

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate Phase I of Noida International Airport on Saturday

PM Narendra Modi is all set to inaugurate the first phase of the Noida International Airport in Jewar on March 28, 2026. The inauguration is scheduled for 12 pm that day, after which the PM will address a public gathering. This airport is expected to put NCR on the international aviation map.

New Delhi.(Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to visit Noida on March 28, 2026. He will be inaugurating the first phase of the Noida International Airport on the day. This airport is more popularly known as Jewar Airport. PM Modi to take walkthrough of airport, address public The PM is scheduled to arrive at the airport around 11:30 am on March 28. He will then take a walkthrough of the terminal building of the airport in Jewar. Post the walkthrough he will inaugurate the first phase of the Airport at 12 pm, said a communication from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The PM is also scheduled to address a public gathering from the airport, post the inauguration. Major breakthrough in India's aviation infrastructure development: PMO



The PMO in its communication, described the inauguration of the Noida International Airport in Jewar, as a significant milestone in India's journey towards becoming a global aviation hub. They India and would enhance regional connectivity, according to the PMO. Development of Noida International Airport The Noida International Airport is being developed at a total cost of Rs 11,200 crore. It is among the largest greenfield airports in the country and is being built under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The airport is being developed as a multi-modal transport hub, which will be connected to road, rail, metro and other regional transit systems. It is also set to function as a multi-modal cargo hub and can handle 2.5 lakh metric tonnes of cargo annually. The administration hopes to expand this capacity to 18 lakh metric tonnes annually in the near future. The strategic location of the Noida International Airport, near the Yamuna Expressway, is expected to make it a favourable choice for people, due to seamless connectivity, to other transport routes.

CM Rekha Gupta trains guns on previous AAP govt over CAG findings

New Delhi.(Agency) Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday tabled a detailed account in the Assembly, alleging serious financial irregularities in the construction of ex-CM Arvind Kejriwal's residence, widely referred to as the 'Sheesh Mahal.' Launching a sharp attack, Gupta said those who built a 'Sheesh Mahal' in Delhi have now moved into what she described as a 'Sheesh Mahal-2' in Punjab. She accused Kejriwal of behaving like an emperor, claiming he saw himself as a ruler as treated the residents of Delhi as his subjects. At her instance, the House referred the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for a detailed probe. Quoting a couplet, she remarked, "Wo zahar deta to sabki nigah mein aa jaata, usne yoon kiya ki dava dena band kar diya" (Had he given poison, it would have been obvious; instead, he chose to withhold the medicine). She emphasised that the issue went beyond bricks, furniture or interiors, and was about exposing what she described as a 'well-planned deception' concealed for years. According to her, the report indicates a deeper moral decline, where a leader who projected himself as a common man allegedly adopted a lifestyle of excess and entitlement. Questioning Kejriwal's image of simplicity, Gupta pointed out that even though the AAP national convener had taken issue with former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit having 10 air conditioners, he himself.



Nationwide Anger Erupts Over Alleged Insult to Sikh Faith in Dhurandhar 2

All India Sikh Conference Babbar demands immediate ban, apology over portrayal of Sikh character and Gurbani

The Sikh Times Sanjay Kumar New Delhi 26 March , A major controversy has erupted across the country following serious allegations of disrespect towards the Sikh community in the recently released film Dhurandhar 2. The issue has triggered widespread anger among Sikh organizations, with strong demands for immediate action against the filmmakers. The All India Sikh Conference Babbar, under the leadership of its President Gurcharan Singh Babbar, has strongly condemned the film, alleging that it portrays a Sikh character in a manner that is deeply offensive and con-

trary to Sikh religious principles. According to the organization, the depiction of a Sikh individual smoking cigarettes is a direct violation of Sikh Rehat Maryada, which strictly prohibits the consumption of tobacco. The organization has further alleged that the film contains scenes and content that amount to disrespect of Gurbani, the sacred teachings enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib. Terming it a "serious insult to Sikh faith and identity," the Conference has warned that such portrayals are unacceptable and hurt the religious sentiments of millions of Sikhs worldwide. In a strong statement, Gurcharan Singh Babbar has demanded that the producer, director, and actors associated with Dhurandhar 2 immediately halt

the screening of the film and issue an unconditional public apology to the Sikh community. He warned that failure to do so could lead to widespread public outrage and protests across the country. The All India Sikh Conference Babbar has also appealed to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to intervene without delay and impose an immediate ban on the film. The organization has raised serious questions over the role of the Central Board of Film Certification, asking on what basis such controversial content was cleared for public release. Community leaders have described the film as an attempt at "character assassination" of Sikh identity in the public domain. They emphasized that Sikh symbols, values, and

religious practices are sacred and should not be misrepresented for cinematic purposes. The controversy has rapidly gained momentum, with calls for strict action growing louder on social media and among religious bodies. Many Sikh groups have expressed their readiness to launch nationwide protests if the authorities fail to take prompt and appropriate action. Observers believe that this issue once again underlines the urgent need for greater sensitivity and accountability in the portrayal of religious communities in Indian cinema. As tensions escalate, the response of the government, certification authorities, and filmmakers will be closely watched in the coming days.

'Shandaar 4 Saal, Bhagwant Mann de Naal'; AAP takes Bhagwant Mann Govt's achievements to every doorstep across Punjab

The Sikh Times CHANDIGARH, 26March: Marking four years of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab under Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the party on Wednesday launched a massive statewide outreach campaign titled "Shandaar 4 Saal, Bhagwant Mann de Naal," taking its governance record directly to the people across villages and urban wards. Ministers, MLAs and constituency in-charges fanned out across nearly 1,000 villages and wards in a single day, engaging with citizens and highlighting key achievements of the Punjab Government. The campaign witnessed strong public participation, with people expressing satisfaction over governance and welfare delivery under CM Bhagwant Singh Mann. Interacting with people in Sham Chaurasi, Cabinet Minister Dr. Ravjot Singh stated, "Today, Punjab's government schools are being discussed across the country. Even surveys conducted by the Government

of India have acknowledged that Punjab's schools and NEET." Highlighting power sector reforms in Ludhiana West, Power Minister Sanjeev Arora said, "The Mann government has created history by making electricity bills zero for 90% of households in Punjab. Earlier, people feared high bills, but today they are getting major relief along with 24-hour uninterrupted power supply." Speaking in Bhoja, Minister Lal Chand Kataruchak underscored the Punjab Government's campaign against drugs, stating, "The Bhagwant Mann government has launched a decisive war against drugs, under which more than 92,000 smugglers have been put behind bars. Along with this, 65,000 government jobs have been provided purely on merit, without any bribery or recommendation." In Jandiala, Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO highlighted healthcare transformation, stating, "985 Aam Aadmi Clinics are successfully functioning in Punjab, where more than 5 crore people have received free treatment. Contd.....page-3



Parvesh Verma Compares Arvind Kejriwal To 'Rehman Dakait', AAP Hits Back

The confrontation centred on the renovation of Kejriwal's official residence, which the BJP has dubbed "Sheeshmahal."

Chandigarh.(Agency) A political storm erupted in the Delhi Legislative Assembly on Wednesday after Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The confrontation centred on the renovation of Kejriwal's official residence, which the BJP has dubbed "Sheeshmahal." Speaking in the House, Verma cited a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report to allege large-scale irregularities in the construction and renovation of the property. He claimed that public funds were misused in 2020 while Delhi was grappling with the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and governance issues. During his speech, Verma compared the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief to "Rehman Dakait," a character from the film Dhurandhar, and described the AAP government as a disaster for the city. The minister alleged that trees were cut and several residential structures, including the houses of government officials, were demolished without proper approvals to facilitate the project. He further stated that the initial tender of Rs 7.5 crore was escalated to Rs 55 crore, with the total expenditure eventually reaching Rs 58 crore. Verma also accused the previous administration of failing to utilise Rs 787.91 crore allocated by the Centre to combat COVID-19. He alleged that while the city suffered during the peak of the pandemic, construction work at the residence continued unabated. In a dramatic moment inside the Assembly, the minister presented a long printed roll listing various items allegedly purchased for the residence, including expensive furniture and furnishings. The visual drew significant attention as the scroll extended across both the treasury and opposition benches. Verma further alleged that a second structure, referred to as "Sheeshmahal 2," was also being built but remains incomplete following the change in government. Responding strongly to the charges, Saurabh Bhardwaj, the Delhi unit president of the Aam Aadmi Party, dismissed the allegations and accused the BJP of hypocrisy. "Those who purchased a ₹6.2 crore VVIP boat have been raising questions over a ₹30 crore Chief Minister's residence for the past three years," Bhardwaj said.



If Superstitions Worked, Terrorists Could Be Killed With Needle: Devendra Fadnavis

If superstition solved problems, wars would have been fought with lemons and chilis instead of drones, quipped Fadnavis

Mumbai.(Agency) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has slammed superstitious beliefs while speaking in the assembly on the investigation against rape-accused astrologer Ashok Kharat. He also used pointed analogies, with mentions of the US and Pakistan, to drive home his message. Taking aim at so-called "bhondu baba" practices, he said, "If superstition had solved problems, we would have made Kharat an adviser to Trump. Wars would have been fought with lemons and chilis instead of drones." "We would have finished terrorists in Pakistan while sitting here with a needle. We wouldn't have sent soldiers to the border. Eight to ten such godmen could have done the job," he quipped. "If black magic solved issues, we wouldn't need arms, campaigns, or governance; we



could do everything sitting here."The chief minister's remarks against superstition were met with applause. "Set Precedent" Referring to Kharat's case, which has expanded beyond a single complaint into wider allegations of

exploitation and black magic practices, the chief minister urged members to assist the investigation. "Whoever has information should give it to the administration. We have to punish him in such a way that it sets a precedent," Fadnavis said. He reiterated that while faith has a place in society, blind faith can be dangerous. "We believe in faith, but there is a difference between faith and blind faith. We have seen how intellect gets lost when that line is crossed," he noted. "Reject Blind Faith" Placing his argument in Maharashtra's reformist tradition, the chief minister said that saints have always opposed blind faith. "Maharashtra is a land of saints. None of them denied God, but they attacked blind faith," he said, referring to Sant Dnyaneshwar, Sant Tukaram and Sant Eknath, who encouraged people to question.

News box

Agencies told to fix Gurgaon roads, seal illegal cuts in school zones to reduce crashes

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Roads next to schools must be maintained regularly, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Sonu Bhatt directed all departments responsible for road upkeep during a district-level committee meeting on Wednesday. The ADC reviewed the Safe School Vehicle Policy and instructed all SDMs to regularly inspect school buses in their respective areas and directed police teams to ensure compliance with road safety rules.

Illegal road cuts, electricity poles installed in the middle of main roads, street lights, black spots near Panchgaon Chowk and the Rapid Metro, measures required to prevent accidents, widening of the road at Bristol Chowk and availability of safety standards, removal of encroachments at the sectors 4-7-9 junction, installation of high-mast lights at major junctions on NH8, and overloaded vehicles, was discussed during the meeting. Providing medical assistance to victims during road accidents was also discussed during the meeting.

ADC directed a joint team comprising representatives from the police, GMDA, DLF and Raahgiri Foundation to inspect Bristol Chowk and submit their report. ADC the district transport officer and secretary of the regional transport authority to organise a training camp with the IIT Madras team to understand the functioning of the TMS and e-DAR applications. DCP Traffic Rajesh Mohan shared his suggestions on accident prevention and traffic management. He said any issue related to illegal cuts presented in the meeting should be routed through the area traffic in-charge. In cases of cable theft or similar incidents affecting street light maintenance, the concerned agency must first register a report at the nearest police station. The ADC also directed DHBVN officials to release the electricity connection for the high-mast light at Panchgaon Chowk.

27-year-old dies in hit-and-run

Noida.(Agency)

A 27-year-old person died after an unidentified vehicle rammed his motorcycle and fled the spot on Sirohal Road in the early hours of Monday.

Ayush Singh lived in Satguru Enclave and had been working at Airtel for the past two years. According to a complaint filed by his cousin, Nishant Singh, the incident took place around 12.10am on March 23 when Ayush was returning to his PG after visiting a friend in Sirohal village. Police said the victim was riding his motorcycle UP16BR7336 when an unknown vehicle rammed his vehicle from behind. The impact caused him to fall on the road, leaving him critically injured. A passerby shifted him to a private hospital in an ambulance, where doctors declared him dead. Following information from the hospital on March 24, a police team reached the facility and recorded the statement of the victim's cousin. Based on the complaint and medical report, a case has been registered at Palam Vihar police station under sections 281 (rash driving), 125A (rash or negligent acts that endanger human life or personal safety) and 106 (causing death due to negligence) of BNS. A cop said efforts are underway to identify the offending vehicle and trace the driver. CCTV footage from the surrounding area is being scanned as part of the probe.

Bomb threat email triggers security check at Gurgaon school



Gurgaon.(Agency)

A private school in Baliyawas received a bomb threat email on Wednesday. Police teams from DLF Phase-1 station, along with dog squad, bomb disposal squad, and other specialised units, rushed to the spot and carried out a thorough search of the entire school premises, including classrooms, buildings, and surrounding areas. "No suspicious object or explosive material was found during the checking, and the premises of Pathways School has been declared safe. The email was a hoax, but the matter is being treated with seriousness. We have launched an investigation to trace the origin of the email and identify the sender," said a senior police official. The mail was sent to the school at 1.30 am. The school management saw the email at 8.30am. Police were then informed, and teams arrived around 8.45am. The bomb squad, along with a dog unit, searched the entire campus. However, prioritising the students' safety, the classes were dismissed at 10.30am.

Earlier this month, a 30-year-old Bangladeshi national was arrested for sending a series of bomb hoax emails to around 40 schools in Jan, triggering panic, evacuations, and large-scale security checks. The man, Saurabh Vishwas, alias Michael, was picked up from Ahmedabad on Thursday after a technical investigation by Cyber South police station traced his role in generating email accounts allegedly used to send the threats. Police said he entered India about nine years ago from Khulna via an illegal route and lived in West Bengal using forged identity documents.

Roads fixed, hoardings and tents up: Noida International Airport gears up for grand opening

Noida.(Agency)

With the inauguration just two days away, the workers were seen putting finishing touches on Noida International Airport. Some were fixing tiles or putting up hoardings, while the others were busy setting up the tents for the mega launch on March 28. On Wednesday, a TOI team visited the airport. It found that the road connecting the airport to the Yamuna Expressway had a few rough patches near Kishorpur village. This road has been designated as a cargo passage. Officials said repair work on the surrounding roads is underway, and workers were seen patching up this very road. Inside the campus, road rollers were levelling the ground to make elaborate parking arrangements for visitors. In the terminal building, check-in counters, baggage handling systems (conveyor belts), boarding gates, flight information display system, customs area were being put through final checks. On the other hand,

fully functional restrooms, seating areas, and escalators are waiting for the passengers. Crew members from a private airline company have also been deployed at the airport. Workers have set up three large tents for the inauguration programme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the airport. There will be three tents which will accommodate over one lakh people. There will be separate entry and exit gates for VIPs and the general public. VIPs will use the link road of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway to attend the launch event. Others will be allowed through the Yamuna Expressway-Kishorpur road. There will be separate seating arrangements for VIPs, the public, and a media gallery. There will be multi-layer security equipped with CCTV cameras at the spot. Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh also visited the airport site and reviewed the preparations. He said that the main pandal

is nearly ready. "This will be a grand pandal supported by two pandals on both sides. This will ensure that the visitors do not face any inconvenience. Water



dispensers will be installed at short distances. The entire campus will be equipped with a public address system to guide people," he said. "Jewar will make its name on the global map and it will help it grow further. I invite everyone to attend the programme and hear the Prime

Minister," he said. District administration and authorities are making elaborate arrangements to make the event successful. The BJP has been holding meetings in Noida, Greater Noida, Bulandshahr, and neighbouring areas to invite people to the programme. MP Gautam Buddh Nagar Mahesh Sharma conducted a public outreach programme in Khurja, Bulandshahr, in preparation for the grand inauguration of the airport. He visited several villages, interacted with locals, and invited them to attend the inauguration ceremony in large numbers at 9.30 am on Saturday. "The commencement of operations at Noida International Airport will generate new employment opportunities, boost trade and industry, and significantly improve regional connectivity. The project is expected to enhance the state's identity at both national and international levels," he said.

MCG cancels contracts for five key infra projects, blacklists four companies

Gurgaon.(Agency)

In a stern move against alleged negligence and delays, the MCG has terminated the contracts of four contractors assigned to five critical civic infrastructure works across the city. The contractors have also been blacklisted for two years, barring them from undertaking any future projects with the civic body. Of the four contractors whose agreements have been scrapped, three had not even begun the assigned work. The remaining two contractors had completed barely 5% of the work, a level of progress officials described as "unacceptable." The civic body is now expected to re-tender the projects or assign them to new agencies to ensure the work is completed without further delay. The terminated contracts covered essential urban maintenance tasks including desilting of stormwater drains and sewer lines, laying of new water pipelines, hiring of jetting machines, and replacement of damaged manholes, slabs, covers, and sewer lines in several parts of the city. According to MCG officials, the decision was taken after the contractors failed to execute the projects despite being awarded the work months earlier. An

internal review revealed a glaring lack of progress on the ground. The stalled works are particularly critical ahead of the monsoon season, when blocked stormwater drains and damaged sewer infrastructure can trigger severe waterlogging and a sanitation crisis in the



city. An MCG official indicated the action was necessary to send a clear message to contractors that non-performance will not be tolerated. "We have debarred these companies for a period of two years besides terminating their contracts. No payments have been made to the contractors for the work assigned," said MCG executive engineer Sandeep Kumar. The works included cleaning and desilting of sewer line by bucket machine in Jacobpura, Adarsh Nagar and Gopal

Nagar; cleaning and desilting of storm water drain in ward no. 27; providing and laying water supply pipeline and restoration of road with interlocking tiles from Jharsa Chowk to HVPNL Colony; cleaning and desilting of storm water drain in ward no. 31 and hiring of jetting

machine and replacement of damaged manhole, slab, cover, damaged lines in ward no 27. The residents said that while terminating the contractors and debarring them is a welcome step, MCG will also have to ensure that these contractors don't fetch contracts again for the future projects. "When I was the RWA president between 2019 and 2021, a road was made in my sector bypassing the norms. I demanded a vigilance inquiry and nine samples of the road constructed by the contractor failed the test, following which he was debarred. However, the contractor continued working on other MCG projects, producing poor quality projects. These contractors have a syndicate. So, while MCG has blacklisted them for two years, they should ensure that these contractors don't get any other project in other divisions," said.

Noida plans new flyover to link Mahamaya with Yamuna Pushta road

Noida.(Agency)

Noida Authority is planning to construct a 1.4 km elevated road to connect the Mahamaya Flyover with the Yamuna Pushta road, which begins from Sector 94. The project aims to ease congestion on the Noida Expressway, which authorities expect will face significantly higher traffic volumes once the Noida International Airport begins commercial operations.

