name of mine is Rahul Vishwakarma.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, INDU CHAUHAN W/O NARENDER SINGH CHAUHAN R/O N-129/1, T-HUTS, KHILONA BAGH DIST NORTH WEST DELHI-110009 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as INDU KANWAR in my minor son namely HARSH VARDHAN SINGH CHAUHAN aged 13 years in his school record and birth certificate No. MCDOLIR-2211-004250356. The actual name of mine is INDU CHAUHAN which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that CHANDER VEER S/O RAM JI LAL R/O Q-157 Vikas Vihar Uttam Nagar West Delhi Delhi-110059 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as CHANDER PAL in my minor daughter namely KIRTI aged 15 years in her birth certificate No.MCDOLIR-0110-00425168. The actual name of mine is CHANDER VEER which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, hitherto known as Farman S/O Akeel Ahmed R/O B 27/27, Gali No 4, Subhash Mohalla North Ghonda, Garhi Mendu, Bhajan Pura, North East, Delhi-110053 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Farman Ahmed.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, BALJEET SINGH S/O GURCHARAN SINGH R/O 12/32, Geeta Colony, East Delhi-110031 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as BALJEET SINGH CHUGH, GURPREET KAUR CHUGH, JASLEEN KAUR CHUGH in my minor daughter JASLEEN KAUR aged 16 years in her 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are BALJEET SINGH, GURPREET KAUR and JASLEEN KAUR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, MOGHAL FATIHA BAIG Wife of JC-355017L Rank-NB/SUB Name-MOGHAL MOHAMMAD BAIG Presently residing at 9-5-5, ANDHRA PATNA NAGAR, PERALTA HIGH SCHOOL, PERALTA, CHIRALA PRAKASAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH-523157, have changed my name from MOGHAL FATIHA BAIG to FATHIMA SHAIK for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 16/07/2025 before First Class Magistrate, Shillong, Meghalaya.

NAME CHANGE
I, Jugal Kishor S/O Lila Dhar R/O H.No-196 S/F, Kh.No-619/21, Chatter Pur, South Delhi, Delhi-110074 have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Krishna Devi aged 16 years and she shall hereafter be known as Priya.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Farman S/O Akeel Ahmed R/O B 27/27, Gali No 4, Subhash Mohalla North Ghonda, Garhi Mendu, Bhajan Pura, North East, Delhi-110053 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Farman Ahmed.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Atif S/O Manzoor Khan R/O 1/99-C, 4/F/F, Gali No-5, Guru Harkrishan School Wali Gali, Kabir Nagar, Gokal Pur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Atif Khan.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Akash S/O Makhan Singh Rawat R/O 2087/5, Gali No.20, Prem Nagar Patel Nagar, Patel Nagar S.O, Central Delhi, Delhi-110008 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Akash Rawat.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Saran Kumar W/O Samarjeet Gupta R/O E-400-D, Block E, Ashok Nagar, Vasundhara Enclave, East Delhi, Delhi, Delhi-110096 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Saranam Sav.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Lakman Yadav alias Bhavikshan Yadav S/O Bechan Yadav R/O Gram Debra, Post Bela, Thana Babubarfi, Ward No-02, Bela, PO Bela, Dist Madhubani, Bihar-847224 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bhavikshna Yadav.

NAME CHANGE
I, Sansare Amrut Narayan father of No.4580889H Rank-Hav Name Sansare Ravindra Amrut residing at Vill. Deolali Pravara, Tehsil - Rahuri, District.Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra - 413716 have changed my name from Sansare Amrut Narayan to Amrut Narayan Sansare vide affidavit dated 15/07/2025 executed before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

SUPPLY OF UNDERGROUND ARMOURED, UNSCREENED, RAILWAY SIGNALING CABLE ETC.
Store Tender No.: PN265118, Dtd: 24-02-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
SI.No.:1; Tender No.: PN265118; Closing/Opening Date: At 14:30 hrs. on 25-03-2026.
Brief Description: Supply of Underground Armoured, Unscreened Railway Signaling Cable, PVC insulated, copper conductor conforming to IRS specification No. IRS-S-63/2014 (Rev 4.0) of size: 12 core x 1.5 sq. mm or latest. Qty-4 Km.
For details please visit website (www.ireps.gov.in)

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Atif S/O Manzoor Khan R/O 1/99-C, 4/F/F, Gali No-5, Guru Harkrishan School Wali Gali, Kabir Nagar, Gokal Pur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Atif Khan.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Saran Kumar W/O Samarjeet Gupta R/O E-400-D, Block E, Ashok Nagar, Vasundhara Enclave, East Delhi, Delhi, Delhi-110096 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Saranam Sav.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as Lakman Yadav alias Bhavikshan Yadav S/O Bechan Yadav R/O Gram Debra, Post Bela, Thana Babubarfi, Ward No-02, Bela, PO Bela, Dist Madhubani, Bihar-847224 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bhavikshna Yadav.

NAME CHANGE
I, Saran Preet Kaur Kochhar W/O Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Sarvepreet kaur and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Saran Preet Kaur Kochhar W/O Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Sarvepreet kaur and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as ASHISH KUMAR RATHOR S/O PURAN LAL R/O Q-48, RAJEEV NAGAR BEGUM PUR, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110086, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAZA AHMED.

CONSTRUCTION WORKS
Tender Notice No.: SCL-ENGG-09-2026 (Two packet system); E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SN.1: Brief Description of Item:** Construction of 2-bay Parcel shed at both ends of each platform (PF-1 & PF-2/3) for loading & unloading of parcel packages, including platform resurfacing & yard drain repairing at Badarpur & Silchar Station.
Tender Value: ₹ 12,54,27,573/-
Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 26-03-2026 and opening at 15:00 hrs. on 27-03-2026. Complete information alongwith the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to 15:00 hrs. on 26-03-2026 in the website www.ireps.gov.in

NAME CHANGE
I, NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, SH AUTAR SINGH Father of JC-413677X Rank-SUB MAJ Name-BHAGAT SINGH presently residing at VILL-BILTIYA SUKOLI TALLI PO-DHAUNTYAL, DIST-PAURI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND-246155 have changed my name from SH AUTAR SINGH to AVTAR SINGH for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, Kulsum w/o Rozuddin R/O B-17, Gali No.3A, Near Mohalla Dilshad Masjid, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Kulsom for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name To Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Tajinder Kaur W/o Jaspreet Singh Bajwa R/O 5243 Ramjas Road Kauri Bagh Delhi -110005 Have Changed My Name To Tajinder Kaur Bajwa For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Saran Preet Kaur Kochhar W/O Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Sarvepreet kaur and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, S VANITHA W/o No. 14838283N Rank-HAV/MT Name-RAMESH P R/O VILL-SEDRAMPUTTU, P. SEDRAMPUTTU, TEH-POLUR, DIST-THIRUVANNAMALAI, TAMIL NADU-623215, have changed my name from S VANITHA to VANITHA R for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 15/07/2025 before Notary Public, Kuppara.

NAME CHANGE
I, SH AUTAR SINGH Father of JC-413677X Rank-SUB MAJ Name-BHAGAT SINGH presently residing at VILL-BILTIYA SUKOLI TALLI PO-DHAUNTYAL, DIST-PAURI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND-246155 have changed my name from SH AUTAR SINGH to AVTAR SINGH for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, BALJEET SINGH S/O GURCHARAN SINGH R/O 12/32, Geeta Colony, East Delhi-110031 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as BALJEET SINGH CHUGH, GURPREET KAUR CHUGH, JASLEEN KAUR CHUGH in my minor daughter JASLEEN KAUR aged 16 years in her 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are BALJEET SINGH, GURPREET KAUR and JASLEEN KAUR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, Kulsum w/o Rozuddin R/O B-17, Gali No.3A, Near Mohalla Dilshad Masjid, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Kulsom for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name To Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Tajinder Kaur W/o Jaspreet Singh Bajwa R/O 5243 Ramjas Road Kauri Bagh Delhi -110005 Have Changed My Name To Tajinder Kaur Bajwa For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I Saran Preet Kaur Kochhar W/O Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/O 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Sarvepreet kaur and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

SUPPLY OF UNDERGROUND ARMOURED, UNSCREENED, RAILWAY SIGNALING CABLE ETC.
Store Tender No.: PN265118, Dtd: 24-02-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
SI.No.:1; Tender No.: PN265118; Closing/Opening Date: At 14:30 hrs. on 25-03-2026.
Brief Description: Supply of Underground Armoured, Unscreened Railway Signaling Cable, PVC insulated, copper conductor conforming to IRS specification No. IRS-S-63/2014 (Rev 4.0) of size: 12 core x 1.5 sq. mm or latest. Qty-4 Km.
For details please visit website (www.ireps.gov.in)

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

SUPPLY WORKS
E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
SN.1. Tender No. NB265112 dated:02-03-2026. PL. Code (Group): 335013750020. Name of work: Brake cylinder PBAC 254-130 for LHB coach, faiveley transport rail technologies india private limited part No. 4F 125156, [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. Earnest Money: ₹1,33,830/-. SN.2. Tender No. NB265166 dated:02-03-2026. PL. Code (Group): 561620294211. Name of work: Supply and application of vinyl film lettering for coaches as per drg no RDSO/CIG/DRG/24024, ext CGC-1728 alt-5, as per mtds 156 rev 6 with corrigendum md35131 dated 18.10.2021 and RDSO specification no. RDSO/2010/cg-08 or latest with pre-spacer tape, make: 3m luminous film 6900 or avery dennisons avary SF-100-120-s base film. Colour shade and pattern of sticker shall get approved by consignee before supply. Details as per scope of work enclosed. [Warranty Period: 36 Months after the date of delivery]. Earnest Money: ₹55,000/-. SN.3. Tender No. NB265181 dated:02-03-2026. PL. Code (Group): 380300290059. Name of work: Upgraded AAR approved CTRB Class K (6.5' X 9') for use on freight stock BOXNS Wagon, Make: TIMKEN or NEI or any other equivalent [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. Earnest Money: ₹1,10,000/-. Date & Time of Closing of Tender: 14.30 hrs. on 20-03-2026. The complete information of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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Deputy Chief Material Manager, New Bongaigaon

NEWS BOX

US 'not concerned' by reports Russia aiding Iran's targeting

WASHINGTON. (Agency)
US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Friday that the United States is "not concerned" about reports that Russia is providing intelligence to Iran on US troop positions and movements. While declining to confirm the reports, Hegseth, in an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," said: "We're tracking everything." "Our commanders are aware of everything," he said. "We have the best intelligence in the world. We're aware of who's talking to who." "We're not concerned about that," the defense secretary said. "We mitigate it as we need to." Earlier Friday, the White House also downplayed a report that Russia is providing Iran with targeting information about US forces in the Middle East. "It clearly is not making a difference with respect to the military operations in Iran because we are completely decimating them," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters. "We are achieving the military objectives of this operation and that is going to continue," Leavitt said. The Washington Post, citing officials familiar with the intelligence, said Russia has provided Iran with the locations of US military assets, including ships and aircraft. Six US service members were killed in a drone attack on a US base in Kuwait on Sunday and the CIA station in Riyadh has also been hit. The Post said China did not appear to be aiding Iran's defenses. Russia and China have longstanding diplomatic and trade ties with Iran, while Russia has close military links to the country.

Canadian PM Mark Carney calls for Mountbatten-Windsor's removal from line of succession

TOKYO. (Agency)
Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor should be removed from the royal line of succession for his "deplorable" actions. Speaking to reporters in Tokyo, Carney said the actions that have caused him to be stripped of his royal titles "necessitate" his removal from the line of succession. Despite being stripped of his status as prince in October over his close links with the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the former Prince Andrew, King Charles III's younger brother, remains eighth in line to become monarch. King Charles III is the head of state in Canada, which is a member of the Commonwealth of former colonies. Carney, a former governor of the Bank of England, said that even though Mountbatten-Windsor is "well down" the line of succession, the "point of principle stands." The prime minister said there is a process to remove someone from the line of succession, which he says should be followed. Under the current line of royal succession, Charles' son Prince William is heir to the throne and his three children — Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis — are next.

US Clears Emergency Sale Of 12,000 Bomb Casings Worth \$152 Million To Israel



world. (Agency)
The US State Department approved the "emergency" sale of 12,000 bomb casings to Israel on Friday as the countries engage Iran in an escalating Middle East war. The requested sale of 1,000-pound (450-kilogram) bomb casings, worth an estimated \$151.8 million, was approved by the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, according to a press release. "The proposed sale will improve Israel's capability to meet current and future threats, strengthen its homeland defense, and serve as a deterrent to regional threats," the bureau said in a statement. In addition to the munitions, the sale will include US government and contract engineering, logistics and technical support services, according to the release. Major US defense companies have agreed to quadruple production of advanced weapons, President Donald Trump said in a social media post Friday, a week after the US and Israel first launched strikes on Iran. While US arms sales typically require approval by Congress, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has issued a waiver bypassing the approval, to the consternation of some elected officials. "The Secretary of State has determined and provided detailed justification that an emergency exists that requires the immediate sale to the Government of Israel of the above defense articles and defense services is in the national security interests of the United States," the State Department said, citing the Arms Export Control Act. Congressman Gregory Meeks, a Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said bypassing congressional review of the arms sale "exposes a stark contradiction at the heart of this administration's case for war." "The Trump administration has repeatedly insisted it was fully prepared for this war," Meeks said in a statement. "Rushing to invoke emergency authority to circumvent Congress tells a different story."

US has given 'permission' to India to accept Russian oil: Treasury Secretary Bessent

We have implemented short term measures to help keep oil prices down. We are allowing our friends in India to take oil that is already on ships, says US Treasury Secretary.

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON. (Agency)
The US said it has given "permission" to India to buy Russian oil that is on ships already floating on waterways with a view to easing supplies around the world amid the West Asia conflict. "The world is very well supplied in oil. Yesterday, the Treasury (Department) agreed to let our allies in India start buying Russian oil that was already on the water," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in an

interview to Fox Business on Friday. "The Indians had been very good actors. We had asked them to stop buying sanctioned Russian oil this fall. They did. They were going to substitute it with US oil. But to ease the temporary gap of oil around the world, we have given them permission to accept the Russian oil. We may un-sanction other Russian oil," he said. Bessent added that there are hundreds of millions of sanctioned barrels of sanctioned crude on the water, and in essence, "by un-sanctioning them, Treasury can create supply. And we are looking at that. We are going to keep a cadence of announcing measures to bring relief to the market during this conflict." Several other Trump administration officials have also been saying that the US has now allowed India to buy Russian oil, months after President Donald Trump had imposed 25 per cent punitive tariffs on Delhi for its purchases of oil from Moscow. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said in a post on X Friday that the United States is "allowing our friends in India" to take the Russian oil already on

ships around Southern Asia, refine it and move the stocks into the market quickly in order to ensure a flowing supply and ease pressure amid the ongoing US-Israel war



against Iran. "We have implemented short term measures to help keep oil prices down. We are allowing our friends in India to take oil that is already on ships, refine it, and move those barrels into the market quickly. A practical way to get supply flowing and ease pressure," Wright said. In an interview

to ABC News Live, Wright said that long-term oil supplies are "abundant" and there are no worries regarding that, but in the short term, there is a need to get oil on the market. "But as oil gets bid up a little bit because of those constraints coming out of the Strait of Hormuz, we're taking a short-term action to say all this floating Russian oil storage that's around Southern Asia, it's China just backed up, China does not treat their suppliers well, so there's a bunch of floating barrels just sitting there." "We've reached out to our friends in India and said, 'Buy that oil. Bring it into your refineries.' That pulls stored oil immediately into Indian refineries and releases the pressure on other refineries around the world to buy oil that they're no longer competing with the Indians for in that marketplace," Wright said. So we have a number of measures like that that are short-term and temporary. This is no change in policy towards Russia. This is a very brief change in policy just to keep oil prices down a little bit better than we could otherwise," he added.

