

Nationwide Outrage in Sikh Community Over Alleged Remarks by Namdhari Baba Dalip Singh Demand for Immediate Legal Action Intensifies; Calls for Arrest Over Alleged Disrespect to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

The Sikh Times Gurcharan Singh Babbar New Delhi, 31st March: A wave of anger and deep resentment has spread across the Sikh community in India and abroad following the circulation of a controversial video allegedly featuring Namdhari sect leader Dalip Singh. In the video, remarks attributed to him regarding Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji have triggered widespread condemnation, with Sikh organizations, religious leaders, and members of the community terming the statements as highly objectionable and hurtful to Sikh sentiments. The Sikh community regards Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the eternal Guru, the living spiritual authority and guiding light for all Sikhs. Any



statement perceived as undermining or disrespecting this belief has

historically been met with strong reactions, and the present controversy is no exception. Prominent Sikh leaders and various religious organizations have expressed grave concern over the alleged remarks. Several groups have termed the statements as a direct insult to the sanctity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and an attack on the core principles of Sikhism. Voices from different parts of the country have united in demanding strict action, stating that such statements cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Many have emphasized that the dignity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is supreme and non-negotiable. Multiple Sikh organizations and community representatives have called upon the Central Government and respective state authorities to take immediate and strict legal

action against Dalip Singh. They have demanded that an FIR be registered without delay under relevant sections of law dealing with hurting religious sentiments and disturbing communal harmony. There is a strong demand that Dalip Singh be arrested and prosecuted for what is being described as a serious offence against the Sikh faith. Community members have also urged law enforcement agencies to act swiftly to prevent escalation of tensions. Sources indicate that protests, demonstrations, and gatherings may be organized in several cities if immediate action is not taken. Sikh bodies have warned that failure to act decisively could lead to widespread unrest and deepening hurt within the community.

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US, Israel-Iran war: 8 Indians dead, 1 missing in Gulf and 55 lakh returns to India, says Govt

On the political front, New Delhi is pushing for "restraint and de-escalation." MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal emphasised that dialogue and diplomacy are the only exits from this labyrinth of violence.



New Delhi.(Agency)

As the horizon of the Middle East remains clouded by the smoke of escalating conflict between the US-Israel, and Iran, the human cost for the Indian diaspora has come into sharp, tragic focus. On Monday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) provided an update on the citizens caught in the crossfire of a region under siege. The toll of the ongoing warfare has now reached a grim milestone. According to the ministry, eight Indian nationals have been confirmed dead across various incidents in the Middle East. Among the most recent tragedies is a death in a Kuwait oil refinery. While the specific cause remains under investigation, Additional Secretary (Gulf) Asim R. Mahajan confirmed that the Indian Embassy is working around the clock with local authorities to repatriate the victim's mortal remains, offering deepest condolences to the grieving family. "Our Embassy in Kuwait is in touch with the family members of the deceased and is working with the local authorities to do everything possible to bring his mortal remains back to India at the earliest," he said. While eight are dead, one Indian civilian remains missing. The government has launched an intensive tracing operation, with officials vowing to leave no stone unturned until the missing citizen is located. Amid the instability in the Middle East, a massive movement of people is underway. The MEA revealed that nearly 5.5 million Indians have returned to India from the Middle East since February 28. This mass homecoming shows the anxiety felt by the millions of Indians living in the Gulf, as the threat of regional spillover grows.

On the political front, New Delhi is pushing for "restraint and de-escalation." MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal emphasised that dialogue and diplomacy are the only exits from this labyrinth of violence.

In a high-stakes move, Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged in direct talks with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman, on March 28. Their discussion centred on two critical pillars, ending the conflict through diplomatic channels, ensuring the safety of merchant vessels and maintaining the "freedom of navigation" in volatile waters.

With millions of Indians still residing across the Middle East, the MEA has shifted into a permanent "crisis mode." To keep a constant Vigil on the situation, Indian embassies are operating 24 hours a day.

The MEA has also launched a separate 24x7 emergency line for the families of the people stuck in the Middle East. Also, the government is issuing frequent safety updates to ensure the community is never left in the dark.

Jaishankar meets Russian minister, discusses West Asia war

The meeting comes at a time when Delhi is facing a shortage of energy supply in the wake of the US-Israel-Iran war, which has completed 30 days now.

New Delhi.(Agency) External Affairs minister S Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday met Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko and discussed ways to further expand their strategic partnership against the backdrop of the West Asia crisis. The meeting comes at a time when Delhi is facing a shortage of energy supply in the wake of the US-Israel-Iran war, which has completed 30 days now. After the meeting, Jaishankar posted on X, "Good to meet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko of Russia. Spoke about further advancement of our wide-ranging cooperation. As well as regional and global developments." While there was no reference to energy supplies in the



post, it is learnt that this topic was "part of the discussions". Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Russian

Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko, were held in New Delhi today (Monday). Both sides reviewed the full spectrum of Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership and shared perspectives on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest." According to Russian official news agency TASS, on March 27, Moscow and Delhi expressed readiness to an increase in liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies and an opportunity to deliver liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to India was also discussed. "Both sides expressed readiness to increase LNG supplies and also discussed deliveries of LPG that is widely used domestically in India," a source in the oil and gas industry told TASS. "Continuation of talks with involvement of the business is expected," the source said, as per TASS.

CM Bhagwant Singh Mann hands over 508 Emergency Response Vehicles to Punjab Police

The Sikh Times SANGRUR, 31 March: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Tuesday announced that Punjab will now deliver police assistance within just six minutes, on par with developed regions such as the US and Europe, as he flagged off 508 Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) in Sangrur to significantly strengthen on-ground policing across the state. The vehicles, equipped with advanced technology and deployed across all 28 police districts under Dial-112, are set to ensure immediate response to distress calls, marking a major leap in rapid, technology-driven law enforcement. Backed by ₹327.70 crore investment in police vehicles over four years, the Chief Minister highlighted that modernisation of the force has not only strengthened law and order but also tightened the grip on drug traffickers, while improved security continues to boost investor confidence, reflected in major investments like Tata Steel's second-largest plant in Punjab. Addressing a gathering in Sangrur, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann gave a strong call to the people, stating, "Social boycott of those

involved in the heinous crime of drug trade is necessary as a final blow to eradicate this menace completely from Punjab." He asserted



that those who have ruined generations deserve no leniency, adding, "Such elements must be taught a lesson, and social boycott will act as a catalyst in freeing Punjab from drugs." Highlighting the government's firm action, he said, "The Punjab Government has already tightened the noose against drug trade, and the conviction rate in such cases has reached 87%, which is far higher than any

other state." He added, "Yudh Nashean Virudh has been the biggest-ever crackdown on the drug network in Punjab, breaking the backbone of this illegal trade by snapping supply chains and putting big fish behind bars." Emphasising a mass-based approach, the Chief Minister stated, "A comprehensive and multi-pronged strategy has been formulated to transform this crusade into a people's movement with proactive public support." He noted that unlike previous governments, the present government has ensured strict action instead of allowing smugglers to flourish, adding, "Our fight is to protect Punjab's young generation, and it will continue relentlessly without pause." Calling the challenge 'drug terrorism', CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Punjab Police is actively combating cross-border drug smuggling and ensuring citizens' safety while strongly countering hostile forces." He further highlighted administrative reforms, stating, "For the first time, a bottom-up approach has been adopted, with vehicles now being provided to SHOs at the ground level instead

of only senior officers." Linking law and order to economic confidence, he said, "The best parameter to judge law and order is the investment coming into a state, and the fact that Tata Steel has established its second-largest plant in Punjab reflects this confidence." He added, "Punjab is one of the safest places, and the credit goes to Punjab Police, which has bridged the gap between the force and the people." Highlighting road safety reforms, the Chief Minister said, "Punjab Government has launched the country's first dedicated Sadak Surakhiya Force to ensure safety on highways and save precious lives." He added, "With 1,597 trained personnel and 144 modern vehicles, the force has reduced road accident fatalities by 48% since its launch." He further noted, "Deployed across 4,200 km of accident-prone highways, the force not only patrols but also acts as a deterrent against violations, a step even appreciated by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari." Detailing police modernisation, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Today, 508 new Bolero vehicles are being flagged off under the Emergency Response Vehicles initiative and dedicated to public service under Dial-112." Contd.....page-3

Census 2027 to start with self enumeration on April 1, data to be used only for aggregation



New Delhi.(Agency)

The first phase of Census 2027 involving self-enumeration and house listing exercise will be launched in select states on April 1, said Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (RG-CCI) Mirtunjay Kumar Narayan on Monday. Self-enumeration will be launched first in National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi-NDMC and cantonment areas—along with Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Karnataka, Sikkim, Odisha, Lakshadweep and Mizoram on April 1. After the enumeration is completed in 15 days, house to house visits will be conducted between April 16 and May 15.

In the rest of the country, the self-enumeration and house to house visits will be undertaken in a phased manner, with Manipur being the last state.

The enumeration process is expected to be completed on September 31. Addressing a press conference here Narayan further emphasised that the individual data collected for the Census 2027 will be kept confidential under Section 15 of the Census Act, 1948 and the same cannot be accessed under the Right to Information or for any of the court cases.

Narayan said, "Census is a vast task to carry on. Census will be carried out in two phases and this time the data will be collected digitally. The procedure of the Census is carried out under the provisions of the Census Act 1948 and the Census Rules 1990. Under Section 15 of the Census Act, the individual data is kept confidential. The data cannot be accessed under the RTI or presented as evidence in court. Only aggregate numbers are used for tabulation." "The Census 2027 is overall the 16th such exercise and the eighth after independence, he said, adding that the first phase of the Census will include questions related to the housing conditions, amenities available and assets possessed.

Priyanka hits back at govt, says 'don't play politics over war'

The government has said in brief but there should be a discussion so that "we can find solutions unitedly", Priyanka Gandhi said.

New Delhi.(Agency) Launching a counter attack against PM Narendra Modi's remarks on Congress, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday said it is not right to play politics over war. Her remarks came a day after Modi accused the Congress of making "dangerous" remarks that could put Indians living in the Gulf at risk to gain political advantage. The Congress leader also asked what plan the government has to bring Indians stranded in the Gulf out of harm's way. Asked about the PM's remarks, Priyanka Gandhi told reporters in the Parliament House complex, "Lives are in danger because bombs are raining from above. What is he doing about that? What is the plan for bringing people out of harm's way? It



is not right to do politics on these things, on war." "We are one on this and the whole country is united, but we want a solution to the problems that are arising out of the conflict. That is why we are asking for a discussion in Parliament so that a

debate takes place and we can also put forward our suggestions and a solution is found," the Congress general secretary said. "As this war is continuing, the crises are deepening. Today the gas cylinder has become so expensive that no one is able to buy it. What will happen in the future? There will be a shortage of petrol and diesel. So what is the government's plan to deal with that?" she asked. The government has said in brief but there should be a discussion so that "we can find solutions unitedly", Priyanka Gandhi said. Addressing a gathering in Kerala on Sunday, Modi had said, "At this time, everyone's attention is on the war going on in West Asia. Our government is continuously working to ensure that its impact on India is minimal." He had further highlighted the ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Front continued news

Nationwide Outrage in Sikh Community Over Alleged Remarks by Namdhari Baba Dalip Singh

Demand for Immediate Legal Action Intensifies; Calls for Arrest Over Alleged Disrespect to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Social media platforms are already witnessing an outpouring of anger, with hashtags demanding justice and respect for Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji trending among Sikh users globally. The issue is particularly sensitive given the central place of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in Sikhism. Since the declaration of Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the eternal Guru by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Sikhs worldwide have upheld its supreme authority with utmost devotion and reverence.

Any perceived deviation or challenge to this principle is considered a serious matter, often evoking strong emotional and religious responses.

While expressing anger, several senior Sikh voices have also appealed to the community to maintain peace and unity, urging that the matter be handled through lawful means. They have emphasized that justice must be pursued firmly but within the framework of the Constitution and rule of law.

The controversy surrounding the alleged remarks of Namdhari Baba Dalip Singh has once again highlighted the deep religious sensitivities associated with Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. As demands for strict legal action grow louder, all eyes are now on the authorities to respond promptly and appropriately to address the concerns of the Sikh community.

Group attacks Class 12 student with rods outside exam centre in Gurgaon

GURGAON.(Agency)

A Class XII student received multiple fractures and serious head injuries after he was allegedly attacked by a group of youths — with iron rods and sticks — outside an examination centre in Sector 14.