The stretch already sees traffic congestion during peak hours. At present, traffic heading towards Greater Noida from DND and the Chilla border area merges with traffic from Noida's internal sectors, including Sector 15, Sector 16, Sector 18 and Film City, at this point. Hundreds of

commuters remain stuck in long snarls in the stretch between Chilla border and Mahamaya Flyover. Those travelling towards Greater Noida, Jewar and Agra are among the worst affected, with congestion worsening during both morning and evening rush hours.

The Authority is already developing the 5.7km Chilla Elevated Road, which runs parallel to the Mayur Vihar-Noida link road up to Mahamaya Flyover. The project, which is around 46% complete, is set to be ready by 2027. Officials said the proposed 1.4 km stretch will connect the Chilla corridor on one end with the Yamuna Pushta road on the other, creating an alternative route to the Noida Expressway. Noida CEO Krishna

Karunesh said the elevated road was planned to ensure smoother and more seamless travel for thousands of daily commuters. Once complete, it will offer a congestion-free corridor for those travelling between Delhi, Noida and Greater Noida, he added. Once the proposal is approved, Noida will write to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, to conduct a survey, prepare a detailed project report and finalise the alignment. The project will move to the next stage after the report is submitted. Noida Authority has also approved a Rs 34 crore tender for the reconstruction of the 11.5 km Yamuna Pushta road, which runs along the Yamuna from Sector 94 to Sector 135.

Construction waste, encroachment threaten Gurgaon's first Nagar Van

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city's first urban forest is near collapse — the 'Nagar Van' in Ghata, projected as a green lung for the city, is fast turning into a dumpyard with rampant construction and demolition (C&D) waste dumping and large-scale encroachment threatening its survival.

A TOI visit to the site found mounds of debris strewn across the land and unauthorised access points into the 40-acre urban forest. Launched in early 2024 with the aim of boosting green cover and improving air quality, the Ghata Nagar Van was funded by the union ministry of environment, forest and climate change and developed at a cost of about Rs 2 crore, which included Rs 1.5 crore spent on fencing the area. However, several stretches of the boundary wall have collapsed or been removed, allowing squatters to move in and vehicles to dump debris unchecked. Residents living near the site said the broken fencing has effectively left the forest unprotected. "The

wall is completely open at several points. Trucks dump construction waste almost daily and trees are being chopped," said Ashok Sharma, a Sector 57 resident. "If this continues, the entire project will be destroyed." The ecology and wildlife of the area also face the brunt of civic neglect. The forest was planned as a biodiversity hub which would help conserve native Aravali species, medicinal plants and fruit-bearing trees. It was also meant to revive the flora and fauna around Ghata Jheel, once a natural waterbody that has now shrunk into a marshy, muck-filled pond.

Now, unauthorised access to the land has allowed illegal activities such as tree felling and timber being extracted from the forest. With their habitat shrinking, several residents said, the population of jackals, wild boars, and rabbits has also dropped. Environmentalists warned that debris dumping will also affect the groundwater quality. "C&D waste dumping is

a hazard for walkers and cyclists and blocks natural rainwater flow into the forest, affecting groundwater recharge and plant regeneration," said Vaishali Rana, an environmental activist. "It is destroying what little green space the city has left." An official said the forest dept has taken note of the matter. "We will send a team to investigate the condition of the boundary wall and the dumping. Patrolling will be increased," he said, adding that the scale of encroachment would decide enforcement methods.

A broken part of the boundary wall of the Ghata Nagar Van. Experts said the condition of Ghata Nagar Van highlights the larger struggle between urbanisation and conservation in the city. "This forest was meant to be a model for urban green spaces across Haryana but its neglect raises serious questions about the state's ability to sustain such projects," said ecologist Sunil Harsana. The dumping problem is compounded by the city's lack of waste-processing

infrastructure. Gurgaon has only one C&D waste treatment plant in Basai, spread across 3.5 acres, with a capacity of 300 metric tonnes per day — far lower than the city's daily debris generation. Some locals have demanded immediate repair of the boundary wall, deployment of security personnel, and installation of CCTV cameras to stop trespassing. "Crores were spent on this forest but without protection it's all going waste," said Mukesh Yadav, another Sector-57 resident. "Authorities must fix accountability before it's too late." Meanwhile, the forest department said it plans to develop water bodies inside the forest and ensure year-round drinking water for wildlife, especially during summer, besides creating grasslands for feeding and breeding. However, with dumping and encroachment continuing unchecked, the future of Gurgaon's first Nagar Van remains uncertain as the city grapples with rising pollution

and vanishing green spaces.

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Editor-in-Chief
Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517

Website : www.thesikhimes.in
Email : sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

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Strict action should be taken against those spreading rumours about gas black marketing and those involved in black marketing: Charanjev Malhotra

The Sikh Times
New Delhi. Prominent social worker, Gaumata Sevak and Corona warrior Charanjev Malhotra said that Narendra Modi is the shining star of the world today. Modi is respected all over the world. Regarding gas supply, prominent social worker Charanjev Malhotra said that due to the ongoing war in the Middle East, this problem is arising all over the world, hence the government has decided to use PNG de-escalation instead of LPG. He said that even during the Corona period, the opposition continued to spread propaganda, but India sent Covid vaccine to more than seventy countries ranging from countries like Brazil, America and Britain to Nepal and Bangladesh and started a new chapter of vaccine diplomacy. Today, if India's image has changed from a third world country to that of a powerful country, then it has to be accepted that India's 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' tradition has played a big role in this. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the Indian Navy personnel stranded on ships in the

Strait of Hormuz. He further stated that he has presented a roadmap for "Made in India" ships and strengthened storage to

logue and diplomacy and assured the country of adequate fuel supplies. During the Corona period, there was chaos in the

and mantras, a time came when during the Corona period, on the call of Modi ji, the people of the entire country clapped and banged their plates. Seeing the effect of Modi ji's words on the people of the country, even the biggest countries praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi ji provided free ration to the poor during the Corona period and cooked food was made available in some places. In such a dire situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not let there be any shortage of anything in the country. Today, due to the ongoing war in the Middle East, to get rid of the global problem of gas supply in the entire country, work should be done with a spirit of cooperation and more and more people should be encouraged to connect to PNG. He said that solar stoves, electronic plates and stoves etc. should be used as alternative uses. Prominent social worker Charanjev Malhotra strongly demanded that strict action should be taken against those spreading rumours about black marketing of gas and those involved in black marketing.



ensure oil and gas supplies, and directed state governments to prevent hoarding. He also advocated for peace through dia-

Walkie-talkie sale on Facebook: Meta moves Delhi HC against CCPA order slapping Rs 10 lakh fine

New Delhi: Meta Platforms Inc on Wednesday assailed in the Delhi High Court a Central Consumer Protection Authority order imposing a Rs 10 lakh penalty on it for alleged unauthorised sale and listing of walkie-talkies on the Facebook Marketplace. The senior counsel for Meta submitted that, unlike Amazon and Flipkart, Facebook was not an e-market but merely a "notice board", and therefore, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has no jurisdiction over it. Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav listed Meta's petition for hearing on March 25, asking it to explain how the order can be termed "without jurisdiction". The judge also asked the petitioner why the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission cannot consider the issue. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Meta, argued that Facebook neither provides a mechanism for sale and purchase nor does it charge any commission from the users, as it is not an e-commerce platform. "We are

not providing virtual Khan Market. This is a notice board meant only for Facebook users. We are not a shop. No commercial Code) Rules by allegedly permitting walkie-talkie listings on Facebook Marketplace without mandatory disclosures. In its petition, Meta said Facebook Marketplace is a free service designed exclusively for natural persons to sell or exchange goods in a personal capacity, and businesses and commercial sellers are not allowed to create listings. Seeking to set aside the order, the petition claimed that the CCPA acted in excess of its jurisdiction by acting on the "untenable" premise that Facebook Marketplace was subject to and governed by the legal framework for e-commerce. The petition also claimed the CCPA passed the order in violation of principles of natural justice. "To circumvent the plain lan-

guage of the E-Commerce Rules and clear statutory frameworks, the Authority adopts a strained interpretation under which any digital platform that hosts repeated listings of regulated goods is brought within the E-Commerce Rules." This approach renders the exclusion illusory and would extend the Rules to virtually every digital platform, including online newspapers and community forums, that allow users to post listings of everyday consumer items like toys, footwear and water bottles, all of which are regulated goods," the petition said. "The resulting burden would fall squarely on natural persons selling goods in a personal capacity, as ordinary household items would suddenly trigger regulatory compliance. Such an outcome is plainly inconsistent with both the text and purpose of the E-Commerce Rules," it added. The CCPA compounded its jurisdictional excess by ruling that it violated the intermediary guidelines, which fall within the purview of the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology,

the plea said. In its January 1 order, the CCPA also directed Meta to ensure that no walkie-talkies or any other product requiring statutory approval/certification is listed, hosted, advertised or sold on its platform without full compliance with applicable laws and mandatory disclosures. It also asked Meta to periodically undertake a self-audit to check deceptive listings and publish a certificate of such self-audit on its website in the public and consumer interest. Earlier, the CCPA took suo motu cognisance of the "large-scale illegal listing and sale of walkie-talkies (Personal Mobile Radios) on e-commerce platforms" and imposed monetary penalties on several online marketplaces. It identified more than 16,970 non-compliant walkie-talkie listings across platforms and issued notices to 13 e-commerce entities, including Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, JioMart and Meta.

Stay calm, prioritise upskilling to remain competitive: Leaders
New Delhi: With concerns mounting over artificial intelligence reshaping the job landscape, industry leaders at the AI Impact Summit 2026 advised professionals to stay composed and prioritise upskilling to remain competitive. Speaking on "The Future of Employability in the Age of AI," top executives acknowledged that while some jobs may become redundant, AI will also create new opportunities. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, founder of Info Edge, parent company of Naukri.com, said fears of mass unemployment may be overstated. Drawing a parallel with the introduction of computers in banking, he noted that productivity improved without widespread job losses. He encouraged young professionals to focus on acquiring practical AI skills rather than worrying about policy changes. "If you don't learn AI, AI will be done to you," he remarked, urging individuals to master multiple AI tools within a short timeframe to safeguard their careers. Echoing similar sentiments, Sateesh Seetharamiah, CEO of EdgeVerve, a subsidiary of Infosys, described AI as a powerful productivity enhancer. He emphasised that lifelong learning would be essential as roles evolve, adding that while job functions may change, human oversight and accountability will remain indispensable. Meanwhile, Vineet Nayar, Founder Chairman of Sampark, said AI could render nearly half of current roles obsolete but would also generate new employment opportunities requiring advanced skills. He underlined the importance of identifying and acquiring the right competencies for the emerging AI-driven economy.



sales are allowed. No consideration is charged. We don't charge anybody. "It is a facility of a notice board meant for sale... Mr Rohatgi has a phone to sell; someone wants to buy. The platform doesn't charge anything or provide any mechanism to buy or sell. Mr Rohatgi will have to contact him," the senior counsel explained. In its order passed on January 1, 2026, the CCPA held that Meta violated the Consumer Protection Act and its Rules and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics

'Shandaar 4 Saal, Bhagwat Mann de Naal'; AAP takes Bhagwat Mann Govt's...

Contd.....Front page
Now, every family is getting up to 210 lakh of free cashless treatment, ensuring that the poor no longer need to take loans for medical care." Addressing people in Malout, Cabinet Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur spoke about women-centric initiatives, stating, "Under the 'Mawan-Dhian Satkar Yojana,' every woman will receive ₹1,000 per month and women from SC communities will receive ₹1,500 per month starting from Baisakhi. Along with this, free bus travel has empowered women." In Jalandhar West, Minister Mohinder Bhagat emphasized agricultural support, stating, "Only the Mann government is the true well-wisher of farmers. Today, farmers are receiving free electricity during the daytime, and after decades, canal water has reached the tail-end of fields. Crop payments are now being transferred directly to farmers' bank accounts within just 24 hours." Speaking in Lehra, Minister Barinder Kumar Goyal highlighted welfare and infrastructure initiatives, stating, "The government is facilitating free pilgrimage for senior citizens. Additionally, families of soldiers who sacrifice their lives for the nation are being given an ex gratia of ₹1 crore, which is the highest in the country. The formation of the 'Sadak Surakhya Force' has reduced deaths in road accidents by 50%." He added, "In the last four years, work has been done that had not been accomplished since independence. With the construction of 40,000 kilometers of roads, 9,000 playgrounds, and 6,000 gyms, the dream of restoring 'Rangla Punjab' is becoming a reality." During the outreach drive, leaders reiterated that the AAP Government is focused not just on policy announcements but on ensuring last-mile delivery, taking the benefits of governance to every household across Punjab.

Turban for Votes, Hat for Statues — Sarna Exposes Selective Sikh Optics

The Sikh Times
NEW DELHI, March 24 — The political theatre in Delhi and Haryana has acquired a familiar costume change linked to Shaheed Bhagat Singh, according to Delhi Akali chief Paramjit Singh Sarna, who on Tuesday launched a sharp attack over what he described as "calculated symbolism dressed up as respect." Sarna's remarks come amid renewed scrutiny of how Bhagat Singh is represented in public memorials commissioned by governments in Delhi and Haryana. The revolutionary, born into a Sikh family and shaped by that identity, is frequently depicted in these statues wearing a Western-style hat rather than a turban. For Sarna, the issue cuts deeper than artistic interpretation. "Whenever elections approach Punjab or Sikh audiences elsewhere, top BJP leaders appear with neatly tied turbans, speaking the language of honour and shared heritage," Sarna said. "Yet when it

comes to permanent representations of icons, they quietly erase the Sikh form. This is not oversight. It is design." He pointed to the contrast as more than cosmetic. In Sarna's telling, the turban becomes a prop in campaign season, while the hat in bronze and stone serves a longer narrative—one that detaches Bhagat Singh from his Sikh roots and recasts him into a broader, more convenient mould. "The same establishment that borrows the turban for optics installs statues that discard it," he said. "One is meant for the camera, the other for history. That tells you which version they truly want to endure." Some BJP leaders in Delhi and Haryana have, in the past, defended such depictions by citing historical photographs of Bhagat Singh wearing a hat during certain phases of his life, particularly around the time of his revolutionary activities. Supporters argue that the hat has come to symbolise his defiance and moderni-

ty. Sarna dismissed that reasoning as selective memory. "No one denies that Bhagat Singh wore a hat at a particular moment," he said. "But reducing him to that image alone, while sidelining his Sikh identity, reveals an intent to reshape rather than remember. You cannot claim cultural sensitivity on stage and practice historical editing in public spaces."

NAME CHANGE
I Nidhi Garg W/O Ankur Garg R/o FLAT NO. 11/002, ANSAL SUNSHINE COUNTY, KUNDLI, BADHKHALSA, Badh Khalsa (41), PO: P.s.rai, DIST: Sonapat, Haryana-131029 have changed my name to Nidhi Singhal for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Wajid S/o MD YUNUS R/o KH NO-392, GROUND FLOOR, KUSHAK ROAD, STREET NO-1-J-BLOCK, SWAROOP NAGAR, Siras Pur, PO: Siras Pur, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi, 110042 have changed my name to MD Wajid for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Mushyada W/O Md Wajid, R/o KH NO-392, GROUND FLOOR, KUSHAK ROAD, STREET NO-1-J-BLOCK, SWAROOP NAGAR, Siras Pur, PO: Siras Pur, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi, 110042 have changed my name to Mussada for all future purposes.

USFD TESTING OF FLASH BUTT WELDING JOINT
E-Tender Notice No. GMW-USFD-022026-MLG Dated: 24-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Name of work:** USFD testing of Flash Butt welding joint by phased array Ultrasonic Weld Tester (PAUT) at Flash Butt Welding Plant, New Bongaigaon of N.F. Railway. **Approximate Tender Value:** ₹1,63,27,500/-, **Earnest Money:** ₹3,26,600/-. **Tender document can be received upto 15:00 hrs. of 23-04-2026 & opening at 15:00 hrs. of 23-04-2026.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available on website www.ireps.gov.in
General Manager (W), Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

MAINTENANCE WORKS
Tender Notice No.: CON/2026/MAR/03, Dated: 16-03-2026. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No.:** CE/CON/MLG/MIS/2026/02. **Name of Work:** Maintenance of various Construction offices at Maligaon and Signal and Telecom Store/Con/Pandu. Rest houses and Residences of GM/Con, CAO/Con's, FA and CAO/Con, under the jurisdiction of Dy. Chief Engineer/Con-III, Maligaon including housekeeping of GM/CON office buildings i.e. Main Building, Annexe Building, SSE/VI C/HQ Office, Yoga Room, Canteen and premises, toilets, circulating area, drain and other Construction offices in Maligaon and Signal, SSE/Electrical/Con office and Godown, SSE/Power office in HQ by cleaning, sweeping and mopping etc. of floors, toilets, drains and open areas to maintain hygiene and cleanliness and maintenance of existing/newly construction garden including planting seasonal flower and plants at GM/CON office, Nirman Vatika, Landscape Garden from Gate No. 3 to GM/CON, Dy. CE/CON-III office at Maligaon, Bungalows of GM/CON, CAO/CONs, PFA/CON for two years. **Approx. Value :** ₹7,72,94,509.03/- **Date & time of closing of tender at 14:30 hrs. on 17-04-2026 and opening of tender at 15:30 hrs. on 17-04-2026.** For details of Tender and Corrigendum, please visit N.F. Railway website www.ireps.gov.in
CE/CON/KYQ Project, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Construction Organization
Serving Customers With A Smile

NAME CHANGE
I Subodh Kumar Pandey S/o Ganga Sagar Pandey R/o 19 B, Jagat Narayan Road, VTC-Kadamkuan, PO-Kadamkuan, District-Patna Sadar, Bihar - 800003, have changed my minor son's name from Som Pandey/aged 13 years to Aarush Pandey forever

NAME CHANGE
I Nitin Kumar S/o Shanti Lal Oswal R/o 1033, Gola Bajar Opp. Saheed Smarak, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh - 482002, have changed my name to Nitin Kumar Oswal

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that PNB Housing Finance Ltd., having its branch office at Faridabad, Haryana, intends to extend a financial facility to Mr. Jagdish Lal, against the security of House No. 60 (Property Id. No. 19KVV03B2), area measuring 44 Sq. Yds., situated at Waka inside abadi Lal Dora Ahirwara, Ballabgarh, Tehsil: Ballabgarh, Distt. Faridabad, Haryana. The Said Property was owned by Mr. Umesh Kumar Bansal, who derived title thereto by virtue of a Sale Deed bearing Document No. 9912, dated 10.12.2012, duly registered with SR Ballabgarh and executed by Mrs. Sumitra Devi. It is hereby further notified that the Original Sale Deed, executed by Mrs. Sumitra Devi in favour of Mr. Umesh Kumar Bansal in respect of the Said Plot (i.e., House No. 60, area measuring 44 Sq. Yds., vide Document No. 9912, in Book No. 1, Volume No./146, Page No. 182/88 to 90 on 10.12.2012, duly registered with Registrar Ballabgarh, has been misplaced/lost and remains untraceable. A report in this regard has been duly lodged with the Crime Branch of Delhi Police vide LR No. 187546/2026, dated 24.03.2026. Accordingly, any person(s), individual(s), or entity (ies) having any claim, right, title, interest, lien, or objection whatsoever in respect of the aforementioned property or against the proposed mortgage in favour of PNB Housing Finance Ltd., are hereby called upon to submit their claims/objections in writing, along with supporting documents, to the undersigned within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. Claims or objections, if any, may be submitted to Adv. Rishi Maheshwari (Mobile No.: +91-9340118309). In the absence of any response within the stipulated time period, it shall be presumed that there are no claims, objections, or encumbrances pertaining to the said property, and the proposed transaction shall be completed without any further reference or demur.
Rishi Maheshwari (Advocate)
Office At: RZ-29, Upper Ground Floor, Bhagwati Garden Jain Road, Near Dwarika More New Delhi 110059, Contact No- +91- 9340118309

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I RAVI THAKUR S/o BIJENDER SINGH R/o 45 G Pocket A - 1, Mayur Vihar, Phase - 3, East Delhi, Delhi - 110096 declare that the name of mine and my wife has been wrongly written as RAVI KUMAR and REKHA in my minor daughter namely ARADHYA THAKUR aged 13 years in her School Record. The actual name of mine and my wife are RAVI THAKUR and REKHA BHANDARI, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Ayushi D/o Manoj residing at Gauripur Habipur, Meethi, Bagpat, Uttar Pradesh - 250601 hereby undertake that I Ayushini want to change my name to Ayush Thakur and gender as Male. I Ayushini henceforth be known as S/o Manoj. The above statement made by me is true & correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. If any legal issue arises in this regard at any stage, I will be personally responsible for the same and, the Department of Publication will not be liable for any consequences arising therefrom.