Man convicted in political assassination plot he tied to Iranian paramilitary

CANBERRA. (Agency)
A Pakistani business owner who tried to hire hit men to kill a U.S. politician was convicted Friday in a trial that showcased allegations of Iran-backed plotting on American soil. As the Iran war unfolded in the Mideast, Asif Merchant acknowledged in a U.S. court that he sought to put an assassination in motion during the 2024 presidential campaign — a plot that was quickly disrupted by American investigators before it had a chance to proceed. A jury in Brooklyn convicted Merchant on terrorism and murder for hire charges. He faces up to life in prison. The verdict after only a couple hours of deliberations followed a weeklong trial that included remarkable testimony from Merchant himself. Merchant told the jury he was carrying out instructions from a contact in the Islamic Republic's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. According to Merchant, the handler never specified a target but broached names including then-

candidate Donald Trump, then-President Joe Biden and Nikki Haley, the former U.N. ambassador who was also in the race for a time. The Iranian government has denied trying to kill U.S. officials. The nascent plot fell apart after Merchant showed an acquaintance what he had in mind by using objects on a napkin to depict a shooting at a rally. He asked the man to help him hire assassins. Instead, he was introduced to undercover FBI agents who were secretly recording him, as had the acquaintance. Merchant told the supposed hit men he needed services that could include killing "some political person" and paid them \$5,000 in cash in a parked car in Manhattan. "This man landed on American soil hoping to kill President Trump — instead, he was met with the might of American law enforcement," U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement released after the conviction. Merchant's attorney, Avraham Moskowitz, didn't immediately reply to a message

seeking comment. Merchant, 47, worked for Pakistani banks for decades before going into clothing and other businesses. He has two families, in Pakistan and Iran, and he sometimes visited the U.S. for his garment business. Merchant testified that he met a Revolutionary Guard intelligence operative about three years ago. The contact gave him countersurveillance training and assignments including the assassination scheme, Merchant said. He maintained that he had to do his handler's bidding to protect loved ones in Iran. The defendant said he reluctantly went through the motions but thought he'd be arrested and explain his situation to authorities before anyone was killed. I was going along with it," he said, speaking in Urdu through a court interpreter. Prosecutors emphasized that Merchant admitted taking steps to enact the plan on behalf of the Revolutionary Guard, which the U.S. considers a foreign terrorist organization, and he didn't proactively go to authorities.

Blue Sparrow, Lucas Drone, PrSM: New Weapons Shaping Middle East War

World. (Agency)
Israel and the United States are testing new or little-known weapons in the Middle East war, including an Israeli "Sparrow" missile and an Iranian-inspired drone made in America then fired back at Iran. Israel's Blue Sparrow Israeli F-15 jets fired munitions including the Blue Sparrow ballistic missile in the operation to kill Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday, the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times have reported. Developed by Israeli defence firm Rafael, the Blue Sparrow belongs to the same family as its Black Sparrow and Silver Sparrow — all originally conceived to test the effectiveness of Israel's air defences. The Blue Sparrow was developed to imitate missiles like Iraq's Scud-C/D, according to a 2023 presentation document. It weighs 1,900 kilos before it is launched and is 6.5 metres long. During the 12-day war in June last year, "Blue Sparrow and Silver Sparrow aeroballistic missiles made it possible to hit various targets at enormous distances -- 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) for the former and 2,000 kilometres for the latter," the chief of staff of the French air force, General Jerome Bellanger, said in July. This range means a Blue Sparrow can be fired from a safe distance, without a war plane risking being shot down by aerial defences. Reversed engineered Shaheds The Lucas is a low-cost, long-range one-way attack drone that looks strikingly similar to the Iranian Shahed-136 from which it is inspired. The commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), Admiral Brad Cooper, has described it as "indispensable" in the conflict with Iran. "This is an original Iranian drone design," he said on Thursday. "We captured it, pulled the guts out, sent it back to America, put a little 'Made in America' on it," he said. And we're shooting at the Iranians." It was used "for the first time in history" in the operation that started on February 28. "These low-cost drones, modelled after Iran's Shahed drones, are now delivering American-made retribution," CENTCOM said on X. Details about the Lucas are few and far between. It is made by SpektreWorks, developed from its FLM 136 drone target, which was initially developed to emulate a threat and which can fly at 137 km/h for more than 800 kilometres. A CENTCOM spokesperson told specialised website the War Zone that the new drone cost "approximately \$35,000", making it possible to mass produce. In comparison, a cruise missile costs more than \$1 million to make. Iran has deployed hundreds of Shahed-136s against the Gulf, and supplied the technology to Russia, which has produced thousands of such drones under the name Geran-2 for its war against Ukraine.

A Week On, How Iran War Is Unfolding, Affecting Middle East And Beyond

world. (Agency)
The broadening Iran war has ricocheted across the region and beyond, with nearly every country in the Middle East sustaining damage from missile hits, drone strikes or shrapnel. Many are reporting casualties, and key embassies, economic engines and passageways have closed down. On Friday, the seventh day of war, Israeli warplanes struck Beirut and Tehran as Iran launched another wave of retaliatory strikes against Israel and Gulf countries. There was no sign of the war letting up, as US President Donald Trump appeared to rule out negotiations with Iran and called for "unconditional surrender." Since the war started with a joint US-Israel attack on Iran, foreign governments have urged citizens to leave Middle East countries on any available commercial flight. Airspaces

have closed, cruise ships and tankers have been unable to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and major airlines have canceled flights. Countries



around the world have scrambled to organize repatriation flights to get their citizens out of the region. Here's a country-by-country breakdown of the impact of the war so far. All airspace information is for commercial flights, from the real-time flight-tracking service FlightRadar 24, as of Friday, or national authorities. Death count: At

least 1,230 according to Iran's Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs. It's unknown how many are civilians. That figure doesn't include the latest Israeli strikes on the Iranian capital of Tehran. Witnesses described the airstrikes as particularly intense, shaking homes in the area. Others reported explosions around the Iranian city of Kermanshah, in an area home to multiple missile bases. Israel's military also said Friday that it had pummeled an underground bunker Iranian leaders had planned to use in emergencies, deploying more than 50 fighter jets and 100 munitions. Major casualty incidents: More than 160 were killed by a strike on an elementary school in Minab, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. Damage and impact: State TV and the Red Crescent Society of Iran say the US-Israeli strikes have hit hospitals, pharmacies.

Only Iran's 'unconditional surrender' can end war: Trump

TEHRAN. (Agency)
US President Donald Trump said Friday that only Tehran's unconditional surrender would bring an end to the escalating Middle East war as crude oil prices surged on fears about global supply disruption. As Israel intensified its air strikes on Lebanon and announced "broad-scale" strikes on Tehran, the US military said it had hit more than 3,000 targets during the first week of the US-Israeli war on Iran. The conflict has embroiled nations beyond the region, upended the world's energy and transport sectors, and brought chaos to usually peaceful areas around the Gulf. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed for "serious diplomatic negotiations" and warned of a "situation that could spiral beyond anyone's control." Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced support for an "immediate" ceasefire in Iran during a phone call with Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday, the Kremlin said. Trump, who has given varying reasons

for starting the war a week ago, has spurned fresh talks with Tehran, however, and said on Truth Social "there will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER." White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said when the president determines Iran no longer poses a threat to the United States and the operation's goals are realized, "Iran will essentially be in a place of unconditional surrender, whether they say it themselves or not." Trump also promised to help rebuild the country's economy if Tehran installs someone "acceptable" to him to replace Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed last weekend. Crude prices -- already surging with the critical energy waterway the Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf effectively blocked -- rose further on Friday. The international benchmark oil contract, Brent North Sea crude, jumped to \$92.69

per barrel, up 8.5 percent for the day and nearly 30 percent for the week. Humanitarian disaster US Central



Command, responsible for US forces in the Middle East, said more than 3,000 Iranian targets have been struck, including command-and-control centers, air defense systems, missile sites, and navy ships and submarines. Six US service members have died and Trump is to attend the return of their bodies at a dignified transfer

ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Saturday. Israel continued to batter Beirut's southern suburbs, where the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah holds sway, and the Lebanese health ministry said the death toll has risen to 217. Israel also carried out strikes on Nabi Sheet in eastern Lebanon's Baalbek district that the ministry said killed at least nine people. Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam warned that a "humanitarian disaster is looming," and the Norwegian Refugee Council said 300,000 people in the country had been forced to flee. Three UN peacekeepers were wounded when their base in southern Lebanon was hit on Friday, the UN force and the Ghanaian military said. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun accused Israel of targeting them, and French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the attack as "unacceptable."

NEWS BOX

Bengaluru man kills paramour, burns body to destroy evidence

BENGALURU. (Agency)

The Devanahalli police arrested a 34-year-old private employee working at the Kempegowda International Airport for allegedly murdering his female friend and attempting to destroy evidence by burning her body near Devanahalli. The accused, Mounesh Maitri (34), from Hasanapura, Yadgir, allegedly killed Nirmala (36), from Nilugumba, Chikkaballapur.

The police said that the accused and the deceased were in an illicit relationship for about an year, while the accused's wife was in her native for childbirth.

Fearing that the relationship would be exposed, the accused allegedly strangled



Nirmala with a rope on February 21 at his rented house in Devanahalli. After keeping the body in the house for two days, he wrapped it in a bedsheet and plastic tarp, and carried it on his motorcycle to a stormwater drain in Devanahalli town.

He allegedly poured petrol and set the body on fire to destroy the evidence. A case was registered after charred remains were found on February 25. CCTV footage and technical evidence helped identify the victim. The accused was arrested on February 27 and remanded on March 3.

Metro Water floats Rs 800-crore tender to overhaul sewer network in Adyar, Teynampet, Kodambakkam

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Metro Water) has floated tenders for a major overhaul of the underground sewer network in Adyar, Teynampet and Kodambakkam zones, at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore. The project aims to replace ageing pipelines, reduce clogging in sewer lines and prevent road cave-ins in the three zones.

Under the project, old and damaged sewer pipelines will be replaced with new ones, while sewage pumping stations in the zones will be refurbished. Odour control systems will also be installed at the pumping stations.

The selected contractor will maintain the sewage network for five years. The works will be carried out under the Chennai Climate Resilient Water Security and Sewerage Project funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), an official said.

"Tender has been floated to finalise a contractor to replace existing pipelines falling under Nesapakkam STP catchment area with cast iron (CI) and ductile iron (DI) pipes at an estimated cost of '800 crore. When the new pipelines are laid, the Metro Water will ensure maximum leverage of gravitational force rather than deploying pumps," the official added.

Metro Water plans to complete the works in the Nesapakkam catchment area within two years and subsequently extend similar upgrades to other catchment areas in the city.

Under the project, non-clog submersible sewage pump sets will be installed.

No more bumpy ride as Madhya Kailash flyover stretch gets tar coating

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Following complaints from motorists, the state highways department has overlaid the concrete stretch of the Madhya Kailash flyover with a bituminous layer. Official sources said this would improve riding comfort and would not significantly increase the load on the structure.

"Flyovers built by the state highways department and currently in operation at Vadapalani, Porur and other locations have bituminous layers. So laying tarmac over the concrete surface is well within the department's protocol," a senior official said. He also dismissed safety concerns, stating that the additional weight on the flyover is insignificant and the structure remains safe. However, several other state highway flyovers, including those at CMBT and Medavakkam, are still in use with concrete surfaces.

On Wednesday night, the flyover at the Madhya Kailash junction was closed to traffic to lay the new tarmac layer and was reopened on Thursday morning. The 652-metre-long L-shaped flyover connecting Sardar Patel Road and Rajiv Gandhi Salai at the Adyar-Madhya Kailash junction was opened for traffic on February 15. The project was completed at a cost of Rs 60.68 crore. The unidirectional two-lane flyover was built to ease congestion on the IIT Madras-Adyar Cancer Institute stretch. However, a section of commuters had criticised the structure, saying they experienced a bumpy ride along more than 500 metres of the flyover. While around 50 metres on both the ascending and descending ramps had a bituminous layer, the remaining 550 metres of the carriageway were reinforced concrete.

MNS wins G North ward committee chair in BMC; BJP leads in second phase

MNS corporator Yashwant Killedar was declared elected from the G North ward committee, which covers Dadar, Mahim and Matunga, after Shiv Sena UBT's Joseph Koli withdrew from the contest shortly before voting.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena secured the chairperson's post of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's G North ward committee after the Shiv Sena UBT candidate withdrew his nomination at the last minute during the second phase of ward committee elections held on Friday.

MNS corporator Yashwant Killedar was declared elected from the G North ward committee, which covers Dadar, Mahim and Matunga, after Shiv Sena UBT's Joseph Koli withdrew from the contest shortly before voting. Killedar is one of the six MNS corporators in the civic body and also serves as the party's group leader in the BMC.

Ward committee elections were held for six committees on Friday as part of the second phase of the civic body's internal polls. Meanwhile, BJP corporators Prakash Musale,

Rohan Rathod and Shrikala Ramchandran were elected unopposed as chairpersons of the K North and K South (Andheri East), K West

East and Bandra West) and G South (Worli) ward committees.

Earlier on Thursday, chairpersons of six ward committees were elected in the first phase, with the BJP winning three posts, the Congress two and the Shiv Sena one.

With the results declared over the past two days, elections have been completed for 12 of the 17 ward committees in the BMC. So far, the BJP has secured six committees, followed by two each by the Congress and Shiv Sena UBT, and one each by the Shiv Sena and MNS. Elections for the remaining five committees are scheduled to be held on March 9.

The BMC has 17 ward committees comprising corporators from the city's 26 municipal wards. Each committee elects a chairperson from among the corporators, typically from the party or alliance with the majority in that committee.



(Andheri West) and P South (Goregaon) ward committees respectively.

Shiv Sena UBT's Rohini Kamble and Padmaja Chemburkar were also elected unopposed as chairpersons of the H East and H West (Bandra

Govt to extend Metro Line 11 to Dharavi & Bandra Strap: Fresh push for second Metro line in Navi Mumbai

The state Budget also allocated Rs 5,575 crore for the second Navi Mumbai Metro line connecting Taloja and Khandeshwar, a project that had been in the pipeline for over a decade.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra government, in its Budget on Friday, announced the extension of Metro Line 11 from Wadala to Gateway of India through redeveloped Dharavi up to Bandra station and Bandra Terminus, along with a fresh push for the second Metro line in Navi Mumbai.

The underground Metro Line 11 project, to be implemented by Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd, is estimated to cost Rs 23,487 crore and is currently awaiting approval from the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Construction is expected to begin in 2027. The state Budget also allocated Rs 5,575 crore for the second Navi Mumbai Metro line connecting Taloja and Khandeshwar, a project that had been in the pipeline for over a decade.

The government also outlined plans to significantly expand the water transport network across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The existing 125 km waterway network will be expanded to 340 km with the development of 24 new terminals on 11 routes

and the modernisation of 30 existing terminals at a cost of Rs 6,600 crore. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the expansion is expected to increase the annual passenger capacity from the current 1.6 crore to 7.39 crore



by 2031, providing an environment friendly and cost effective alternative to road transport.

The Budget also announced that a master plan will be prepared for areas surrounding the Bullet Train stations at Virar, Boisar and Thane

to maximise economic opportunities around the high speed rail corridor. The three stations are expected to be completed by February 2027.

Currently, about 173 km of Metro lines are operational across Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur.

The government said another 50 km of Metro network will be opened in the coming year, including stretches of Line 9 (Dahisar to Mira Bhayandar), Line 2B (Mandale to DN Nagar), Line 4 (Wadala to Thane) and Line 5 (Thane to Bhiwandi to Kalyan).

By 2029, an additional 165 km of Metro corridors are expected to be operational, including Metro Line 8 connecting the Mumbai airport with the Navi Mumbai International Airport at an estimated cost of Rs 22,862 crore.