Two days after the incident, a case was registered at Sector 14 police station naming four people as accused, following a complaint lodged by Piyush Singh, who hails from UP's Jaunpur. "The assault is due to a previous enmity," a senior police officer said.

Piyush alleged that one of the attackers was carrying a gun and threatened to kill him. He sustained fractures in both legs and his right hand. One of the accused snatched his mobile phone when he tried to call for help, he said.

The officer said, "An altercation previously occurred between the victim and the group last month. We are trying to ascertain the reason behind the assault and their previous enmity. Meanwhile, a team is conducting raids to nab the accused involved in the incident."

Piyush — currently residing in Patel Nagar area of Sector 15 Part 2 — went to appear for his board examination at a school on March 28. Around 1.45pm, shortly after he exited the examination centre, three youths — identified as Sahil, Ricky and Raju — blocked his way and assaulted him. One of them struck him on the head with a brick and an iron rod, causing him to fall.

Soon after, around 10 to 12 more youths arrived in a Scorpio and another vehicle and joined in the assault. "I tried to take shelter in a nearby canteen, but a group of five to seven attackers followed me inside and continued beating me with rods and sticks," the complaint stated.

Police said the injured was initially admitted to a hospital in Sector 10, where doctors recorded 14 injuries and declared him unfit to give a statement on the day of the incident. The following day, doctors declared him fit, after which he gave a written complaint in the presence of his relatives.

Dwarka expressway toll hiked from April 1, cab commuters to get costlier

NOIDA.(Agency)

Commuting on Dwarka Expressway is set to become costlier from April 1 — more so, for those dependent on cabs — after National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) revised toll rates at the Bijwasan plaza.

"The increase of 2-5% has been made across vehicle categories," an NHAI official said, adding, the revision is part of the authority's annual toll rationalisation exercise carried out in accordance with changes in the central govt's wholesale price index (WPI), which typically results in incremental increases each year. The revision comes just months after toll collection began at the plaza in Nov last year and is expected to further push up travel costs for daily commuters. The impact will be felt more by cab users, as the single-journey crossing toll has now been increased from Rs 355 to Rs 365, while the return-journey fare has gone up from Rs 535 to Rs 550. The monthly pass for 50 trips has also been revised upwards from Rs 11,890 to Rs 12,195. For private car users, the single-trip toll has been raised from Rs 220 to Rs 225, a 2.3% increase, while the return fare has gone up from Rs 330 to Rs 340. The monthly pass for 50 trips has been revised from Rs 7,360 to Rs 7,550. Meanwhile, the concessional monthly pass for residents living within a 20-km radius has also been increased from Rs 340 to Rs 350. While private vehicle owners have the option of monthly or annual passes to reduce per-trip costs, cab users do not enjoy similar relief. Cab aggregators typically pass on toll charges directly to passengers, making every trip more expensive. Many residents said fares have already surged since toll collection began last year and will rise further after the latest revision.

Buses from Noida city centre will take you to airport every hour; services to run from NDLS, Kashmere Gate, Gurgaon & Doon too

NOIDA.(Agency)

As Noida International Airport prepares to open for commercial flights in May, the race now is to solve every passenger's first impression — the journey to and from the terminal. In a major push to plug that last-mile gap, UP Roadways has decided to run buses from Pari Chowk to the airport every 30 minutes, while services from Noida City Centre will operate every hour. "We are working to link the airport with Noida city centre, Delhi and other major NCR and north Indian cities through a mix of state-run buses, private shuttles, taxis and app-based mobility services," an official said. Shailendra Bhatia, nodal officer at Noida International Airport Ltd (NIAL), said the aim is to ensure passengers are not left struggling for transport once flights begin. "From the very first day, the airport will offer a wide range of mobility options, including intercity and long-haul buses, airport taxis, cab aggregators and parking facilities. We will ensure travel to

and from the airport is smooth," he added. Bhatia said NIAL has signed agreements with multiple road transport corporations to build direct bus links with key cities. Uttarakhand Transport Corporation will run services to Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh and Haldwani. Haryana Roadways will connect the airport with Chandigarh, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Palwal. Delhi Transport Corporation will operate buses from Kashmere Gate, Sarai Kale Khan, Anand Vihar and New Delhi railway stations. UP Roadways, which already runs nearly 300 CNG buses from depots in Noida and Greater Noida, will form the bulk of last-mile services. "Initially, roadways buses will run from 8am to 8pm. Buses from Pari Chowk to the airport will be available every 30 minutes, while services from City Centre via Pari Chowk will run every

hour," Bhatia said. Alongside state transport services, NIAL is also planning shuttle links from key NCR points,

as Uber, Ola, Rapido and travel agencies like MakeMyTrip will offer on-demand bookings. The deployment of cabs will be finalised closer to launch. For long-distance travellers, RedBus will provide luxury coach services to destinations such as Mathura, Agra, Lucknow, Dehradun, Chandigarh and Jaipur, covering individual passengers, groups, tourism packages and charter demand. Residents said they were relieved with the options to reach Jewar, which is 65km from central Noida. "The bus links will be a big relief because reaching the airport easily is just as important as catching the flight on time," said a resident from Greater



Noida. Officials said the airport's Aerodrome Security Programme certification from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security is expected within a week, clearing another key step before operations begin.

Noida's Karishma Chauhan secures 17th rank in UPPSC PCS 2024

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Noida resident Karishma Chauhan (28) has secured the 17th rank in the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) Combined State/Upper Subordinate Services (PCS) 2024 examination, placing her among the top 20 candidates in the state. A resident of a housing society in Sector 78, Chauhan cleared the prestigious exam in her second attempt. She now wishes to work on issues related to women's education, empowerment and healthcare in Uttar Pradesh.

UPPSC declared the final results of the PCS 2024 examination on Monday, with women candidates performing strongly. Out of 947 vacancies, 932 candidates have been declared successful, while 15 posts remained vacant due to the absence of suitable candidates. The selected candidates will be appointed to 24 key administrative positions, including subdivisional magistrate (SDM), deputy superintendent of police (DSP) and block development officer (BDO).

Women candidates accounted for a notable share of the selections this year. Of the 932 successful candidates, 319 are

women, making up 34% of the total. Women also secured a majority of SDM positions, winning 21 out of 37 posts. In the top 10, six candidates are women, and



the top two ranks were also secured by female candidates. Overall, 13 women featured in the top 20, indicating a steady rise in women's representation in the state's administrative services. Women's education, especially girls' enrolment,

needs to be increased in Uttar Pradesh. Wherever I am posted, I would like to focus on improving access to education for girls, strengthening primary healthcare and ensuring better awareness about women's welfare schemes," Chauhan told.

She said she narrowly missed clearing the examination in her first attempt after failing to qualify at the preliminary stage. Determined to improve, she adopted a disciplined routine and studied for long hours. "I used to study for 14-15 hours a day. Consistency and self-belief helped me improve. My aim now is to clear the UPSC, and I will prepare for it simultaneously along with my responsibilities," she added. She completed her schooling in Noida before pursuing a bachelor's degree in Zoology (Honours) from Delhi University. She later completed her postgraduate studies from IGNOU. Apart from academics, Chauhan enjoys playing badminton and cooking in her free time. Her father is a businessman, her mother is a homemaker, and she has a younger sister.

Jewar on a high after airport launch, but not everyone is celebrating

Noida.(Agency)

The mood in Jewar is celebratory with Noida International Airport formally inaugurated and poised to open. But many local youths who worked for contractors engaged with the airport project, fear the good days are coming to an end for them as work on the first phase of the airport begins to wrap up. What next? It's a question that has many of them worried as they look to align their own futures with that of the airport. The project, they are certain, will bring many job opportunities to Jewar, but how and when that will take shape is anyone's guess. Should they bide their time or move on? Roughly 1,000 workers employed across roles ranging from housekeeping and plumbing to welding and machine operation say no permanent positions have been offered,

no medical cover extended, and no clarity given on whether their contracts will survive the shift from construction site to operational airport. Mahendra Ambedkar, a BSc graduate with diplomas in computer science, IT, and civil engineering, once earned Rs 25,000 a month as a lab assistant at a Delhi hospital. Today, he earns Rs 14,000 a month as a contractual worker doing any odd jobs assigned at the airport site, a role he has held for the past 10 months, since losing his hospital job during the Covid-19 pandemic. His family gave up 10 bigha of land for the airport project and received Rs 46 lakh in compensation. "After I lost my job, I started working here because it is near my home in Jewar Banger. The income is lower than before, but at least there was employment in the area," he

said. For many, like Ambedkar, the gap between what was promised and what was delivered is measured not just in pay slips but also in the lack of job security. Yash Kumar (20), from Taharpur village, earns around Rs 14,000 a month working eight to nine hours a day. His family, he said, were farmers for generations. "There is little land now, so we have to work. At the airport, there are many types of jobs, and I never refuse any work." But after petrol, food, electricity, and contributions to his siblings' education, little remains. "And now even that income is uncertain. Since the last few weeks, the new contractor has not given me any job," he said. Abhishek Kumar (21), also from Taharpur, has used the site to build skills he initially lacked — installing window panes, assisting with electrical work, painting.

Thar & Fortuner in lead, Noida airport payout brings a car showroom boom to Jewar

NOIDA.(Agency)

Newly wealthy Jewar, whose rural economy has benefited from commercial activity centred around the airport and compensation landlosers received, is already showing the Delhi-NCR DNA in its love for cars. In the last 2-3 years, most major carmakers have opened booking offices there. Dealers aren't just happy about the sales, they like the fact that many of their customers don't insist on EMIs. They just want to make the full payment and drive off with the car. Mahindra opened the first car showroom in Jewar in 2013. The others followed the money. Hyundai, Tata Motors, and Maruti Nexa have all established outlets since 2021-22, as compensation cheques began reaching farmers whose land was acquired for the airport project. Buyers who previously travelled to Noida or Aligarh to purchase vehicles are now finding multiple options near home. Ram Yadav, a store manager at the Mahindra showroom in Jewar, said monthly deliveries have more than tripled since 2021-22. "Earlier, we sold around 15-20 cars a month. Since 2022-23, at least 50-60 cars are delivered every month," he said, adding that SUVs, particularly the Thar and Scorpio-N, dominate demand. "Many customers also ask for VIP registration numbers. Earlier, buyers hesitated even about the down payment. Now a large number are purchasing vehicles outright."

At the Tata Motors outlet, the shift has been even more dramatic. Sales manager Deepak Singh said monthly figures have risen nearly fivefold — from five or six units to 25-30. "Most customers are purchasing in cash, and many of them are above 50 years of age," he said.

Hyundai's outlet, which initially relied on village-level stalls before opening a full showroom in 2022, now moves 15-20 cars a month, up from eight to 10 previously, manager Amit Chauhan said. The most significant change, dealers said, is in how people pay. Where almost every buyer once depended on loans and EMIs, a growing share now arrive prepared to close the deal immediately, in full. "They come prepared and close the deal quickly."

Revenue up 3x in a year as Gurgaon civic body snaps 100 illegal water & sewer lines, sends 5k notices

NOIDA.(Agency)

In an attempt to plug years of revenue leakage, MCG has disconnected over 100 unauthorised water and sewerage connections across the city in Feb and March. In the last one year, MCG issued over 5,000 notices to residents, asking them to regularise illegal connections and clear pending water and sewerage dues. The drive comes amid mounting pressure on the civic body to improve its dismal recovery from water and sewerage services, a problem that has long plagued the city's finances.

"Illegal connections strain the system and create inequity in distribution," an MCG official told TOI. According to officials, the civic body earned Rs 56 crore from water and sewerage charges in FY 2025-26, compared with Rs 16 crore in FY 2024-25, which is an over threefold increase. The sharp jump has been attributed largely to enforcement measures, including mass notices and disconnections, rather than structural reforms in the billing



system. Despite the improvement, officials admit the civic body is still far from realising the true revenue potential of a city with lakhs of households and thousands of commercial establishments. The corporation has now set a target of Rs 80 crore for FY 2026-27, signalling further tightening of enforcement. "There are plans to

integrate water and sewerage connections with the no-dues certificate (NDC) portal. The system would mirror the property tax model, where sellers must obtain clearance of dues before completing property transactions," said a senior MCG official privy to the matter. If implemented, this could make it difficult for

property owners to sell or transfer real estate without first clearing water and sewerage liabilities, a step officials believe could significantly boost recovery. MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said the corporation is also exploring systemic improvements rather than relying solely on enforcement. Dahiya told TOI that the civic body is working on a pilot project for 24x7 water supply, drawing lessons from water management models observed during his visit to Israel and the state of Odisha.