NAME CHANGE
I Hitherto known as SONIA VERMA W/O PUNEET SHARMA R/O WZ-438B/1, Sri Nagar, Gali No-1, Near Hanuman Mandir, Rani Bagh, Sri Nagar Colony, PO: Saraswati Vihar, Dist: North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SONIA SHARMA.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I MANI SHANKAR PRASAD S/O JIWCHH SAH R/O House No-C-298, C-Block, Under Enclave-2, Kirari Suleman Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi - 110085 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as MANI SHANKAR in my minor daughter PRIYANKA KUMARI aged 14 years in her school record. The actual name of mine is MANI SHANKAR PRASAD which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, MANSI D/O MANOJ KUMAR RAY R/O 1256 Gali No-12 Bhand Jaipal Golden Pump Kapashera Po: Gurgaon Road Dist: South West Delhi Delhi-110037 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as MANOJ PATEL in my 10th and 12th class educational documents. The actual name of my father is MANOJ KUMAR RAY respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, SHALENDRA KUMAR S/O SHRI RAMA SHANKAR SINGH R/O Plot No. 254 & 255, 2nd Floor, Front side, Gali No. 19A, Uttam Nagar, PO DK Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have changed my minor daughter's name from TANISHQ SINGH to PRAGATI SINGH Adhar No. 5352 7159 8685, for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I RAVI THAKUR S/o BIJENDER SINGH R/o 45 G Pocket A - 1, Mayur Vihar, Phase - 3, East Delhi, Delhi - 110096 declare that the name of mine and my wife has been wrongly written as RAVI KUMAR and REKHA in my minor daughter namely ARADHYA THAKUR aged 13 years in her School Record. The actual name of mine and my wife are RAVI THAKUR and REKHA BHANDARI, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, Mussrat W/O Ikramuddin R/O h.no-E332 new seemarpuri delhi 110095, Changed my name to Mussarat Jhan.

Public Notice
It is for general information that I Mohd Bilal S/O Alizan Khan, R/O E-11 F/1 Kh No 654, Main 60 Ft Road, Shri Ram Colony, Rajayee Nagar, Karol Bagh, North East Delhi, Delhi 110094, declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as Heena Begum in my passport no Z 6493836. The actual name of my wife is Hina Kausar, respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, LATA, is legally mother of Army No. 2808049Y, Rank - Hav, Name - SHREENATH HUDDAR, presently residing at Vill - Shahapur, Post - Shahapur, Teh - Belgam, Dist - Belgam, State - Karnataka - 590003, have changed my name from LATA to HEMLATA KALLAPPA HUDDAR and my date of birth from 02/08/1978 to 12/08/1965 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 25/03/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, KALLAPPA, is legally father of Army No. 2808049Y, Rank - Hav, Name - SHREENATH HUDDAR, presently residing at Vill - Shahapur, Post - Shahapur, Teh - Belgam, Dist - Belgam, State - Karnataka - 590003, have changed my name from KALLAPPA to KALLAPPA SOMANATH HUDDAR and my date of birth from 05/04/1967 to 01/07/1962 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 25/03/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, MUGUTRAO, is legally father of JC No. 461839P, Rank - Sub, Name - MHAISAGAR GAJENDRA MUGUTRAO, presently residing at Vill - Pimpalkhuta Bu, Post - Nimkhed, Teh - Nandura, Dist - Buldhana, State - Maharashtra - 443101, have changed my name from MUGUTRAO to MUGUTRAO WAMANRAO MHAISAGAR and my date of birth from 16/08/1952 to 14/01/1951 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 25/03/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, GOUKARNA, is legally mother of JC No. 461839P, Rank - Sub, Name - MHAISAGAR GAJENDRA MUGUTRAO, presently residing at At - Pimpalkhuta Bu, Post - Nimkhed, Teh - Nandura, Dist - Buldhana, State - Maharashtra - 443101, have changed my name from GOUKARNA to GAUKARNA MUGUTRAO MHAISAGAR and my date of birth from 16/08/1958 to 01/07/1949 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 25/03/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

[ASHWANI KUMAR]
Advocate
Chamber No. 122, Tehsil Compound, Ghaziabad, U.P., kumar2021ashwani@gmail.com

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I ARVIND S/O RAM LAVER, Residing at House No. E -102, Shahid Shukhdev Nagar, Wazir Pur, Ind. Area, North West Delhi, Delhi - 110052 declare that the name of mine and my minor son has been wrongly written as ARVIND KUMAR and YATENDRA in my minor son namely YATENDRA KUMAR aged 14 years in his Aadhar No. 4097 1538 0233. The actual name of mine and my minor son are ARVIND and YATENDRA KUMAR respectively, Which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I ANJANA W/O SANDEEP KUMAR R/O 41632 4 MARLA NEAR SHIV MANDIR SHIVAJI COLONY ROHTAK HARYANA 124001 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANJANA

NEWS BOX

Ground report: Boats idle, no income as war hits Lebanese fishermen hard



World. (Agency)
 Along Lebanon's southern coastline, fishing has long been more than just a source of income — it is a way of life passed down through generations. Today, however, that tradition is under serious threat as the ongoing conflict in the middle East disrupts access to the Mediterranean Sea, leaving hundreds of families in uncertainty.
 From Saida to Naqoura, nearly 1,500 fishermen depend on the sea for their daily livelihood, according to local syndicate estimates. In the coastal city of Tyre alone, around 180 registered boats once headed out at dawn, supplying fresh fish to markets across the region. In Saida, more than 450 families rely entirely on fishing as their primary source of income.

Savannah Guthrie gives first interview since mom vanished: We are in agony

World.(Agency)
 A tearful Savannah Guthrie, in her first interview, has spoken publicly about the disappearance of her 84-year-old mother, saying her family is going through "agony" weeks after she went missing from her Arizona home.
 In an interview with NBC colleague Hoda Kotb, aired on the "Today" show, Guthrie said, "We are in agony. We are in agony. It is unbearable," as the search for her mother continues with no clear answers. According to NBC News, Guthrie said the emotional



toll has been overwhelming, adding that she wakes up every night thinking about what her mother may have faced. "I wake up every night in the middle of the night," she said. "In the darkness, I imagine her terror she needs to come home now."
 Nancy Guthrie went missing on February 1 from her home near Tucson, Arizona, after she failed to attend a planned church gathering. She was last seen the previous night after dinner with family.
 Authorities believe the case could be an abduction, but so far there have been few solid leads. Security footage shows a masked person tampering with a camera outside her home early that morning. The camera stopped working around 1:47 a.m., according to investigators.

Israel in race to bomb Iran targets amid fears Trump may abruptly end war: NYT



World.(Agency)
 Israel is racing to strike as many high-priority targets in Iran as possible, driven by concerns that US President Donald Trump could suddenly move to end the war, according to a report by The New York Times.
 Citing senior Israeli officials and people briefed on internal discussions, the report said the push reflects urgency within Israel's leadership to maximise military gains before any potential diplomatic shift.
 Israel is "working to urgently hit as many high-priority targets in Iran as it can," the report said, amid fears Trump could "end the war suddenly."
 According to The New York Times, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday instructed the military to intensify operations and "take out as much of Iran's industry as possible" within 48 hours.
 The order followed Israel's access to a US-drafted 15-point proposal aimed at ending the conflict — a plan that has raised alarm in Tel Aviv.
 Israeli officials believe the proposal does not adequately address core security concerns, particularly Iran's nuclear programme and ballistic missile capabilities. The urgency, including what officials described as a tight deadline, stems from a belief within Israel's government that Trump could announce peace talks at any moment. The report notes that Israeli leaders are wary of a deal being finalised before their key war objectives are achieved.

Two killed in Pakistan-Afghanistan clashes after temporary ceasefire expires

The latest violence comes about a week after both sides agreed to halt hostilities following Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan at the request of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar.

Kabul. (Agency)
 Renewed fighting erupted along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan on Wednesday after a temporary ceasefire expired, killing at least two civilians and wounding others in eastern Afghanistan, Afghan Taliban officials said.
 The brief truce had been announced by the two sides ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Ziaur Rahman Speenghar, a director at the information and culture department in Afghanistan's Kunar

province, said Pakistani forces fired dozens of artillery shells into the Narai and Sarkano districts, killing two civilians and wounding eight others after the ceasefire expired. Afghan border forces returned fire, he said, claiming they destroyed three Pakistani military posts and killed one person.
 His claims could not be independently verified. There was no immediate comment from Pakistan's military. However, a local Pakistani official in the northwest accused Afghan forces of initiating the exchange of fire in multiple areas.



The latest violence comes about a week after both sides agreed to halt hostilities following Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan at the request of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. The pause followed Pakistani strikes that the Afghan Taliban

government said hit a drug rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, killing more than 400 people. That toll could not be independently confirmed.
 Pakistan has denied targeting civilians, saying it struck an ammunition depot. Separately, the Pakistani Taliban, known as

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, said it had resumed attacks inside Pakistan after observing its own three-day Eid ceasefire.
 The TTP, which is separate from but allied to the Afghan Taliban, has stepped up attacks inside Pakistan since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021. The TTP has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United States and the United Nations. Pakistan accuses Kabul of sheltering TTP leaders and thousands of members who carry out cross-border attacks.

Kabul denies the charge, but Pakistan has vowed to continue targeting TTP and its supporters inside Afghanistan until Afghanistan's Taliban government assures that it will not allow TTP and other militants to use the Afghan soil for attacks.

Trump claims Iran proposed making him Supreme Leader: I said, 'No, thank you'

US President Donald Trump made the extraordinary claim that Iran's leadership had informally floated the idea of him becoming the Islamic Republic's next Supreme Leader, but he turned them down.

World. (Agency)
 US President Donald Trump on Thursday doubled down on his claim that he is in talks with Iran to end the nearly month-long war, even as Tehran flatly denied any negotiations were underway.
 Speaking at a Republican fundraiser, Trump went further, making the extraordinary assertion that Iran's leadership had informally floated the idea of him becoming the Islamic Republic's next Supreme Leader, but he turned them down.
 "There's never been a head of a country that wanted that job less than being the head of Iran," Trump said at the annual

NRCC dinner. "We hear them very clearly. They say, I don't want it. We'd like to make you the next supreme leader. No, thank you. I don't want it."
 The remarks come amid what's effectively a power vacuum in Iran after many of its top leaders were killed



in strikes. Following the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last month, his son, Mojtaba Khamenei, was subsequently elevated as supreme leader. However, he has not appeared in public since the war broke out.

Reports have suggested he was injured in the attacks.

Trump described the operation against Iran as a "military decimation", and once again gleefully declared a US victory in the war. He insisted that backchannel talks with Tehran were progressing, and that the regime was eager for a ceasefire but was balking due to fear of repercussions at home.

"And I tell you, we're winning so big, nobody's ever seen anything like we're doing in the Middle East with Iran. And they are negotiating, by the way, and they want to make a deal so badly. But they're afraid to say it because they figure they'll be killed by their own people. They're also afraid they'll be killed by us," he said.

Militants in Nigeria kill 10 security forces and 1 resident in armed ambush

World.(Agency)
 Armed militants ambushed Nigerian security forces who were responding to a distress call in the northwestern state of Kebbi, fatally shooting nine soldiers, a police officer and one resident, authorities said Wednesday.
 The militants targeted the security forces in Kebbi's Shanga council area late Tuesday when they were being deployed to respond to warnings about a pending attack, according to Yahaya Sarki, a spokesman for Kebbi state government.

the attack had caused great loss. "Those that lost their lives, the government of Kebbi state will do everything to assist the families," he said. The attack is the latest in a cycle



Several soldiers also were injured in the attack in the village of Giron Masa, said Sarki, who shared photos of burned vehicles along a dusty road surrounded by forests.
 Kebbi Governor Nasir Idris visited the injured soldiers at the hospital and

of violence in Nigeria's conflict-battered region where armed groups often target security forces and remote communities in areas with limited state and security presence. No group immediately claimed

responsibility for Tuesday's attack, but some residents suspected the Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), known locally as Lakurawa, which recently has become more lethal in states like Kebbi and Sokoto along the porous border with Niger Republic.

Lakurawa was the target of a U.S. strike carried out in Nigeria in December in collaboration with the Nigerian military. That strike came as part of U.S. intervention efforts after U.S. President Donald Trump alleged that Christians were being targeted in killings in Nigeria.

The Nigerian military has said in the past that Lakurawa has roots in neighboring Niger and that it became more active in Nigeria's border communities following a 2023 military coup in Niger that fractured relations between Nigeria and Niger.

Hormuz opens for India: Iran says 5 'friendly nations' won't face blockade

World.(Agency)
 Amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East, Iran announced that it would not impose a blockade on vessels belonging to five friendly nations, including India, in the Strait of Hormuz. Other than India, ships from Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iraq have been allowed safe passage through the conflict-torn chokepoint.

In an interview with Iranian state TV, Abbas Araghchi, the Foreign Minister of Iran, said that the Strait of Hormuz is not entirely closed, as ships belonging to several nations with whom Iran shares friendly ties were allowed to pass through.

"Many of the shipowners, or the countries that own these vessels, have contacted us and requested that we ensure their safe passage through the strait. For some of these countries that we consider friendly, or in cases where we have decided to do so for other reasons, our armed forces have provided safe passage," Araghchi



said, according to a Reuters report that cited the state TV. "You have seen on the news: China, Russia, Pakistan, Iraq, and India. Two of its ships passed through a few nights ago, and some other countries, and even Bangladesh, I believe. These are countries that spoke with us and coordinated with us, and this will continue in the future as well, even after the war," he added.

However, he affirmed that vessels from the United States, Israel, and Gulf nations playing a role in the prevailing Middle East conflict will not be provided with the green signal to transit through the war-ridden water point. "We are in a state of war. The region is a war zone, and there is no reason to allow the ships of our enemies and their allies to pass through. But it remains open to others," Araghchi said, while talking about the ships of the 'enemy nations.'

Araghchi also expressed his satisfaction over the command that Iran showed over the Strait of Hormuz after almost five decades. He said that when Iran announced the partial blockade, many in the world did not believe it and thought it was a bluff.

HIV samples, fake Covid kits: Inside China-linked biolab network in California

What began as a routine code enforcement visit to a seemingly vacant warehouse in rural California has spiralled into a multi-state criminal investigation into unlicensed biological laboratories.

World.(Agency)
 It began with a foul odour and a misplaced garden hose. It ended with a congressional investigation into what lawmakers are calling a "grave national security risk" hidden in the heart of California's farm country.
 A clandestine laboratory operating out of a supposedly vacant warehouse in Reedley has exposed a criminal enterprise involving dangerous pathogens, counterfeit medical supplies, and over USD 1.3 million in unexplained payments from China. The investigation found that the lab was part of an elaborate scheme to import Covid tests from China and pass them off as American made.

investigation. Inside the facility were vials labelled in English and Mandarin for pathogens including HIV, malaria, Covid-19 and Sars, alongside rows of biohazardous refrigerators, some marked "Ebola" and "Blood". Some containers bore labels in English and Mandarin, while others were coded, obscuring their contents.
 Harper also discovered thousands of lab mice, whose waste was identified as the source of the stench. As she probed further, she encountered workers assembling diagnostic kits, an activity that would later become central to a federal fraud case.

The case came to light when Jesalyn Harper, a local code enforcement officer, visited a building expecting a routine zoning inspection. Instead, she stepped into what would become a high-stakes biomedical

"I realised I'm in trouble, and I need to get out of this building without tipping them off that I'm scared," Harper told Los Angeles Times, as she explained the startling discovery.
 Subsequent assessments by health

authorities painted a troubling picture. According to filings by the health department, the warehouse contained at



least 20 infectious agents, including dengue, hepatitis B and C, herpes simplex virus, rubella, and Sars coronavirus. However, a critical limitation hampered the investigation. Many of the vials were not formally tested. Officials said that because

they were not explicitly labelled as regulated "select agents," federal agencies such as the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declined to analyse them, a procedural gap now under scrutiny.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

The prosecutors have charged a Chinese national, Jia Bei Zhu, who also goes by the name David He, with manufacturing and distributing misbranded medical devices, making false statements to regulators, and later, wire fraud and conspiracy.

Authorities allege that Zhu and his associate, Zhaoyan Wang, imported hundreds of thousands of Covid test kits from China and falsely marketed them as American-made. The shipments were allegedly disguised as pregnancy test kits to bypass regulatory restrictions, generating an estimated USD 1.7 million.