The Budget also highlighted plans to redevelop slum settlements across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The Slum Rehabilitation Authority is preparing a master plan to redevelop around 20 lakh slum homes and construct 10 lakh affordable houses to rehabilitate displaced residents.

Maharashtra scraps serial killer study in prisons after complaints against project head

The criminology research project titled "RUDRA", approved in May last year, aimed to study repeat offenders and develop behavioural profiles to help predict crimes and identify inmates who may require psychological counselling.

Mumbai. (Agency)

An ambitious Maharashtra government project to interview and create a database of serial killers and other serious offenders in state prisons has been scrapped following complaints against the project head.

The criminology research project titled "RUDRA", approved in May last year, aimed to study repeat offenders and develop behavioural profiles to help predict crimes and identify inmates who may require psychological counselling.

According to a Government Resolution issued by the state Home Department on Friday, complaints were received against the project's research head, Atharva Deshpande (22), prompting the government to cancel the project.

A GR issued by the Home Department said, "...considering the serious complaints received

against the Research Head of this project, Mr. Atharva Deshpande, and the report submitted by the Dean, Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Corporation Medical College and General Hospital, Sion, Mumbai, in connection with the said



complaints, there is a possibility of adverse impact on the functioning of this important project of the Government."

It further stated that "considering the above facts, the Government has decided to cancel the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the financial sanction given for the "Criminology

Research Project RUDRA" implemented in the prisons of the state with immediate effect."

Sources said the complaint had been made by members of the nearly 10-person team working on the project, RUDRA (Research Unit for Detection and Resolution of Anomalies in Criminals).

"An in-house enquiry was conducted into the allegations following which the Dean submitted a report. Based on the report, it was decided that running the project would no longer be tenable in its current manner," a source

said. When contacted, Deshpande said he did not wish to comment on the matter. The Home Department is now considering consulting the Bengaluru-based National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences to carry out a similar research initiative.

Gujarat BJP MLA & former minister Govind Parmar suffers heart attack, dies at 72

Parmar's demise has vacated the Umreth constituency seat, which was part of the BJP's tally in the state Assembly.

Vadodara. (Agency)

GOVIND PARMAR, the BJP MLA from Umreth Assembly constituency in Anand district, died on Friday after suffering a heart attack. He was 72.

According to sources within the BJP, Parmar was taken to a hospital in the early hours on Friday, where he died. A leader of the Kshatriya-Thakor community of Anand district who had considerable influence in the cooperative sector, Parmar was a four-term MLA - he had been elected in 1995, 1998, 2017 and 2022.

In 1995, Parmar was elected as an Independent from the Sarsa Assembly constituency and was re-elected as MLA in 1998 on a Congress ticket. He lost the seat in 2002 and 2007. He contested the 2017 Assembly polls from Umreth constituency on a BJP ticket and won against arch rival and NCP leader Jayant Patel (Boskey). He retained this constituency in 2022.

Parmar also served as a Minister of State (MoS) in the Cabinet led by the then Chief Minister, the Late Vijay Rupani, and served as the MoS for Panchayat with an independent charge. He also held the charge of the Environment Department as MoS.



Parmar's demise has vacated the Umreth constituency seat, which was part of the BJP's tally in the state Assembly. He had earlier served as president of the Anand district panchayat. Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi and BJP Gujarat President Jagdish Vishwakarma posted on X to offer condolences following Parmar's death.

'We had no idea how to run a homestay': Why women and retirees are making their homes the new holiday address

Since September last year, around 2,000 applications for homestays have been received from temple towns and eco-tourism zones under the Bread and Breakfast and Home Stay Policy, 2025. Varanasi and Ayodhya top the charts

Lucknow. (Agency)

It was Colonel Sandeep Srivastava's daughter who suggested he start a homestay. She realised several rooms in their Lucknow home were lying vacant - her own room as she is settled in London, her brother's room as he studies abroad, and an additional guest room. In October last year, the retired Army officer took the plunge and opened the homestay in Kathwara village along the Lucknow highway.

"At first, I thought it would simply be a way to generate some extra income," Colonel Srivastava, who is visiting his daughter in the UK, tells The Indian Express. "But once we actually started it, we realised it also solved another problem - it filled the emptiness we felt when the children moved



abroad." In the few months since Chandrakanta Farm Stay opened, it has received guests from across the country - Delhi, Rajasthan,

Gujarat and even Mysuru. As the property lies en route to Chandrika Devi temple, many of their visitors combine the visit

with trips to Ayodhya.

"Families come... parents and children... sometimes, the children listen to my travel stories. My wife cooks food for them - it feels almost like a family environment," he says, adding that the children especially like his stories from his service days.

He says they charge Rs 1,500 for a room. "What began as an idea from my daughter has turned into something that keeps us engaged and connected with people," he adds. "The house feels alive again." Srivastava is among a growing number of homeowners who have converted spare rooms into certified homestays under the Uttar Pradesh 'Bed and Breakfast and Home Stay Policy, 2025' - a trend that's gaining ground, especially in temple towns of the

state and eco-tourism sites.

After the policy was introduced in an effort to boost tourism, 750 certified homestays have come up across UP - a sharp rise from around 150 in early January.

The number of applications, too, has seen a surge. According to Tourism Department data, around 2,000 applications were received from across the state since September last year, with Varanasi and Ayodhya taking the lead - 813 and 144 applications were received respectively.

In its recently announced annual Budget, the government has also set an ambitious target of establishing 50,000 homestays across the state.

Further, it isn't just the elderly who are setting up homestays - women are as well.

Gujarat warehousing leasing up by 10% in 2025, Ahmedabad leads demand: Report



Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Gujarat recorded a 10 per cent increase in warehousing leasing volumes in 2025 compared to 2024, according to a report by property consultancy Knight Frank India released on Friday.

Ahmedabad remained the largest warehousing market in the state, with leasing activity reaching 6.4 million sq ft. This marked an 11 per cent year-on-year increase. The city ranked sixth among 21 major warehousing markets in India in terms of annual transactions.

Ahmedabad, Surat, Vapi, and Vadodara together recorded 9.14 million square feet (sq ft) of leasing in 2025, up from 8.28 million sq ft in 2024.

According to the report, the manufacturing sector accounted for 46 per cent of demand in Ahmedabad, followed by third-party logistics (3PL), e-commerce, and retail.

"Supported by the government's manufacturing push and enabling policy initiatives, Gujarat's warehousing and industrial real estate market is poised for sustained growth," Rumi Parikh, Senior Director and Branch Head (Ahmedabad), Knight Frank India, was quoted as saying in a release.

Among Ahmedabad's logistics clusters, the Aslali-Kheda belt accounted for 43 per cent of transactions, while the Changodar-Bagodara belt increased its share from 35 per cent to 41 per cent during the year.

Surat ranked 10th among the 21 warehousing markets. Leasing volumes there reached 1.48 million sq ft in 2025, largely driven by activity in the Kosamba-Palsana belt. Grade A rentals in Surat ranged between ₹20 and ₹28 per sq ft per month.

Danger of playing catch-up with defence tech

The American-Israeli attack on Iran nudged and winked, if not instigated, by Iran's other regional adversaries has once again underscored that multiple obituaries of the post-1945 US-anchored, soi-disant 'rules-based' international order are repeatedly being foregrounded. The world has regressed to the early 20th century where outcomes are once again being measured in hulls, squadrons and technological edges.

In this churn, the US has delineated a new baseline: its defence budget has almost crossed the trillion-dollar threshold, a sum larger than the next nine nations' combined. A significant portion of this is being channelled into a new generation of capabilities, from the yet-unproven 'Golden Dome' architecture to the software-defined platforms of Silicon Valley's defence tech startups.

Opposite this is the People's Liberation Army of China. Since the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-96, Beijing maintained a sustained, double-digit increase in defence spending for two decades, a trajectory that moderated in 2016 to a still-steady 7.6 percent annual rise in the decade since.

From a defence expenditure roughly a sixth of the US's in 2012, China compressed the gap to roughly a third by 2024. In the Indo-Pacific, China's defence spending is hegemonic: more than thrice that of India, five times that of Japan and nearly seven times South Korea's. The Chinese spend more on defence than the next 22 Indo-Pacific militaries combined, including India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and Taiwan. It translates into the world's largest navy, a modernised air force operating stealth aircraft, and an integrated missile force predicated on power projection far from its shores. For a nation of India's geostrategic heft, a peninsula jutting into the Indian Ocean with a contested 15,000-km land frontier, this is the unforgiving context. We are not just situated in a hostile neighbourhood, but also positioned in the crucible of the 21st century's defining great-power competition.

Against this backdrop, India's own fiscal calculus for national security demands a cold, hard audit. The M M Joshi Committee flagged a chilling trend in 2018: defence expenditure had slid from 2 percent of GDP in 2014-15 to 1.6 percent by 2017-18. It has averaged 1.9-2.1 percent since then—a persistent pattern of stagnation.

For 2026-27, the Budget estimated defence spending at Rs 7.85 lakh crore. While this represents an over-15 percent increase from the last fiscal, as a percentage of GDP it hovers around 2 percent, close to the average since 2014. Within this constrained envelope, the twaddle runs deeper. Capital outlays remain anaemic—less than 30 percent of total defence spending, stuck at less than 0.6 percent of GDP for the three services. These modest outlays are strangulating the modernisation the armed forces so desperately require.

The Indian Air Force's struggle to replace its ageing squadrons and expand its fighter fleet is held hostage to this dynamic. The production ramp-up of the Tejas light combat aircraft remains painfully sluggish, a source of public frustration. The advanced medium combat aircraft, however, languishes in bureaucratic limbo. The navy's submarine and surface fleet expansion, from Project S5 to the P-18 class, face interminable headwinds. Projects 75-I and 77 for conventional and nuclear-powered submarines struggle to translate ambitious policy into steel in the water, even as Chinese shipyards launch vessels at a pace outstripping the US's. The army requires advanced surveillance, rugged communications and specialised weaponry. Artillery modernisation remains a work in progress—delayed, scaled down or proceeding in numbers too small to make decisive operational difference. The quest for 'atmanirbharta' in defence is mired in systemic inertia. The Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy 2020 ambitiously aimed for a turnover of ₹1,75,000 crore and exports of ₹35,000 crore by 2025. Yet.

Lessons from raising a child with autism

Autism was never the enemy. Hopelessness was. And we chose not to surrender.

AS a doctor in uniform, I have worn the olive green for years, managed trauma in high-pressure environments and made life-saving decisions in seconds. On the battlefield, chaos demands clarity. Emotion is secondary to action. But nothing in my training prepared me for a sentence from a specialist in a calm and composed tone: "Your child has autism." There was no protocol, no triage drill, no combat manual. Just silence. My wife's fingers tightened around mine; I remember staring at the wall — not because I was brave, but because I was breaking. Bruce Lee once said, "Do not pray for an easy life. Pray for the strength to endure a difficult one." That day, strength felt distant. We were in denial — a phase I am not proud of. I could feel this would be the fiercest battle and, that too, with an invisible enemy. United in resolve, we decided to tackle it head-on. My son was two and a half years old. He didn't respond to his name, he tore paper into strips, avoided eye contact. My wife saw it, but I refused to; I resisted. As a father, I hid behind denial — because accepting autism felt like accepting defeat. But autism does not wait for your readiness. It arrives, stays and teaches.

New Delhi: Where fear turned into fire

We entered the world of early intervention — speech, occupational and behavioural therapy. Our real training began. Along with it came hefty bills. Finances felt like combat logistics, but quitting was not an option. Autism does not wait. Neural development is time-sensitive. Early years are decisive. My wife took the bravest decision to specialise in autism spectrum disorders. What began as maternal anxiety became professional competence. She studied while raising our son and converted pain into purpose. That decision transformed our journey.

Our son secured admission to a reputed school. On paper, it was inclusion, but in practice, we discovered that inclusion without sufficient numbers of trained special educators, structured shadow support and measurable accountability is fragile. Awareness campaigns are not enough. Schools require autism-specific training, realistic teacher-student ratios and regulatory oversight.

"Absorb what is useful, discard what is not, add what is uniquely your own." That became our model. We absorbed therapies, discarded blind hope, added relentless parental involvement, stopped searching for miraculous cures and began building structured, evidence-based routines at home.

We realised something powerful: Therapists give one hour. Parents shape the other 23.

The day my son ran towards traffic

On a Sunday morning, when he was five, we were in Delhi cantonment, outside a temple. In seconds, he bolted towards the main road. I caught him once; the second time, I couldn't. A stranger stopped him just before the traffic line. That day, I stopped being a passive father and became hyper-aware. Roads became war zones,

did. My wife said something that changed me: "He isn't being difficult. He is trying to communicate." That sentence humbled me. I emptied my ego, stopped trying to control and started trying to understand.

Jaipur: Discipline meets love

In 2023, we moved to Jaipur. We applied discipline differently. For 90 straight days, we practised structured behavioural walks with our son and practised behavioural techniques. Interruptions like viral fevers proved to be great setbacks — days when it felt like we were back to zero. But consistency strengthened his working memory and significantly reduced impulsive road-running. I still remember that evening when he walked 100 metres ahead and turned back responsibly — I did not clap. I did not shout. I simply looked at the sky

and whispered Thank you. We were never extraordinary. We were just consistent.

What autism taught me

It taught me that:

1 Progress is microscopic before it becomes visible.

1 Setbacks are not reversals — they are rehearsals.

1 Inclusion without trained infrastructure is illusion.

1 Sleep, structure and sensory regulation are not luxuries — they are foundations.

Most importantly, it taught me that leadership at home is harder than leadership in uniform.

In the armed forces, commands are obeyed.

At home, love must persuade.

To every parent fighting quietly

You are not weak because you are tired.

You are not failing because progress is

slow.

You are warriors in civilian clothes.

My son is 17 now.

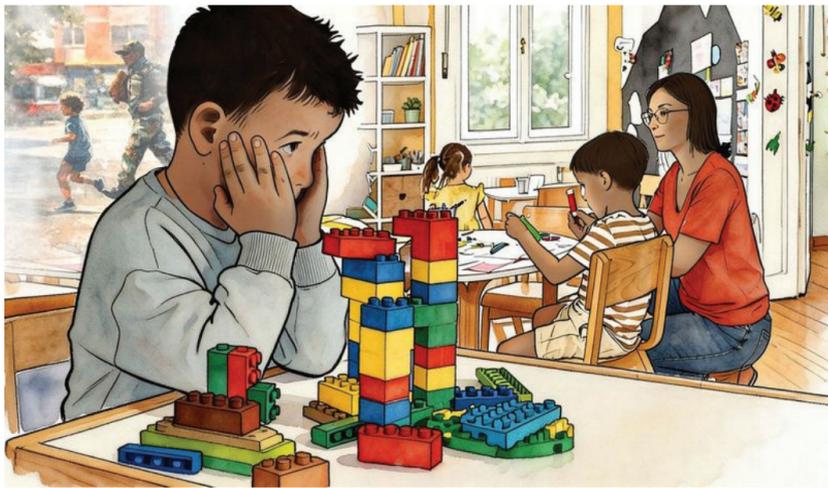
He loves structure and predictability.

He is not "less". He is wired differently.

And I no longer ask, "Why us?"

Because Bruce Lee was right: "You fall seven times, stand up eight. Autism was never the enemy. Hopelessness was. And we chose not to surrender."

This journey shaped my broader reflection: Autism care in India must move beyond episodic therapy towards ecosystem-based reform. Autism is no longer rare. This is not a niche condition. It is a public health and education priority.



crowds became unpredictable terrain. I realised autism is not just delayed speech. Sometimes, it is a child who cannot process danger fast enough. I learned to adapt, anticipate, flow around behaviours instead of colliding with them.