"Additional commissioner Yash Jaluka and executive engineer Pradeep Kumar have conducted surveys and introduced technology-based interventions to streamline water connections across the city. Our team is working to enhance revenue as well since our expenditure to purchase bulk water supply from GMDA is over Rs 140 crore," he said.

It was in Feb that the MCG launched a fully online system for applying for drinking water

and sewerage connections, becoming the first civic body in Haryana to digitise the process end to end.

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CM Bhagwant Singh Mann hands over 508 Emergency Response Vehicles to Punjab Police

Contd.....Front page He added, "These vehicles will be deployed across all 28 police districts, ensuring prompt assistance to citizens." He further stated, "With these additions, the Dial-112 fleet has increased to 764 vehicles, all equipped with advanced technologies including GPS trackers, dash cameras, and mobile data systems."

Comparing governance priorities, he said, "While previous governments allocated minimal funds for police welfare, the current government has invested ₹327.69 crore in just four years, purchasing 2,904 vehicles since 2022." He added, "Today, every police station in Punjab has at least one new vehicle."

additional vehicle procurement in 2026-27." Reflecting on Punjab's security history, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "Punjab has witnessed difficult phases of terrorism, but due to the sacrifices of police personnel, peace was restored, and today the state is known for peace."

Police, making it a front-ranking force in the country and strengthening law and order through scientific methods." The Chief Minister also spoke about farmer welfare, stating, "The government is exploring the feasibility of putting high-tension wires passing through agricultural land underground, which will provide relief and reduce risks to farmers and their crops."

advertised in March 2026." Reiterating commitment to transparent governance, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "People's tax money is being spent judiciously on development, ensuring benefits in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and welfare schemes."

governance." Contrasting political approaches, he said, "While this government talks about education, health, power, and agriculture, other parties focus only on grabbing power." He added, "People have rejected opportunistic politics and chosen a government that works for them."

Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "Some leaders are daydreaming of returning to power with unrealistic promises, but people are fully aware of their track record." He further remarked, "Even late Parkash Singh Badal had never entrusted full leadership responsibilities to Sukhbir Singh Badal, understanding the consequences."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is hereby given to the general public that our client Mrs. Poonam Devi W/o Mr. Sube Singh is the owner and in possession of a Freehold Residential Plot area measuring 0 Kanal 4 Marla i.e., 120 sq. yard, out of Khewat/Khata No. 134/158, Mu No. 25, Killa No. 13 (8-0), area 8 Kanal 0 Marla share of 1/40, Situated at Wala Siwana Naharpur Kasan, Tehsil Manesar District Gurgaon Haryana. Our client acquired the said property by virtue of a Sale Deed dated 24.02.2016, as Doc No. 2809, Book No. 1, Dated 24.02.2016, SR-Manesar. In the chain of documents, the Original Sale Deed dated 05.11.2014 executed by Mr. Jagdish Chand S/o Mr. Hira Lal in favour of Mrs. Seema W/o Mr. Chetram in respect of 0 Kanal 4 Marla Vide Doc. No. 1872 SR-Manesar is not available. Therefore, our client hereby declares that except him, no other person has any right, title, interest, claim or objection in respect of the above-mentioned property. The said property is presently financed / mortgaged with Pritam Finance Ltd., Branch: Chhatrapur New Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and/or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Ranvir Singh S/o Mr. Umraw Singh is the owner of Freehold Residential Built-up Property of Land area measuring 165 Sq Yds. out of Khata No. 7/15 Bearing Property No. D-60, Situated at Village Karawal Nagar in the Abadi of Gali No.4, Ankur Enclave, Karawal Nagar, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110094, by virtue of Regd. Family GPA and Notarized Gift Agreement & WILL dated 06.01.2026, in the chain documents below mentioned documents not available i.e. SMC of Late Mr. Shobhit Tiwari S/o Mr. Uttam Tiwari had expired on 16.06.2021 in now our client is declaring that that any other person does not have any right over the said property, and same property sold too Mr. Nitish Kumar and same has been financed by SMFG India Home Finance Company Limited Branch: Noida Uttar Pradesh. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and/or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

NAME CHANGE

I, No. GS-185230X Rank SENIOR SUPERVISOR STORES Name U SUDHAKAR S/O U SUBBARAYUDU presently residing at H-NO-7-63, VILL. AKKIVARIPALLE, PO. KALAS-APADU, DIST CUDDAPAH, ANDHRA PRADESH-516217 have changed my name from U. JYOTHI to UMMADISETTY JYOTHI for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 27.03.2026 before Sub Divisional Magistrate Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, RUP KUMAR is a legally wedded spouse of No. 1483875H Rank HAV Name AMAR SINGH YADAV presently residing at VILL- BHADRESAR POST-DONI TEH-NOWGONG DIST- CHHATARPUR, PIN-471201 have changed my name from RUP KUMAR to RUP KUMAR YADAV for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 31.03.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as MANI RAM, S/O ALGU RAM R/O VZ-15, GALI NO-4, VASHIST PARK, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110046 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MUNI RAM.

Chandrawal WTP to gradually restore full supply: Jal Board

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Friday said water supply in parts of the city is expected to resume gradually as repair and restoration work continues at the Chandrawal Water Treatment Plant (WTP). In a statement, DJB said teams are working "continuously at a war footing" to restore operations. Out of the plant's total pumping capacity of 58 million gallons per day (MGD), 47 MGD has already been restored. The remaining 11 MGD is expected to be operational by Saturday. The WTP, which supplies potable water to key areas of Central Delhi, was affected on 22 March after a 600 mm diameter backwash pipeline burst near the facility. Located in a low-lying area, the site was submerged, forcing a complete shutdown. The pipeline has now been repaired, and teams are working round-the-clock to restore normal operations. Repair work began immediately after the incident, and the plant was partially operational in a phased manner from 25 March. However, residual moisture has caused repeated faults in the repaired motors, affecting consistent water supply. To provide interim relief, DJB has deployed around 100 additional water tankers in affected areas. Existing tankers have been supplemented in neighbourhoods including New Rajender Nagar, Old Rajender Nagar, WEA Karol Bagh, Sant Nagar, Patel Nagar, West and East Patel Nagar, Prashad Nagar, Than Singh Nagar, Prem Nagar, Nehru Nagar, Ballimaran, Nabi Karim, Sadar Thana Road, Neem Wala Chowk, Ram Nagar, and Laxmi Narayan Mandir. Officials noted that the motors installed at Chandrawal Phase-II WTP are customised older units with a 6.6 KV rating, and spare parts are not readily available. "These heavy-duty motors require considerable time for repair and restoration. To safeguard the repaired motors and prevent short-circuiting, extra precautions are being taken, and the motors are being operated intermittently," DJB said.

NAME CHANGE

I, Kum Rinku Kumari W/O Krishan Kumar Puna, H.No-66B, DDA Janta Flats, Ram Pura, Tri Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110035 have changed my name to Rinku for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, PRIYANKA W/O PANKAJ KUMAR, R/O 10A PRASHANT ENCLAVE, BAPROLA, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110077, have changed the name of my minor daughter POORVI MEHTA aged 07 years and she shall hereafter be known as POORVI.

NAME CHANGE

I, Md Sahil, s/o Mohammad Samim, r/o E57/B441, Bhuggi, Sunder Nagar, Delhi 83, declares that in my school records, the names of my parents have been wrongly recorded as Shabana Begam and Md Shamim respectively, whereas the correct names are Shabana & Mohammad Samim respectively. In future, my parents should be known as Shabana & Mohammad Samim only. Sd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you that Mrs. Kavita Devi, W/o Mr. Raghunandan, is intending to purchase a residential building bearing Old No. 247, presently Municipal Corporation No. 261-1/2A, measuring 50 sq. yards, situated towards the north of Kharsa No. 58/81, in the area of Village Kaila in the colony known as Sundaripur, Tehsil and District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, through Kumar Priya. The original owner of the entire property was Mr. Dal Chand, who sold the property to Mr. Gajendra Singh through a Sale Deed dated 08.03.1972. Unfortunately, Mr. Gajendra Singh passed away on 22.10.1990, and his wife, Mrs. Angoori Devi, also passed away on 12.08.1993. They were survived by their legal heirs, namely Mr. Kushpal Singh (son) and Mr. Yashpal Singh (son). Mr. Kushpal Singh has issued a No Objection Certificate (NOC), confirming that he has no objection to the sale/gift of the share of Mr. Yashpal Singh. Thereafter, Mr. Yashpal Singh gifted the said property to his daughter, Kumar Priya, through a Gift Deed dated 10.12.2025. However, Kumar Priya has informed us that one of the original documents, namely the Sale Deed Dated 08.03.1972 (Registered as No. 1714), relating to the said property, has been lost/misplaced. The said document is not traceable and could not be found. An online FIR (LAR No. 197/12/2026) dated 29.03.2026 has been registered regarding the loss of the aforesaid document. Consequently, Kumar Priya has become the absolute owner of the aforementioned property. The property is confirmed to be free from all kinds of litigation, encumbrances, liens, charges, or claims. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd., Noida Branch, Uttar Pradesh. If any person(s) object(s) regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days from the date of the Notice in writing. The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

CARRYING OUT ULTRASONIC TESTING OF FB WELDED JOINTS

Tender Notice No. CON/J-I/IMPHAL/2025-26/03; Dated: 26-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: DYCE-C/IMP-USFD-25-26-03; Name of work: Carrying out ultrasonic testing of FB welded joints executed by mobile FB plants at site by using Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing (PAUT) on all types of rails as per testing procedure circulated vide RDSO letter No. CT/USFD/Phased Array weld tester dated 27.06.2023 and as per latest instruction as specified and directed. The rates are inclusive of rail surfaces preparation for PAUT testing, contractor's men, materials & machines completed unless otherwise specified and directed in between Khongsang-Imphal section in connection with construction of BG line from Jiribam to Imphal. Tender value: ₹1,31,72,656.00/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,15,900/-; Date & time of submission of tender from 06-04-2026 to up to 15:00 hrs. on 20-04-2026 and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 20-04-2026. For details including corrigendum please visit website www.ireps.gov.in

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD AKRAM S/O MOHD ISRAEL R/O 6831-32 BLDG NO.8 4TH FLOOR CHAMELIAN ROAD BARA HINDU RAO DELHI 110006 Changed my name to MOHD AKRAM

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Shahjan W/O Moreen, P/O house no. 56, modinagar road kharkhanda, Touri 13 Biswa, VTC, Touri 13 Biswa, POC, Touri, SDC District Modinagar, District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, 245304, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NANIHI.

NAME CHANGE

I, RUBI BEGUM/RUBHY SHEKH W/O. MOHAMMAD JAVED R/O S-221/168, STREET NO-4, VISHNU GARDEN, TILAK NAGAR, DELHI-110018 have changed my name to RUBBY for all future purposes.