NEWS BOX

Security drill at Ahmedabad sports complex

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

A JOINT drill was conducted by Ahmedabad Police, Chetak commandos and multiple security agencies as preparation to deal with crisis situations such as terrorist attacks at the newly constructed International Sports Complex in Naranpura area of Ahmedabad city. This exercise was conducted keeping in mind the coming major events and possible security challenges, the state government said on Wednesday.

"The main objective of this mock drill was to test the coordination, response capacity and management capabilities of various security agencies during times of crisis. A live demonstration was given of how security forces take prompt and effective action in the event of a terrorist attack or other emergency in a huge sports complex where thousands of people are in attendance," said a statement from the state government.

During the drill, a hypothetical situation was simulated — as though some 'terrorists' had infiltrated the complex. As soon as the incident was reported, teams of local police, crime branch and SOG (Special Operation Group) immediately surrounded the entire area. Along with this, a strategic search operation was carried out in the complex with the help of drone cameras.

The statement said, "The team of Chetak commandos carried out the work of safely evacuating the citizens trapped inside the complex with utmost skill. Also, GVK-EMRI ambulances and medical teams were immediately deployed to provide immediate medical assistance to the injured."

During the exercise that lasted nearly five hours, traffic was diverted in the surrounding areas, in which the citizens also fully cooperated with the police, the statement said.

4k utilisation certificates not submitted by March last year: CAG

Shimla.(Agency)

In its report for the state finances for the year 2024-25, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has raised the issue related to delay in submission of utilisation certificates (UCs) of the purposes for which grants-in-aid (GIA) have been issued and which are essential to be obtained and sent to the Principal Accountant General (A&E) within stipulated time.

The CAG has noted that as many as 4,258 UCs in connection with GIA worth Rs 7,431 crore given to 18 departments of the state government between 2001-02 to 2023-24 were not submitted till March 31, 2025. With that, the CAG has recommended instituting a rigorous monitoring mechanism for the compliance of the legal provision in this regard. The CAG pointed out the issue in its report while discussing the chapter on financial reporting practices of the state government. The report says that Gujarat Financial Rules, 1971 read with General Financial Rules, 2017 provide that every GIA made for a specified object is subject to two conditions: 1) The GIA shall be spent for the intended purpose, and within a reasonable time if no time-limit has been fixed by the sanctioning authority, and 2) Any portion of the GIA which is ultimately not required for expenditure for the purpose, shall be duly surrendered to the government.

It further says, "Further, Rules 154 and 155 of Gujarat Financial Rules, 1971 prescribe that Utilisation Certificate (UCs) of grants provided for a specific purpose should be obtained by the Departmental officers from the grantee and after verification should be forwarded to the Principal Accountant General (A&E) within one year from the date of their sanction, unless specified otherwise."

'It was like genocide': Allahabad HC denies relief to seven Kanpur anti-Sikh riots accused

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday dismissed the applications of seven accused seeking quashing of chargesheets and proceedings against them in separate cases related to 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Kanpur after assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, calling the nature of incidents similar to "genocide" and that "final reports were submitted in hurried manner".

Rejecting the petitions, the single bench of Justice Anish Kumar Gupta observed, "The nature of the incidents was like a genocide against a particular community in which various innocent persons were killed, ablazed alive, house and properties were burnt, destroyed and looted."

The court further said, "Such a large scale crime, committed against humanity gone unnoticed and in almost all such cases the final reports were submitted in a hurried manner to save various accused persons, who were involved in the incident."

The order stated that the Supreme Court had appointed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by a retired high court judge to investigate the anti-Sikh riots cases across the nation while hearing writ petitions filed in 2016-17 on the basis of the Nanavati Commission report. In Uttar Pradesh, the SIT found a total of 186 cases and out of them, 20 were identified in Kanpur City.

Try accused for culpable homicide not amounting to murder: District court on BMW hit-and-run case

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Nearly 10 months after a speeding BMW car allegedly hit a Chandigarh Police constable in Sector 9, a district court has ordered that the accused, Ishaan Shankar, be tried under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which pertains to culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The order was passed on Wednesday by Additional District and Sessions Judge Ashwani Kumar, who framed charges against the accused and disposed of his discharge application.

"It is not a simple case of rash and negligent driving punishable under Section 106 of BNS, rather it is a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder," held the court. The trial in the case is scheduled to commence on July 6.

The incident dates back to May 11, 2025, when two BMW cars were allegedly racing on a road in Sector 9. During the race, one of the vehicles, driven by the accused, struck a cyclist — later identified as Constable Anand of

Chandigarh Police — causing him fatal injuries. The victim succumbed before reaching the hospital. During the proceedings of accused's discharge application, the defence argued that the case did not warrant charges



under Section 105 (culpable homicide), and instead fell under Section 106 of the BNS, which deals with death caused by negligence in road accidents.

The defence counsels argued that in this case

during the investigation, the police have not collected such evidence which could show that all the ingredients constituting the offence punishable under Section 105 of BNS are fulfilled. He pointed out that as per application, dated May 13, 2025, filed by the investigating officer, offence under Section 105 of BNS has been added on the basis of site inspection report, mechanical examination report and analysis of CCTV footage. However, mechanical examination report of offending vehicle was prepared on May 15, 2025 whereas CCTV footage was taken in police possession on May 14, 2025. The public prosecutor, however, contended that the applicant-accused had committed accident while racing with another vehicle. He had knowledge that his act would result in an accident and after accident, the applicant fled away. During the investigation, the applicant was found involved in the commission of offence under Section 105 of BNS.

NRI Sabha polls: HC Gives Punjab leeway, keeps issue on fast track

Jalandhar.(Agency)

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has granted limited time to the Punjab government in an ongoing matter concerning delayed elections to the NRI Sabha Punjab, while continuing to treat the issue as urgent amid growing concerns over institutional paralysis.

The case, heard on March 20, arises from a petition filed by Sabha member Karan Randhawa, who has sought completion of the election process and publication of the electoral roll of eligible voters. During the hearing, counsel for State submitted that approval for conducting the elections had been granted by the Chief Minister — also the Chief Patron of the Sabha — on March 16, 2026. The government requested approximately one month to place a formal election schedule on record. The HC, however, stopped short of allowing the full period sought and instead adjourned the matter to April 2, 2026, effectively giving the State a shorter window to respond while keeping the proceedings under the urgent category.

In its order, the court noted that while the election process had earlier been stated to be initiated, a crucial step—the publication of the list of

eligible voters—remains pending. The petition highlights that the absence of an electoral roll has stalled the process, even after the expiry of the President's tenure earlier this year.

This marks the second round of litigation on the



issue. In an earlier petition disposed of on December 23, 2025, the High Court had recorded the State's position that the election process had already been initiated. The current plea contends that little tangible progress has followed since that assurance.

As per the Sabha's governing rules, elections to the President's post are to be conducted every

two years. The tenure of the previous President expired on January 5, 2026, leaving the body without an elected head for over two months. The delay in preparing and publishing the electoral roll has emerged as a key bottleneck.

Alongside the election delay, Randhawa and some members have raised allegations regarding the functioning of the Sabha during the outgoing President's tenure, including non-constitution of the Central Executive Committee, non formation of the Administrative Sub-Committee, not convening of Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and no presentation of financial statements. They have also alleged that a government order dated January 31, 2024, appointing office bearers, was not implemented, and that an RTI application seeking financial details did not receive a response. These allegations form part of the petition but have not been adjudicated upon by the Court. Members have expressed concern that the continued delay may be impacting not just the central body but also district-level units, where elections are required once membership thresholds are met.

After SC stay, HCS officers' IAS cadre promotions face setback

The chargesheet was filed by the State Vigilance Bureau in June 2023 against the officers and others in connection with alleged irregularities in the selection of the 2001-batch of the state civil services.



Chandigarh.(Agency)

In a setback to eight Haryana Civil Services (HCS) officers awaiting promotion to the IAS cadre, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court that had quashed a vigilance chargesheet against them.

The chargesheet was filed by the State Vigilance Bureau in June 2023 against the officers and

others in connection with alleged irregularities in the selection of the 2001-batch of the state civil services. The HC ruling had cleared the way for their promotions to the Indian Administrative Services.

Former Haryana minister Karan Singh Dalal, through his son and SC lawyer Deepkaran Dalal, moved a petition to the apex court challenging the February order of

the High Court. Alleging collusion between the officers concerned and the Haryana government, Dalal had asserted that the collusion was evident from a legal opinion which had recommended issuance of integrity certificates to the officers — despite the filing of a final report under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Hearing the petition, a bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta said on Wednesday: "...issue notice, returnable within four weeks. In the meantime, the effect and operation of the impugned order (s) passed by the High Court shall remain stayed." Dalal had earlier challenged the selections before the HC in 2002, alleging "favouritism, malpractices and illegalities involved in the entire HCS Executive and Allied Services Examination".

'Illegal, incorrect and criminal': Inquiry Panel on power of attorney executed in Parth Pawar's favour in Mundhwa land deal

Mumbai.(Agency)

A government-appointed inquiry committee probing a controversial land deal in Pune has found that a power of attorney (PoA) executed in favour of NCP MP Parth Pawar for government land was "illegal, incorrect and of a criminal nature." However, the committee has stopped short of recommending direct action against him, saying his role will be examined as part of an ongoing police investigation.

The deal involves 40 acres of prime land in Mundhwa, Pune, near the upmarket Koregaon Park area. The land, reportedly worth Rs 1,800 crore, was sought to be sold to Amadea Enterprises LLP — where Parth Pawar is a partner — for just Rs 300 crore, with a stamp duty waiver of Rs 21 crore. Parth Pawar is the son of the late former deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and is currently a Rajya Sabha MP. His party, the NCP, is part of Maharashtra's ruling Mahayuti alliance. A government-appointed

inquiry committee probing a controversial land deal in Pune has found that a power of attorney (PoA) executed in favour of NCP MP Parth Pawar for government land was "illegal, incorrect and of a criminal nature." However, the committee has stopped short of recommending direct action against him, saying his role will be examined as part of an ongoing police investigation.

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Mumbai Metro mishap: A month on, two victims still hospitalised after parapet collapse

Mumbai.(Agency)

Over a month after the metro parapet collapse in Mulund, two of the three injured remain hospitalised, with one still in intensive care and facing long-term disability, even as an MMRDA probe has squarely blamed the contractor for the incident, citing serious lapses in execution and supervision.

Rajkumar Indrajeet Yadav, 45, the rickshaw driver, continues to be in the ICU at Upasani Hospital, while Mahendra Pratap Yadav, 52, has been shifted to a general ward and may be discharged soon, family members said. Both were travelling with a relative, Ramdhan Yadav, who died in the incident. Rajkumar has undergone seven to eight surgeries since the accident, including procedures on his head, abdomen and limbs. "A few days ago, Rajkumar underwent another head surgery as water would continuously leak out of

his nose when he sat upright," said Sarvesh Yadav, a relative. "Rajkumar will never be able to live a normal existence again; he will remain 40 to 50% paralysed and dependent on others for the rest of his life."

Family members said the injuries were extensive. "The damage to Rajkumar's left hand and both legs has been such that even after surgery, he cannot move them. Of his entire left hand, he can only move his little finger," Sarvesh added.

Mahendra, who suffered injuries to his spine, head and lungs, is recovering but still requires continued care. "Rajkumar has only just started eating. Almost every part of his body was affected," said Shubham Yadav, Mahendra's son. "Mahendra is much better, but we are not sure about his discharge as he still needs proper medical

care, which may not be possible at home. At least here, doctors are available at all times."



The accident has also displaced both families, who are now living in a rented room near the hospital. "We have been moving between the hospital and the room every day," Shubham said. Rajkumar's daughter has also dropped out of school,

relatives said.

The MMRDA, in its submission to the Bombay High Court, said subcontractor Milan Road Buildtech has paid ₹27.59 lakh towards the treatment of the injured. However, a detailed probe report has held the Reliance Infrastructure-Astaldi joint venture responsible, citing unsafe practices and lapses at multiple levels, including the welder, supervisor and site engineer.

The report found that a parapet segment became unstable after temporary supports were removed prematurely, pointing to procedural violations rather than any flaw in design or material. Earlier, the MMRDA had also flagged negligence by the contractor and lack of adequate supervision as key factors behind the collapse.

Meet flags gaps in mental health, uneven care; calls for citizen-led reforms



Ahmedabad.(Agency)

A multi-state stakeholder consultation held in Ahmedabad on Wednesday discussed the recommendations of the Lancet Commission report on a citizen-centred health system to create an integrated system in the country that would address concerns of the present times.

Mirai Chatterjee, director (social security) at the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and a commissioner on the Lancet panel, raised concerns on how India's health system continues to face "uneven quality of care, fragmented delivery and poor governance", flagging rising mental health concerns and gaps in last-mile implementation.

"What stands out in our report is that it starts with citizens' needs and aspirations—not the system," she said. "But we are also seeing clear gaps, especially in mental health services at the primary level and a lack of local counsellors." The consultation was organised by SEWA's health initiative Lok Swasthya SEWA at the Indian Academy for Self Employed Women (IASSEW), with participants from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Vikram Patel, co-chair of the Commission and professor at Harvard Medical School, emphasised that a "high-performing, publicly financed and publicly provided, integrated healthcare delivery system" remained central to achieving universal health coverage.

Bringing Bahu into the business

A recent proposal to the Securities and Exchange Board to recognise daughters-in-law as 'relatives' within promoter groups—led by promoter families themselves—for disclosure and succession planning may signal an important shift in women's roles in India's family businesses. It may be finally acknowledged that women's roles in business families can no longer remain informal, invisible or assumed.

This comes at a time when India's family-managed businesses, contributing over 70 per cent of the country's GDP, are already undergoing change. For decades, they operated on an unspoken compact: ownership remained within the family, authority rested with patriarchs, and women, though central to the family, remained at the periphery—shaping values, resolving conflicts and preserving legacy, but rarely part of strategic decision-making. That compact is beginning to loosen. Across the country, women from business families are increasingly stepping into visible leadership roles. Yet, to see this as merely a matter of regulatory inclusion, or of "giving women a seat at the table", is to miss the deeper shift underway. Laws and regulations can redefine who is formally recognised, but they cannot, by themselves, determine who is truly trusted, heard or empowered. The real change lies not in structures or policies, but in mindsets—not just within firms, but within families, and critically, among women themselves. The traditional architecture of Indian family firms reflected deeply gendered expectations. Sons were groomed to take over, while daughters—no matter how capable—were prepared for transition into other families. Women were often steered toward "safe" roles such as philanthropy, while core business decisions remained an inherited male privilege. That script is now being rewritten by three forces.

The first is education and exposure. Today's daughters return to family businesses with global degrees, corporate experience and a strong sense of professional identity. They are not looking for token roles, but want to contribute meaningfully.

The second is legal change. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, by granting daughters equal coparcenary rights, has altered the economic foundations of family enterprises. If Sebi recognises daughters-in-law as relatives, it would extend this logic further, recognising that women entering the family through marriage also play a role in ownership, governance and continuity.

The third is the market itself. Investors, partners and consumers increasingly expect professionalism, transparency and diversity. Family businesses that fail to tap into their full talent pool risk not just reputational costs, but competitive disadvantage.

Despite these structural shifts, progress remains uneven. The difference comes down to family mindsets. Business families that operate with a fixed mindset—where leadership is linked to gender, birth order or tradition—may formally recognise daughters or daughters-in-law, but not trust them fully. By contrast, families with a growth mindset see leadership as something that can be developed, demonstrated and earned, and evaluate successors on capability rather than convention. Our recent research on women in family businesses reinforces this. Across contexts, what shapes women's active involvement is not geography or industry, but the family's mindset. Families with a fixed mindset tend to create subtle but powerful barriers, while those with a growth mindset enable women's participation through three mechanisms: promoting meritocracy, involving women early in the business and fostering visible role models. This is where the limits of regulation become evident. Sebi can recognise daughters-in-law as part of the promoter group, but it cannot ensure they are part of the decision-making group. That change depends on mindset. Another crucial dimension is agency. Many women in family businesses still face a "legitimacy gap", where they have to establish their authority repeatedly. Women who see themselves as decision-makers are better able to claim and exercise leadership.

To impeach the CEC is a troubling first

Opposition's move against Chief Election Commissioner raises questions

A win-win situation benefits all stakeholders, even if a compromise is reached in search of a workable alternative. It could even be a way in which the winning side successfully deludes the losing side to perceive its loss as a necessary price it paid for survival. The win-win phrase has no antonym, although the exact opposite would be the one in which both sides lose without anything to compensate for their losses. The impeachment motion by Opposition parties against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is one such example. It is a motion destined not to be carried. Yet its prime movers may not see the loss as a defeat. But can the CEC see their loss as his victory?

The Opposition parties' move is doubtless dramatic, even desperate. The question that needs to be pondered by the well-wishers of this constitutional body is what prompted them to don the gloves for a fight with no chance of victory. Perhaps, sometimes one fights not to win but to wound the opponent. The troubling part is that these political parties treat the CEC as an opponent. That raises disturbing questions that both sides must answer. The move to impeach the CEC is a first in the history of an institution that is the vanguard of Indian electoral democracy and was genuinely hailed as its custodian.

"India built many institutions after attaining freedom and adopting a Republican Constitution... If anyone were to conduct an opinion poll on which of these institutions rendered the best service to Indian democracy with the highest degree of integrity, I have no doubt that the Election Commission of India (ECI) will be our people's first choice." That was Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Prime Minister, speaking at the ECI's golden jubilee celebrations on January 17, 2001. Twenty-five years later, 193 parliamentarians of Opposition parties submitted notices for an impeachment motion against the CEC, citing charges of "partisan and discriminatory conduct" and "obstruction of investigation into electoral fraud" and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The notice is as unprecedented as the manner in which the revision of electoral rolls has been undertaken despite a serious challenge by most of the political parties, except the ruling dispensation. That unusual alignment of thinking disconcerted Opposition parties, which sharpened their attack against the CEC. The repeated press conferences of the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) exposing discrepancies in the electoral rolls of states where elections had been held,

further soured the relationship. The aggressive style and the severity of the LOP's attack were surprising, for never in recent memory had someone as eminent as the LOP targeted the poll body, questioning its integrity. But more surprising was the poll body's obduracy in not providing a credible response to the doubts raised on its functioning and impartiality. Even as the attacks became bitter, the communication channels between the poll body and the Opposition seemed to choke. The nation had seldom seen such a relentless campaign against the CEC, who stood his ground as the Supreme Court endlessly heard petitions against his decisions. As the petitions failed to yield any substantive relief, frustration mounted and so did the CEC's apparent indifference,



resulting in a virtual breakdown in dialogue. The CEC persisted with the SIR despite the fortnight-long Voter Adhikar Yatra just before the Bihar Assembly elections. Defiance seemed to define the relationship between the players and the referee.