Mumbai: When regression broke us again

In 2018, we moved to Mumbai. With relocation, we rebuilt our ecosystem from scratch — new therapists, routines, sensory adaptations. Then Covid struck. Lockdown shattered routines and dismantled structure. Regression followed. One evening, he ran out of the house towards a swing 150 metres away, driven not by defiance but by an unprocessed sensory need. His speech couldn't clearly explain his need; his behaviour

Tonnes of garbage: Scientific waste disposal needed in Punjab

The upcoming Solid Waste Management Rules are meant to bring order to this chaos

PUNJAB'S garbage crisis is no longer merely an urban nuisance; it has become an environmental hazard over the decades. With stricter waste management norms set to take effect on April 1, civic bodies across the state are confronting a daunting reality: mountains of legacy waste, weak municipal capacity and the threat of regulatory penalties. Across Punjab's 166 urban local bodies, nearly 41 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste still remain to be cleared — a task unlikely to be completed before April 2027. Years of unscientific dumping have created sprawling garbage mountains that release toxic leachate, contaminate groundwater and periodically catch fire. At the same time, cities generate thousands of tonnes of fresh municipal waste every day, much of which still ends up mixed and poorly processed. The upcoming Solid Waste Management Rules are meant to bring order to this chaos. They require stricter segregation of waste streams, mapping and remediation of dumpsites and a time-bound push toward scientific processing. Yet the



new regime also exposes how ill-prepared many municipalities remain. Even in districts that claim 100%

door-to-door collection, mixed waste continues to be transported to dumping grounds with little segregation or treatment.

Regulatory pressure is mounting. The National Green Tribunal has repeatedly pulled up the state for failing to manage solid waste and untreated sewage, imposing heavy environmental compensation. Civic bodies are reportedly paying around Rs 10 lakh daily in penalties for non-compliance. It is a reflection of the costs of administrative inertia. Punjab now faces a critical test. Bio-mining legacy dumps, enforcing segregation at source and strengthening municipal infrastructure must become urgent priorities. Without stronger planning, funding and accountability, the new rules risk becoming another well-intentioned reform buried under decades of accumulated neglect.

Op Epic Fury: The inmates are running the asylum

In Trump's topsy-turvy Washington DC, there is a dense fog over the objectives of the attacks on Iran

AMID the unprovoked and illegal attacks launched by the United States and Israel on the Islamic Republic of Iran on February 28, the rupee is falling, stock markets have crashed, oil prices have soared and there is a looming shortage of LNG and LPG. None of this is linked with the fiscal strategies of the Ministry of Finance or monetary policies of the Reserve Bank of India. And it comes in the wake of the chaos unleashed by US President Donald Trump's tariff tantrums and the turbulence created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Welcome to a brave new world where geopolitics has become the new macroeconomics. In Trump's topsy-turvy Washington DC, there is a dense fog over the objectives of the attacks. Initially, the stated focus was on Iran's nuclear programme. Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Al Busaidi mediated several rounds of talks in Muscat that brought Iran and the US close to a final agreement. But the guns were locked and loaded, forcing the usually low-key Busaidi to make a desperate public plea. Give diplomacy a chance, he said, because Iran had finally agreed that it would not accumulate or stockpile any enriched uranium. That didn't prevent Israel and the US from launching a volley of strikes on the morning of February 28 to assassinate Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several other senior members of the theocratic regime in Iran. Because neither President Trump nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could take Yes for an answer. It wasn't just the nuclear programme; it was also Iran's missiles and launchers, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio later clarified. No, the real problem was the regime itself, Trump asserted. Regime change? Surely



Washington hadn't already forgotten its disastrous experiments with regime change in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan? In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's alleged nuclear weapons were never found but he was defeated, deposed

and captured in 2003. The power vacuum created by the dismantling of the Ba'ath Party gave birth to the Islamic State and a host of other extremist groups. The Americans ended up with 37,000 casualties (dead or injured), a bill of \$2.9 trillion and a battered and bruised country. In Afghanistan, the Taliban paid the price for hosting Osama bin Laden in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. They were defeated and removed from power in 2001, only to triumphantly return to Kabul in 2021. The Americans suffered over 25,000 casualties and spent \$2.3 trillion in the taxpayer-funded fiasco. In Libya, Muammar Qaddafi

was taken down in 2011, but the country went through a destructive civil war and still remains cleaved into two antagonistic parts. Arms flowing into Libya have also fed into Islamist groups in the Sahel, leading to violent insurgencies in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Regime change has consequences. Israel, though, has no such misgivings. Netanyahu is quite clear that his end goal is to get a friendly regime in place in Tehran. "This is what I have aspired for 40 years," he crowed. Don't miss this opportunity to take back your country, he told the Iranians. And unlike the Americans who were looking for a quick exit, Israel is quite prepared for a campaign that would last several weeks. The emerging script suggests that we are, once again, witnessing a case of an aggressive tail wagging a befuddled dog.

For the Iranians, who have been at the receiving end of an unpopular and repressive regime, it isn't a question of simple binaries. Hating the theocratic regime doesn't mean embracing the US and Israel. The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) Operation Ajax in 1953 to remove then Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and install the Shah hasn't been forgotten. Bombing a school in Minab and killing over 160 schoolgirls isn't going to win hearts and minds in Iran. Nor will reports that the CIA is planning to arm the Kurdish minority to rise against Tehran. Having seen Iraq and Syria next door, they would also realise that even a bad government is better than having no government at all. Iran's own response to the bombings appears to have caught the US by surprise. The regime has survived the decapitation of its top leaders by pivoting to a collective leadership and a more decentralised command-and-control structure. They have managed to land some blows on US military

bases in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. They have also hit airports, ports, hotels and energy infrastructure in each of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to all shipping traffic. In lashing out at its Arab neighbours, Tehran appears to have reserved a special ire for the UAE, despatching over a thousand missiles and drones at Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Fujairah. Effective air defence systems have kept damage to a minimum, but Tehran clearly hopes that its attacks will force the rulers of Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia to use their special relationship with Trump and bring the war to an early halt. That tactic might backfire. Abu Dhabi has formidable defence capabilities but has so far chosen to act with restraint, as have the other Gulf nations. This is not our war, they have maintained, even as they have asserted their right to respond to Iran's aggression.

Over the last few years, the Gulf countries had worked assiduously to mend fences with Iran. They had actively opposed this war, not only for its potential to destabilise the region but also because a belligerent Israel had started to appear as a larger strategic threat than a weakened Iran. But Iran's actions over the last six days have endangered their economic security and may even push some into joining the US-Israel coalition. It is a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Finally, spare a thought for Canadian PM Mark Carney's spirited plea in Davos for a concert of middle powers to counter Trump's unilateral violations of international law. The last week has shown Carney, along with the leaders of France, Germany, Australia, UK and even India, delicately tiptoeing around the debris of the rules-based order. Because the inmates in Washington DC are running the asylum. And nobody wants to mess with them.

Himachal to merge 10 colleges due to low enrolment

Shimla.(Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to merge 10 government degree colleges with nearby institutions due to low student enrolment, a move aimed at improving the utilisation of resources and availability of teachers.

The decision was taken by the Higher Education Department after it was found that several colleges were functioning with very small student strength, leading to underutilisation of infrastructure and staff.

Students studying in the colleges that would be merged will be accommodated in nearby colleges to ensure continuation of their studies without disruption.

After the merger, teachers and other staff working in these institutions would be declared surplus and shifted to colleges where there is a shortage of faculty.

Among the colleges identified for merger are three in Shimla district: Tikkar with only six students, Kupvi with 53 students, and Nankhari with 66 students. In Mandi district, Sandhol has 38 students, and Kotli has 70. In Kangra district, Haripur Guler has 32 students, while Multhan has 59 students.

Similarly, Bhalei College in Chamba district has 19 students, Jaynagar in Solan district has 68 students, and Kukumseri in Lahaul-Spiti district has 40 students.

Initially, the state government had planned to merge colleges with fewer than 100 students. However, the proposal faced opposition in several areas. Following the protests, the government revised the decision and reduced the threshold to 75 students, as a result of which 11 colleges were excluded from the merger plan.

Man booked in Shimla over threatening video with pistol-like lighter

Shimla.(Agency)

The police in Shimla have booked a man for allegedly threatening another individual with a pistol-like object in a video that went viral on social media, causing fear among residents.

According to Superintendent of Police Gaurav Singh, a case was registered on March 5 at Jubbal police station after a video surfaced on Facebook showing a man brandishing a pistol-like object and threatening to kill another individual.

Police initially registered the case under Sections 351 and 352 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Sections 25 and 30 of the Arms Act.

During the investigation, the accused was identified as Vijay Kumar alias Sam, son of Govardhan Das, a resident of village Patthar Nala (Jhalri), Post Office Deem, Tehsil Jubbal in Shimla district. Police conducted a search of his house and recovered a pistol-like object, a lighter, and a mobile phone with a SIM card, which were seized for investigation.

SP Gaurav Singh said, "The investigation revealed that the pistol-like object shown in the video was not a real firearm but a lighter designed to resemble a pistol, which the accused used while making the threatening video."

He added that further investigation in the case is underway, and legal action is being taken against the accused under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The SP also warned that strict legal action will be taken against individuals who attempt to spread fear or panic through social media platforms.

Family donates body of 81-year-old to Hamirpur Medical College for research

Nadaun (HP).(Agency)

The body of 81-year-old Sita Ram, a resident of Kohla village in the Nadaun revenue subdivision, was donated to Dr Radhakrishnan Government Medical College and Hospital, Hamirpur, on Friday evening by his family members. Sita Ram passed away at his home on Friday morning after a brief illness. During his lifetime, he had pledged to donate his body to the Hamirpur Medical College after his death so that it could be used for medical research and the education of students.

Vinod Kumar, the eldest son of the deceased, said the family fulfilled his father's last wish by donating the body to the medical college. He added that Sita Ram had first expressed his desire to donate his body around four years ago and had since prepared the entire family to honour his decision.

The family later brought the body to the medical college and formally handed it over to the authorities. Dr Harjinder Singh, Head of the Department at the medical college, described the act as a noble contribution that would greatly benefit medical students and the medical fraternity by helping them learn and conduct research.

He said that earlier, the medical college had to obtain bodies for academic purposes from PGI, Chandigarh. However, over the past three years, five bodies have been donated by people from the district itself. He added that a donated body is usually preserved for 10 to 15 years, or even longer, depending on academic requirements. Hundreds of villagers gathered when the ambulance arrived in the village to take the body to the medical college. In accordance with the deceased's wishes, the body was sent off with respect and ceremony, with a band playing as villagers helped pull the ambulance towards the main road using a large rope.

HP gets new Gov in Kavinder Gupta: Old RSS hand, went to jail during Emergency

He ventured into politics at the civic level and was Jammu mayor for three consecutive terms between 2005 and 2010.

Chandigarh .(Agency)

Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, has been named as 23rd Governor of Himachal Pradesh. He replaces Shiv Pratap Shukla who has been the Governor of Telangana. On Friday, Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri called on Shukla at Lok Bhavan and extended his congratulations and best wishes on his new appointment.

Gupta, who has served as secretary of the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit, is known for his outspoken statements on political issues. Gupta has a long association with the RSS, having joined the organisation when he was a minor.

Like many in the RSS, he too was jailed during the Emergency. Gupta was the secretary of the Punjab wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) between 1978-79 and headed the J&K unit of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, the BJP's youth wing, from 1993-98. He ventured into politics at the civic level and was Jammu mayor for three consecutive terms between 2005 and 2010. He was also J&K's general secretary for a brief period.

He became an MLA after defeating then sitting

minister Raman Bhalla from the Gandhinagar seat in the 2014 J&K Assembly polls. After the BJP forged a post-poll alliance with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and became a part of the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed government, Gupta



was unanimously elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He was the first-ever BJP Speaker of the J&K Assembly. After Sayeed's death in April 2016, his daughter Mehbooba Mufti took over the PDP and was sworn in as CM. Gupta graduated from

Speaker to deputy CM in April 2018 — but that was short-lived. The BJP ended ties with PDP in June 2018, leading to the collapse of Mufti's government. He has had a brief brush with controversies too in the past. In 2018, while he was Speaker, Gupta blamed the Rohingya community for the terror attack on Sunjwan Army Station. Following protests from the Opposition benches, his remarks were later expunged from the Assembly proceedings.

In April 2018, barely hours after taking oath as Deputy CM, Gupta called the gang rape and killing of a minor Bakerwal girl a "small" thing. "Such challenges (as the incident) are faced by the government. It should not have been given all this hype... It was a small thing and we have to think over it so that such incidents are not repeated," he said. In 2020, he described the transfer of state land under the now-scrapped Roshni Act as "land jihad". Subsequently, allegations of him allegedly occupying tracts of the J&K Revenue Department's land in Khasra Girdawari had come to light. Gupta has denied these claims.

Accompanied by band-baja, Minister protests against Bajwa for 'casteist' remark

LoP says AAP leader compromised House security, writes to Governor for probe

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Punjab Cabinet minister Harbhajan Singh, accompanied by a wedding band, Friday led a protest against Congress leader Parup Singh Bajwa for allegedly making a casteist remark against him.

Bajwa, the Leader of Opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha, had last month accused Harbhajan Singh of corruption and said, "Jehra pehle band vajaan da reha, ehda band asin vajvange (He used to play in a band, we will take him to task)". The remarks had drawn sharp reactions from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party even as Bajwa had denied that his remarks had anything to do with Harbhajan Singh's caste.

Harbhajan Singh, who hold the PWD portfolio, said that his father was a band master, and Bajwa's remarks mocked people who made an honest living. He demanded an apology from the Congress leader as protesters, among them MLA Amansher Singh Sherry Kalsi, raised slogans

against Bajwa even as the wedding band played tunes. The protest was held ahead of the start of the budget session. Bajwa dubbed the protest deeply disturbing and raised serious concerns



about "breach of security." "It is shameful that in its desperation, the AAP government compromised the security of the Vidhan Sabha by allowing unauthorised persons to enter a

restricted and highly sensitive area. This is a grave lapse. I have written to the Governor requesting that an inquiry be ordered so that responsibility can be fixed," he said.

Harbhajan Singh said Bajwa's remark was insulting not just to him but to the entire Dalit community.

"By mocking the livelihood of marginalised communities, Bajwa has exposed the mindset of the Congress leadership towards the poor and Dalit sections of society," he said.

"The people of Punjab are watching the arrogance of Congress leaders closely, and they will give a fitting reply to those who insult the dignity and livelihoods of poor and Dalit communities," the minister added.

Earlier, the Punjab State Scheduled Castes Commission (PSSCC) summoned the Congress leader to seek his explanation over his remark. Bajwa denied making any caste-sensitive remark in his submission to the panel.

CH01-DD-0001 fetches Rs 53.88L, RLA Chandigarh generates record revenue

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The registration number 0001 from the CH01-DD series drew an intense bidding in the latest e-auction conducted by the Registering and Licensing Authority (RLA), Chandigarh, and fetched Rs 53.88 lakh. The reserve price for the number was set at just

generated a revenue of Rs 4.48 crore — the highest revenue in the history of auctions conducted by the authority.

The registration numbers from 0001 to 9999 of the new series were put up for bidding along with the unsold special numbers from the previous series.



Rs 50,000. The e-auction was conducted from March 4 to 6 during which 591 registration numbers were auctioned, officials said. During the three-day process, the RLA

The number 0001 from the series was the most sought-after number, with another premium number 0003 securing the second highest bid of Rs 32.32 lakh.

The number 0005 was auctioned for Rs 17.50 lakh, 0009 fetched Rs 14.40 lakh and 0007 went for Rs 14.22 lakh. Among other fancy numbers, CH01-DD-1000 was sold for Rs 9.19 lakh, 0006 for Rs 8.50 lakh and 0008 for Rs 8.24 lakh. The numbers 0002 and 0100 were auctioned for Rs 7.25 lakh and Rs 6.23 lakh, respectively.