DATE OF BIRTH CHANGE

I, SUSHILA DEVI Wife of No-3205185H Rank-HAV Name-JITENDRA KUMAR BIJARNIA Presently residing at WARD NO-11, BHARNI, SRIMADHOPUR, DIST-SIKAR, RAJASTHAN-332715, in my husband's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 05/07/1991 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1988 vide Affidavit dated 31/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

(BEDAKHAL)

I, SURBHI GOYAL Wife of shri NARESH GOYAL declare as under that I disowned my son's PIYUSH GOYAL from my all movable/immovable/Particular properties/assets for his wrong behaviour. I shall not be held responsible for any kind of acts done by him in money or transactions and police cases and criminal activity illegal/legitimate and property purposes in the future. That he debarred from entering my premises situated at H-NO-C-14, GALI NO-5, NEW KRISHNA NAGAR, NEAR LAL MANDIR, DELHI-110051. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

NAME CHANGE

I, No. 21013366F Rank- GNR (DMT) Name-HAVA SINGH CHANEJA S/O SUGAN CHAND CHANEJA R/O VILL- JAGOO KA BASS, JAGOOVASS, ALWAR, HARSORA, RAJASTHAN-301421 have changed my minor daughter name from SANVEE to SANVI CHANEJA for all future purposes. Vide Affidavit dated 31/03/2026 Before Notary Public New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I Sushma Bhardwaj, D/O Rameshwar Dayal Sharma W/O: Rajesh Bhardwaj, R/O 672, chirag delhi, Malviya Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi- 110017, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Tej Bhan Sharma in my 10th Class educational documents. The actual name of my father is Rameshwar Dayal Sharma, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Mr. Sandeep Sharma S/o Mr. Satish Sharma is the Owner in respect of Residential Flat bearing Private Flat No. 03 & Flat No. 02, on Ground Floor (Back Side), extent with the ceiling level (i.e. only Ground Floor Portion) without roof rights, Built on Property No. B-218/A, Both Flat area measuring 60 Sq. yds., out of Kharsa No. 393264/2, situated in the area of Village Chilla Saronda Block-B, New Ashok Nagar, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110096, by virtue of Notarized GPA dated 03.04.2023, ATS & Will, executed by (Mrs. Anamika Tiwari W/o Mr. Rajesh Tiwari was the Owner of Flat No. 03, area 30 Sq. Yds.) and (Mr. Rajesh Kumar Tewari son of Mr. S.P. Tewari was the Owner of Flat No. 03, area 30 Sq. Yds...) and said property to be sold to Mrs. Sunita and same to be financed by SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd., General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as NEHA AGARWAL alias NEHA BANSAL W/O TARUN BANSAL D/o HARISH KUMAR AGGARWAL, R/O, C-9B, STREET NO.1, KANTI NAGAR EXTN., KRISHNA NAGAR, EAST DELHI - 110051 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NEHA BANSAL. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection. NEHA AGARWAL alias NEHA BANSAL

NAME CHANGE

I, NITIN SUSHEEL KUMAR S/O SUSHEEL KUMAR ANANDHAKUMAR R/O 03 ROHINI APARTMENT, 3TH CROSS NEXT TO TEMPLE TREE HOTEL, WILSON GARDEN, BANGALURU, KARNATAKA-560027, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NITIN S FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE

I AMREEN W/O ZULFIQAR AHMED R/O 2761 MOHALLA NIHARIYAN AJMERI GATE DELHI 110006 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO AMBREEN

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Kashifa Junaid Suriya D/O Junaid Ashraf Suriya, R/O B-152, SAROJ APARTMENT, S-1, SHALIMAR GARDEN MAIN, NEAR SWATI CABLE, SAHIBABAD, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Suriya Kashifa Junaid.

ELECTRICAL WORKS UNDER TINSUKIA DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. TSK/Elect/232; dated: 27-03-2026. Works tender through E-Tendering System are invited by the undersigned for the following works: SN-1. Brief Description of Item: Provision and augmentation of 750 Volt Supply arrangement for maintenance of HOG coaches in washing/sick lines at Dibrugarh Coaching depot. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-921-R-1). Tender Value: ₹2,47,546.92; Earnest Money: ₹1,65,000.00; SN-2. Brief Description of Item: Provision of Earthing and RCCB in Electrical Installation & APFC Panels in Identified Load Centres. (Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-924-R). Tender Value: ₹1,40,68,185.00; Earnest Money: ₹2,20,400.00. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 20-04-2026 and opened at 15:00 hrs. on 20-04-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 13:00 hrs on 20-04-2026 in website http://www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (Elect.)/Tinsukia

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Serving Customers With A Smile

CARRYING OUT ULTRASONIC TESTING OF FB WELDED JOINTS

Tender Notice No. CON/J-I/IMPHAL/2025-26/03; Dated: 26-03-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: DYCE-C/IMP-USFD-25-26-03; Name of work: Carrying out ultrasonic testing of FB welded joints executed by mobile FB plants at site by using Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing (PAUT) on all types of rails as per testing procedure circulated vide RDSO letter No. CT/USFD/Phased Array weld tester dated 27.06.2023 and as per latest instruction as specified and directed. The rates are inclusive of rail surfaces preparation for PAUT testing, contractor's men, materials & machines completed unless otherwise specified and directed in between Khongsang-Imphal section in connection with construction of BG line from Jiribam to Imphal. Tender value: ₹1,31,72,656.00/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,15,900/-; Date & time of submission of tender from 06-04-2026 to up to 15:00 hrs. on 20-04-2026 and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 20-04-2026. For details including corrigendum please visit website www.ireps.gov.in

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD AKRAM S/O MOHD ISRAEL R/O 6831-32 BLDG NO.8 4TH FLOOR CHAMELIAN ROAD BARA HINDU RAO DELHI 110006 Changed my name to MOHD AKRAM

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Shahjan W/O Moreen, P/O house no. 56, modinagar road kharkhanda, Touri 13 Biswa, VTC, Touri 13 Biswa, POC, Touri, SDC District Modinagar, District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, 245304, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NANIHI.

NAME CHANGE

I, RUBI BEGUM/RUBHY SHEKH W/O. MOHAMMAD JAVED R/O S-221/168, STREET NO-4, VISHNU GARDEN, TILAK NAGAR, DELHI-110018 have changed my name to RUBBY for all future purposes.

DATE OF BIRTH CHANGE

I, SUSHILA DEVI Wife of No-3205185H Rank-HAV Name-JITENDRA KUMAR BIJARNIA Presently residing at WARD NO-11, BHARNI, SRIMADHOPUR, DIST-SIKAR, RAJASTHAN-332715, in my husband's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 05/07/1991 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1988 vide Affidavit dated 31/03/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

(BEDAKHAL)

I, SURBHI GOYAL Wife of shri NARESH GOYAL declare as under that I disowned my son's PIYUSH GOYAL from my all movable/immovable/Particular properties/assets for his wrong behaviour. I shall not be held responsible for any kind of acts done by him in money or transactions and police cases and criminal activity illegal/legitimate and property purposes in the future. That he debarred from entering my premises situated at H-NO-C-14, GALI NO-5, NEW KRISHNA NAGAR, NEAR LAL MANDIR, DELHI-110051. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS - 2026

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during the upcoming Summer season, Railways have decided to run the following Summer Special Trains as per details given below:-

Table for 04209/04210 Varanasi - Delhi Jn. - Varanasi Reserved Special Express Train (Tri-Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

Table for 04209 Ex. Varanasi on every Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 15.04.2026 to 20.05.2026 and 04210 Ex. Delhi Jn. on every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from 16.04.2026 to 21.05.2026.

Table for 04203/04204 Lucknow - New Delhi - Lucknow Reserved Special Express Train (Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

Table for 04203 Ex. Lucknow and 04204 Ex. New Delhi on every Monday from 20.04.2026 to 13.07.2026.

Table for 04213/04214 Ayodhya Cantt - Anand Vihar (T) - Ayodhya Cantt Reserved Special Express Train (Bi-Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

Table for 04213 Ex. Ayodhya Cantt on every Sunday & Thursday from 16.04.2026 to 17.05.2026 & 28.05.2026 to 17.07.2026.

Table for 04010/04009 Delhi Jn. - Sitamarhi - Delhi Jn. Reserved Special Express Train (Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

Table for 04010 Ex. Delhi Jn. on every Thursday from 16.04.2026 to 09.07.2026 and 04009 Ex. Sitamarhi on every Friday from 17.04.2026 to 10.07.2026.

Table for 04052/04051 New Delhi - Howrah Jn. - New Delhi Reserved Special Express Train (Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

Table for 04052 Ex. New Delhi on every Friday from 17.04.2026 to 15.05.2026 & 29.05.2026 to 10.07.2026 and 04051 Ex. Howrah Jn. on every Sunday from 19.04.2026 to 17.05.2026 & 31.05.2026 to 12.07.2026.

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

Table for 04062/04061 Delhi Jn. - Bhagalpur - Delhi Jn. Reserved Special Express Train (Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

DAYS OF RUN: 04062 Ex. Delhi Jn. on every Tuesday from 21.04.2026 to 14.07.2026 and 04061 Ex. Bhagalpur on every Wednesday from 22.04.2026 to 15.07.2026.

Table for 02275/02276 Subedarganj - Shakurbasti - Subedarganj Special Express Train (Bi-Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

DAYS OF RUN: 02275 Ex. Subedarganj on every Sunday & Tuesday from 05.04.2026 to 28.04.2026 and 02276 Ex. Shakurbasti on every Monday & Wednesday from 06.04.2026 to 29.04.2026.

Table for 08743/08744 Durg - Haridwar Jn. - Durg Special Express Train (Weekly) with arrival and departure times.

DAYS OF RUN: 08743 Ex. Durg on every Sunday from 19.04.2026 to 28.06.2026 and 08744 Ex. Haridwar Jn. on every Monday from 20.04.2026 to 29.06.2026.

Table for Extension of Periodicity of Train No. 04652/04651 Amritsar - Jaynagar - Amritsar Humsafar Special Express with proposed extension dates.

Table for Extension of Periodicity of Train No. 05736/05735 Kathiar - Amritsar - Kathiar Summer Special with proposed extension dates.

Table for Revised Timings of Train No. 05736/05735 Kathiar - Amritsar - Kathiar Special at following stations with arrival and departure times.

Table for Note: Rest all information will hold good.

NORTHERN RAILWAY logo and text: Your Convenience - Our Concern. Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

NEWS BOX

Trump is willing to end war without reopening Strait of Hormuz: report

World (Agency)

Donald Trump has indicated he is prepared to wind down military operations against Iran even if the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal citing the president's aides. As per the WSJ, Trump and his senior aides recently concluded that efforts to forcibly reopen the crucial maritime chokepoint could significantly extend the conflict beyond the administration's preferred four-to-six-week timeline. Instead, the current focus is on weakening Iran's naval capabilities and missile stockpiles before scaling back hostilities. The report added that Washington aims to shift toward diplomatic pressure on Tehran to restore the free flow of global trade through the strait. Should those efforts fall short, the US may encourage its European and Gulf allies to take a leading role in reopening the passage.

At a White House briefing, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reiterated that the military operation had always been expected to last between four and six weeks, noting that it has now reached day 30.

Trump "has always stated four to six weeks, estimated timeline," Leavitt told reporters. "We're on day 30 today. So again, you do the math." "He wants to see a deal over the next 10 days," she said. The White House press secretary also stated that Trump would be interested in calling on Arab states to pay for the cost of the Iran war. "I think it's something the president would be quite interested in calling them to do. It's an idea that I know he has and something that I think you'll hear more from him on," Leavitt said.

NASA begins the countdown for humanity's first launch to the moon in 53 years

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (Agency)

NASA began the countdown Monday for humanity's first launch to the moon in 53 years. The 32-story Space Launch System rocket is poised to blast off Wednesday evening with four astronauts. After a day in orbit around Earth, their Orion capsule will propel them to the moon and back. There are no stops — just a quick U-turn around the moon. The nearly 10-day flight will end with a splashdown in the Pacific. "Our team has worked extremely hard to get us to this moment," said launch director Charlie Blackwell-Thompson. "Certainly all indications are right now we are in excellent, excellent shape."

Managers said the rocket is doing well following the latest round of repairs. Forecasters said the weather should cooperate. NASA's Artemis II mission should have soared in February, but was grounded by hydrogen fuel leaks. The leaks were fixed, but then a helium pressurization line became clogged, forcing a return to the hangar late last month. The rocket returned to the pad 1 1/2 weeks ago, and its U.S.-Canadian crew arrived at the launch site on Friday.

Unlike Apollo, which sent only men to the moon from 1968 through 1972, Artemis' debut crew includes a woman, person of color and a non-U.S. citizen.

Artemis II's pilot Victor Glover said over the weekend that he wants young people to see them and think, "Girl power and that's awesome, and that young brown boys and girls can look at me and go 'Hey, he looks like me and he's doing what?'" At the same time, Glover, who is Black, looks forward to when "one day we don't have to talk about these firsts" and exploring the cosmos becomes an all-encompassing "human history." NASA has the first six days of April to launch Artemis II before standing down until the end of the month.

Iran's Hormuz Grip Is Tighter Than Ever After A Month Of War

World (Agency)

Israel and US strikes have wiped out senior Iranian leaders and hit key targets across the country. But after a month of fighting, it is arguably Iran that has secured the most significant strategic victory — a tightening grip over traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. So far in March, the first full month of war, barely six vessels per day on average have traversed the narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the world, in either direction. That compares with about 135 a day in normal times, according to ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg.

Over that time, 80% of the small number of oil tankers exiting the strait have been Iranian — or belong to countries with which it is on cordial terms, the figures show. Electronic interference in the Hormuz area disrupts vessel-tracking systems and some ships disable their transponders, impacting the timeliness and precision of tracking data. Even so, there is every sign that Tehran's ability to control the strait is increasing. Virtually all vessels that make the crossing now are doing so along Iran-approved routes — sailing close to its shores, and not to the Omani side of the strait — and often after talks to seek safe passage. Over the past few days, Malaysia and Thailand have reported bilateral deals to free tankers trapped in the gulf. Hormuz remains a closed gate for oil tankers," said Anoop Singh, global head of shipping research at Oil Brokerage Ltd, adding the problem was not likely to see a quick fix without a ceasefire. "Even if there is one, it will not mean a rapid return of flows and shipping through Hormuz. Oil traders, refiners and supply-chain players are being forced to adapt."