Not that there was no dialogue. The one between the poll body and the Trinamool Congress caused more rancour, culminating in the theatrical presence of Mamata Banerjee in the Supreme Court. Never before had a chief minister appeared in the court arguing against the ECI's "unfair" decisions. The dharnas against the SIR in West Bengal or the number of officials dying in the course of conducting the revision failed to deter the CEC or change his avowed commitment to "purify" the electoral rolls. It was unprecedented for the poll body to treat exclusion rather than inclusion as the parameter of its

success in "not leaving any voter behind". The ECI invented the "logical discrepancy" tool that pitted the electors against the artificial intelligence of algorithms used to detect discrepancies. A poll body that refused to explain the discrepancies publicly pointed out by the LOP after analysing its data now questioned the presence of electors in the rolls prepared as per its own due process. West Bengal saw over 58 lakh electors deleted at the draft stage and more than 60 lakh "under adjudication" in the final list. Never before has the ECI announced elections in a state with the fate of nearly 10 per cent electors undetermined. It employed micro-observers for finalising the revised rolls, something never done in the past, and the SC took the unusual step of appointing about 500 judicial officers to decide the fate of these electors in a short span.

It is unusual for a constitutional body mandated with the preparation of electoral rolls to involve another constitutional body in discharging its routine function, disregarding the elector's voting right it was created to protect. The exclusion of even a single eligible voter due to the way SIR has been conducted would legitimise the criticism of this arbitrary, ambitious and aggressive exercise. However, does all this justify the impeachment move? The answer depends on which side of the divide one stands. The crores of voters who figure in the final electoral rolls might not protest, treating the tension and trauma during the revision process as part of the routine struggle that helpless citizens go through to secure their rights. The voice of those excluded doesn't count in the elections in any case. Eventually, the

valid concern of protecting the right to vote turns into the lament of losers left with no choice but to resort ineffectively to the ultimate constitutional weapon against the CEC. The impeachment debate might be yet another phantasmagoria like the one on electoral reforms in the winter session of Parliament in December last year. Meanwhile, the ECI has sounded the poll bugle, asking the players to contest against each other rather than expend their energy against the referee. The ECI is now in full control. The successful completion of the poll process will justify all its decisions. Victors will exult; losers will find reasons to complain.

What the nation would be left with will be a bruised poll body in which a battered Opposition, representing more than half the voting population, expressed no confidence.

Toxic taps: A silent crisis in Punjab & Haryana

Flagship schemes promise tap water for all, but quality assurance remains a glaring blind spot.

FRESH data placed before Parliament has once again exposed a disturbing truth: drinking water in Punjab and Haryana is far from safe. High levels of contamination in water samples are not merely statistical red flags, they signal a public health emergency unfolding quietly across homes, farms and villages. The crisis is neither sudden nor isolated. Across India, from deaths linked to contaminated supply in Indore to disease outbreaks in Betul (Madhya Pradesh), unsafe water has become a year-round threat. Its implications are particularly severe in Punjab and Haryana, where intensive agriculture, excessive groundwater extraction and unchecked industrial discharge have long degraded water quality. In Punjab, the legacy of pesticide-heavy farming has seeped into aquifers, with reports of heavy metals and chemical residues in drinking water. Haryana, too, grapples with



high salinity, fluoride and industrial pollutants in several districts. The tragedy is compounded by governance gaps — underutilised funds, weak monitoring and delayed

implementation of rural water scheme. Infrastructure exists on paper; safe water often does not. What makes the crisis alarming is its invisibility. Contaminated water does not always look or smell unsafe. But its effects — skin diseases, gastrointestinal illnesses and long-term organ damage — are devastating. The burden falls disproportionately on rural and economically weaker communities, who lack access to filtration systems or alternative supplies. Policy responses have remained fragmented. Flagship schemes promise tap water for all, but quality assurance remains a glaring blind spot. Testing must be decentralised, transparency ensured and accountability fixed at the local level. Equally crucial is a shift towards sustainable agriculture and stricter industrial regulation to address the root causes of contamination.

Water, the most basic necessity, cannot be allowed to turn into a vector of disease.

The Guru's Word is beyond the law

If Guru Granth Sahib is treated as an object requiring legal protection from desecration, its deeper purpose risks being overshadowed

IN recent years, debates in Punjab around legislation seeking to define and punish the "desecration" of Guru Granth Sahib have generated intense emotional and political responses. These impulses arise from genuine reverence. For Sikhs across the world, Guru Granth Sahib is not merely a sacred book but also the living Guru, the embodiment of divine wisdom and the spiritual centre of the Sikh faith. Yet the attempt to regulate its sanctity through legal statutes and judicial definitions raises a deeper philosophical question: can the word of the Guru truly be protected or defined by law? At the heart of Sikh thought lies a profound philosophical proposition articulated by Guru Gobind Singh in the injunction "Guru maneyo Granth." With this declaration, the temporal line of human Gurus ended, and Guru Granth Sahib was elevated as the eternal guide of the Sikh community. Yet the meaning of this declaration is often misunderstood. The Gurus did not intend that the Granth Sahib be transformed into an object of rigid ritual or juridical regulation. Rather, it was to be revered as a living body of wisdom, a spiritual and philosophical guide that illuminates the path towards truth, humility and the divine. From Guru Nanak onwards, Sikhism conceived of every human being as a Sikh, a learner. Even Guru Nanak was a Sikh in this sense, for the word Sikh derives from shishya, one who learns. Sikhism, therefore, rests upon a culture of continuous inquiry, reflection and spiritual learning. Guru Granth Sahib embodies this tradition, being not merely a sacred text in the conventional sense but also a vast reservoir of poetry, meditation, ethical reflection and divine insight meant to guide the seeker towards a deeper relationship with the divine. But this transformation did not mean the deification of paper and

ink. The Gurus were not elevating a physical object; they were affirming the supremacy of the shabad, the divine word. This is precisely why the attempt to codify the Granth Sahib within legal frameworks, whether through the SGPC Act or state legislation defining "desecration", raises troubling questions. Can a body of spiritual wisdom be reduced to the language of legal adjudication? Can a judge determine what constitutes the "desecration" of a text whose essence lies in the



indestructibility of its word? The shabad, the divine word celebrated throughout the Granth Sahib, is understood in Sikh philosophy as eternal and omnipresent. No physical act upon a printed volume can destroy the spiritual force of that word. When the state or religious institutions attempt to legislate elaborate rules about how the Granth Sahib must be transported, who may accompany it or how it may cross national borders, they risk transforming a living spiritual guide into a juridical object. The requirement, for instance, that the Granth Sahib

cannot be taken abroad unless accompanied by designated attendants imposes a bureaucratic ritualism that seems far removed from the spirit of Sikh thought. Instead, the followers of Sikhism must advocate the free circulation of the holy text so that it reaches the far corners of the globe. It is a common and longstanding practice among many Sikhs — whether they are army officers, judges, civil servants, professionals or ordinary citizens — to keep a copy of Guru Granth Sahib in their homes and devote a quiet room as a place of daily prayer.

When such individuals are transferred from one city to another, as often happens in professions like the armed forces or the civil services, Guru Granth Sahib travels with them, carefully and respectfully carried to the new home. No authority questions where it is housed, nor does any institution presume the right to supervise the private space of devotion in which the scripture is kept. The relationship between a devotee and Guru Granth Sahib is intimate and sacred; it belongs to the realm of faith, not surveillance. To place this deeply personal bond under scrutiny or regulation risks creating fear among followers and undermines the living reverence that has sustained the Sikh tradition for generations.

To suggest that such a practice would now require legal permissions or ceremonial escorts is to misunderstand the very nature of Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru is not confined to institutions, jurisdictions or borders. The word of the Guru is meant to travel with the seeker, to inhabit the mind and conscience of the Sikhs wherever they may be. The danger of excessive ritualisation is that it begins to replace spiritual engagement with mechanical reverence. Sikhism has historically resisted precisely such tendencies. The Gurus rejected empty ritual, caste hierarchy and priestly mediation.

They emphasised instead the direct encounter between the individual and the divine through the shabad.

If Guru Granth Sahib is treated primarily as an object requiring legal protection from "desecration", its deeper purpose risks being overshadowed. The real desecration of the Granth Sahib would not lie in the mishandling of a printed volume, but in forgetting the ethical and spiritual teachings it contains, teachings of humility, justice, equality and truth. Of course, respect for Guru Granth Sahib has always been central to Sikh life. The daily practices of parkash and sukhasan, the covering of the head, the removal of shoes in the presence of the Guru, are customs reflecting reverence developed organically within the community. But these practices emerged from devotion, not from legislative compulsion. When reverence becomes codified through the machinery of the state, something essential may be lost: the inner relationship between the Sikh and the word of the Guru. Consider the paradox that arises when courts or legislatures attempt to adjudicate upon the sanctity of the Granth Sahib. The shabad, as the Gurus remind us, is eternal and indestructible. The divine word cannot be diminished by physical acts upon a printed volume.

To imagine that a judge must determine what constitutes the "desecration" of the Guru is to introduce a hierarchy in which a temporal authority appears to stand in judgment over the Guru. The call for special legislation to protect Guru Granth Sahib is, at one level, understandable, given the deep anguish caused whenever an act of sacrilege occurs. Yet from both a constitutional and philosophical perspective, such additional codification is unnecessary. Under the framework of the Constitution, any act that deliberately insults or provokes religious sentiments, or incites violence against a community or its sacred symbols,

Agra: 8-yr-old girl murdered after kidnapping, body found in flour drum

Agra.(Agency)

An eight-year-old girl was brutally murdered after being kidnapped, triggering public outrage and protests. The victim, identified as Pragya, was the daughter of a local shoe businessman, Dinesh Kumar, police said on Thursday.

According to reports, Pragya went missing on Tuesday afternoon while playing outside her home in the Tajganj area of the district. Her family initially assumed she had gone for tuition, but when she did not return by evening, they began searching and filed a missing person complaint at the Tajganj police station.

During the investigation, police discovered that a tenant named Sunil, who lived in the same building, was also missing. CCTV footage showed the girl heading towards a nearby shop around 2 PM.

Late Wednesday night, police searched Sunil's room on the upper floor of the house. They recovered the girl's body hidden inside a small plastic drum filled with flour. Preliminary findings suggest that she was strangled to death.

The incident sparked anger among family members and local residents. Protesters blocked Fatehabad Road near Mughal Pulia and reportedly pelted stones at vehicles attempting to pass through. There were also heated exchanges with police personnel.

Multiple police teams were deployed to control the situation, and order was restored around 1 AM. Police officials stated that efforts are ongoing to locate and arrest the accused.

CIK raids 10 locations across Kashmir in LeT-linked terror module probe

Srinagar.(Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir Police's Counter Intelligence Kashmir is conducting raids at multiple locations across the Valley in connection with a terror module linked to Pakistan-based militant outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba, officials said on Thursday.

The searches were carried out by CIK at 10 locations in the districts of Srinagar, Shopian and Ganderbal as part of a fresh terror investigation case registered at Police Station CIK.

Officials said the raids were conducted after obtaining search warrants from a competent court and were still underway when the last reports came in. According to details, six locations were searched in Ganderbal district, three in Shopian district and one location in Srinagar district.

The investigation pertains to a transnational terror module allegedly being directed by Shabir Ahmad Lone, a Lashkar-e-Taiba operator originally from Kangan area of Ganderbal who is currently based in Bangladesh. The module was reportedly receiving instructions from LeT handlers operating from Bangladesh and Pakistan, officials said.

Officials said the searches were aimed at collecting evidence, including digital devices, documents and other materials linked to the terror network. Further investigation in the case is underway.

Administration is backbone of any nation: J&K LG

Jammu.(Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday directed the stakeholders to prioritise collaboration and create an environment where a strong professional community is built through networking, best practices, national and international exposure, and joint training programmes.

"Today's challenges are complex and multi-dimensional. Their solution is possible only through collective effort and we must focus on this to actively drive Jammu Kashmir's rapid growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that people from different sectors must come together to deliberate, share experiences, and jointly find solutions. He said, through cooperation and dialogue we can forge a strong, inclusive model of development for the union Territory. The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Indian Society for Training and Development's Jammu Chapter, at Padma Shri Padma Sachdev Government PG College for Women Gandhinagar, Jammu. The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to the entire team of Indian Society for Training & Development (ISTD) for the new beginning.

He said the ISTD's Jammu Chapter will play a crucial role in strengthening the learning and development ecosystem and it will position Jammu as a regional hub for training and professional development.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the ISTD's Jammu Chapter to focus on job creation and entrepreneurship, and make local talents more globally competitive. "The future is full of challenges but it is also brimming with opportunities. We must ensure we are ready to seize the new opportunities," he said. The Lieutenant Governor observed that the purpose of education is not merely to impart knowledge, but to prepare students for life's challenges and opportunities.

"We should focus on soft skills, research, entrepreneurship, and a startup culture. The education sector must bring about broad transformation through mentoring and academia-industry collaboration," he said.

NFR Accelerates Execution of Development Works through Multi Location Inspection by GM/NFR

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 26th March: The General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, conducted a comprehensive and wide-ranging inspection on 24th March 2026 across multiple sections of the Lumding Division to review infrastructure development, safety systems and passenger amenities. He was accompanied by senior officials from NFR Headquarters as well as concerned divisional authorities. The inspection also encompassed a range of ongoing development initiatives to ensure their steady progress in alignment with NFR's strategic vision and operational priorities. The inspection commenced from Kamakhya (KYQ) in the early hours, covering key locations including Lumding (LMG), Diphu (DPU) and Barpathar (BXP). At Lumding, the General Manager reviewed the proposed Loco Mid-life Rehabilitation Project at the relief yard, aimed at enhancing locomotive efficiency and long-term operational sustainability. A successful speed trial between Bokajan and Barpathar over 31.3 km achieved speeds up to 120 kmph while adhering to all safety restrictions, reflecting NFR's continued focus on capacity enhancement, track standards and

safe train operations. At Diphu, several important passenger-centric and safety

enhance station security and passenger confidence. Additionally, a newly con-



enhancing initiatives were inspected and demonstrated. These included the Electronic Interlocking Double Section system between Diphu-Daldali, significantly strengthening operational safety across the 10 km section. CCTV surveillance systems were also reviewed to further

structured Road Under Bridge (RUB), replacing Level Crossing Gate No. ST-58, was inspected, marking a major step towards improving safety, ensuring seamless road rail connectivity and reducing congestion. At Barpathar station, the General Manager conducted detailed

inspections and observed demonstrations of modern technologies, including data and voice recording systems at level crossing gates. Important track components such as Points & Crossings, Long Welded Rails and Switch Expansion Joints were also inspected to ensure safety and maintenance standards. He also interacted with field staff, appreciating their dedication and emphasising safety, efficiency and teamwork. The inspection also covered key engineering assets, including minor and major bridges such as Bridge No. 331. Advanced safety systems like pre-warning mechanisms at unmanned crossings and innovative trolley mounted greasing systems were reviewed, reflecting NFR's focus on modern maintenance practices and technology driven solutions. The inspection further progressed with a review at Jamuguri. Ongoing projects under the Lumding Division were also reviewed. This extensive inspection reaffirms NFR's unwavering commitment to modernization, enhanced safety standards and superior passenger experience. Through continuous monitoring, infrastructure upgrades and proactive initiatives, NFR remains dedicated to delivering efficient, reliable and passenger-friendly railway services across the region.

A week after Maldives boat accident, family plans prayer meet for missing 'Gypsy King' Hari Singh in Chandigarh on March 30

Hari Singh, a five-time Indian National Rally Champion, has been untraceable following a boat accident on March 19 in the Maldives.



Chandigarh.(Agency)

The family of 59-year-old rally driver Hari Singh has decided to hold a prayer meeting on March 30 at a gurdwara in Chandigarh, after the 'Gypsy King' remained untraceable since March 19 following a boat accident in the Maldives.

SPS Garcha, president of the Chandigarh Motorsport Association, said, "The family has decided to hold a prayer meeting for Hari on Monday, March 30, at Gurdwara, Sector 8, Chandigarh, from 12 noon to 1 pm."

Hari Singh, a five-time Indian National Rally Champion, was on a speedboat with others, including industrialist and Raymond Group chairman Gautam Singhania, when

the accident occurred near the Felidhoo area of the Maldives around 1.15 am on March 19. After the boat capsized, Singhania was rescued with injuries and later brought back to Mumbai, but Hari and at least one other person remain missing, according to reports.

Garcha, who has known Hari Singh for years, said the rallyist shared a long association with the motorsport community in the region.

Hari Singh began his rallying career in 1990 with the Himalayan Car Rally. Driving for the JK Tyre Rally Team, he also won the inaugural Asia Zone Rally Championship and represented India in international events, including the ASEAN and SAARC rallies.

Tricity residents move Punjab and Haryana HC against Zirakpur bypass tree felling

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Raising concerns over the felling of many trees for the proposed construction of a six-lane Zirakpur Bypass, 21 residents from the Tricity have sought the intervention of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The 19-km project will commence from NH-7 (Chandigarh-Rajpura-Patiala) and terminate at NH-5 (Zirakpur-Parwanoo Road), forming part of the proposed Tri-City Ring Road.

The residents, represented by senior advocate Anand Chhibar, stated in their public interest litigation that "the Rs 187 crore project will result in the felling of more than 5,000 mature trees including over 2,000 trees from notified forest land in Punjab, more than 2,200 trees from the Panchkula Golf Course, and approximately 1,000 trees from Sector-1A, Panchkula and other green belts".

They added: "These trees are predominantly 20-30 years old and constitute established ecological assets performing vital ecosystem services." According to the petitioners, the Panchkula Golf Course, developed by Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran over approximately

124 acres since 1988, houses nearly 14,000 mature trees and functions as one of the principal urban green lungs of Panchkula. They argued that compensatory afforestation proposed in Firozpur, Punjab, situated over



240 kilometres away, cannot restore the ecological functionality of mature, region-specific forest and riverine ecosystems in the Tricity urban belt. Mature trees, they said, cannot be substituted by saplings which take decades to attain ecological equivalence and often suffer high mortality. The petitioners highlighted that as per the India State of Forest

Report 2023, Punjab possesses only 3.67% forest and tree cover and Haryana merely 3.65%, both drastically below the national average of 21.71% and far below the 33% benchmark envisaged under the National Forest Policy, 1988. In such a scenario, diversion of additional forest land constitutes ecological regression of alarming magnitude.

They pointed out that the tendering process has already advanced and financial bids are imminent. "The tender has already been issued by the NHA and the closing date of the said tender was 20.03.2026. If tree felling commences, the ecological damage will be permanent and irreversible. No subsequent judicial relief or monetary compensation can restore decades-old forest ecosystems," said the petitioners. Seeking intervention, the petitioners urged the High Court to quash or reconsider forest clearances, restrain further tendering and construction activity, direct reconsideration of alternative alignments, and ensure that developmental objectives are pursued strictly in conformity with constitutional mandates, statutory safeguards, and binding environmental jurisprudence.