The e-auction was conducted through an online bidding system, allowing participants to place bids digitally during the specified period.

The RLA officials said the overwhelming response and record revenue highlight the popularity of the auction system among the city's vehicle owners.

Aspirants need to have an open, learning mind: Economics graduate who secured AIR 25

Chandigarh.(Agency)

For Chandigarh's Bhavika Chopra, who secured an All India Rank of 25 in the UPSC CSE 2025, the day has been spent receiving congratulatory messages from her family and friends. Talking about what inspired her, Chopra says, "I had a professor recommend two or three books to me written by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, 'Good Economics for Hard Times' and 'Poor Economics'... I think the civil services, the way they operate, they just give you that opportunity to implement whatever you read about in theory, and that was my inspiration for the UPSC exam."

She did her graduation in Economics from St Stephen's College, University of Delhi. Earlier, she also studied in Carmel Convent School, Chandigarh.

Bhavika says her love for reading comes from her mother. "It is probably because of her that I also have been reading since I was five years old," she says.

She says her parents were very supportive during her entire preparation even when decided to quit the job in order to sit for the exam. She

worked at Ernst & Young for a year.

Self-preparation was her main method of study, Bhavika says. "I did enrol in a couple of institutions for tests. So, test series are not something that I felt I could judge very well on my own because I was competing with a lot of people... having that benchmark set by other people who are writing the same exam is important," says Chopra.

The loss of a loved one during COVID was the starting point of this journey. "Just realising that I wish there was something more that I could do... sitting there helplessly working a corporate job was not something that I saw myself doing for the rest of my life.

It's sad that it took the death of a family member to push me into it, but at the same time, I think that was the main catalyst. UPSC preparation is often a long and demanding journey. I spent about four years before I got the result that I wanted.

I started my preparation properly at the beginning of 2022, and the emotional highs and lows... they're just very difficult.

UP to launch Shubhanshu Shukla scholarship, plans space park and science university: Minister

Lucknow. (Agency)

In a push to place Uttar Pradesh more firmly on the country's scientific and technological map, the state government is planning a series of initiatives ranging from a scholarship in the name of astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to the development of science parks, observatories and a proposed space park in Lucknow.

Uttar Pradesh Science and Technology Minister Anil Kumar said the initiatives are aimed at nurturing scientific curiosity among students while expanding public access to space and science education. Speaking with UNI here on Saturday, the minister said the proposed scholarship in Shubhanshu Shukla's name is expected to begin in the coming financial year. At present, the department provides fellowships to M.Tech students in three categories—Rs1 lakh, Rs75,000 and Rs50,000—to encourage meritorious students to pursue

higher education and research in science and technology. Born on November 25, 1975, in Taharpur village of Saharanpur district, Anil Kumar received his early education in his native area.

Known for his calm and friendly personality, he gradually built his public life through grassroots engagement before entering active politics. His political career largely developed in the Muzaffarnagar region. He was first elected to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 2007 from the Charthawal Assembly constituency, marking the beginning of his journey in state politics.

The minister said the observatory in Gorakhpur, established in the 1980s during the tenure of former chief minister Veer Bahadur Singh, will be opened to the public in March. He added that the observatory in Rampur is also being reopened, while the Lucknow observatory has recently

been upgraded with modern technology to help people better understand astronomy. "The state government is also moving ahead with its plan to establish science parks at the divisional level to spark scientific curiosity among children and youth. Locations have already been identified in Moradabad, Bareilly, Banda, Agra and Varanasi with the aim of promoting innovation and interest in scientific research," he said.

After his first electoral victory in 2007, Anil Kumar continued to strengthen his political base and was re-elected in 2012 to the 16th Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from the Charthawal constituency. His consecutive victories helped establish him as a prominent leader in the region.

In the 2022 Assembly elections, he was elected to the 18th Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from the Purkaji constituency, continuing his legislative career and later taking responsibility in

the state cabinet. Highlighting the department's digital initiatives, Anil Kumar said remote sensing is being used for extensive digital mapping across the state. Several tasks earlier handled by other departments are now being carried out by the Science and Technology Department.

Mapping work has already been completed for municipal corporations and the Urban Development Department.

He said remote sensing technology is also being used to provide advance information about natural disasters and to assess potential benefits or losses in agricultural and industrial production, including crops such as fruits and flowers. Over the years, Anil Kumar has developed a reputation for maintaining a low-profile but effective approach to governance. Colleagues often describe him as soft-spoken and accessible, qualities that have helped him maintain a strong connect with constituents. From his

Chamba court frames charges against BJP MLA Hans Raj in POCSO case

Shimla.(Agency)

The prosecution is likely to move the chargesheet against BJP MLA from Churah and former Deputy Speaker Dr. Hans Raj in the POCSO case registered against him, as a Chamba court on Thursday framed charges and formally commenced the trial.

The legislator appeared before the court during the hearing. The court has fixed March 30 as the next date, when the victim is expected to appear and her statement will be recorded before the judge.

During the hearing, the prosecution will also present its witnesses, who will be cross-examined by the defence counsel representing the MLA. According to the prosecution counsel, the investigation in the case has been completed and the chargesheet is ready, which will be formally submitted before the court in the upcoming hearings.

The case relates to allegations made by a young woman from the Churah area who accused the MLA of sexually abusing her when she was a minor.

Based on her complaint, an FIR was registered at the Women's Police Station, Chamba, under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including allegations of kidnapping and sexual harassment.

Police had earlier filed the challan on January 21, 2026, before the Chamba court, moving the case into the next stage of judicial proceedings. With the framing of charges, the trial has now begun in the case, which has drawn considerable public attention in the state.

Meanwhile, AIDWA State Secretary Phallama Chauhan said she had been informed by a counsel of the High Court that the chargesheet in the case has been prepared and may be moved against the MLA by the next date of hearing. She added that the organisation is closely monitoring the proceedings.

Chauhan further stated that a petition is pending before the Himachal Pradesh High Court, seeking cancellation of the bail granted to the MLA. The plea argues that bail should not have been granted in a case registered under the POCSO Act. Notices have already been issued in the matter.

Maoist leader Ganapathy's possible surrender sparks debate over end of Naxalism

New Delhi.(Agency)

Speculation over the possible surrender of senior Maoist leader Muppala Lakshmana Rao, better known as Ganapathy, has triggered intense discussions within security and political circles, with officials weighing whether such a move could signal the beginning of the end for Left-wing extremism in India.

The debate gained momentum after Union Home Minister Amit Shah said during a visit to Odisha on March 6 that the country could witness an "unprecedented" development this month in the fight against Naxalism. His remarks came nearly two weeks after senior Maoist leader Devji surrendered in Telangana, fuelling speculation that more top cadres could follow.

GANAPATHY'S ROLE IN THE MAOIST MOVEMENT

Ganapathy is regarded as one of the most influential figures in India's Maoist insurgency. He spent nearly four decades

underground and played a key role in shaping the ideological and strategic direction of the movement.

Having embraced Naxalite ideology in the 1970s, he rose through the ranks to become the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) after the merger of major Maoist groups in 2004. He held the post until 2018, when he stepped down citing age and health concerns, though he remained associated with the organisation's leadership and ideological framework. Security agencies say Ganapathy faces more than 150 serious criminal cases across several states, including charges of murder, bomb blasts, sedition and offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Authorities have announced rewards totalling around Rs 3.5 crore for information leading to his capture, including Rs 1 crore in Chhattisgarh and Rs 25 lakh in Telangana.

WOULD HIS SURRENDER DEAL A MAJOR BLOW?

If confirmed, Ganapathy's surrender would mark one of the most significant setbacks for the Maoist movement since the formation of CPI (Maoist) in 2004.

Security experts say he has long served as a central ideological pillar of the insurgency. His surrender could weaken the movement's leadership structure and have a major psychological impact on cadres across Maoist-affected regions.

However, analysts caution that even the surrender of such a senior leader may not immediately bring an end to Naxalism. The organisation operates through a layered structure that includes the Central Committee, Politburo, regional commanders and the armed wing, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA).

SHRINKING LEADERSHIP CORE

Recent security assessments indicate that the number of top Maoist leaders active in Chhattisgarh has fallen sharply following sustained counter-insurgency operations,



arrests and surrenders over the past decade. According to security records up to March 5, 2026, only a handful of senior leaders remain active in the CPI (Maoist) hierarchy, mainly within the Politburo, Central Committee and the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee. Among those still considered key figures are

Mishir Besra alias Bhaskar, Sujata (Alluri Krishnakumari), Paparao Kudum alias Mangu, and Mangtu alias Lal Singh, many of whom operate across the Bastar-Dandakaranya region.

SECURITY OPERATIONS WEAKEN INSURGENCY

The Maoist leadership has also been weakened by recent security operations. Between January 2025 and March 2026, several senior Maoist leaders, including Basava Raju, Jairam Reddy and Vivek Chandri Yadav, were killed in encounters across Maoist-affected areas.

Others, including Malla Jula Venu Gopal, Pulluri Prasad Rao, Ramder alias Soma and Devji, have surrendered during the same period. Data from security agencies shows that from 2020 to early 2026, more than 4,300 Maoists have surrendered and over 3,500 have been arrested in anti-Naxal operations in the Bastar range alone, pointing to a steady decline in the insurgency.

ED attaches properties worth Rs 441 crore in Andhra liquor scam

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Friday attached the properties worth Rs 441.63 crore of several accused, including Kessireddy Rajasekhara Reddy, Booneti Chanakya, and Donthireddy Vasudeva Reddy and their related entities. The investigative agency seized the properties under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The alleged multi-crore scam, which unfolded between 2019 and 2024, when the state was ruled by the YSR Congress, involved Kessireddy Rajasekhara Reddy as the primary accused. As the investigation unfolded, it came to light that



Reddy, along with Chanakya, Avinash Reddy, Kiran Kumar Reddy, Paila Dileep, and Saif Ahmed, allegedly manipulated the Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation Limited's procurement process, which led to a loss of Rs 3,500 crore for the state.

"The accused established and/or acquired control over several distilleries, which were utilised as special purpose vehicles for the generation of proceeds of crime," the investigative agency mentioned in its statement.

The investigative agency also found a money trail of Rs 1,048.45 crore, which was collected from several distilleries in the form of kickbacks. As part of the investigation, the ED attached properties that include bank balances, fixed deposits, land parcels and other immovable assets. Further investigation into the case is underway.

Kejriwal defends 'phansi ghar' claim before Delhi Assembly privileges panel

New Delhi.(Agency)

AAP national convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday appeared before the Delhi Assembly's Privileges Committee in connection with the controversy over the alleged 'phansi ghar' in the Assembly complex and accused the BJP government of insulting freedom fighters by claiming that the site was merely a 'tiffin room'. Kejriwal appeared before the Assembly's Committee of Privileges along with former Speaker Ram Niwas Goel and former Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla and placed their versions on record regarding the authenticity of the 'phansi ghar' that was inaugurated within the Assembly premises on August 9, 2022. Former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, however, failed to appear.

After the hearing, Kejriwal said the Assembly complex is a historic building constructed in 1912 when the British shifted the capital to Delhi.

He claimed that in 2022, during the tenure of then Speaker Ram Niwas Goel, it was discovered that a section of the building was used by the British to hang freedom fighters. "Goel had suggested that it should be opened for tourists.

After that, it was inaugurated," Kejriwal said. He alleged that since BJP came to power, it has been trying to prove that the structure was a tiffin room. "There can't be a bigger insult to freedom fighters than calling a place where they were hanged a tiffin room," he said.

Kejriwal said the committee had asked him to present evidence proving that the structure was a 'phansi ghar'. "I said that the then-speaker had taken the step only after conducting a full inquiry asking them if they have any proof that it was a tiffin room. They have none," he said. He also criticised the BJP government, claiming Delhi's condition had deteriorated over the past year.

Committee chairperson Pradyuman Singh Rajput said, "It is deeply concerning that those who held high constitutional offices could not present a single factual document before the panel to support their claims".

He added that making unsubstantiated claims about a 'phansi ghar' without historical proof not only misled the public but also insulted the memory of martyrs. The committee will now deliberate on the next course of action based on the statements.

Roads Blocked, Vehicles Burnt After Delhi Man Killed During Fight On Holi

New Delhi.(Agency)

Tensions gripped Delhi's Uttam Nagar area after the death of a 26-year-old youth following a dispute that began during Holi celebrations. The incident triggered large-scale protests, with hundreds of people gathering outside the Uttam Nagar Police Station demanding justice.

According to police, the dispute started on Holi after coloured water from a balloon accidentally splashed on a woman from another family. The balloon had reportedly been thrown by an 11-year-old girl who was playing Holi on the terrace with relatives. The balloon burst on the road, and coloured water splashed on the woman, which led to an argument between members of the two families.

The argument soon escalated into a



violent clash.

The injured youth, identified as Tarun, was allegedly attacked by a group when he was returning home after playing Holi with friends. He was seriously injured in the assault and later died during treatment in the hospital on March 5.

Family members of the victim alleged that the attackers brutally beat Tarun and even threw a large stone on his

chest while he was lying on the road.

Following the youth's death, anger spread among residents and members of Hindu organisations.

On March 6, hundreds of people gathered outside the Uttam Nagar Police Station demanding strict action against the accused. Police said around 500 protesters were present at the spot, while 200-300 police personnel were deployed to maintain law and order. Security has been tightened in the area, and police have restricted entry into the inner lanes to prevent any untoward incident.

On Thursday evening, members of Bajrang Dal allegedly removed household items from the accused's residence and set a motorcycle on fire. Police personnel present at the spot quickly extinguished the fire and brought the situation under control.

Deadly 2025 Uttarkashi Flood Wasn't Caused By Cloudburst, ISRO Reveals Cause

New Delhi.(Agency)

ISRO has identified a new possible cause of last year's flooding in Uttarkashi's Dharali. When a wall of water, mud and boulders tore through the village on August 5, 2025, the devastation was swift and shocking. Homes were smashed, hotels collapsed, and the bustling marketplace along the Khir Gad stream was buried under debris. In the immediate aftermath, the usual explanations came thick and fast: Was it a cloudburst, a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF), or extreme monsoon rain?

Now, a detailed scientific investigation by scientists from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has revealed a very different and far more



unusual trigger. The Dharali flood, they say, was caused by the sudden collapse of an exposed ice sheet high above the village, a hidden and under-recognised hazard in a warming Himalaya.

What happened at Dharali?

Dharali sits on the banks of the Bhagirathi River, just below where a smaller glacier-fed stream, the Khir

Gad, rushes down from the Srikanta Glacier. The village lies on a narrow valley floor, leaving little room for error when water comes charging down from above.

On August 5, residents captured terrifying videos of a sudden, violent surge, a short-lived but extremely powerful flow of water mixed with rocks, mud and ice. This was followed by hours of slower, muddy flow. The nature of the flood itself raised questions.

Cloudbursts usually bring prolonged, intense rainfall. GLOFs involve huge volumes of water released when a glacial lake bursts. Dharali showed neither pattern.

India eyes long-range strike drone capability with IG Defence's Project KAL

India has unveiled Project KAL, an indigenous long-range strike drone under development by IG Defence, aimed at boosting the country's unmanned combat capabilities amid the growing global role of attack drones in warfare.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India is stepping into the long-range strike drone category with IG Defence's Project KAL. Indigenous defence company IG Defence has offered the first glimpse of the platform, an indigenous long-range strike drone designed to expand the country's unmanned combat capabilities.

Long-range one-way attack drones have become a defining feature of modern warfare. Platforms such as the Iranian Shahed-136 have drawn global attention for their ability to carry explosive payloads across long distances at a relatively low cost. Their growing role has been particularly visible in the ongoing escalation between Iran and the United States and Israel, where waves of drones and missiles have been launched across the region.