Iran has now passed a law introducing a toll and banning US and Israeli vessels from transiting the strait. The bill formalizes a system which multiple shipowners have already been reporting, as tankers are asked — through intermediaries — for detailed cargo and crew lists, and, in some cases, for payment. Perhaps as part of this move to normalize control, some interference with signals has begun to ease, a change that would help navigation in the area.

Trump again threatens widespread destruction in Iran if a deal is not reached 'shortly'

DUBAI. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump on Monday threatened widespread destruction of Iran's energy resources and other vital infrastructure, potentially including desalination plants that supply drinking water, if a deal to end the war is not reached "shortly." Iran, meanwhile, struck a key water and electrical plant in Kuwait, and an oil refinery in Israel came under attack. A drone hit a Kuwaiti oil tanker in Dubai waters, causing a fire that authorities were working to control early Tuesday, the Dubai Media Office said. Israel and the US launched a new wave of strikes on Iran as the war raged with no end in sight. Trump's new threat came in a social media post. Earlier comments to the Financial Times suggested American troops could seize Iran's Kharg Island oil export hub. Trump has repeatedly claimed to be making diplomatic progress — though Tehran denies negotiating directly — while ramping up his threats and sending thousands more US troops to the Middle East. Trump told the New York Post that the US is negotiating with Iran's parliament

speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf. The former Revolutionary Guard commander, who has taunted the US on social media, dismissed the talks facilitated by Pakistan as a cover for the latest American troop deployments. Trump says diplomacy is going well but threatens major escalation.

In a social media post, Trump said "great progress is being made" in talks with Iran to end military operations. But he said if a deal is not reached "shortly," and if the Strait of Hormuz is not immediately reopened, the US would broaden its offensive by "completely obliterating" power plants, oil wells, Kharg Island and possibly even desalination plants.

The strait is a crucial waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped in peacetime. The laws of armed conflict allow attacks on civilian infrastructure such as energy plants only if the military advantage outweighs the civilian harm, legal scholars say. It's considered a high bar to clear, and causing excessive suffering to civilians can constitute a war crime.

A 22-year-old resident of Karaj, near Tehran, said his area lost power for several hours



overnight following nearby strikes.

"I was really scared. I thought that they'd hit the power plants and that we are not going to have power anymore," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity out of security fears. Iran says US demands are 'excessive, unrealistic and irrational'.

The US already has targeted military positions on Kharg. Iran has threatened to launch its own ground invasion of Gulf Arab countries and to mine the Persian Gulf if US troops set foot on its territory.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Tehran had received a 15-

point proposal from the Trump administration containing "excessive, unrealistic and irrational" demands, while denying there had been any direct talks.

Qalibaf, the parliament speaker Trump says he is negotiating with, said Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever,"

according to state media. Twice during Trump's second term, the US has attacked Iran during high-level diplomatic talks, including with the Feb. 28 strikes that started the current war.

Iran attacks Israel and Gulf infrastructure Sirens sounded at dawn near Israel's main nuclear research center, a part of the country that has been targeted repeatedly in recent days. Israel's military also said it had taken out two drones launched from Yemen, where the Iran-backed Houthi rebels entered the war on Saturday with their first missile attack.

'War crime': Iran says US strike hit India-bound humanitarian aircraft at Mashhad Airport

World (Agency)

An aircraft operated by Iran's Mahan Air was reportedly struck during a United States airstrike at Mashhad International Airport, according to Iranian sources cited by ANI.

The aircraft, which had been scheduled to fly to New Delhi as part of a humanitarian mission, was stationed at the airport when the strike occurred. The planned flight was intended to support ongoing coordination between India and Iran by transporting medicines and medical supplies.

There has been no immediate confirmation or response from US authorities regarding the reported strike. Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation strongly condemned the incident, calling it a "war crime" and a violation of international law. In a statement shared by Iran's mission in India on social media platform X, the organisation said the aircraft was

carrying medical equipment and medicines sourced from multiple countries as part of a humanitarian effort. The statement further asserted that targeting a civilian aircraft engaged in humanitarian work



contravenes established international aviation and humanitarian norms. It referenced key legal frameworks, including the Chicago Convention (1944), the Montreal Convention (1971), and Article 52 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit attacks on civilian

aircraft and classify such actions as war crimes. The Civil Aviation Organisation urged international bodies to launch an independent investigation into the incident, hold those responsible accountable, and strengthen safeguards to protect civil aviation from similar threats.

The aircraft was expected to arrive in New Delhi on April 1 to collect essential medical supplies for Iran.

Earlier, on March 18, India had dispatched its first consignment of medical aid to Iran through the Iranian Red Crescent Society. The Iranian embassy in New Delhi had expressed appreciation for the assistance extended by the people of India. Mahan Air, one of Iran's private carriers, has been under US sanctions for several years. Washington has alleged links between the airline and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), accusing it of transporting personnel and equipment tied to regional conflicts.

Massive military complex under Trump's pet ballroom project at White House

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

The US military is building a massive complex under a privately funded ballroom being built in the White House, a move that has run foul with President Donald Trump's detractors.

The underground facilities at the White House include a Presidential Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) which dates back to the Second World War. This facility has been upgraded at regular intervals. "The military is building a massive complex under the ballroom — that's under construction," Trump told reporters late Sunday evening onboard Air Force One while returning to the national capital from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. Trump said the new ballroom will have a range of security features such as bulletproof glass and drone-resistant design. It will host

international dignitaries and major events, including the inauguration of a new president. CNN had reported in January that the existing PEOC had been "dismantled" during Trump's East Wing demolition and that a new, modernised facility was in the works. "I cannot tell you more about that, actually, as a matter of fact.

However, the military is making some upgrades to their facilities here at the White House, and I'm not privy to provide any more details on that at this time," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters during a media briefing here on Monday.

Trump's ballroom project has been under a cloud of criticism with experts claiming that the works will carry out significant changes to the White House precincts without appropriate Congressional oversight or public

scrutiny. Trump said the ballroom would incorporate high-end architectural elements, including hand-carved columns. "They'll be Corinthian, which is considered the best, most beautiful by far," he said.

Reports suggested that the classified nature of the underground project has made it skip approval by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). According to CNN, White House official Joshua Fisher told the NCPC that the overall project would boost "mission-critical functionality," make "necessary security enhancements," and create "resilient, adaptive infrastructure" for future needs. The NCPC, at its meeting on March 5, heard a presentation on preliminary and final site and building plans for the East Wing Modernisation Project submitted by.

With Spielberg's help, 101-year-old Auschwitz survivor becomes mighty warrior against hate

Kolinka credits Steven Spielberg for helping to precipitate her decision 30 years ago to start opening up about the mental and physical scars that she buried for decades.

SYDNEY. (Agency)

After surviving Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ginette Kolinka developed a stock answer to shut down questioners who'd ask about her experiences of the Nazi death camp and its horrors. "If I had a child, well, I would prefer to strangle them with my own hands than make them go through what I went through," she'd tell them. "For me, that was an answer that said it all," Kolinka says. Now, at the tail end of a remarkably long and fruitful life, the feisty 101-year-old with an easy and generous smile has

become a mighty warrior against antisemitism in France, seeing purpose in sharing her firsthand insight of murderous hatred and inhumanity.

So the lessons of the Holocaust aren't forgotten. So people who tune in to the countless interviews she gives cannot say that they didn't know about the death camps and the extermination of six million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. So school pupils who are thrilled to meet and listen to Kolinka inherit and embrace the duty of remembrance.

'Schindler's List' was turning point Kolinka credits Steven Spielberg for helping to precipitate her decision 30 years ago to start opening up about the mental and physical scars that she buried for decades, the survivor's guilt that tormented her, the eternal regret of goodbye kisses that she didn't get to give to her father, Léon, and 12-year-old brother, Gilbert, before Nazi guards sent them to the gas chambers, and so many other cruelties. After the 1993 release of "Schindler's List," Spielberg launched a foundation to collect

testimonies from Holocaust survivors. When it contacted Kolinka, she was reticent, replying that talking to her would be a waste of time, she recounts in "Return



to Birkenau," her memoir. But when its interviewer then sat down with her, in 1997, out the memories flowed, for nearly three hours. Tears, too. The foundation says it has since collected more than 60,000 testimonies and is still gathering more. "For the first time, I found myself

compelled to think about it again," Kolinka says in her book, published in 2019. In World War II, Nazi-occupied France deported 76,000 Jewish men, women and children, mostly to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Just 2,500 survived. It took France's leadership 50 years to officially acknowledge the state's involvement in the Holocaust, when then-President Jacques Chirac in 1995 described French complicity as an indelible stain on the nation. Through her books, media appearances and school visits, Kolinka has become the most prominent remaining French survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Just a few dozen, perhaps fewer than 30, are still alive, according to the Paris-based Union of Auschwitz Deportees, a survivors' group. Held back from the gas chambers

Pupils hung on her every word when Kolinka dropped by the Marcelin Berthelot high school east of Paris recently to tell her story for the umpteenth time, with The Associated Press also present.

Student shoots a teacher at Texas high school before fatally shooting self

World (Agency)

A 15-year-old student shot a teacher at a Texas high school and then fatally shot himself Monday, according to authorities, who were still investigating what led to the early morning attack. No other injuries were reported at Hill Country College Preparatory High School in Bulverde, a small but growing city near San Antonio. The teacher was taken to a nearby hospital. Comal County Sheriff Mark Reynolds said hours after the shooting that he did not know her condition. "What happened today is something no community ever wants to face, but we prepare for something that we hope never occurs," Reynolds said.

He said the student shot the teacher before turning the gun on himself. Reynolds said investigators were working to understand the relationship between the student and the teacher and looking into how the firearm was obtained. The small campus of roughly 250 students was placed on lockdown shortly after 8:30 a.m., according to the school. One student told San Antonio television station KSAT that they heard loud bangs coming from a room on the second floor and then heard screaming. Another student told the TV station that she heard five shots and yelling before her debate teacher told students to get inside a classroom.

Students were bused to a nearby middle school, where parents stood in long lines, some praying, as they waited to be reunited. Reynolds said the family members of the shooter had also gone into reunification line. "We're trying to collect as much information as we can from witnesses," Reynolds said. Jesse Lopez, a parent, told KSAT that it will be difficult to tell his daughter that she has to eventually go back to class. "For one, she has autism, and she'll be afraid to go back, she'll be real afraid to go back," Lopez said.

The school canceled classes for Tuesday but counselors would still be made available for students and families, principal Julie Wiley said in a statement. She did not provide details about the teacher's condition.

"Our hearts are with everyone impacted, especially that teacher, their family, and our school community," Wiley said. "We know this has been a difficult day."

The high school, which is part of the Comal Independent School District, focuses on academics and skills to prepare students for college, according to the district's website. Its curriculum is centered on science, technology, engineering, arts and math, known as STEAM, with electives that include cybersecurity and engineering. The school opened in August 2020 with a freshman class. It has since grown to offer grades nine through 12.

NEWS BOX

Gujarat Muslim outfit plans protests, legal fight against UCC Bill passed by Assembly

Ahmedabad.(Agency)
The Gujarat Muslim Hit Rakshak Samiti – an umbrella body of different organisations of the community in the state – said it will organise protests across the state against the “anti-Muslim” Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill passed by the Gujarat Assembly last week and challenge the validity of the legislation in court.
The organisation said it will submit a memorandum to Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat requesting him to reject the Bill and file petitions in the Supreme Court and the Gujarat High Court challenging it.
The samiti said Muslims across the State will express their opposition to the UCC Bill by wearing black bands on their right arms during the Jumma (Friday) prayers on April 3. “Ulama-e-Kiram will lead prayers (Yaum-e-Dua) against the UCC Bill, and a specific sermon (Khutbah) prepared by Mufti Ahmed Devla and other prominent Muftis will be delivered,” Sagirahmed Ansari from Gujarat Muslim Hit Rakshak Samiti told.
Delegations of religious, social, and political leaders, lawyers, and organisation heads will submit memorandums to district collectors across Gujarat on April 6. Silent sit-in protests will be held outside collector offices across the state on the occasion and video messages on the protest will be circulated online. Seminars and workshops will be organised to educate the community on how the UCC might affect Sharia laws, Ahmed said.
The samiti said it will also seek cooperation from other religious and social organisations, presenting the issue as a matter of civil and constitutional rights rather than just a religious one. “The UCC should apply to all citizens of the country across its territory.”