At Kashi's cremation ground, courtesans offer their devotional tribute to 'Baba' through dance

Varanasi.(Agency)

In the religious and spiritual city of Kashi, the three-day "Shringar Mahotsav" (Adornment Festival) of Shri Shri 1008 Baba Mahashmashan Nath Ji—held from the fifth (Panchami) to the seventh (Saptami) day of "Chaitra Navratri"—concluded on Wednesday night.

At the Mahashmashan Nath Temple located at Manikarnika Ghat, courtesans of the city offered their heartfelt devotional tribute to "Baba" through the medium of dance, praying for liberation from their hellish existence and seeking blessings for their well-being.

Temple administrator Gulshan Kapoor remarked that such a scene—burning funeral pyres on

one side and the practice of devotional dance on the other—is possible only in Kashi. As the 'Yoginis' (female ascetics/dancers) offered their floral tributes of devotion to Lord Shiva through dance, the realm of the dead (Shav Lok) was transformed into the divine abode of Shiva (Shiv Lok).

In the evening, a grand 'Aarti' (ritual worship with lamps) was performed according to Tantric rites, following the offering of the 'Panchamakara' (Panchatattva), 'Bhog' (sacred food offering) to Baba Mahashmashan Nath Ji and Mata Mahashmashan Kali Ji.

It is believed that to please "Baba," the Goddess Shakti had assumed the form of a Yogini. On this day,

the temple courtyard was adorned with Rajnigandha (tuberose), roses, and various other fragrant flowers.

Following the 'Aarti', the courtesans dedicated their traditional devotional tribute to "Baba" through their singing and dance, offering a prayer that "Baba" might redeem their next life. It was an intensely emotional scene that moved all those present to tears.

Elaborating on the tradition behind this "Shringar Mahotsav", Gulshan Kapoor explained that this custom dates back hundreds of years. When Raja Man Singh undertook the renovation of this temple dedicated to "Baba," no artist was willing to come forward to perform music within the

temple premises. (In Hinduism, music is considered an essential element of every ritual worship or auspicious ceremony.) When no artist could be found, Raja Man Singh was deeply distressed. News of this situation gradually spread throughout the city, eventually reaching the courtesans of Kashi. Thereupon, with trepidation, the courtesans of the city sent a message to King Man Singh, requesting that if they were granted the opportunity, all the courtesans of Kashi would like to offer their heartfelt musical homage to their revered deity—Nataraja Mahashmashaneshwar, the progenitor of music.

Upon receiving this message, King

Man Singh was greatly pleased, and the courtesans were invited with due honour and respect. Thus began this tradition.

On the other hand, a thought also took root in the minds of the courtesans: that if they were to steadfastly uphold this tradition, it might pave the way for their liberation from their hellish existence.

Today, even after the passage of hundreds of years, this tradition remains alive. Uninvited, on the Saptami (seventh day) of Chaitra Navratri, the courtesans of Kashi—no matter where they may be—voluntarily gather at Manikarnika Ghat to present themselves at the court of Baba Mahashmashan Nath.

EOW conducts searches in Srinagar, Budgam in COVID-era procurement fraud case

Srinagar.(Agency)

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Kashmir on Thursday conducted searches at three locations in Srinagar and Budgam in connection with a COVID-era procurement fraud case involving alleged siphoning of huge government funds.

The searches were conducted in connection with an FIR registered on February 23 at Police Station Economic Offences Wing, Srinagar under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B IPC, read with Section 66-D of the IT Act.

The sections pertain to cheating, forgery of valuable documents, use of forged documents as genuine, criminal conspiracy, and cheating by personation using computer resources. Officials said the house searches conducted were aimed at securing further evidence, including digital records and financial documents.

"Further investigation is underway," they said. According to the EOW, the case was registered following a written complaint submitted by M/s Sanjay Trading Company, Najafgarh, New Delhi, through its proprietor Sanjay Kumar Sahu, who alleged that Emad Muzafar Makdooom alias Imran Shah of Peerbagh, Srinagar and Vikar Ahmad Bhat Sanatnagar, Srinagar dishonestly induced the firm on the pretext of arranging medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently cheated the company.

A preliminary probe revealed that the accused persons, through deceitful means, fraudulently obtained huge amounts, including funds from the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag. They also attempted to siphon off crores of rupees from Government Medical College, Srinagar, EoW said. The accused individuals impersonated government officials, posing as delegates and OSD (Supplies), and issued fake allotment orders of various departments and institutions. They further created fake email IDs of the complainant firm and opened fraudulent bank accounts in its name to divert payments. On the basis of these findings, a formal case was registered and the investigation set into motion.

India Speeds Up Oil, LPG Import Deals Amid Middle East Supply Shock

Earlier this week Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Parliament: "In the last 11 years, we have diversified energy imports... earlier we used to import from 27 nations. Now we import from 41."

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has fast-tracked signing of contracts to diversify import of crude oil and LPG, industry sources told Thursday. Sources said contracts are being finalised after 'detailed negotiations on rates that suits India's economic interests'.

The list of potential suppliers includes Russia, from whom India bought large amounts of discounted crude - immediately after its war on Ukraine began and Moscow faced sanctions - till those purchases were reduced per terms set by the United States. The US - which had expressed reservations over India buying Russian oil, arguing it was helping fund the war on Ukraine -

made reduction a condition to sign February's interim tariff deal. India agreed to offset the reduction by buying from the US.

But the US-Israel war on Iran that began Feb 28 sent oil prices soaring and constrained supply lines after Tehran shut down tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for 20-25 per cent of the world's seaborne crude trade.

The Hormuz channel is a key supply route for India; an estimated 40 per cent of the country's massive oil needs, between



5.5 and six million barrels per day, came through that passage.

Then, on March 6 Washington gave Delhi 30-

day 'permission' to buy Russian oil that had already been loaded on ships to offset loss of supply from the Middle East. Bloomberg said India have already bought an estimated 60 million barrels (article behind paywall) from Russia to be delivered in April 2026.

The government has stressed there is no immediate shortage of either fuel or gas. The country's three strategic reserves currently hold an estimated 3.372 million tons - or two-third its maximum capacity - junior Petroleum Minister Suresh Gopi told Parliament this

week. In addition, current total reserves - i.e., SPRs, which hold unrefined or crude oil, and ready-to-use fuel - are at 74 days, Gopi said, "... which includes stores with oil marketing companies".

Earlier Prime Minister Narendra Modi said: "In the last 11 years, we have diversified energy imports... earlier we used to import from 27 nations. Now we import from 41." On the supply of LPG, i.e., liquefied petroleum gas used to cook food by over 33 crore Indian households, the government said early March it had ordered a 25 per cent increase in domestic production and that there is no need for panic buying.

CAG slams DJB for failing to repay loans worth Rs 66.5K crore in 10 years

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Wednesday rapped the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) for failing to repay loans worth Rs66, 595 crore accrued over a period of 10 years. The CAG recommended the DJB should explore ways and means for the collection of the huge amount of dues outstanding from consumers.

The audit noted that the outstanding loan of DJB increased from Rs 25,140 crore in April 2017 to Rs 34,540 crore in March 2022. Moreover, the interest on the accumulated loan was Rs 32,055 crore on March 31, 2022. However, the DJB has not repaid any loan to the Delhi government since 2013-14, and the total



outstanding loan and interest stood at Rs 66,595 crore as of March 2022. The CAG report on the DJB was tabled in the Delhi Assembly.

In its reply to the auditor, the DJB stated that it is a non-profit organisation with the main objective of supplying water to more than 26 lakh consumers of Delhi, which comes under essential household service. To provide water supply, the Delhi government grants loan to the DJB, because the income of the DJB from supply of water is not enough to repay the loan amount. Therefore, it requested the government to convert the loans into grants. The decision is still pending with the Delhi government.

The auditor rejected the reply, saying it did not make efforts to either periodically revise the water/sewage charges nor made efforts for recovery of dues pending from consumers.

LPG black marketing rackets busted, five nabbed and 248 cylinders seized

New Delhi.(Agency)

In view of the ongoing LPG cylinder issue, Delhi Police has busted illegal LPG rackets and recovered 248 cylinders in separate operations. In the first incident, police bound down four persons and seized 183 cylinders, officials said. DCP (Crime) Rahool Alwal said all four accused are registered delivery personnel associated with an authorised gas agency and were responsible for LPG distribution in Sangam Vihar. The agency's authorised storage godown is located in Sheikh Sarai.

During interrogation, it emerged that the accused were illegally storing LPG cylinders at rented premises instead



of delivering their daily quotas after procuring them from the agency.

They maintained unauthorised stock and were illegally refilling gas from filled cylinders into empty ones using unauthorised equipment, selling them in the open market to make undue profits, the DCP said.

The equipment used included iron pokers, iron pipes and weighing scales. The accused allegedly carried out the refilling process cautiously by first removing the sealed caps using iron tools. Empty cylinders were then placed over filled ones and connected through pipes to transfer gas. Around one to two kg of LPG was extracted from each filled cylinder and transferred into empty cylinders, which were then sold at higher-than-prescribed rates.

14 charred to death as bus collides with truck in Andhra, bursts into flames

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu asked officials to ensure medical aid for all the injured after expressing his shock and grief over the incident.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Fourteen people lost their lives, and 23 sustained injuries as a private bus, carrying over 37 passengers, suffered a head-on collision with a gravel-loaded tipper truck in Andhra Pradesh's Markapuram area on Thursday morning. The victims were burnt to death as the bus soon caught fire after the accident.

As preliminary information suggests, the bus was heading to Kaligiri in Nellore district from Jagityla in Telangana when the accident happened. The reason behind the collision is unknown yet and is being investigated. The administration reacted quickly upon learning about the incident and dispatched several rescue teams. With the help of the locals, the rescue teams were successful in taking

out several people who were trapped inside the bus after the fire broke out and sent them to a nearby hospital, where they are presently undergoing treatment.

"We have shifted 23 injured people to the



hospital. Efforts are on to gather complete details of the incident," Markapuram Superintendent of Police (SP) V Harshavardhan Raju told PTI.

The driver of the tripper lorry also

sustained injuries and was moved to the hospital.

The rescue teams are also working to gather the data of the victims' relatives. After ensuring all the details and completing all the procedures, the victims' bodies will be handed over to the relatives.

CM NAIDU EXPRESSES GRIEF

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed his grief and shock over the incident.

He spoke to officials to ensure adequate medical assistance for all the injured persons, as reported by PTI.

In addition, he directed officials to conduct a comprehensive enquiry into the cause of the accident and submit a report.

Mahant Swami Maharaj consecrates 108-foot Neelkanth Varni statue at Akshardham temple in Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a grand ceremony held today, Mahant Swami Maharaj, the spiritual head of the global BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, consecrated a 108-foot-tall statue of Tapomurti Shri Neelkanth Varni (Bhagwan Swaminarayan) at the Swaminarayan Akshardham. Elaborate preparations were done for the event, attracting devotees and volunteers from across India.

108-foot Neelkanth Varni statue at Akshardham temple

The towering statue, made from panchdhatu (a sacred alloy of five metals, primarily bronze) depicts

Neelkanth Varni standing on a single foot, symbolising deep austerity and penance. Officials said that this is the first statue of its kind in the world to present the form in such a posture.

In the lead-up to the inauguration, several consecration ceremonies were conducted. On March 22, rituals were held at newly constructed BAPS Swaminarayan temples in Panchkula and Kurukshetra. The following day, the statue intended for the Paris temple, set for consecration in September, was ritually worshipped.



The 108-foot statue took nearly a year to complete, with the dedicated efforts of artisan sadhus, nearly 50 skilled craftsmen and numerous volunteers. The bronze-rich panchdhatu

composition adds to the statue's spiritual and artistic significance.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan, revered in his youthful ascetic form as Neelkanth Varni, embarked on a spiritual journey at the age of 11 after renouncing his home. Over seven years, he travelled more than 12,000 kilometres across India for the welfare of humanity, visiting sacred sites including the Himalayas, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Kailash-Manasarovar, Muktinath in Nepal, Kamakhya in Assam, Jagannath Puri in Odisha, Rameshwaram, Nashik, Pandharpur and Dwarka.

Vande Bharat meal row: IRCTC slapped with Rs 10 lakh fine, caterer Rs 50 lakh after worms found in curd

The Railways cancelled the contract of the company responsible for providing food on the train and also slapped a fine of Rs 50 lakh on the caterer

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Ministry of Railways has slapped a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on IRCTC and Rs 50 lakh on the service provider after a passenger complained of finding worms in the curd served on the Vande Bharat train. The passenger travelling on board Vande Bharat Express from Patna to Tatanagar shared a video on social media showing insects found in a cup of dahi served along with dinner on the premium train. In the video, widely circulated on social media platforms, he alleged that worms were also found in the curd served to other passengers.

Reacting swiftly to his complaint, the Railways cancelled the contract of the company responsible for providing food on the train and also slapped a fine of Rs 50 lakh on the caterer. The Indian



Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has also been



fined Rs 10 lakh. The Ministry of Railways replied, "The complaint

regarding food quality raised by a passenger in train number 21896 (Patna - Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express) on 15 March 2026 has been taken seriously. Action taken, IRCTC has been penalised Rs 10 lakh, the service provider has been penalised with Rs 50 lakh, and ordered to terminate the contract. Passenger safety and quality remain our top priority.

An Indian Railways spokesperson said that the matter will not be taken lightly and that the quality of service remains their top focus, news agency ANI reported. The spokesperson said that strict rules are in place to maintain proper standards, especially on premium trains like the Vande Bharat Express, where passengers expect better service and hygiene.

NEWS BOX

IPL 2026 Preview: About time Shubman Gill steps up as captain of Gujarat Titans

New Delhi. (Agency)

2025 marked a significant turning point in Shubman Gill's career. He took over as India's ODI and Test captain and also served as the team's vice-captain, although he eventually missed out on a place in the T20 World Cup squad. As a result, when Gill steps out for the Gujarat Titans in IPL 2026, he is expected to be wiser, more mature and far more game-aware, having gone through an important phase in his leadership journey. Gill is the leading run-scorer for the Titans in IPL history and remains their only batter to have scored over 2000 runs. But as a captain, he is still a work in progress. After a disappointing 2024 campaign, in which Gujarat failed to qualify for the playoffs, Gill began to show signs of growth as a leader in 2025, with the Titans at one stage looking like favourites to finish as table-toppers.

However, the Titans lost their final two league games, slipped out of the top two, and were then knocked out by Mumbai Indians in the Eliminator. Still, 2026 brings a fresh



opportunity. With the experience of captaining Team India at the highest level, this is Gill's chance to prove that he can be just as effective a captain in the IPL as he has been a batter.

IPL: GT'S STRENGTHS

GT's biggest strength lies in their balance between top-order stability and bowling depth. Their top order looks among the strongest in the league, with Sai Sudharsan and Shubman Gill being prolific run-scorers over the years, making GT one of the most reliable opening pairs. Add Jos Buttler at No.3, and GT have a top three that offers both consistency and explosive power. They have also roped in Tom Banton, a proven performer in T20 cricket, which further strengthens their batting unit. Jason Holder adds even more balance to the lineup with the experience and pedigree he brings.

Their second major strength is a high-quality, flexible bowling attack. Prasad Krishna won the Purple Cap last season with 25 wickets, while Mohammed Siraj added 16 wickets, giving GT a strong Indian pace core.

Rinku Singh appointed Regional Sports Officer, thanks UP government for honour

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Indian cricketer Rinku Singh on Wednesday thanked the Uttar Pradesh Government and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath after being appointed as a Regional Sports Officer under the state's sports quota scheme. In a video message shared on social media, the left-handed batter thanked the authorities for the appointment and also acknowledged the financial assistance of Rs 3 crore provided to him. "I thank the Uttar Pradesh government and Hon'ble Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for appointing me to the post of Regional Sports Officer," Rinku said. The 26-year-old said he could not attend the appointment



letter distribution ceremony held on Tuesday due to his commitments with his Indian Premier League franchise, Kolkata Knight Riders. However, he added that he would soon travel to Lucknow to receive the letter and seek the chief minister's blessings.

Rinku's appointment is part of a wider initiative by the state government to provide jobs to international medal-winning athletes. Among the others is Rajkumar Pal, a member of India's bronze medal-winning hockey team at the Paris Olympics 2024, who will be appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP). Hailing from Ghazipur, Rajkumar is one of six athletes being recognised.

Paralympic high jump gold medalist Praveen Kumar (Gautam Buddha Nagar) will also be appointed as DSP, while javelin throw silver medalist Ajit Singh (Etawah) and 200m bronze medalist Simran (Ghaziabad) will be given the role of District Panchayat Raj Officer.

Senegal approaches CAS after controversially being stripped of AFCON title

Senegal have approached the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) after being stripped of their Africa Cup of Nations title by CAF. The governing body controversially awarded the crown to Morocco following a chaotic final. The appeal could take months, with no clear timeline yet set for a verdict.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Senegal have formally appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) after being stripped of their Africa Cup of Nations title, in what has emerged as one of the most contentious decisions in recent African football. The appeal, registered on Wednesday, challenges a ruling by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), which overturned Senegal's victory in the



January final and awarded the title to hosts Morocco. CAS confirmed that Senegal have also requested additional time to file their detailed appeal, citing the absence of a full written explanation from CAF. The court

added that no timeline can currently be set for hearings or a final decision. **WHAT IS SENEGAL'S AFCON CONTROVERSY?** The controversy stems from the chaotic final in Rabat, where Senegal players briefly walked

off the pitch in protest after Morocco were awarded a late penalty during a 15-minute stoppage. Play eventually resumed, and the penalty was saved, before Senegal went on to win 1-0 in extra time.

CAF, however, invoked tournament rules stating that a team refusing to continue play can be disqualified, leading to the unprecedented decision to strip Senegal of the title two months after the final.

The ruling has sparked wider debate, with Senegal's government calling for an international probe into alleged corruption within CAF. It has also fuelled perceptions of Morocco's growing influence in global football, especially with the country set to co-host the 2030 FIFA World Cup. CAF president Patrice Motsepe dismissed claims of bias, insisting that no nation would receive preferential treatment.

CAS proceedings are expected to take several months, with the final verdict likely to shape one of the most controversial chapters in African football history.

Kylian Mbappe denies that Real Madrid examined the wrong knee after injury

CHANDIGARH. (Agency)

Kylian Mbappe has dismissed reports of a wrong knee diagnosis at Real Madrid, clarifying his injury situation while confirming that he is fit and ready to feature for the France national football team ahead of the upcoming friendlies. France forward Kylian Mbappe has denied reports suggesting that Real Madrid examined the wrong knee, which allegedly led to a prolonged spell on the sidelines. "The information that they examined the wrong knee is not true," he said at a press conference ahead of France's game against Brazil in Foxborough, Massachusetts. "I may be indirectly responsible for this situation, because when you don't communicate about what's happening, it opens the door to different interpretations." Earlier in the week, RMC Sport, followed by several Spanish outlets, claimed that the club failed to diagnose a partial ligament tear in his left knee after performing scans on his healthy right knee. The French



international sustained the injury late last year during a La Liga game against Celta Vigo.