Shahed-class drones can be produced cheaply and deployed in large numbers, overwhelming air defences and forcing adversaries to use far more expensive interceptor missiles. This sharp cost imbalance has highlighted how relatively inexpensive unmanned systems can impose disproportionate operational and financial pressure on advanced defence networks.

Against this backdrop, Project KAL aims to develop a made-in-India long-range strike drone to expand the country's indigenous combat drone capabilities. The system is envisioned as a deep-penetration strike platform capable of operating far beyond the frontline.

With a projected range of up to 1,000 kilometres and an endurance of three to five hours, the drone is expected to operate



deep inside contested environments, observe targets and adjust its flight path before striking.

Designed to carry a high-explosive payload, the platform is intended to strike high-value targets such as strategic infrastructure, logistics hubs, radar installations and other critical military assets.

Such capabilities could offer armed forces a scalable and cost-effective option for precision strikes while reducing risks to personnel operating in high-threat environments.

Commenting on the development, Maj Gen R.C. Padhi (Retd.), senior vice president at IG Defence, said unmanned systems are rapidly reshaping modern warfare.

"Unmanned systems are rapidly transforming the character of modern warfare. Recent developments in the Middle East, particularly the ongoing conflict involving Iran on one side and the United States and Israel on the other, have once again demonstrated how long-range strike drones can influence operational strategies by combining reach, persistence and cost efficiency," he said.

India gave safe harbour to another Iranian ship days before IRIS Dena's sinking

Days before a US submarine sank IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Sri Lanka, India gave safe harbour to another Iranian frigate. According to government sources, the ship's crew has been put up at naval quarters in Kochi.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Days before a US submarine sank an Iranian frigate in the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka, Iran had approached India seeking urgent docking for another naval vessel in Kochi after it developed technical problems, government sources said. Tehran requested permission on February 28, the day the US and Israel launched joint strikes on Iran, for IRIS Lavan to dock at Kochi, saying the vessel had developed technical issues and required urgent attention. The ship was in the region for the International Fleet Review. According to sources, approval was granted on March 1, and IRIS Lavan docked in Kochi on March 4. The vessel's crew of 183 is currently being accommodated at naval facilities in the southern port city.

While IRIS Lavan got safe harbour in the nick of time, its sister vessel wasn't so lucky. IRIS Dena, which was sailing back to Iran after participating in a military exercise at Visakhapatnam, sank in the Indian Ocean on March 4 after being struck by a torpedo fired from a US submarine. The attack sharply escalated tensions in the widening conflict involving Iran, the US and Israel.

The sinking occurred in international waters about 40 nautical miles off the southern Sri Lankan port of Galle. The warship issued a distress call at dawn reporting an explosion but had already sunk by the time Sri Lankan rescue ships reached the scene. More than 80 sailors perished when the frigate went down.

Facing flak for apparently not aiding the Iranian ship that had been its guest, the Indian Navy clarified what had transpired on the day of IRIS Dena's sinking. In a statement on Thursday, the Navy said it launched search-and-rescue operations after receiving the distress signal from the frigate.

A long-range maritime patrol aircraft was deployed to speed up search efforts already underway by Sri Lankan authorities, while another aircraft equipped with air-droppable life rafts was kept on standby.

INS Tarangini, which was operating in the vicinity at the time, was diverted to assist in the rescue mission. Another vessel, INS Ikshak, sailed from Kochi to support the search operations and remains in the region to help locate missing personnel as a humanitarian measure, the Navy said.

NEWS BOX

Clutch is Hardik Pandya: How India all-rounder went into zen mode vs England

New Delhi. (Agency)

When the Indian all-rounder made this statement in the latest video released by the BCCI ahead of the T20 World Cup final, you kind of realise that he is just stating a fact. During the T20 World Cup 2024 final, it was Hardik who followed up Jasprit Bumrah's good work by bowling a sensational last over. He did the same during the semi-final against England, where India looked to be on the ropes. After Bumrah bowled a sensational 18th over, Hardik came on and was received with a six by Jacob Bethell. He didn't flinch and go into a shell or lose focus. Hardik picked up the wicket of Sam Curran in the same over to put more pressure on England. "There are two ways in life. I could have got my heart racing and not been able to execute, so I went into my Zen mode. It's quite amazing that instead of my heartbeat rushing, I stayed still. I'm really proud of that," said Hardik. This was followed up with a sensational fielding effort by the all-rounder



as he was able to run out Bethell in the final over, which sealed the win for India. This allowed him to win the Impact Player Of The Match medal, given by the Indian team management. "One batter I had to get out from the field was Bethell, the way he was batting. I knew I had to keep calm and throw it where it was supposed to be. I would have liked it a little closer to the stumps, but nevertheless we got the job done," said Hardik.

BEING THE FAMILY MAN'

The reaction from Hardik after dismissing Bethell was telling as he was very animated in his celebration, pumping up the entire side. The all-rounder said it was because his son Agastya and girlfriend Mahieka Sharma were present in the stands and he wanted them to feel his emotions during the game.

Wouldn't be surprised if Bumrah is T20 World Cup final's Player Of The Match: Clarke

LONDON. (Agency)

With anticipation building for the T20 World Cup 2026 final between India and New Zealand, Michael Clarke has singled out Jasprit Bumrah as a potential game-changer. The final, set to take place on Sunday, March 8, in Ahmedabad, comes after India's narrow seven-run victory over England in a high-scoring semifinal, where Bumrah played a pivotal role. Clarke's comments focus on Bumrah's consistent impact throughout the tournament, praising his ability to deliver under pressure in key moments. The star pacer bowled the 18th over, where he gave away just six runs. This was followed by another tight over from Hardik Pandya, which sealed the deal for India in the end.

Speaking on the Beyond23 cricket podcast, Clarke said that Bumrah has the skills to execute under pressure, which makes him the best bowler in the world.

"One thing is having so many options (variations), but most importantly, having



the skills to execute under pressure. This is what makes him the best in the world. He has been a defining factor for India. I wouldn't be surprised if he is Man of the Match in the final. He's just so dominant," said Clarke.

WHAT MAKES BUMRAH SPECIAL?

Clarke further lauded Bumrah's versatility and adaptability on the international stage, which makes him special and the best bowler in all three formats of the game.

"India are the standout team in this tournament. They have been absolutely brilliant. We probably haven't spoken much about him throughout this World Cup campaign, because we now just expect it. Bumrah. He is just a freak. All three formats, he is, by a distance, the most important player in the world in all three formats. He is a match-winner. He bowls the most difficult overs. Run-saving machine, wicket-taker, execution under pressure is better than anybody in world cricket," Clarke stated.

Pakistan seal Hockey World Cup spot after 8 years, put AUS tour horror behind them

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan has secured its place at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 after defeating Japan 4-3 in a dramatic semifinal at the qualifiers held in Ismailia, Egypt, on Friday, March 6. The team clinched victory with a late goal, ensuring a return to the World Cup and putting the horror of their ill-fated Australia tour behind them. Alongside Pakistan, England also qualified after a commanding 7-1 win over Malaysia in their respective semifinal, setting up a final clash between the two sides. With these results, both Pakistan and England advance to the tournament, joining India, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, and Australia as confirmed teams. France and Ireland also made it to the tournament, with 13 out of the 16 World Cup spots filled. Pakistan and England will now face off in the final of the qualifying tournament in Ismailia, while Malaysia and Japan contest the bronze medal match. The winner of the third-place game will also qualify for the World Cup. Additionally, the highest-ranked fourth-placed team across all qualifiers is set to earn a spot, further intensifying competition for

the remaining places.

HOW PAKISTAN OVERCAME OFF-FIELD ISSUES

Despite on-field success, Pakistan's hockey faced significant off-field turmoil during its FIH Pro League tour of Australia. The team encountered an accommodation crisis, resulting in widespread criticism and administrative fallout. The incident drew attention at the highest political level and had repercussions for both management and athletes. Team captain Ammad Butt was vocal in his criticism of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) over alleged mismanagement during the tour. The controversy escalated when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered an inquiry into the matter. Subsequently, PHF president Tariq Bugti resigned from his position, and Ammad Butt was initially issued a two-year ban. This series of events further complicated Pakistan's build-up to World Cup qualification.

The administrative situation began to stabilise after Mohiuddin Wani was appointed interim PHF president. Under his leadership,

Ammad Butt's two-year ban was lifted, allowing the captain to rejoin the squad as they completed their qualification run.

HOW DID PAKISTAN VS JAPAN UNFOLD?

Japan had the first clear chance of the match



when Tsubasa Tanaka found himself one-on-one with the goalkeeper, but his attempt sailed over the crossbar. Muhammad Ammad put Pakistan ahead in the 9th minute, reacting quickly to a rebound after his initial shot was saved by Takumi Kitagawa and bounced

back off the post. Japan created a few opportunities from penalty corners but were denied, including a brilliant save on the post by Arshad Liaqat. They eventually equalised in the 21st minute when Ryoma Ooka deflected the ball into the net from open play, making it 1-1 at halftime. Japan took the lead early in the second half through Shota Yamada, whose drag flick in the 35th minute found the net. They extended their advantage in the 41st minute after a clever overhead pass caught the Pakistani defence off guard. The goalkeeper rushed out but failed to clear the ball, allowing Koji to score with a simple finish at the left post. However, Pakistan mounted a comeback, especially after Japan were reduced to 10 players following a yellow card with about 10 minutes left. Abu Mahmood pulled one back in the 52nd minute with a drag flick down the middle. Pakistan levelled the score three minutes later when Sufyan Khan fired a powerful drag flick between the goalkeeper and the post defender.

Ahmedabad calling: Airlines add special flights for IND vs NZ final rush

T20 World Cup: Flights and trains are being added as fans rush to Ahmedabad for the T20 World Cup final. With India chasing history and New Zealand eyeing their first title, travel demand for the big clash has surged.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Cricket fans across the country are making plans to travel to Ahmedabad as India prepare to take on New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final on March 8. With the summit clash expected to draw a massive crowd to the Narendra Modi Stadium, airlines and railways have started adding extra travel options to handle the sudden surge in demand. Air India Express and Akasa Air on Friday announced special flights to Ahmedabad to help fans reach the city for the highly anticipated final. The move comes as ticket demand for both flights and trains rises sharply whenever India feature in a major global final. Such occasions often see airfares shoot up while train tickets disappear within minutes. Despite the challenges, thousands of supporters still travel long distances for marquee matches, especially when the

Indian team is involved and chasing silverware. The Narendra Modi Stadium, the world's largest cricket venue, is expected to be packed for the final. To manage the rush, airlines have started



adding more seats while also keeping an eye on booking trends. Both carriers indicated that they may consider increasing capacity further if demand continues to grow closer to match day. Air India Express has also announced additional flights to Ahmedabad from several major cities to accommodate fans travelling to the match. "To facilitate cricket fans travelling to witness the final, the airline will operate additional flights to Ahmedabad from Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. These flights have been scheduled in response to the sharp increase in demand for travel to the city as fans across the country plan to attend

the highly anticipated match," Air India Express said in a release. Akasa Air said it will operate special direct flights between Mumbai and Ahmedabad on March 8 and March 9, adding to its existing services between the two cities. The airline is also planning to bring a cricket-themed touch to the journey for passengers travelling to the final. Through its SkyScore feature, Akasa Air passengers will be able to follow live match updates even while they are in the air. The airline also said it plans to create a festive environment on board for fans heading to the big game.

FANS GEAR UP FOR IND vs NZ T20 WORLD CUP FINAL

Apart from air travel, railways have also stepped in to handle the demand.

Western Railway has announced two special trains between Mumbai and Ahmedabad on special fares, including one scheduled to run on match day, March 8, to help supporters reach the city in time for the final. The excitement around the match is understandable. India head into the final with a chance to achieve something no team has managed before in T20 World Cups. After edging past England in a thrilling semi-final, where Sanju Samson's explosive innings helped India post 254, the hosts are now one win away from successfully defending the title on home soil.

India vs New Zealand, T20 World Cup final: What type of pitch awaits in Ahmedabad

Mumbai. (Agency)

The countdown to the T20 World Cup final between India and New Zealand in Ahmedabad has triggered the usual debates about team combinations and match-ups. But at the Narendra Modi Stadium, there is another element that could quietly shape the outcome — the pitch. Motera is unlike most venues in India because it offers three different kinds of surfaces: red soil, black soil and a hybrid of the two. Each brings its own personality to a game. Black-soil pitches tend to be slower and can grip a bit, making it harder for batters to play through the line. Red-soil surfaces, on the other hand, usually provide better bounce and pace, something that often leads to higher scores. India's experience earlier in the



tournament might also be fresh in their minds while deciding what works best. During the Super Eight stage, the hosts suffered a heavy defeat against South Africa on a black-soil pitch in Ahmedabad, where the surface slowed down and made run-scoring tricky as the game progressed. That

is why the curators have been carefully weighing their options ahead of the final. According to ESPNcricinfo, the centre pitch expected to be used for the title clash is likely to be a mix of red and black soil. These hybrid strips generally offer the best of both worlds, enough bounce and pace for strokeplay, but also some grip for bowlers as the match moves along. Interestingly, the final call had not been officially confirmed even late on Friday. Broadcasters were yet to install the stump cameras, usually a sign that the surface is still being finalised. One particular pitch, however, attracted plenty of attention from the ground staff, with local curators inspecting it closely while BCCI CEO Hemang Amin was also seen doing a recce before that strip was eventually.

Brendon McCullum set to continue as England coach despite Ashes humiliation

Brendon McCullum is expected to remain as England's head coach across formats following a challenging winter, with strong support from players and the ECB amid ongoing

New Delhi. (Agency)

Brendon McCullum is set to continue leading the England cricket team as head coach in all formats, despite a series of setbacks during the past winter, according to reports in British media. Following England's T20 World Cup 2026 semi-final defeat to India in Mumbai, scrutiny intensified over McCullum's position. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) appears committed to retaining his leadership as it reviews recent results and plans for the future. England's defeat in the T20 World Cup semi-final marked the culmination of a demanding period for the squad across both

white-ball and red-ball formats. The team's results, particularly a poor Ashes campaign in Australia, brought McCullum's tenure under renewed examination. Pressure on the head coach increased following reports of off-field incidents during the tour, fuelling discussions about potential changes in team management.

WHAT DID MCCULLUM SAY ABOUT HIS FUTURE?

Despite these challenges, McCullum publicly expressed his desire to continue as head coach after the semi-final loss to India. "I love the job. It's a great job. It doesn't come without its challenges, of course, but that is the nature of it." "I feel we have achieved some really cool things over the last few years but there is still so much to achieve with the side, across all formats." "I would love to carry on, so we will see what unfolds over the next little while. Right now, after being on the road for a fair bit of time, it's



about getting home, watching some fast horses and playing some shocking golf. "A bit of time to reflect, to let things land and objectively look at what is and isn't working." "I would love to help lead the team through to the next stage." Reports suggest that the England and Wales

Cricket Board (ECB) still expects him to remain in the role. McCullum also received strong support from England white-ball captain Harry Brook, who offered strong backing for McCullum after the World Cup exit.

The ECB has initiated a formal review into England's Ashes performance in Australia, aiming to identify causes behind the disappointing results. While the investigation is ongoing, McCullum remains at the helm, continuing to oversee preparations across formats and maintaining regular communication with team leadership. Plans are underway for McCullum to focus on rebuilding the Test side for the upcoming home Ashes series in 2027. Despite the recent disappointments, the ECB and team management see continuity as essential for long-term success and stability, especially with major tournaments on the horizon.



Abhishek Sharma's World Cup struggles await a Virat ending

MELBOURNE. (Agency)

In Indian cinema, that line usually arrives just before the credits roll. The hero may have stumbled through most of the film, but if the ending lands perfectly, everything that came before suddenly feels like part of the journey. For Abhishek Sharma, the 2026 T20 World Cup has felt like a long and uncomfortable middle act. The kind where the script refuses to cooperate, the timing never quite clicks, and the critics grow louder with every scene. Yet the final still remains.