With 3.63 gigawatt, Karnataka leads in hydro power generation

BENGALURU.(Agency)
As Karnataka’s economy grows by leaps and bounds, recent data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation shows the state also leads in hydroelectric power generation, with 3.63 gigawatt of power. It also tops in small hydro power project generation with 3,726MW in 2024-25. The ministry’s National Statistics Office (NSO) on March 30 released the annual Energy Statistics India 2026 report, which noted that India has a huge potential for generation of renewable energy, which stands at 47,04,043MW as on March 31, 2025. Solar energy has seen staggering growth, from 7,48,990MW during financial year 2023-24 to 33,43,378MW in FY 2024-25. It also has the highest share (around 71 per cent) followed by 11,63,856MW of wind energy and 1,33,410MW from large hydro projects.
“More than 70 per cent of the total potential for renewable energy generation is concentrated in six states— Rajasthan (23.70%), Maharashtra (14.26%), Gujarat (9.10%), Andhra Pradesh (9.1%), Karnataka (8.59%) and Madhya Pradesh (8.09%),” the report noted.

After delay of two decades, tenders invited for Bengaluru's Peripheral Ring Road

BENGALURU.(Agency)
The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) invited tenders on Monday for the much-awaited Bangalore Business Corridor (BBC), also called the Peripheral Ring Road, at an estimated cost of Rs 3,348 crore.
The tenders have been invited for the first package of the project covering nearly 20 km, which has to be completed within 36 months. With this, it looks like the project, delayed for nearly two decades, is finally moving. If the work gets completed as planned, the 20 km ring road would be completed by mid-2029, easing traffic in the city.
The EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) tender Package-1 is from Tumakuru Road to Ballari Road for 19.80 km. The tender includes 10 years of operation and maintenance on design, build, operate and transfer (DBOT) mode.
As per the timeline mentioned in the tender document, the last date for tender enquiries is April 15, and the last date to submit the tender is May 4. The technical bids would be opened on May 6 and the financial bid on May 11. The tender also had a note which read, “The implementation of the project on lands that are subject matter of various writ petitions pending in the High Court of Karnataka is subject to the outcome of such writ petitions.”

Netizens welcome floating of tender for biz corridor, say it's a milestone for city
BBC Chairman LK Atheeq said they have reached an important milestone by calling for tenders for the ring road from BIEC Madavara (near Nelamangala) to the Airport/Ballari Road. Netizens welcomed the tenders and termed it a milestone. Former Infosys chief financial officer Mohandas Pai congratulated Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D K Shivakumar.

Mumbai Police suspect that the man arrested by Delhi Police may be the one terrorising city with hoax mails since years

The Mumbai police have in the past registered at least 17 FIRs against an unidentified person sending these emails while Chennai Police have registered 22 FIRs against what two forces believe to be the same person, based on the similar content of the hoax threat mails.

Nashik .(Agency)
THE MUMBAI Police, which has been trying to track down a mystery man who has been terrorising the city by sending hoax mails to courts, five-star hotels, schools and Bombay Stock Exchange, suspect that he is the same 47-year-old man arrested from Mysuru by the Delhi Police last Thursday.
The Mumbai police have in the past registered at least 17 FIRs against an unidentified person sending these emails while Chennai Police have registered 22 FIRs against what two forces believe to be the same person, based on the similar content of the hoax threat mails. Apart from state police units, even central agencies like National Investigation Agency and Intelligence Bureau (IB) were on the lookout for him. The Delhi Police arrested Srinivas Louis from Mysuru on Thursday and



said that he had sent over 1,100 hoax mails across the country. The Delhi Police said that while there is no clarity on the motive behind

government employee. It was based on a tip-off that Delhi Police along with local police raided the Mysuru residence and arrested the accused. Officers from Mumbai Police said they will be reaching out to Delhi Police to confirm their suspicions that he is the same person.
A senior officer from Mumbai Police said they suspect Louis may be the person who they have been trying to track down over the years. “We will reach out to the Delhi Police and ask for the technical details they have found from his residence so that we can check it with the records like the VPNs used in threat mails sent in the state,” an official said.
Sources said the police are also seeking threat mails that the accused had sent to places across the country to check the contents with the ones that had been sent across Maharashtra.

As LPG supply takes a hit, a quiet return of migrant workers begins in Mumbai

Mumbai. (Agency)
It does not show up at construction sites or in factory lanes. There are no visible signs of an exodus, but go to Mumbai’s railway stations, and you will find it.
Vishesh Tyagi, 24, has been working for the last five years at a Mumbai factory that makes plumbing material. He had gone home to Varanasi for a brief break and returned on March 19. Five days later, he was on a train back. He had not been able to find a gas cylinder, could not afford to keep eating out, and saw no point in staying.
For five days last week, The Indian Express tracked three trains out of the city — the Kamayani Express to Uttar Pradesh, the LTT Rajgir Express to Bihar, and the CSMT Howrah Mail to West Bengal. The choice of trains was deliberate. According to the 2011 census, Uttar Pradesh is the single largest source of migrants to Mumbai, with Bihar and West Bengal also

among the top six. The newspaper spoke to migrants at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) over five days. Of



the 130 people interviewed, 62 said they were returning home because of the LPG crisis. At LTT, 40 of 70 cited it as their reason for leaving. At CSMT, 22 of 50 said the same.

The trigger is familiar. The West Asia conflict has disrupted supply, sending black-market prices of 5-kg cylinders, according to migrant labourers, soaring from Rs 500-550 to Rs 1,100-2,000, and 14.2-kg cylinders from Rs 900-1,200 to Rs 3,200-4,000. Most migrants, without the KYC documents required for a registered connection, have no access to cylinders at official rates. When hotel meals became too expensive and savings began to run out, going home became the only option. This is not the mass reverse migration of the Covid-19 pandemic. People are not fleeing, but are quietly and pragmatically retreating, with one eye on the situation and plans to return the moment it stabilises.
The others interviewed were heading home for the West Bengal assembly elections, weddings, or family visits. But for nearly half, the calculation was simpler. Without a way to cook and with food costs rising, staying on was no longer an option. These are some of them:

‘Disproportionate, stigmatic’: 32 years on, Gujarat HC quashes bank employee’s dismissal

Vadodara. (Agency)
STATING THAT the penalty of “dismissal from service” handed out to an employee of a nationalised bank after 41 years of service was “disproportionate, stigmatic” and “an economic and social death” of the petitioner, the Gujarat High Court (HC) on Monday quashed and set aside the dismissal, directing the bank to pass orders of “substitution of penalty” by reduction of basic pay without any financial liability on the bank.
A Division Bench of Justices B D Karia and L S Pirzada was hearing a petition filed by the legal heirs of N G Kotecha – now deceased employee of the Central Bank of India – challenging the October 2024 judgment of the HC, which dismissed a 2004 Special Civil Application filed by Kotecha challenging his dismissal from service from the bank in May 1994 as penalty following procedural inquiry into six

allegations – none of which caused financial losses to the bank, as per the petition. Senior Advocate Bhaskar Tanna, who appeared for the litigants, submitted that Kotecha, who served the bank for 41 years with an “unblemished record” and even



earned “recommendations and prizes for his exemplary service” was dismissed from service on the basis of an inquiry report of October 1993, which came just ten days before he was due to retire that year. The bank had issued an order directing Kotecha to continue in service till the conclusion of the departmental proceedings against him. Kotecha

had submitted his reply in October 1993 and he was dismissed in May 1994, under Regulation 4 of the Central Bank of India Officer Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Regulation, 1976. As per the petition, Kotecha had joined the Central Bank of India as a clerk in 1952 and was promoted to the post of General Manager and working as Chief Internal Auditor at Ahmedabad in July 1993 when he received a memo to submit replies in connection with alleged procedural lapses committed by him between July 1986 and February 1990, while working as Chief Manager at the Jamnagar main office. Submitting that “not a single memo was issued to him, much less charge-sheet or any adverse order during his entire career” previously, Tanna stated that out of the six charges proven against Kotecha, none of the charges resulted in any monetary loss for the respondent bank.

Evading BNSS notice can invite arrest, says Karnataka High Court

BENGALURU.(Agency)
The Karnataka High Court has said that an accused can be arrested if he evades the notice issued to him under Section 35(3) of BNSS and does not cooperate with the officers investigating his crime. Justice M Nagarasanna passed this order on March 25, rejecting a petition filed by Yugadev R from Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, questioning the arrest order issued on January 19 by the additional chief judicial magistrate in a crime registered under Section 66C of the IT Act and Section 318(4) of BNS with Aduodi police in the city. Citing a verdict of the apex court, the high court said that Section 35(3) does not empower the police to communicate an electronic copy or by WhatsApp the notice or copy of FIR. It has to be mandatorily given in person. The police searched the petitioner for 40 days to hand over the notice. This non-cooperative behaviour of the accused was enough for the

police to take him into custody. Three persons, including Anki Bhauwala from Wilson Garden in the city, registered a complaint against the petitioner and his wife. The petitioner and his wife introduced themselves as yoga teachers and started running a company, Jai Bhairavi Devi



Financial Solutions, and received investments through a website. The complainants are said to have invested Rs 39.20 lakh. The complaint was registered in December 2025 for criminal breach of trust, misappropriation and causing wrongful loss.

Panic buying of fuel in Gujarat: Police record Rajkot fuel association chief’s statement, say no evidence so far against him for spreading rumours

FIR was filed against him based on a complaint by Divisional Retail Sales Head of IOCL based in Rajkot

Ahmedabad. (Agency)
Rajkot Petrol Diesel Dealers Association president Gopal Chudasama on Monday gave a statement to the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Rajkot City Police which is investigating the FIR filed against him on charge spreading rumours of fuel shortage in the state amid the war in West Asia.
Speaking to The Indian Express on Monday, PSI V V Dhrangu, the Investigation Officer of the case, said, “We have not yet found any evidence of Chudasama making a comment or giving a media byte regarding fuel shortage. We have issued him a notice and he gave a statement on Monday.”
The police are now investigating whether Chudasama had given any media byte regarding “fuel shortage”. The major cities in Gujarat witnessed panic buying of fuel – that began in Rajkot and spread across the state – on March 23 and 24, leading to long queues outside fuel stations across the state. In Ahmedabad, these queues outside

major outlets continued even late in the night even as Deputy Chief Harsh Sanghavi, senior bureaucrats like Additional Chief Secretary Mona Kandhar and collectors, as well as Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary (Marketing and Oil Refinery) in the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in Delhi, tried to assuage people’s fears stating that there is no shortage of fuel in the country.
The investigation against Chudasama, who is also the Vice President of the Federation of Gujarat Petroleum Dealers Associations (FGPDA), began after an FIR was filed against him at Pradyumnagar police station in Rajkot on March 24 on the basis of a complaint by Amit Shivprasad Jaiswal, the Divisional Retail Sales Head of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), based in Rajkot. The case was transferred to the SOG for investigation. Though The Indian Express reached out to Chudasama, he declined to comment on the matter.

The IOCL had, earlier on March 24, declined to comment on the matter. The FIR stated that on March 23 “Gopal Chudasama had visited my (Jaiswal) office at IOCL



Bhavan on Race Course road, along with other dealers and mediapersons without a prior appointment and asked me about our stocks of petrol and diesel.... I replied that IOCL had enough fuel stock. Chudasama then gave a written application on a letter pad.”

The FIR stated that Jaiswal had told Chudasama to stay away from rumours. The FIR further stated, “Gopal Chudasama then left my office and gave false statements that petrol pumps had run out of petrol and diesel. It was later seen on social media and news channels that there is fuel shortage in the state. ...believing these rumours, people lined up outside petrol pumps...”
Later, Chudasama was booked under BNS section 353(1)(b) (spreading rumors that cause public fear or alarm and Sections 3, 7 and 9(2) of the Essential Commodities Act. The FGPDA had told on March 23 that some petrol pumps had been closed and others had faced a problem of procurement due to the recent change in payment system by oil marketing companies from a credit system to an advance payment policy, triggering cash crunch issues for dealers, and “not due to unavailability or shortage of fuel”.