However, after receiving the green light from the club's medical staff, Mbappe featured throughout January against Alaves, Talavera and Sevilla, which eventually brought the issue to light and led to him being sidelined for three and a half weeks. He was later eased back into the squad by coach Alvaro Arbeloa, coming on as a substitute in Real Madrid's win over Manchester City in the second leg of the UEFA Champions League Round of 16, followed by an appearance against Atletico Madrid in a must-win Madrid derby. "I have never been and never will be a player who regrets things," he added on Monday in Paris. "I focus on the present and the short-term future. I am glad to be feeling good in both knees. In part, I owe that to my club. I am very happy to be here, in form, fit, and ready to contribute."

LSG owner credits Jay Shah for IPL boom, Lalit Modi tells him to jog his memory

New Delhi. (Agency)

Lalit Modi, founder of the Indian Premier League, hit out at Sanjiv Goenka after the Lucknow Super Giants owner credited former Board of Control for Cricket in India president Jay Shah for the league's growth. Goenka, who praised Shah's vision for building a strong foundation for the IPL, was called out by Modi on X in the early hours of Thursday, March 26. Goenka's remarks came after two IPL franchises - Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru - were sold to high-profile consortiums for over USD 1 billion. RCB, for example, has seen its valuation grow nearly 37 times since it was bought by Vijay Mallya in 2008. Goenka took to X to state that the skyrocketing valuations were a result of the IPL's underlying structure. "The way broadcast and digital rights were structured. The governance that gave brands confidence to invest at premium levels. Much of this traces back to the vision of Jay Shah," Goenka said. "Seriously, this guy really has memory loss of who conceived the model. That's

okay. He just lives in his own world," Modi retorted.

THE BIRTH OF IPL

The origins of the Indian Premier League can be traced back to the early 2000s, when the idea of a franchise-based T20 competition



first began to take shape. One of the earliest defining moments came in December 2003, when Lalit Modi, then an outsider in cricket administration, declared his intent to enter the sport. Over the next two years, with political backing and structural changes within Rajasthan cricket, Modi rose to become president of the Rajasthan Cricket

Association, giving him a foothold within the system. The concept of a city-based league had initially failed to gain traction within the Board of Control for Cricket in India. However, the landscape shifted dramatically with the launch of the Indian Cricket League (ICL) by Subhash Chandra. The privately funded T20 league, featuring a mix of international and domestic players, threatened to disrupt the BCCI's monopoly over the sport. Faced with the possibility of losing players and commercial control, the BCCI was compelled to act. By then, Modi had secured a position within the board, aided by his association with Sharad Pawar, who had taken over as BCCI president.

In September 2007, the IPL was officially announced, backed by both the BCCI and the International Cricket Council. The timing proved crucial, as India's triumph in the inaugural T20 World Cup that same year helped legitimise the format and generate immediate interest.

Vijay Mallya says madness paid off as RCB grows from Rs 450 cr to Rs 16,500 cr

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Vijay Mallya, the former owner of Royal Challengers Bengaluru, took to X to mock his critics after his former team was sold at a staggering valuation of Rs 16,500 crore on Tuesday, March 24. The Bengaluru-based franchise was bought by a high-profile consortium led by the Aditya Birla Group, in partnership with The Times of India Group and Bolt Ventures.

Mallya revealed that when he had originally bought the franchise for Rs 450 crore in 2008, many criticised and laughed at his decision to invest in a cricket team, calling it a vanity project. Taking a victory lap on Thursday, March 26, Mallya said it was immensely gratifying to see his "madness" grow nearly 37 times to Rs 16,500 crore.

"I would like to heartily congratulate the new owners of RCB. I wish them the very best and Godspeed with the most valuable IPL franchise. When I bought the franchise in 2008 for INR 450 crores, most people laughed at me and criticised my investment



as a vanity project. Behind my much touted madnesses was building the Royal Challenge brand and hence I named the franchise RCB," Vijay Mallya wrote on X. "Immensely gratifying to see my INR 450 crore investment grow to INR 16,500 crores. RCB will always remain a part of my DNA with indelible memories, including picking the young Virat Kohli, who is now among the best in the world. To all RCB fans who came on board during my stewardship and beyond, a grateful thank you, and please continue to support RCB, the Lion of Bengaluru. Namaskara," he

concluded.

IPL: THE SALE OF RCB AND RR

The winning bid for RCB was led by the Aditya Birla Group, headed by Kumar Mangalam Birla, in partnership with The Times of India Group. The consortium also includes Bolt Ventures, led by American sports investor David Blitzler, and global private equity giant Blackstone Inc..

The acquisition was part of a historic double-header day for the IPL, with Rajasthan Royals also being sold for USD 1.63 billion to a US-based consortium led by entrepreneur Kal Somani, reportedly backed by the Walton and Ford family interests. The RCB deal, however, remains subject to regulatory approvals from the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the Competition Commission of India. It marks a significant transition from the previous owners, United Spirits Limited, a subsidiary of Diageo, which had earlier termed the franchise a non-core asset.

IPL 2026: Pat Cummins targets mid-season return for SRH after back injury

IPL 2026: Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins has said that his best-case scenario is to return to full fitness for the second half of the IPL, including the knockout stages in late May.

BANGKOK. (Agency)

Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins has begun his road to recovery, with the Australian pace spearhead joining the team's training session at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday, March 25. Cummins, who is nursing a back injury, kept his workload light during the session. The 32-year-old focused on warm-up routines, participated in fielding and catching drills, and bowled a few deliveries with a shortened run-up in an empty net,



signaling a gradual return to bowling rhythm. The Australia Test and ODI captain has been sidelined for much of the past year due to a lumbar stress injury sustained after the Caribbean tour last July. Since then, he has featured in just one international match - the Adelaide Test against England in

December - and also missed Australia's underwhelming campaign at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. With IPL 2026 around the corner, Cummins has confirmed that he will miss the initial phase of the tournament but is optimistic about returning midway through the season. "I'm still recovering from a back

injury, but it's good. I'm back bowling in the nets," Cummins said on the Business of Sport podcast. "The IPL is starting soon. I won't make the start of that, but it shouldn't be too long before I'm back out there playing. I'm bowling basically every third day at the moment. We've mapped out a plan to get me right by the middle of the tournament, so hopefully, if nothing goes wrong, I can play the back half plus the finals." In his absence, wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan has been named Sunrisers Hyderabad's stand-in captain for the early part of the season.

Cummins' return will be crucial not just for SRH but also for Australia, who have a packed international calendar later this year. The side is scheduled to host Bangladesh for a two-Test series in August before touring South Africa for a three-match Test series, which also serves as part of the ongoing World Test Championship cycle. Australia will then play a white-ball series in South Africa before returning home for a marquee four-Test series against New Zealand in the summer.

Asian stocks mostly fall and oil climbs again over Iran war de-escalation uncertainties

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Asian stocks were mostly lower and oil prices gained on Thursday as a de-escalation of the Iran war remained uncertain.

U.S. futures were down 0.1%.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was trading 0.3% lower at 53,607.75. South Korea's Kospi lost 1.9% to 5,537.30. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.4% to 24,978.71, while the Shanghai Composite index was down 0.6% to 3,909.16. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged down 0.2%, while Taiwan's Taiex was trading 0.4% higher. Oil prices were up again on Thursday after an earlier dip. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 1.3% to \$98.51 per barrel. It was below \$95 on Wednesday. Benchmark U.S. crude was 1.6% higher at \$91.75 a barrel.

The rise in oil prices came as Tehran on Wednesday dismissed a ceasefire plan by the U.S., after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump offered a 15-point proposal to Iran and Trump this week delayed a self-imposed deadline to "obliterate" its power plants in order to force Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Iran also launched more attacks on Israel and Gulf Arab countries as Israel launched airstrikes on Tehran and the U.S. prepared to deploy more American troops to the region. With the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway between Iran and Oman where roughly a fifth of the world's oil typically passes through, remaining largely closed after the Iran war began, oil prices have fluctuated, climbing around 40% since the beginning of the war, which is now in its fourth week. On Wednesday, Wall Street stocks closed higher. The S&P 500 gained 0.5% to 6,591.90. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.7% to 46,429.49, and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.8% to 21,929.83. U.S.-listed shares of Arm Holdings jumped 16.4%, following an announcement by the U.K. company that it would be launching and selling its own chips which is expected to drive future revenue. On Holding, the Swiss sportswear company selling On running shoes, fell 11.2% in the U.S. Its CEO Martin Hoffmann is stepping down and the company has named two co-founders as co-CEOs.

How Railways is enhancing travel with RailMadad, regional cuisine, fair pricing

BANGKOK.(Agency)

In recent years, Indian Railways has been taking several measures to provide good amenities and comfort to train passengers. In an attempt to overcome the inconvenience caused to passengers over multiple helpline numbers for grievances and enquiry, Indian Railways has RailMadad – 'a grievance redressal mechanism that provides travellers an integrated platform for grievances, assistance and inquiry'.

RailMadad: Railway Helpline number

In RailMadad, train travellers are able to use multiple channels to put forward their grievances and getting information of train timing, etc. Helpline number-139, RailMadad Web, App and SMS are integrated into the system. Passengers are also able to share feedback on the resolution of their grievances through RailMadad. IRCTC's Culinary Evolution

The Ministry of Railways has informed that Indian Railways serves nearly 58 crore meals annually across its trains. Keeping travellers' comfort on priority, IRCTC makes sure that regional cuisine is provided on trains. Passengers travelling in Gujarat bound trains are given Thepla, trains in Bengal have Machher Jhol in menu. Medu Vada is provided to passengers in Karnataka-bound train, Indori Poha in Madhya Pradesh, and Pyaz Kachori in Rajasthan.

As per the Railways, the complaints regarding food provided by IRCTC catering services on trains averages only about 0.0008%, which includes complaints related to overcharging. Over the past three years, the Railways has imposed penalty amounting to Rs 2.6 crore following inquiries into complaints over food.

Gold & Silver price outlook: Geopolitical tensions & inflationary headwinds explained

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and Silver prices have seen high volatility ever since the US-Israel started military operations against Iran on February 28, 2026, with Tehran retaliating with strikes on Israel and several 'US bases' in the Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and others.

Gold Price today outlook

On March 26, Gold price hovered around \$4,500 per ounce, struggling to extend recent gains as geopolitical uncertainty between the US and Iran kept markets cautious. The US reportedly proposed a 15-point plan via Pakistan to resolve tensions and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran rejected ceasefire terms and insisted on sovereign control over the route. Commodity expert Ajay Suresh Kedia said rising military presence, including deployment of thousands of US troops, has heightened fears of further escalation. Despite its safe-haven appeal, gold faced selling pressure this month as higher energy prices fueled inflation concerns, prompting a hawkish shift among major central banks and limiting upside.

Silver Price today outlook

Silver prices hovered above \$71 per ounce but struggled to extend gains amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainty between the US and Iran. Expressing his views on Silver, Kedia said the Trump administration signaled continued negotiations, proposing a 15-point plan via Pakistan to resolve tensions and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran rejected ceasefire terms and demanded sovereign control over the route.

All fuel outlets operating normally, rapid rollout of PNG connections underway: Centre

All refineries are operating at a high capacity with adequate crude inventories. While panic buying did occur in some areas due to rumours, the government has confirmed that all retail outlets are operating normally.

New Delhi.(Agency)

All retail outlets are operating normally with sufficient petrol and diesel stocks to meet national demand, according to the government, while a rapid rollout of PNG connections is currently underway across the country. All refineries are operating at a high capacity with adequate crude inventories. While panic buying did occur in some areas due to rumours, the government has confirmed that all retail outlets are operating normally. Moreover, the government is maintaining 100 per cent supply for domestic PNG and CNG transport. Supply to industrial and



commercial consumers connected to the grid is being sustained at approximately 80 per cent of average consumption to ensure their economic continuity and India's progress. Meanwhile, the government has notified the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order, 2026. This creates a streamlined, time-bound framework for nationwide pipeline expansion, aiming to accelerate PNG network growth and bypass land access delays. A single-day record of

9,046 new PNG connections was achieved across over 110 geographical areas. To support this, entities like IGL and GAIL are offering new incentives, while the DDA in Delhi has permitted 24/7 pipeline laying and waived road restoration charges.

In the meantime, the Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation (PESO) has been advised to dispose of CGD applications within 10 days, while the PNGRB has directed that connections for

residential schools, hostels, and community kitchens be prioritised and completed within five days.

The overall commercial LPG allocation to States/UTs has increased to 50 per cent. This additional supply is prioritised for essential sectors, including restaurants, dhabas, hotels, and 5kg FTL cylinders for migrant labourers. The Centre has offered an additional 10 per cent allocation of commercial LPG to States and Union Territories, specifically linked to their progress in transitioning consumers from LPG to Piped Natural Gas (PNG). Importantly, under the Essential Commodities Act, authorities conducted over 2,700 raids in a single day, seizing 2,000 cylinders. To date, more than 650 FIRs have been registered and 155 individuals arrested for malpractices.

To ease LPG demand, an additional 48,000 KL of kerosene has been allocated to the States. Furthermore, the Union Ministry of Coal has ordered increased allotments to small and medium consumers to provide alternative energy options.

Will Dalal Street's recovery run end as US, Iran fail to end war

New Delhi.(Agency)

Just as Dalal Street staged a two-day recovery on hopes that US President Donald Trump was signalling a possible end to the Iran conflict, developments over the past 24 hours suggest that a clear resolution remains elusive, keeping global uncertainty elevated. Over the past two sessions, the Sensex has rebounded over 2,500 points and the Nifty nearly 800 points, driven by hopes of easing tensions in West Asia. However, that recovery could be tested on Friday as markets react to fresh developments following Thursday's Ram Navami holiday. The United States has put forward a 15-point framework aimed at ending the conflict, including a ceasefire, limits on Iran's nuclear and missile programmes, and phased sanctions relief. Iran has rejected the proposal as excessive and has instead outlined a five-point counter, demanding an immediate halt to attacks, guarantees against future military action, and broader recognition of its regional

position. **NO MEANINGFUL BREAKTHROUGH**

Following recent developments, experts indicated that markets could remain volatile and may even decline



tomorrow, as there has been no meaningful breakthrough in efforts to end the conflict. It may be noted that the conflict remains active, with continued drone and missile activity reported across parts of the region. This suggests that while diplomatic channels may exist, they have yet to translate into any concrete de-

escalation. For markets, the key issue is the gap between expectations and reality. Asian markets traded lower on Thursday, with key indices including Japan's Nikkei, South Korea's KOSPI and Hong Kong's Hang Seng declining, reflecting rising caution amid escalating geopolitical tensions and firm crude prices.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs), who had been net sellers earlier this month, turned marginal buyers in the last two sessions, according to exchange data, indicating that the rally may have been driven partly by short covering and tactical positioning rather than fresh conviction.

THE OIL FACTOR

That creates a degree of vulnerability. With domestic markets closed on Thursday, global assets have continued to react. Brent crude remains elevated above the \$100 per barrel mark, while safe-haven assets have seen intermittent buying.

Are Banks open or closed today for Ram Navami? Here's what you need to know

New Delhi.(Agency)

If you are planning a bank visit on March 26, it is important to check your city's holiday status first. Banks across India are not following a uniform schedule today, as Ram Navami is a regional holiday and closures vary from state to state. On the occasion of Ram Navami, bank branches are shut in multiple cities and states where the festival is officially observed. These include major locations such as Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai, and Ranchi, among others. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) holiday calendar confirms that bank closures on this day depend on local observances, meaning not all states follow the same schedule.

Banks Remain Open in Some Cities

Despite the holiday, banks continue to operate normally in cities where Ram Navami is not a gazetted holiday. This includes places like New Delhi,

Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kochi, where customers can access regular branch services. Because of these regional differences, customers are advised to



verify the status of their local branch before planning a visit. Why the Holiday Varies Across India

India follows a state-wise bank holiday

system. While national holidays apply across the country, festivals like Ram Navami are observed differently depending on regional traditions and government notifications.

As a result, bank closures are staggered, with some states observing the holiday on March 26 and others on March 27. More Bank Closures Around the Corner The Ram Navami holiday is part of a larger cluster of bank holidays this week: March 27 — Ram avami/Chaita Dasain (in select states)

March 28 — Fourth Saturday (banks closed nationwide)

March 29 — Sunday (weekly off)

This creates an extended holiday period in several regions, limiting branch access for multiple days.

Is your restaurant charging you extra on bills Govt flags illegal LPG fees, orders crackdown

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major relief for consumers, the government has directed hotels and restaurants to stop adding extra charges such as "LPG charges", "gas surcharge", or "fuel cost recovery" to customer bills. The move comes after a surge in complaints about inflated bills driven by such hidden costs. The directive has been issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), which has termed the practice an "unfair trade practice" under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The CCPA has made it clear that restaurants and hotels cannot automatically add any fuel-related charges to bills. These include labels such as LPG charges, gas surcharge, fuel recovery fees, or similar terms.

Authorities noted that many establishments were adding these costs over and above menu prices and applicable taxes — often without clear disclosure — leading to higher bills for customers.

What the New Rule Says

According to the advisory:



No hotel or restaurant can levy LPG or fuel-related charges by default

Menu prices must reflect the final cost of food items Only applicable taxes can be added to the bill The regulator emphasised that customers should not be forced or misled into paying any additional charges that are not

voluntary. Why These Charges Are Illegal The watchdog has clarified that expenses like LPG, fuel, electricity, and other operational costs are part of running a business and must already be included in menu pricing. Charging these separately is seen as a way to bypass existing rules on service charges and impose unjustified

costs on consumers.

Complaints Triggered Government Action

The move follows multiple complaints received through the National Consumer Helpline and media reports highlighting the growing trend of restaurants adding such charges. Officials said the practice lacked transparency and created confusion for customers, who were often unaware of these extra costs until the final bill was presented.

Strict Action for Violations

The CCPA has warned that any violation of the directive could invite action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Authorities are also monitoring compliance across the country and have indicated that businesses found flouting the rules could face penalties.

What Customers Should Do

Consumers who notice such charges in their bills have the right to:

Ask the establishment to remove the charge
File a complaint via the National Consumer Helpline (1915)

8th Pay Commission update: Salary hike timeline revealed, Big changes in pay and pensions under review

New Delhi.(Agency)

The government has shared a fresh update on the 8th Pay Commission, offering clarity on its progress, timeline, and the scope of changes expected in salaries and pensions of central government employees. The Ministry of Finance, in a reply to Parliament, confirmed that the process is underway, with key aspects like pay structure, allowances, and pension systems currently under review. The commission has been tasked with examining multiple components of employee compensation, including:

Its recommendations will impact lakhs of central government employees and pensioners across India.