And if there is one player whose story proves that a messy tournament can still end in glory, it is Virat Kohli. Abhishek arrived at this World Cup carrying enormous expectations. Over the last couple of seasons, the left-hander had built a reputation as one of India's most fearless T20 batters. His ability to take down bowling attacks inside the powerplay pushed him rapidly into the spotlight and even took him briefly to the top of the ICC T20I batting rankings. Some saw him as India's explosive X-factor at the top. Others pointed to the influence

of his mentor Yuvraj Singh and imagined another World Cup campaign lit up by fearless hitting. Instead, the tournament turned into a survival test. A stomach infection struck early, forcing Abhishek to play the opening game against the United States while unwell. The match ended with a first-ball duck. His condition worsened soon after, requiring hospitalisation and ruling him out of the Namibia clash.

But the physical toll did not end there. Abhishek reportedly lost around two kilos during that period. For a batter whose entire style revolves around power hitting, wrist strength and the ability to clear the ropes, even a small drop in body weight can have a real impact. Less strength often means less power in the swing. Now add another complication to the mix. A tournament like the T20 World Cup rarely allows players the luxury of proper recovery. Teams travel constantly from one city to another, matches arrive every few days, and training schedules barely leave space for the body to fully reset.

Govt asks ports to allow storage of Middle East-bound cargoes, consider charge waivers

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways has asked ports to allow temporary storage of Middle East-bound cargo as transshipment, and consider waivers or reductions in port charges during the crisis period. The Director General of Shipping, India's statutory maritime authority, will hold a meeting with ship owners, cargo owners and charterers on Friday. Ports have been advised to allow cargoes meant for the Middle East to be stored as transshipment cargoes during the affected period. Port authorities have also been instructed to allocate additional storage space where necessary to accommodate the build-up of such cargoes until normal shipping schedules resume.

The directive also asks ports to facilitate berthing of ad-hoc call vessels that may arrive to drop off or pick up Middle East-bound transshipment cargoes. This measure is intended to provide operational flexibility to shipping lines and exporters facing schedule disruptions. The government has asked the ports to "expeditiously facilitate 'Back to Town' movement of export cargo lying in port premises in co-ordination with Customs and provide priority handling for perishable cargo to prevent deterioration." Freighters and exporters have repeatedly flagged concerns regarding losses incurred due to perishable items being stuck. Moreover, several exporters and freighters said that surged storage charges at terminals, demurrage levied by shipping lines, and port-related charges have been skyrocketing as cargo remained stationary. The government asked the port to consider requests from users regarding the reduction, waiver or remission of certain charges during the crisis period, though specific decisions would be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Port authorities have been directed to coordinate closely with agencies such as Customs, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and other relevant bodies to ensure the timely implementation of the measures.

Gulf tensions: Will use every policy tool to help exporters, assures Piyush Goyal

Kolkata, (Agency)

Government will use "every policy tool and the export promotion mission" to support exporters in the ongoing crisis in West Asia, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday. "We are in complete engagement with exporters. Every day, the inter-ministerial group talks to exporters and takes feedback. We will not be found wanting in supporting our exporters in any way," Goyal said.

Goyal told reporters on the sidelines of an event by the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) that gov't set up a help desk and an inter-ministerial group that engages with exporters daily to review the situation and gather feedback.

Exporters faced disruptions such as higher freight rates, demurrage charges, longer shipping routes and shortages of containers following the conflict involving the US, Israel and Iran, and sought gov't support to deal with rising logistics costs.

Goyal said the commerce ministry is in dialogue with the ministry of shipping and shipping companies to address concerns about cargo ships stuck in the Persian Gulf. "We are in dialogue with the ministry of shipping and with shipping companies. I hope we will find a resolution to this issue," he said. The minister also said India will continue to meet its commitments to international buyers despite the disruptions. "We will continue to ensure that all our international commitments are met. Even during the Covid pandemic, India met all its international commitments, which earned us the acronym of a trusted partner, and we will continue to be the trusted partner of the world," he said.

In 2025, India imported goods worth about \$157 billion from the region while exports to West Asian economies stood at around \$67 billion.

Mutual fund: Investors can now place a 'debit freeze' on investments

New Delhi, (Agency)

Sebi has introduced an important and useful feature for mutual fund investors. They will now be able to make their mutual fund investments even more secure. This feature is being referred to as 'debit freeze' and it allows investors to temporarily lock their mutual fund folios. While this lock is active, no funds can be withdrawn from that folio, nor can units be redeemed or transferred.

What is the facility?

Under SEBI's new facility, investors can place a debit freeze on their mutual fund folios. This means that no units can be redeemed, switched, or transferred while the freeze is active. The significant feature of this facility is that it is completely optional, meaning investors can enable or disable it as per their needs. Experts point out that it will be of use when fraudsters are lurking around every corner in this digital age. This facility will apply to both demat and non-demat accounts. This means that whether your investment is held in a demat account or directly with an asset management company, this facility will work on both accounts. Initially, this facility will be available through the MF Central platform. This is a digital platform where investors can manage mutual funds from different fund houses from a single location. Registrars and transfer agents will provide the lock and unlock facility through this platform.

Conditions for using it

There are a few requirements that must be fulfilled before this feature can be used. The investor's folio must be updated as per KYC.

Easy EMI options offered by banks and online platforms have made it possible to buy these expensive devices with monthly payments that may appear manageable at first glance.

New Delhi, (Agency)

iPhones were once seen as luxury purchases in India. Today, they are far more common, helped by easy EMI options that allow buyers to spread the cost of a Rs 1 lakh phone over monthly instalments. Walk into any electronics store or browse online shopping platforms and one thing is clear: expensive smartphones, especially iPhones, are in huge demand.

Easy EMI options offered by banks and online platforms have made it possible to buy these expensive devices with monthly payments that may appear

manageable at first glance. But financial planners say the ease of instalments can sometimes hide the real financial burden. For people who are already paying EMIs on cars, education loans or credit cards, adding another EMI for a phone could quietly stretch their finances.

IS BUYING A PHONE ON EMI A BAD IDEA?

Abhishek Kumar, Sebi RIA and founder of Sahaj Money, believes the growing trend of buying expensive smartphones on EMIs should make people pause and think. "This trend is largely worrying as it encourages the consumption of high-depreciation assets using future earnings," he said. However, he noted that the purpose of the purchase also matters. "If someone is buying a phone or a computer to earn their living or upskill themselves then within reasonable limit such spend could be justified." Still, he warns that such purchases should never come at the cost of long-term financial

stability. But such spend shouldn't compromise a person's ability to save or invest, leading to long term debt in exchange for short term wants."

CHECK YOUR EMIS BEFORE ADDING



ANOTHER ONE

Many young professionals today are already paying EMIs for education loans, cars, or personal loans. Adding another instalment for a phone can increase financial pressure. Kumar says the first step is to check the debt-to-income ratio. "They should first calculate their total Debt

to Income ratio to ensure it stays below 40% including the new commitment," he said. He also stressed the importance of financial safety nets. "Additionally, they should check if they have emergency fund to cover at least six months of all combined EMIs as well as other expenses to avoid a potential default during a financial crisis."

HOW MUCH OF YOUR INCOME SHOULD GO TOWARDS EMIS?

Financial planners usually suggest limits on how much of a person's income should go towards loan repayments.

Kumar says crossing certain thresholds can make finances risky.

"Ideally, no more than 30% of your gross monthly income should go toward debt repayments to maintain financial flexibility," he said. "Spending more than 40% on EMIs is considered risky, while exceeding 50% often indicates a severe debt trap that can lead to falling into debt trap if income is interrupted."

Domestic LPG price hiked by Rs 60, commercial cylinder up Rs 115 amid Iran war

New Delhi, (Agency)

Domestic cooking gas prices have increased across India, with the cost of a 14.2-kg household LPG cylinder rising by Rs 60, while commercial cylinders have become costlier by about Rs 115. The revision, which took effect on March 7, comes amid rising global energy prices linked to the ongoing military conflict in West Asia. According to the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the price of a non-subsidised domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi has increased from Rs 853 to Rs 913. Similar increases have been recorded in other major cities. In Mumbai, the price has gone up to Rs 912.50, while in Kolkata it now costs around Rs 939. In Chennai, the revised price stands at Rs 928.50 per cylinder. Industry officials said the increase reflects a surge in global energy costs triggered by tensions and disruptions in West Asia, a region critical to global oil and gas supply chains. Despite the hike, officials maintain that cooking gas prices in India remain lower than in several neighbouring countries.

The increase marks the second revision

in domestic LPG prices in less than a year. The last hike was in April 2025, when prices were raised by Rs 50. Rates differ slightly across states depending on local taxes and VAT. Beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri



Ujjwala Yojana, which provides LPG connections to low-income households, will continue to receive a subsidy of Rs 300 per 14.2-kg cylinder for up to 12 refills annually. The scheme currently covers more than 10 crore households across the country.

COMMERCIAL ENTITIES FEEL THE HEAT

Commercial LPG cylinders, widely used by restaurants, hotels and other

establishments, have also seen a significant increase.

In Delhi, the price of a 19-kg commercial cylinder has risen from Rs 1,768.50 to Rs 1,883. In Mumbai, it now costs Rs 1,835, while the price has reached about Rs 1,990 in Kolkata and Rs 2,043.50 in Chennai.

Commercial LPG prices have risen sharply this year, with an overall increase of more than Rs 300 so far.

The price revision comes amid escalating tensions in West Asia that have unsettled global energy markets and sparked worries over the safety of shipments passing through the Strait of

Hormuz. The strategic waterway carries a significant portion of the world's oil and gas supplies. Nearly half of India's crude oil and LPG imports move through this route. Recent US and Israeli strikes on Iranian positions, followed by warnings from Tehran to vessels, along with insurers pulling back coverage, have added to disruptions in tanker traffic.

Tariff refund system to be ready in 45 days: US customs agency

New Delhi, (Agency)

The US customs agency is readying a system within 45 days to process refunds on US President Donald Trump's tariffs that were struck down as illegal and importers will not have to sue for them, a customs official said in a court filing on Friday. The declaration by Brandon Lord, a top Customs and Border Protection official, came as government lawyers were meeting with a federal trade judge to hammer out a process for returning \$166 billion in tariff payments to around 330,000 importers. The tariffs that were a central part of President Donald Trump's economic policy were struck down as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court last month. However, the Supreme



Court did not say how the collected tariffs should be refunded, worrying small importers that the process would be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming. "This new process will require minimal submission from importers," Lord said in his declaration, which was filed with the US Court of International Trade just as government

lawyers began meeting with Judge Richard Eaton of the US Court of International Trade.

Eaton called the meeting to discuss how the government will carry out his sweeping order issued on Wednesday directing the CBP to begin refunding tariffs to potentially hundreds of thousands of importers using the agency's existing internal process. SINGLE PAYMENT FOR IMPORTERS

Lord said the customs agency anticipated the refund process would require importers to file a declaration with the CBP's computer system known as ACE detailing tariff payments, and the system and CBP would then validate those and process refunds with interest.

Are bank lockers still the safest place for your valuables

New Delhi, (Agency)

Gold jewellery meant for weddings, family heirlooms passed down generations, and important documents are quietly placed inside steel vaults with one simple belief, that bank lockers offer the highest level of security. But a series of recent incidents across the country has begun raising uncomfortable questions about that assumption. In Delhi's Kirti Nagar, a woman alleged that jewellery worth around Rs 60 lakh had gone missing from her bank locker. In Lucknow, police registered a case after four lockers at a bank branch were allegedly broken open and gold ornaments worth about Rs 48 lakh were misappropriated. In Faridabad, a chartered accountant and his family accused a bank branch of mishandling their locker after nearly one kilogram of gold and three kilograms of silver jewellery were found missing.

In another case in Lucknow earlier this year, jewellery worth nearly Rs 1.5 crore was allegedly stolen from a locker at a nationalised bank, with the customer accusing bank staff of theft.

And in Bengaluru, police arrested an assistant manager of a nationalised bank

who was accused of stealing around 2.7 kg of gold ornaments from customers' bank lockers over time and pawning them to fund online betting. Each of these cases is different and investigations are ongoing. But together they highlight a troubling reality: even spaces that customers believe are the safest can sometimes become the centre of disputes, theft allegations or operational lapses. At the same time, getting a bank locker itself has become increasingly difficult, with waiting lists stretching months or even years in many cities. So the question many customers are now asking is a simple one: are bank lockers still the safest place to store valuables? This is the first story in Lock & Key, a special series examining how India's bank locker system works, what protections customers actually have, and what they should know before trusting their valuables to a steel vault.

HOW SAFE ARE BANK LOCKERS TODAY?

Abhishek Kumar, Sebi Registered Investment Adviser (RIA) and founder of

Sahaj Money, told India Today that lockers still provide protection compared with keeping valuables at home, but customers should understand that banks are not responsible for everything inside them. "While lockers offer protection



against theft at home, recent RBI guidelines clarify that banks are not absolute insurers of the contents and have capped liabilities," he said. "Consequently, customers now face a different set of financial and legal risks regarding total loss compensation."

WHAT CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS

Kumar said the new RBI guidelines were the most significant regulatory change in recent years. "The most significant change occurred with the RBI's revised locker guidelines effective from 2022, which introduced mandatory new locker agreements and enhanced security protocols," he said. "Banks must now provide SMS and email alerts for every operation, maintain CCTV footage for 180 days, and ensure that electronically operated lockers meet strict cybersecurity standards." He added that the rules also clarify bank responsibility in certain situations. "Banks are now explicitly held liable for losses caused by their own negligence, such as theft, fire, or fraud by employees."

WHY GETTING A LOCKER IS HARDER NOW

Kumar said the shortage of lockers is largely due to demand rising faster than banks can expand locker facilities. "There is a genuine shortage of lockers in many urban and semi-urban areas because the demand has outpaced the physical expansion of bank vaults," he said.

Wall Street slides as weak jobs data, Middle East tensions rattle markets

New Delhi, (Agency)

Wall Street's main indexes fell on Friday, with the financials-heavy Dow touching a more than three-month low, as the conflict raging in the Middle East threatened to fuel inflation and data showed the economy unexpectedly shed jobs in February. Signs of a weakening jobs market came amid a strike by healthcare workers and harsh winter weather. The unemployment rate increased to 4.4%. Traders pulled forward bets for a 25-basis-point interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve, with odds at about even for June, from about 35% earlier in the day, according to LSEG-compiled data. "Given the developments in the Middle East and the spike in energy prices, I felt that the first rate cut was likely coming in September," said Jeff Schulze, head of economic and market strategy at ClearBridge Investments. "But given the renewed weakness in the labor market, that brings in both sides of the Fed's dual mandate into the equation. I do think that the first rate cut will come in July at this point." The Fed's dual mandate is to balance both prices and the labor market.

Meanwhile, the Middle East conflict pushed up oil prices the most this week since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, bringing shipping through the strategic Strait of Hormuz to a halt. Brent crude prices hit \$90 a barrel, sending the S&P 500's passenger airlines subindex .SPLRCALI on track for a near 13% weekly drop.

Natural gas producer Qatar said it would take "weeks to months" to resume normal deliveries even in the case of an immediate ceasefire, according to a report, and that all Gulf energy producers could shut down exports within weeks, driving oil to \$150 a barrel. At 11:44 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average .DJI fell 577.08 points, or 1.20%, to 47,377.66, the S&P 500 .SPX lost 72.78 points, or 1.07%, to 6,758.27 and the Nasdaq Composite .IXIC lost 194.43 points, or 0.85%, to 22,554.56. Losses were broad on the S&P 500, while banks .SPXBK tanked 2.7% and touched a more than four-week low on jitters in the private credit market. Asset manager BlackRock BLK.N lost 5.6% after limiting withdrawals from a flagship private credit fund after redemption requests surged, joining rival Blackstone BX.N earlier this week. Lender Western Alliance WAL.N fell 12.9% after suing Jefferies JEF.N for not making a payment for loans tied to bankrupt auto parts supplier First Brands Group. Jefferies dropped 8.7%.