Those entitled must get bail from trial courts, can't be forced to spend more in higher courts: Justice A S Oka (Retd)

Mumbai.(Agency)
Stressing the need for overall development of ‘grassroot’ level judiciary including trial courts, former Supreme Court judge Justice Abhay S Oka on Monday said that neglect towards such courts should be avoided.
Justice Oka was delivering the JP Narayan lecture organised by People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) at Mumbai Press Club complex, on the topic ‘bringing back the Constitution and people to judiciary’.
The former SC judge said there is a need to pay attention on what happens in trial courts and ensure fair trial to litigants.
“In our legal system, those who are entitled to bail must get it in magistrate or sessions court and they cannot be forced to spend more, engage costly lawyers in high court and Supreme Court and fight for the bail,” he said.
Justice Oka also said that once the Constitution came into force, one cannot say only Supreme Court and High Courts are constitutional courts.
“Because all these trial courts are also constitutional courts as they work under constitutional law but we keep branding them as lower courts as if lawyers appearing in the High Courts and Supreme Court are superior to lawyers appearing in trial courts,” he said.
Justice Oka also stressed the need for more trial court judges highlighting that while there was an estimation of nearly 8,000 judges across Maharashtra in 2022, the state government sanctioned only 800 judges. Justice Oka further said that while there is a discussion on ‘Vikasit Bharat,’ one must consider the lack of implementation of the Supreme Court directives on judge-to-population ratio.

Universe: Upanishads as against Dharma-shastra

In the Upanishads, the word Brahmin is about inner realisation. In Dharma-shastra, the word Brahmin is about birth status and purity. The early Upanishads were composed between 600 BC and 200 BC, while the early Dharma-shastra were composed between 200 BC and 500 AD. The former is more spiritual. The latter is more legal. Strict rules of marriage based on caste are promoted by Dharma-shastra. This idea is not present in Upanishads. In fact, as per genetic studies, endogamy in India began only 1,900 years ago (70 generations ago), which scientifically proves this dramatic social shift which changed Hinduism forever. It is this new form of Hinduism that Brahmins took with them beyond Arya-varta to the river valleys of South and East India, when they were forced to leave North India following Huna invasions and loss of patronage to Buddhists and Jains. In the Chandogya Upanishad, a boy named Satyakama approaches the teacher Gautama and asks to be accepted as a student. Gautama asks about his lineage. Satyakama repeats what his mother told: she had many lovers so does not know who the father is. Gautama declares: only a true Brahmin can speak such uncompromising truth. He accepts the boy as a student. Here, truthfulness, not pedigree, marks Brahminhood. Raikva, a humble cart driver, refuses to reveal the secrets of Upanishad to King Janashruti in exchange for money. But when the king offers his daughter, thus welcoming him as a family member, overcoming caste and class prejudices, the knowledge is revealed.

Contrast this with the Dharma-shastra world. In the Manusmriti, Brahmin is defined by birth into a particular varna. Duties are listed: study and teach the Veda, perform and officiate sacrifices, accept and give gifts. Detailed rules govern marriage alliances, food restrictions, inheritance, and punishment. If a Brahmin commits a crime, the penalty may be lighter than for a Shudra committing the same offence. Social order rests on graded inequality. There are stories that illustrate this legalistic framework. The tale of Shambuka in the Ramayana tradition shows a Shudra performing austerities reserved for higher varnas. His tapas is seen as a violation of cosmic order. The king intervenes violently, kills Shambuka, to restore dharma. Here dharma is tied to fixed social roles, not inner quest.

Similarly, in Manusmriti discussions, mixed marriages produce named categories of offspring, each assigned specific occupations. Identity becomes a matter of regulated descent. The concern is not realisation of Brahmin but the preservation of hierarchy. Krishna is always referred to as a cowherd, as he is raised by cowherds. Karma is always referred to as charioteer, as he is raised by charioteers. Draupadi refuses to consider Karma for marriage as he is of inferior birth.

In Bhakti lore, saints considered impure are not allowed to enter temples. Across India, in temples like Jagannath Puri and Pandharpur, there are shrines at temple gates reminding all of those who were not allowed to enter the temple on grounds of impure birth. Thus, the Upanishadic imagination opens Brahminhood to anyone who embodies truth and insight. The Dharma-shastra imagination closes it within birth, rule, and privilege. One tells stories of seekers who transcend status. The other tells stories of order threatened when status is crossed. In the 21st century, Hindus quote Upanishads to prove the greatness of their faith, but their social behaviour is aligned to Dharma-shastra. Social media is full of popular gurus who speak of the glory of Brahmin birth. That is unfortunate.

Keeping your enemies closer

Pak's sudden diplomatic visibility raises uncomfortable questions about India's positioning

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar was absolutely right when he told an all-party meeting on the West Asia crisis earlier this week that "India is not a dalaal nation." Jaishankar, a former diplomat who understands the value of words, used the Hindi word 'dalaal', meaning broker, when Opposition leaders asked him about Pakistan's role in ending the four-week-long US-Israel war against Iran. It's understandable that Jaishankar was angry. The Hon'ble MPs were clearly asking about — and, therefore, comparing — India's position in this Persian Gulf conflict with that of Pakistan. It seems the country's military establishment, led by Donald Trump's "favourite Field Marshal" Asim Munir, has been passing messages between Iran and the US, which has helped Trump proclaim a pause in the war till April 6. Pakistan has offered to host the talks; Turkiye and Egypt could be the other venues.

Whichever way you look at it, Pakistan has managed to insert itself into the global limelight these last 48 hours. Nothing may come of it in the coming week. Trump may still order a ground invasion of Iran. But these Hon'ble MPs at the all-party meeting, otherwise mostly concerned about their impending polls in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam, had clearly noticed that something was seriously amiss, and not just because the price of their household gas cylinder has gone up.

Clearly, Jaishankar has a right to be angry. The Pakistani military establishment, which has orchestrated one horrendous attack after another upon innocent Indians, killing people again and again over the decades, from Mumbai to Pahalgam, needs to be called out for its heinous crimes — not applauded by no less than the most powerful man in the world, the US President.

Perhaps this is a good moment for India to do some soul-searching about the direction in which we, the people of an ancient and unique civilisation, are moving in this modern and fast-paced world. Mostly, Indians aren't too concerned about foreign policy issues — we are satisfied that Prime Ministers as varied as Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi mostly protect us from the big and bad influences abroad.

Some things we know. First, that India has become the world's fourth largest economy, even though in per

capita terms (about \$2,700-3,000), we occupy the 140th place in the list of nations. Second, the Indian diaspora's influence is exploding, especially in the US. And third, India's chief rival on the world stage is China, not puny Pakistan. Why, then, is puny Pakistan besting India by offering to mediate between the warring parties, the US and Iran — and more to the point, why is the world listening? Let's take a step back. Perhaps we are asking the wrong question. The right question is not whether Pakistan has succeeded in being one-up on India — that game can be played in many ways and on many occasions — but whether India has lived up to its own image of being a nation with a peculiar moral centre, one which has stood us in good stead since the freedom movement, which allows the occasional straying in

powerful nations on earth. (Who would dare?) That, in any case, it had such huge stakes in the US-Israel-UAE triangle of nations — trade, diaspora, defence — and that an early position would earn it brownie points.

Unfortunately, it hasn't quite worked out that way. By taking sides in an unfortunate and unjust war, India forsook the Middle Path that a son of India — Gautam Buddha — taught it several centuries ago.

The politically astute PM must have understood the widespread unease that followed the cold-blooded assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei by US missiles; or the bombing of a school in Minab, Iran, which the UNHRC is finally debating. Not that Indians were applauding Khamenei's headline religiosity or what he stood for; we were simply aghast at the

impunity with which one or two countries were violating every rule in the book. And so, although India has resisted an outright condemnation of Khamenei's killing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was sent to the Iranian embassy in Delhi to sign the condolence book. Both Modi and Jaishankar have, since, spoken to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, respectively — even if it is to help India-flagged ships loaded with oil cross the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranians, bloodied but not bowed, have played the game in an even more sophisticated manner. They understood that Indians — ordinary folk in Kashmir collected money and jewels for their Iranian brethren, while the elite wrote opinion pieces in newspapers like The Tribune — were not fully comfortable with the government's gambit. It seems that some Iranian missiles now have "thank you, India..." written on them.

That brings us to the several foreign policy learnings this week. First, talk to all sides, even if you don't agree with them — so, both Iran and Israel, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Second, listen to all sides — one reason why Indians were so surprised that Pakistan had made a successful bid to mediate between Iran and the US is because we no longer have access to the Pakistani media as all newspapers and TV channels and several X accounts have been banned since Operation Sindoor; if you hear only from the New York Times and Wall Street Journal and not the Dawn and The News about what's happening inside Pakistan, then your ability to both listen and understand will be circumscribed.



pragmatic directions (like not speaking up when Netanyahu flattens Gaza or when Vladimir Putin invades Ukraine), but one which still won't support an immoral or unjust fight.

This is India's biggest strength — the need to return to the centre. So even if PM Modi went to Israel only two days before his host Benjamin Netanyahu, in conjunction with the US, ordered air strikes that sought to decimate Iran, the fact is that the Modi government has since been forced to abandon its earlier position of openly siding with US-Israel. India probably thought, like Trump and Netanyahu, that Iran wouldn't be able to resist the most

Minimum balance: Banks must do away with penal charges

The issue of levying hidden charges on unsuspecting bank customers, needs resolution

BANKS penalising savings account holders for not maintaining minimum balance test the boundaries of ethics and morality. A waiver is not merely a symbolic gesture; it assures support to the customer when the chips are down and builds trust. Data shared in the Lok Sabha sends a problematic message. Banks have raked in around Rs 19,000 crore from customers for not maintaining minimum balance from 2022-23 to 2024-25. Private sector banks mopped up around Rs 11,000 crore. According to the Finance Minister, the amount collected by the public sector banks is primarily aligned with the cost of providing services rather than revenue generation through penalties. But the question remains, why resort to this at all? As MP Balbir Singh Seechewal mentioned in the Rajya Sabha, penalties imposed on farmers and labourers reflect their financial hardship, not any unwillingness to comply with a banking



system that couldn't care less, unless the waiver is for a corporate entity. The Centre maintains that 10 public sector banks have stopped imposing penalties and the other two have rationalised their policies. It claims that about 72 crore basic savings accounts, including those under the PM Jan Dhan Yojana, are not subject to any penal charges. This lends hope that private banks, too, would go in for a rethink and follow suit. A parliamentary committee has recommended incentivising customers maintaining consistent deposits rather than penalising those who are unable to. While proposing a uniform policy of not charging penalties, it has said that the Department of Financial Services and the Reserve Bank of India may consider issuing guidelines. It's the correct thing to do.

Creation myths that gurus conjure

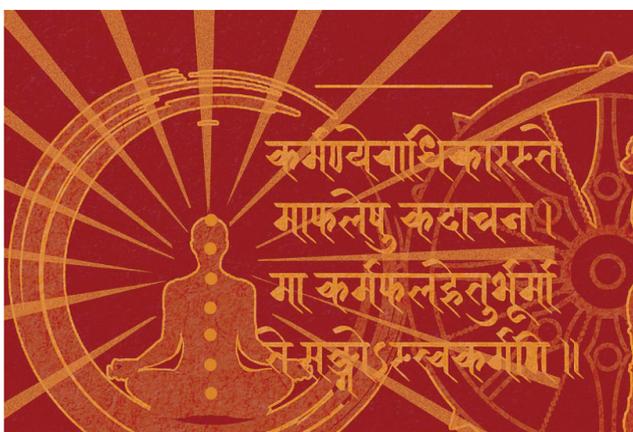
In contemporary Hindu-inspired spirituality, three systems dominate popular imagination: Sadhguru's yoga universe, the Brahma Kumaris, and ISKCON

Creation myths are political long before they are cosmic. They tell people not only where the universe came from, but who has the right to interpret it, who commands obedience, and whose voice becomes sacred. In contemporary Hindu-inspired spirituality, three systems dominate popular imagination: Sadhguru's yoga universe, the Brahma Kumaris, and ISKCON. Each claims ancient roots, yet each is a modern engineering of tradition. Each rewrites classical Hindu ideas to build a distinctive structure of authority. And each is very different from the biblical model of creation.

Sadhguru speaks through the language of Adiguru, the primordial yogi seated in absolute stillness on Kailash. From silence comes vibration, from vibration energy, and from energy the cosmos. There is no single moment of creation, no fixed beginning, no final end. Universes expand and dissolve like breaths of a vast being. Shiva is not a craftsman who manufactures the world but pure awareness that becomes form through Shakti. Time is immeasurable, fluid, almost arrogant in its refusal to fit human calendars. This cosmology feels liberating, but it is anchored to one charismatic centre.