Timeline: Report Expected Within 18 Months

The government has stated that the 8th Pay Commission will submit its report within 18 months of its formation. This follows the official notification issued in November 2025, when the commission was formally constituted along with the appointment of its chairperson and members. This means the final recommendations are likely to come sometime in 2026–27. Implementation Date Still Uncertain While revised salaries are expected to take effect from January 1, 2026, the actual rollout will depend on when the commission submits its report and when the government approves it. In case of delays, employees may receive arrears retrospectively once the new pay structure is implemented.

Fiscal Impact Yet to Be Assessed

One of the key questions raised in Parliament was about the financial burden of implementing the 8th Pay Commission.

The Finance Ministry clarified that the fiscal impact on the Union Budget will only be determined after the recommendations are finalised and approved. This is crucial, as previous pay commissions have had a significant impact on government expenditure. Stakeholder Feedback Window Open

The commission is currently in its consultation phase and has invited inputs from stakeholders, including employees, pensioners, ministries, and experts. Questionnaire deadline: March 31, 2026 Memorandum submission deadline: April 30, 2026 This step is aimed at making the process more inclusive and data-driven.

Shweta Tripathi

On Playing Golu In Mirzapur For 8 Years: 'I Feel Extremely Grateful'

Actor Shweta Tripathi recently spoke about her long association with Golu Gupta from Mirzapur, sharing how the character has remained a constant in her life over the years. Having played the role for nearly eight years, she described it as a journey that has stayed with her both personally and professionally. When Mirzapur first released, Gajgami "Golu" Gupta was introduced as a quiet, thoughtful college student who preferred books and debates over confrontation. In a narrative driven by crime and power struggles, the character stood apart for her measured approach and reliance on observation rather than aggression.

As the series moved forward, the character underwent a gradual shift. From a reserved student, Golu grew into a more assertive and strategic figure within the storyline. Reflecting on this journey, Shweta Tripathi said, "It's difficult to explain what Golu means to me because she has been a part of my life for almost eight years. When I first started playing her, she was this reserved, intelligent girl who believed deeply in books and knowledge. Over time we saw

her grow, change and become stronger because of everything life threw at her. As an actor, getting the chance to live with a character for so many years is very rare, and I feel extremely grateful for it." She also recalled how the character was received when the first season came out.

"I still remember reading reviews after Season 1 and seeing how many people spoke about Golu. Some wrote about how she brought a certain calm intelligence into such a violent world. Others said they loved that she was observant and thoughtful rather than loud. That meant a lot to me because those are the qualities that define her."

Over time, the response to the character has continued, with many viewers associating Shweta closely with the role.

"Golu has given me so much, love from the audience, recognition, opportunities and most importantly memories that I will carry with me forever. I have grown with her in many ways. I feel like a part of me will always remain Golu. Whenever people call me Golu didi, I love to! And it reminds me how deeply characters and stories can connect us." Looking back, the actor said the show has had a lasting impact on her work and choices. "Mirzapur changed many things for me as an actor. But more than anything, it gave me Golu, and that is something I will always cherish," she says.



Sonam Kapoor's Birthday Wish For Mom Sunita Kapoor: 'I Carry You With Me In Everything I Do'



Sunita Kapoor celebrated her birthday on March 25, with warm wishes pouring in from family and the film industry. Among them, Sonam Kapoor took a nostalgic trip down memory lane, sharing a series of throwback photos along with a heartfelt note. The post featured childhood pictures with her mother as well as some of their more recent moments together.

Along with the pictures, she wrote, "My mother is so rare, even her eyes are green. Grace, strength, and love, you are everything. You've held us together with so much warmth and quiet power, and I carry you with me in everything I do. The best mama in the world, always. Happy Birthday."

Anil Kapoor On His Wife Sunita Kapoor

Earlier, during the promotion of Subedar, Anil Kapoor praised his wife and opened up about the sacrifices she made. He told The Indian Express, "Kabhi kabhi ye bhi hota he situation ki film mein scene ye hai ki he is there doing his duty, he has to be with his wife also. But he is like let me finish my duty and then I will be with you. So that conflict, which is always there in your life also. Where you want to become a better father, better husband, better friend... but sometimes you are a person who is so passionate about his work also. He is conflicted... Sometimes why I say that my wife's contribution is tremendous, is because she could understand my madness and my love for my work. She sacrificed so much to understand and let me be. Let me work, let me be myself."

Sonam Kapoor Expecting Second Child

Speaking of the actress, she and her husband, Anand Ahuja, are expecting their second child. Sonam married businessman Anand Ahuja in a lavish wedding ceremony in May 2018, after being together for several years. The couple welcomed their first kid, a baby boy called Vayu, in August 2022. In terms of acting, she was most recently seen in the 2023 film Blind. Shome Makhija directed the crime thriller. It also has Purab Kohli, Vinay Pathak, and Lillete Dubey in supporting parts. Blind, a remake of the 2011 Korean film of the same name, revolves around a blind police officer on the hunt for a serial killer.

'Miss You My Friends': Poonam Dhillon Shares Old Pic; Remembers Rishi Kapoor, Aadesh Srivastava, Rajiv Kapoor



Bollywood veteran actress Poonam Dhillon, on Wednesday, shared a heartfelt throwback as she remembered late composer Aadesh Srivastava along with actors Rishi Kapoor and Rajiv Kapoor, further saying that she misses her friends who are no longer around. "Memories of my Dear Friend Aadesh's birthday. Miss you my friends Aadesh, Chintu ji & Chimpu," she wrote. The picture shared by Poonam on her social media account, appears to be from late Aadesh Srivastava's birthday celebration, with many prominent Bollywood personalities gathered around him. Among those seen in the picture are



Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor, and other industry members.

Poonam's note comes as a tribute to three beloved figures, Aadesh Srivastava, fondly remembered for his musical contributions, Rishi Kapoor, affectionately called "Chintu ji", and Rajiv Kapoor, known as "Chimpu." For the uninitiated, all the three of them have passed away, leaving behind a lasting legacy in Indian cinema. Aadesh Srivastava passed away in 2015 after battling cancer. Rishi Kapoor breathed his last in 2020 following a prolonged fight with leukemia. Rajiv Kapoor passed away in 2021 due to a cardiac arrest.

Talking about Poonam Dhillon, the actress who has been a part of the film industry for decades, shared a close association with Rishi Kapoor, having starred opposite him in popular films such as Yeh Vaada Raha and Karz. Their on-screen pairing was loved by audiences.

Shalini Pandey

Calls Dhurandhar Her 'Favourite'; Wishes To Work With Ranveer Singh, Hrithik Roshan

Aaditya Dhar's Dhurandhar: The Revenge, which hit theatres on March 19, is currently enjoying a thunderous run at the box office, winning praise for its gripping narrative and high-octane action. Amid the film's growing success, actress Shalini Pandey recently shared her admiration for the franchise, revealing that she loved Dhurandhar, calling it one of her favourites. In a recent interview, she also expressed her wish to collaborate with Ranveer Singh.

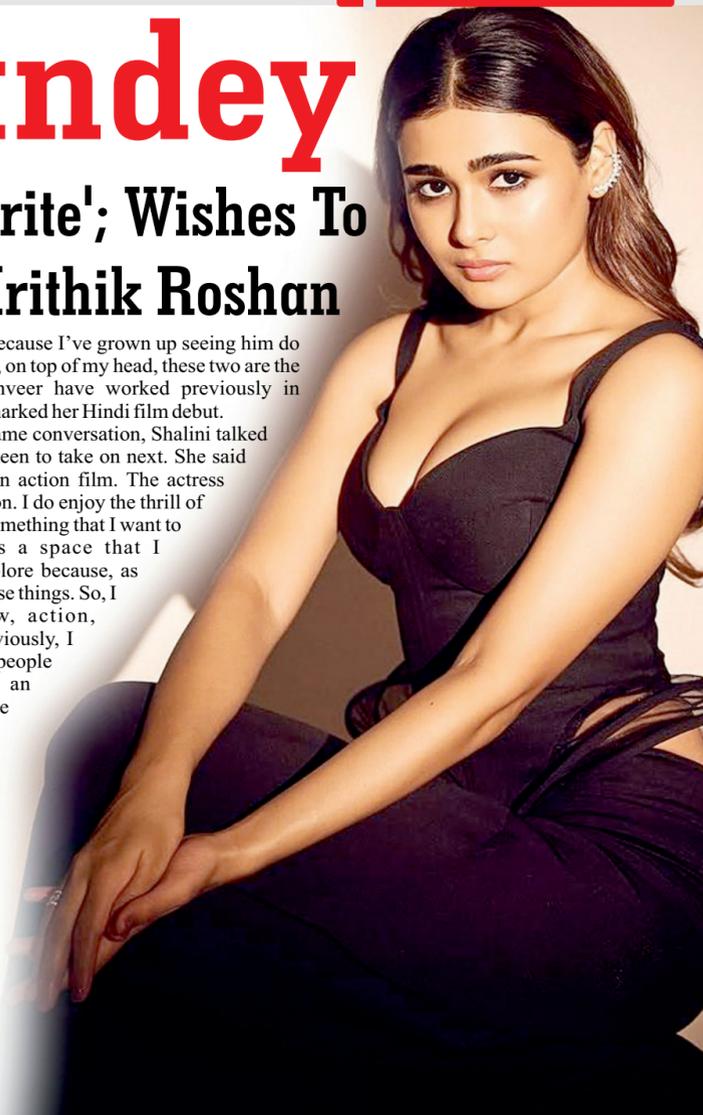


Shalini, who rose to fame with Arjun Reddy alongside Vijay Deverakonda, told India Today that she would love to work with both Ranveer and Hrithik Roshan. She praised Ranveer's versatility, calling him capable of excelling in any role, and reiterated that Dhurandhar is among her recent favourites. She also mentioned Hrithik as a major inspiration, especially when it comes to action roles. The actress said, "I think, top of my head, I love Ranveer as an actor. So, I do think he's someone because I had seen Dhurandhar, it's one of my recent favourite films, so I do think he's someone who can be good at anything. He's such a versatile actor. So, I do think him. I like Ranveer. I also

think Hrithik Roshan because I've grown up seeing him do these things. So, I think, on top of my head, these two are the ones." Shalini and Ranveer have worked previously in Jayeshbhai Jordaar. It marked her Hindi film debut.

Meanwhile, during the same conversation, Shalini talked about the roles she is keen to take on next. She said that she wants to do an action film. The actress added, "I do enjoy action. I do enjoy the thrill of it. So, action is really something that I want to do. Then comedy is a space that I absolutely want to explore because, as an audience, I enjoy these things. So, I do think, you know, action, comedy. And then, obviously, I do want to work with people who motivate me as an actor, who push me beyond my own comfort zone. Because I do feel that if I become comfortable, not that I don't try to not be too comfortable wherever I am, but I feel as an actor, I want to be pushed. I don't want to be somewhere where I'm not growing at all. So, that's a big portion of it."

Shalini was last seen in Rahu Ketu alongside Pulkit Samrat and Varun Sharma.



Go skintastic This summer!



Are skin woes dampening your summer spirit? Fret not, here's addressing a host of skin-related queries so that you can make the most of that gorgeous summer shift dress.

Sweltering weather is synonymous with rising hems and plunging necklines. So don't let problem-ridden skin come in the way of daring summer dressing. "Eat for beauty," advises nutritionist and food consultant, Naini Setalvad. Paying a little attention to the changing needs of your body this summer can go a long way.

What are the diet essentials for the summer months?

Setalvad recommends a heavy breakfast, a light lunch and a medium dinner. "Fried food, red meat and dry fruits (except raisins) should be avoided. Eggs are heat producing and should be kept to a minimum; fish is a good option. Light grains like rice and wheat are okay for the diet but millets should be avoided," she states. "Yoghurt cools down the digestive system. So try to include raitas in your meals or use yoghurt as a salad dressing," she adds. Dr. Apratim Goel, dermatologist, says that antioxidants

helps to counter the damage caused by over exposure to the sun. "Raw tomatoes are an excellent source of antioxidants. The bottom line for great summer skin, however, is maximum hydration," she explains.

What does one drink in summer for optimum hydration?

Setalvad strongly recommends raw mango drinks (popularly known as aam panna in most parts of India). Avoid alcohol and sugary fluids like sherbets and aerated drinks. Salted lemon water, buttermilk, jal jeera and caffeine-free herbal infusions like peppermint or coriander drinks are ideal.

Does a predominantly fruit and vegetable diet ensure great skin?

Not all veggies are ideal for summer. Pumpkins, snake gourds, cucumbers, tomatoes and lettuce are good for light summer meals. Setalvad suggests incorporating slices of raw mango into salads or snacks. "Mango pickle is an excellent option since it helps to replenish the essential salts lost due to perspiration," she explains. Melons and mangoes are well known 'summer fruits'. However, the innocuous mango is often thought to be

responsible for pimples. "Don't blend mangoes with milk or sugar," warns Setalvad. Mango is alkaline while milk is acidic, resulting in a disrupted pH. This causes indigestion and skin break outs when the body tries to eliminate the accumulated toxins. Setalvad also suggests sprinkling dry ginger powder on mango in order to reduce the risk of flatulence.

What is the basic skin care regimen that one should follow during summer?

Your skin needs moisturising even in summer. Dr. Goel recommends making an emulsion of your regular moisturiser by mixing it with a little water and applying this to the face and neck. She suggests a natural remedy to rejuvenate tired, summer

skin. "Pack grated cucumber in a piece of muslin cloth and place this on the face for 20 minutes," she suggests. Fungal infections proliferate in summer due to dampness induced by excessive perspiration. Using a light anti-fungal dusting powder can help nix rashes and infections.

How does one choose the right sunscreen?

'Sunscreen' is a golden word in summer.

But it is a fact that it doesn't agree with all skin types. In such cases, make the most of physical protection in the form of broad-rimmed hats, sunglasses, full-sleeved cotton clothing, etc. "If sunscreen is too greasy for you, use aloe vera and calamine. This is especially good for acne-prone skin," says Dr. Goel. He explains that over-the-counter sunscreens are of two kinds chemical and physical.

"The chemical ones need to be applied 20

minutes prior to sun exposure whereas the physical ones (that contain titanium or zinc oxides and benzenes) act instantly," she says.

Handy tips

- As inviting as they are, avoid packaged facial wipes as most of them contain alcohol that could eventually harm your skin.
- Mineral water sprays are a good alternative when there is no provision for a face wash.
- Use a cold compress after long periods of sun exposure. It helps to instantly cool down the skin. Applying tomato juice or buttermilk relieves minor sunburn.

How mommyhood

Changes a woman

Becoming a mother is one of those experiences that changes a woman forever — and not just physically. These alterations are subtly visible in the way her personality undergoes a makeover once she gives birth and becomes engrossed in rearing her child. There are psychological, physiological and emotional changes, most of which are for the better — thereby elevating this phase in a woman's life to be one of the epitomes of her existence.

The deeply satisfying phase enriches her

Motherhood is demanding, however, at the same time, it is deeply satisfying too and this contentment

enriches the mother to a large extent. Weight management and Ayurveda professional Dr. Amrapali Patil says, "A mother instinctively knows that she is a special creation because she alone has been given the power to bring forth another human life and this builds up her resilience, character, strength, happiness, confidence, faith, love — all these characteristics reflect externally, making the mother look more charming and charismatic."

Hormones play their magic and enhances her beauty

A new mom -to-be's body is flooded with pregnancy-related hormones,



say doctors. These tend to add a lovely glow to the skin, which make her appear radiant and fresh. The quality of her hair also improves, and hair fall reduces due to these hormones, say experts. The body develops soft curves and the breasts look fuller.

Cosmetologist Dr. Jaishree Manchanda says, "A woman's blood flow changes during pregnancy. This increased blood flow happens in order to help nourish the growing baby, but by a happy accident, it can make a woman look gorgeous and radiant too. So, once a woman is pregnant, her skin glows with an unmistakable radiance."

Motherhood becomes a source of strength

Being a mother requires strength and the

process of going into labour and delivering a baby requires a woman to have faith and vanquish fear. Patil says, "This enhances her confidence further (a concept referred to as the Aishwarya Bhava in Maharishi Patanjali and Ashthanga Yoga). This adds to her internal stamina to take on life and manifests externally as enhanced body confidence." And one of the best things that a woman can wear is her confidence.

The immense power of pure love becomes a reality

Becoming a mother increases a woman's ability to love by many folds. Patil adds, "Love is a very powerful emotion and tends to make the facial features become tender, soft and less fierce. Such a face is more joyful, appealing and attractive."

Tips a mother can follow to enhance her beauty

Though one day in the year is not enough to celebrate motherhood, at least on Mother's Day, many acknowledge the mother who is invariably taken for granted on all other days. Mothers need to take care of themselves — their hair, skin etc and Dr. Manchanda gives us tips...

Hair:

Have a healthy diet that is rich in antioxidants to strengthen the roots of your hair.

Acne:

The best natural ingredients to deal with this are aloe vera and eucalyptus.

Dark circles and puffy eyes:

Sleep for seven to eight hours, eat healthy and stay hydrated.

Skin:

Eat a lot of green leafy vegetables. Use cocoa butter, almond or olive oil on skin to avoid stretch marks.



spread to people around you. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious so try to wash your hands as much as possible.

2. Do simple eye exercises every morning. This is especially essential for those who spend hours in front of the computer screen everyday. Wash your eyes with a splash of cold water at least twice a day.
3. To relax, place cucumbers on your eyes. This will provide a lot of relief to tired eyes.
4. If you are prone to dust allergy, use an eye compress.
5. Eat a lot of green veggies and protein-rich foods — these are

10 Tips to rejuvenate your eyes this summer

You might have already started wearing your sunglasses and slathering on sunscreen thanks to the summer heat. In spite of taking all these precautions, there are still high chances that you may end up catching an eye allergy because of the rising temperature. Here are some simple yet effective tips that you can try to rejuvenate your eyes...

1. If you get conjunctivitis, ensure that you consult a doctor and use your eye drops regularly. Maintain hygiene so that it doesn't

excellent for eye health.

6. Don't expose your eyes directly to air conditioner. This may cause your eyes to get dry and sensitive.

7. Don't share your makeup products, especially the ones that are applied on your eyes. This may also result in spreading infection.

8. Give yourself an eye massage. Use your thumb and index finger to give your eyes a soothing massage. Much needed this summer!

9. If you are a swimmer, make sure to wear water goggles.

10. Sleep for at least six to eight hours a day. That in itself is a good way to rejuvenate your eyes. If you suffer from dry eyes, use soothing eye drops to get some relief. Don't forget to blink your eyes often.