Bhumi Pednekar

Cheers For Anil Kapoor As Subedaar Receives Positive Reviews

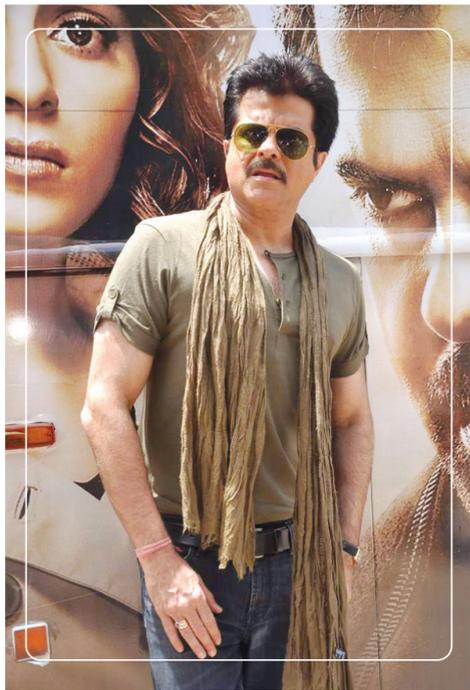
Anil Kapoor's latest action drama, Subedaar, premiered on Prime Video on March 5, 2026. The film combines patriotism, family emotions, and high-octane action to create an engaging experience for both mainstream audiences and OTT viewers. While many in the industry praised the movie, Bhumi Pednekar was quite happy about it getting good reviews. Bhumi shared a snap showcasing the various ratings given by many reviewers. She posted it with clapping emojis and tagged Anil Kapoor and others from the Subedaar team.

Mohit Suri Praises Anil Kapoor

Before the film's release, director Mohit Suri posted the trailer on his Instagram story, identifying the whole cast and crew. Suri praised Anil Kapoor by writing, "Jhakass boss." Anil Kapoor promptly re-shared the article and replied, "thanks Mohit."

Anil Kapoor On Subedaar

Recently, Anil Kapoor spoke at the News18 Rising Bharat Summit 2026. Sharing insight into the project, Kapoor said, "Subedaar is the story of a retired fauji and about his dignity, emotional depth and how he is dealing with his civil life. His story is set in the heartland of India, so we shot for it in Agra, Kanpur, etc. Our filmmaker went to all these places first, met these people and then he wrote the film. After that, he shared the story with me and I started feeling emotionally



connected to it. I found the emotional layer to the character." Subedaar, directed by Suresh Triveni, stars Anil Kapoor, Radhika Madan, Aditya Rawal, Saurabh Shukla and Mona Singh, hinting at a layered narrative based on emotional realism. Set in India's heartland, the film follows Arjun Maurya, a former soldier navigating civilian life, unresolved trauma from his past, and a troubled relationship with his daughter. As the novel progresses, Singh is drawn into a conflict that causes him to face both internal and external fights, with themes of duty, loss, and redemption at its foundation.



Priyanka Chopra Shares Romantic Roka Anecdote, Joe Jonas Responds



Priyanka Chopra recently opened up about a touching memory from her roka ceremony with husband Nick Jonas, sharing a heartfelt moment that highlighted the deep connection between them. The global star reflected on the experience during a conversation on the Mythical Kitchen podcast, where she discussed their whirlwind romance and the emotional significance of the pre-wedding ritual. Priyanka revealed that their relationship moved quickly but felt incredibly natural. According to her, the couple got engaged just two months after they started dating and tied the knot four months later. She explained that soon after the engagement, they travelled to India for the traditional roka ceremony, an important family ritual that marks the formal beginning of wedding celebrations.

Nick Jonas Impresses Priyanka's Family During Roka Ceremony

Talking about the ceremony, Priyanka fondly recalled how Nick embraced the traditions and impressed her family members, especially her aunts. She shared, "After the ceremony was over, which Nick did perfectly. Much to the joy of my aunts, they were like oh he's saying swaha, oh wow, he can play the Dholak, they loved him. It was great. So we went back upstairs just to change and come back to lunch. He held my hand, and he said, 'I feel like we are on our third or fourth lifetime.'"

The Meaning Behind Nick's Romantic Words

Priyanka also spoke about how Nick's remark resonated with the deeper symbolism of Indian wedding traditions. She explained that in Hindu weddings, couples walk around the sacred fire seven times, symbolising a promise to stay together for seven lifetimes. Reflecting on that moment, she said she was curious about what prompted Nick to say something so meaningful. He said, "'Because it's so familiar, it feels like home, but I want to experience so much of it together.' I mean, how are you not gonna marry that."

Joe Jonas Reacts to the Story

The heartfelt story also caught the attention of Nick's brother, Joe Jonas. Reacting to the clip from the conversation online, Joe left a comment with big puppy-dog eyes emojis, hinting at how touched he was by the emotional moment shared by the couple.

Rani Mukerji Not On Board OMG 3 Despite Early Talks With Akshay Kumar: Report



Speculation had been rife that National Award-winning actor Rani Mukerji would join Akshay Kumar in the third instalment of the Oh My God series, OMG 3. The potential collaboration had generated considerable buzz, as it would have marked the first time the two stars shared screen space. However, recent reports indicate that Mukerji will not be part of the project.

Talks Did Not Move Beyond Early Discussions

According to Variety India, Mukerji had been approached to play the lead protagonist in OMG 3, while Akshay Kumar was expected to return with



an extended cameo appearance. Sources suggest that the actor had heard a brief outline of the story and initially showed interest in the project. However, the discussions reportedly remained at a preliminary stage and did not develop further.

"Akshay and Rani share a great long-standing relationship and were genuinely excited about teaming up, but those were very early conversations," a source reportedly said.

Makers Now Searching For New Female Lead

With Mukerji no longer attached to the film, the makers are now said to be looking for another actor to take on the central role.

The third instalment of the popular franchise is currently in the development stage and is expected to go on floors sometime between May and June 2026.

While the casting process continues, fans of the series are waiting to see which actor will eventually step into the lead role alongside Akshay Kumar in the upcoming film.

Janhvi Kapoor

Shares Glimpses Of Spiritual Birthday Celebration With Friends, 'HBD Ladoo' Cake Grabs Attention

Boney Kapoor and Sridevi's eldest daughter and actress Janhvi Kapoor turned a year older on March 6. Like every year, she chose to keep her special day lowkey as she visited the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh. She climbed 3,550 steps barefoot to seek blessings on her birthday. A while ago, Janhvi took to social media and shared glimpses of her spiritual trip with her friends. This year, her rumoured beau, Shikhar Pahariya, was not seen accompanying her to the temple.

Janhvi Kapoor drops pictures from her birthday celebration

Janhvi, who turned 29, shared a bunch of pictures on her Instagram handle, offering a glimpse of her quiet yet peaceful birthday celebration with her friends. For her visit to the temple, the actress opted for a pink half saree. In some pictures, she can be seen flashing her million-dollar smile and posing for picture-perfect moments against a picturesque backdrop. She also shared a peek into her early morning trek to the temple. The photo dump even features her birthday cake, with 'HBD Ladoo' written on it. The nickname was given to her by her late mother, Sridevi. The birthday decor also featured a customized balloon with her funny face on it. Soon after she shared the pictures, her

cousin Shanaya Kapoor and aunt Maheep Kapoor dropped red heart emojis while uncle Sanjay Kapoor wished her a happy birthday in the comments section. Orry went on to call her "most beautiful bday girl." Her fans were also seen showering love on her.

Meanwhile, earlier today, Khushi Kapoor took to social media to wish her big sister with a special post. She dropped wholesome pictures and even penned a heartfelt



note for her. Her post read, "Happy birthday to my sister, my best friend, my advisor, my teacher and my partner in crime. Thank you for being the best human ever and helping in raising me in becoming the person that I am today. I'm nothing without you, and I hope I'm stuck with you in every lifetime. I love you."

On the work front, Janhvi was last seen in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, alongside Varun Dhawan, Sanya Malhotra, and Rohit Saraf. She will next be seen in the Telugu film Peddi, headlined by Ram Charan.



Survival for the Fittest



problems people face are mobility issues. They have incorrect postures and flawed squat patterns." He feels that most gym trainers focus more on body building and teach only partial range of motion.

GET STARTED NOW

Exercise is a must. The energy you produce while exercising breeds more energy, not caffeine and sugar. "Redesign your schedule to squeeze in some movement on a daily basis. Simple tasks like standing, walking a few steps every hour, climbing stairs or 10-minute morning/evening yoga can deliver positive health benefits," says Arora.

He recommends a healthy combination of elbow planks, wall push-ups, squats and pelvic tilts for starters - done in a slow, controlled manner, breathing normally and under proper guidance. Do not get too ambitious if you seek everyday strength. "Getting the form right is more important. Keep weights for later," says Hirani.

SAY NO TO...

- Sodas: Drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Starch: Go for wholegrain over refined flour
- Packaged food: They are high in preservatives and salt
- Artificial sweeteners: May contain less calories but has an adverse effect on insulin levels

Eating little and still putting on weight? Have low stamina, weak bones and frequent low back pain and headaches? Congratulations. You've just won yourself a spot in the 21st century tired people's club. "I meet people in their 20s and 30s who can't even climb stairs or walk a kilometre. They are clocked out even before they touch midday," says Gagan Arora, a Delhi-based fitness trainer. Fatigue has become one of this century's most debilitating, yet underrated, conditions, affecting the youth physically, emotionally and

mentally. While getting the fit figure is still the driving factor for many, most strive to just get the basic, everyday fitness to do their household chores and professional jobs better. "Doing the kind of work I do, there's always a lot of load on my back. Having suffered a previous slipped disc, I would come back from assignments wincing in pain," shares photographer Mansi Midha. She started functional training recently with the prime objective of not losing weight but to strengthen her back and get overall endurance. "I feel I can handle much

more now - physically and mentally. I'm in a more positive space now," she adds.

TOO MUCH TO HANDLE

Today's coffee-and-adrenaline-fuelled lifestyle leaves less room for physical movement. Arora says, "Although we have more health clubs than ever and new fitness programmes, a huge population still lacks basic cardio respiratory endurance and strength required to perform daily chores effortlessly." Agrees strength and conditioning coach, Raoul Hirani: "The biggest



Are you Walking right?

We have all heard that walking is so beneficial to health — we know about how it helps prevent several chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke — but are we walking enough? An international heart association has recommended not less than 150 minutes a week (or 30 minutes a day). How many calories you burn depends on your body weight and how fast you walk. It's also important to walk the right way. Take brisk strides, keep your shoulders back, swing your arm and don't tilt your head. As you take steps, let the heels dig into the ground first, then let the pressure move towards the balls of your feet and finally the toes.

6 KINDS OF WALKS AND THEIR BENEFITS

- 1) **Brisk Walking:** This is the most commonly used style. Beneficial to weight-watchers, it also strengthens the heart and cuts diabetes risk.
- 2) **Power striding:** An upgrade to the brisk walk, power striding is taking the natural gait to a faster, brisker pace with exaggerated arm swings. Helps to burn fat, build

metabolism and boost energy levels.

- 3) **Stairwell walk:** Walking up and downstairs is also a great way to burn calories (175-200 an hour) and tones major muscle groups. Remember, to take rest in-between.
- 4) **Uphill climb:** Usually done on holidays and during other recreational activities. It works to strengthen the calves, thighs and hamstring.
- 5) **Treadmill walking:** Part of the cardio gym activity, this works for just anyone. Use the pace as you're your comfort level. Also one of the most relaxed styles of walking as you need not worry about obstacles in your path.
- 6) **Pool walking:** Can also be done by the seashore. It takes the stress and pressure off the joints as water provides support. It's apt for patients with arthritis, back pain and osteoporosis.



Do you talk in your sleep? Here's how you can tackle it.

Rita Rajan, a banker, spent sleepless nights many a times due to her husband Anurag's habit of talking in his sleep. Anurag would blabber about his day and even touch upon some of their conversations. While this was an innocent case of talking in sleep, it did have an effect on her health and even on their relationship. Says Rita, "Finally we decided to seek help and now we have managed to bring it under control. It wasn't a serious problem but it kept me awake at night!"

What's sleep talking?
The medical term for 'sleep talking' is 'somniloquy' or 'parasomnia' which, when translated, means abnormal behaviour that occurs during sleep. The causes could range from harmless to serious health disorders and research also points towards genetics. The 'talk' can be a conversation with self, or at times addressed to someone. It's either mumble or at times, articulate speech. According to clinical psychologist, Dr Kanan Khatau Chikhal, "Sleep is a time for rest and rejuvenation. It is the time our body and mind takes to process, digest and recalibrate. While the conscious mind is resting, the subconscious is awake. During sleep, voluntary activities of the body, like walking, stop, but involuntary activities, like the beating of heart, continue."

The main causes
According to Kailash Mantry, mental health expert, there are many reasons why this happens...
Sleep deprivation: When you haven't slept enough, you need deep sleep to make up for the lost hours and this can lead to talking in your sleep.
Health issues: Long term illness, especially fever, makes you more prone to it.
Emotional problems: An introvert nature combined with loneliness increases anxiety levels, raising the possibility of expressing thoughts while



being asleep.
Stress: It could be work-related or personal but immense stress can trigger this problem.
Weight: Those who suffer from obesity-related sleep apnoea or those with nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder (where the sufferer might eat whilst in a state of sleep) show high incidences of sleep talking.
How to deal with it
Talking in sleep is a natural way of cleansing negative thoughts or suppressed emotions trapped in the subconscious mind, say experts. "It would help if the person experiencing this can talk to a partner or friend about their feelings without any risk of negative consequences," says Mantry. Doctors also suggest maintaining a sleep diary which helps in treating the condition. The diary should have details like time of going to bed, time of drifting off to sleep, the time when you wake up. Apart from this, things like medicines taken, fitness activities through the day and food and drinks consumed in the evening should also be noted. After maintaining this diary for at least 2-4 weeks, a sleep pattern can be interpreted. A family member can help with the sleep talking pattern and an expert can guide you to take corrective measures if you want to reduce incidences of talking in your sleep.
When kids talk in their sleep
It is disturbing for many parents to find

their children talking in their sleep and they are eager to find out the causes and remedies for the same. Dr Kanan, who also coaches children on life skills for enhancing their leadership and emotional quotient for performance, says, "There is a gateway in the brain that shuts down when we sleep. We don't walk, talk or eat in our sleep. This gateway closes by the time a child is 3 to 4 years old. However, if the brain for some reason keeps this gateway partially open, it is receiving input that the mind and body are awake. A child experiences this if he is in a hyper active state of mind or has not been able to express certain emotions during the day. However, parents should know that sleep talking is not a medical or abnormal condition. Anyone, be it a child or a grownup, can go through this." However, for parents who are anxious about their children being affected by this, here are a few tips:
Reduce intake of sugar for the child post 7 pm, since glucose makes them more energetic and alert.
Give the child your time, focus and energy through the day. Talk to them beyond academics, so that they can express themselves.
Expressive mediums like art, dance and drama can help a child emote, express, speak up and stand up for himself if he/she is being bullied at school.
Teach children to clear their mind before going to sleep by throwing emotions in an imaginary waste basket.
Under an expert's guidance you can teach them to use techniques like diaphragmatic breathing and walking meditation to calm the mind before they sleep, which signals the brain to shut down the gate way.
If the sleep talking is accompanied by night terror, then therapy by an expert might be needed.