The universe is so subtle, so layered, so experiential that ordinary seekers are told they cannot grasp it without a living guide. Adiguru becomes a symbolic mirror that reflects back to Sadhguru himself. He is not God, yet he becomes the necessary gateway to understanding creation. Science is embraced as a metaphor, rejected as

a limitation. Freedom is promised, but the path leads repeatedly to retreats, initiations, branded practices, and the gravitational pull of one personality. This is not a community-run tradition. It is a cult of charisma. The Brahma Kumari vision constructs creation very differently. Here, the cosmos is not fluid but tightly



scheduled. Time runs in a precise 5,000-year loop divided into Golden, Silver, Copper, and Iron ages. Souls begin pure, gradually fall, and are purified again through divine intervention. Chaos is not creativity but moral decay. God, called Shiva, does not remain distant but speaks through a human medium.

What makes this system distinctive is that its power structure is primarily female-led. The organisation is run, managed, and ritualised by women who control teaching, meditation centres, and doctrinal boundaries. In a society where religious authority is overwhelmingly male, this inversion is striking. Women become gatekeepers of truth, disciplinarians, and managers of cosmic time. Yet this does not make the system less controlling. Certainty replaces freedom. Doubt becomes disobedience. Liberation requires daily meditation, lifestyle regulation, and loyalty to the institution. Science is rejected because it disrupts the timetable of the soul. Here, creation becomes a bureaucratic moral machine, administered by women but no less rigid for it.

ISKCON offers a third kind of creation story, one that creatively reworks classical Vaishnava cosmology into a global devotional system. Instead of abstract consciousness, the centre is Krishna in Goloka Vrindavan, a perfect spiritual realm beyond matter. From this transcendental world, Vishnu expands into multiple forms and oversees the creation of layered material universes. Brahma acts as a secondary creator, assembling planets, oceans, and life under divine supervision. This draws from Puranic texts, but ISKCON standardises it into a quasi-scientific cosmic map of lokas, shells, and dimensions. The moral twist is that the material world is fundamentally fallen, a prison for souls who forgot Krishna. Salvation comes through chanting, temple life, dietary rules, and allegiance to ISKCON's interpretation of bhakti.

Unlike the Brahma Kumaris, ISKCON is overwhelmingly male-controlled. Gurus, administrators, temple presidents, and doctrinal authorities are almost entirely men. Women participate as devotees but rarely as final decision-makers. Creation here becomes a devotional hierarchy where cosmic order mirrors patriarchal order. Manipulation is soft, emotional, and ritualised, but real. Tradition is presented as eternal, yet it is curated, globalised, and packaged for a diaspora seeking identity. All three systems reuse classical Hindu models: cyclical time, multiple divine forms, the cosmos as breathing rather than manufactured, and consciousness as foundational. Yet each reshapes these ideas to secure power. Sadhguru personalises the universe around charisma. Brahma Kumaris institutionalise it around a female-run discipline. ISKCON ritualises it around male-led devotion. Where they diverge most sharply from the Bible is in their sense of time and creation. Biblical cosmology is linear: one God speaks once, the world appears, and history moves toward a final judgement. There is a single beginning, a single creator, and a moral drama that ends in heaven or hell. Hindu-derived systems retain cycles, multiplicity, and an endlessly regenerating universe. Yet modern movements paradoxically import biblical-style authority: one chosen medium in Brahma Kumaris, one supreme guru in Sadhguru's world, one centralised priesthood in ISKCON.

Thus, three contemporary creation myths coexist. One dazzles with cosmic openness, one governs with cosmic schedules, and one binds through devotional cosmology. None is neutral. Each turns the story of the universe into a mechanism of spiritual power.

Preparations underway to improve the Yamuna in Vrindavan, trial runs from KC Ghat to Deoraha Baba Ghat

Mathura.(Agency)

An important initiative is underway to clean and streamline the Yamuna River in Vrindavan. Geological mapping will be conducted on both banks of the Yamuna from Deoraha Baba Ghat to KC Ghat. Based on this, plans to decontaminate the Yamuna water and develop waterways can be implemented.

An important meeting was held in the Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad auditorium, chaired by the Council's Vice President, Mr. Shailaja Kant Mishra on Monday.

Mayank Gandhi, founder of the Global Vikas Trust, presented a plan to collect scientific data necessary to improve water quality. The current status of the Yamuna, silt, water flow, and scientific measures for pollution control were discussed in detail.

Council Vice President Shailaja Kant Mishra directed the Council to initiate a scientific study as a trial project from KC Ghat to Devraha Baba Ghat in the first phase. It was decided that a scientific study would be conducted in the selected area first, based on which an action plan would be implemented.

District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh directed the relevant departments, including irrigation, to provide necessary support and coordination.

A discussion was also held on a cow-based organic model. A plan was agreed upon to scientifically utilize cow urine and dung for greater utility in agriculture, forestry, and organic farming.

Bihar cleric detained by STF over objectionable remarks against Yogi's mother

Gorakhpur.(Agency)

The Special Task Force (STF) in Gorakhpur detained a Bihar-based cleric accused of making objectionable remarks about the mother of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, officials said on Tuesday.

The accused, identified as Maulana Abdullah Salim, was taken into custody by the STF from Bihar on Monday and is currently being interrogated. According to officials, a video had recently gone viral on social media in which the cleric was allegedly seen using offensive and derogatory language against the chief minister's mother during a religious gathering.

Following the circulation of the video, public outrage spread across Gorakhpur and other parts of the state, leading to protests. More than 80 FIRs have reportedly been registered against the accused across Uttar Pradesh, including at the Cantt police station in Gorakhpur.

Local lawyers had also filed a complaint demanding strict action against the cleric. STF in-charge Satyaprakash Singh confirmed that the accused is being questioned and that the investigation is progressing swiftly, considering the seriousness of the allegations and the viral video.

However, officials noted that the charges filed so far do not include provisions for immediate arrest. Further legal action will be determined based on the findings of the ongoing investigation.

MP: Young legislators' conference in Bhopal

Bhopal.(Agency)

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav today emphasized that the belief that the concept of democracy originated in the West is not entirely true, as democracy is a natural feature of the Indian political system. He asserted that humility, dignity, and discipline are essential elements in politics, and those dedicated to public service can remain active and successful in public life.

Dr Yadav was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day conference of young legislators organised in the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly at Bhopal.

He noted that personal ambitions negatively affect democratic values and systems. He said that public representatives must remain sensitive to public issues, be well-informed, skilled in stress management, and fully dedicated to serving the public interest.

"The conduct of a public representative and their ability to manage and resolve problems reflect their personality and leadership qualities," he said, adding that political leaders should rise above party differences and work collectively for positive activities and development works.

Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, Vasudev Devnani, said that the primary responsibility of public representatives is to establish effective communication between the people and the government.

He stated that the strength of democracy depends on greater transparency and participation among citizens, the legislature, and governance processes.

Legislators, he said, should not limit themselves to merely winning elections, but should actively contribute to social development through study, thoughtful engagement, and sensitivity towards public issues.

Leaders & motorsport fraternity attend prayer meet for rally driver 'Gypsy King'

The motorsport fraternity also marked a strong presence, with representatives from the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, Northern Motorsports, with several rally drivers and officials attending the ceremony.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Hundreds of people from multiple professions, including friends and relatives on Monday gathered at the gurdwara in Sector 8 to attend the prayer ceremony of Hari Singh, also known as the "Gypsy King". He is survived by his wife Simran Kaur, daughter Azmat Kaur and son Mivaan Singh, who were present at the ceremony.

The ceremony, organised by the family, saw an outpouring of grief from members of the motorsport community and public representatives. Though the family chose to stay away from media interaction, the emotional atmosphere reflected the deep void. Among those who paid tributes were

senior political figures, including Preneet Kaur, Simranjit Singh Mann, Pawan Kumar Bansal and Manpreet Singh Badal.

The motorsport fraternity also marked a strong presence, with representatives from the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, Northern Motorsports, with several rally drivers and officials attending the ceremony.

Noted names included Gaurav Gill, Sunny Sidhu, Manik Rakhi, Garima Avtar and S P S Gharcha, president of the Chandigarh Motorsport Association and a close associate of Singh. Hari 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, 2026. After the boat capsized, Singhania was rescued with injuries and later brought back to Mumbai.

Fondly known as the "Gypsy King", Hari began his rallying career in 1990 with the Himalayan Car Rally and went on to become a five-time Indian National Rally Champion. Driving for the J K Tyre Rally Team, he also won the inaugural Asia Zone Rally Championship and represented India in international events, including the ASEAN and SAARC rallies.

2023 CAG report tabled in HP Assembly, flags fund misutilisation, delays in relief, policy gaps

Chandigarh.(Agency)

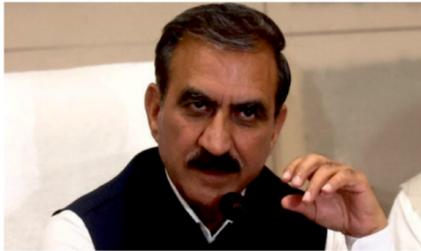
Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu tabled the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report for the Period Ended for March 2023, flagging concerns over fund management, delays in disaster relief and regulatory lapses across key departments, in the Assembly on Monday. The report is signed by Principal Accountant General (PAG, Audit) Purushottam Tiwary.

The report scrutinises multiple sectors, including the forest department, industries and institutions such as the Himachal Pradesh University, and calls for systemic reforms to ensure transparency and accountability. The CAG has issued a series of stringent recommendations to the Himachal Pradesh government.

Among its key recommendations, the CAG stressed the need for efficient utilisation of available funds and directed the government to issue standing instructions to banks for timely investment of surplus balances. It also called for mechanisms to prevent misuse of

funds on inadmissible works, suggesting that every bill submitted to the Treasury be accompanied by a signed undertaking, verifying compliance with the SDRF/NDRF norms.

Highlighting delays in disaster relief, the audit



recommended that assistance be provided within 30 days of a disaster report. It suggested strengthening monitoring systems, such as the State Management Information System (SMIS), to automatically flag delays and fix accountability.

Rs 10 crore civic push in Chandigarh: Paver blocks relaying, drainage upgrade, sewer strengthening approved

Chandigarh.(Agency)

With a focus on relaying of paver blocks, improving drainage and sewerage, and strengthening sewage lines in villages, the Finance and Contract Committee (F&CC) of the Municipal Corporation (MC), Chandigarh, on Monday approved development works worth over Rs 10 crore across the city. The meeting was chaired by Mayor Saurabh Joshi and attended by MC Commissioner Amit Kumar, along with councillors and senior officials.

A major share of the approved projects pertains to road infrastructure and pavement improvement. The committee cleared the relaying of paver blocks on V-5 road in Sector 20-B (Rs 39.52 lakh), the repair and raising of pavement in Sector 45 (Rs 32.29 lakh), and kerb and channel works in Sectors 43 (Rs 25.89 lakh), 34 (Rs 40.55 lakh) and 35 (Rs 15.53 lakh). Repair of interlocking paver blocks along V-4 road in Sector 41 (Rs 26.55 lakh) and footpath repair on Dev Samaj College Road, Sector 45-B (Rs 12.91 lakh) were also approved. Works to repair paver blocks around parks in

Sector 20-B (Rs 43.58 lakh), Sector 20-C (Rs 49.78 lakh), and Sector 35 (Rs 49.88 lakh) also form a key part of the plan. To improve drainage and sewerage infrastructure, the committee approved stormwater disposal works in Dhanas (Rs 39.02 lakh) and the strengthening of sewage



lines in the village (Rs 34.52 lakh). An additional sewer line in Sector 19-D will be laid at a cost of Rs 29.60 lakh. Market upgradation projects were cleared for Sector 37-D (Rs 47.17 lakh) and Sector 38-C&D (Rs 45.68 lakh), along with the construction of raised platforms in Sector 34-C (Rs 3.42

In the forest sector, the CAG report flagged under-assessment of Net Present Value (NPV), leading to short realisation of CAMPA funds under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. It noted that out of 314 examined cases of forest land diversion, 158 involved road construction.

In 56 instances, roads were built by the Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department (HPPWD) without prior approval, violating statutory provisions. While penalties amounting to Rs 5.01 crore were recovered in 53 cases after post-facto approvals, three cases saw no penalties imposed, contrary to prescribed guidelines.

The mining sector audit revealed that while it contributed Rs 1,236.66 crore to state non-tax revenue between 2018-19 and 2022-23, critical planning gaps persisted. The department failed to prepare mandatory Annual Action Plans (AAP) during the period, hampering systematic monitoring of inspections, royalty assessments and projects under Pradhan Mantri Kshetra Kalyan Yojna (PMKKKY).

A model vending zone in Sector 37 will be developed at Rs 10.53 lakh, an MC official said.

Among other key works, installation of fountains in the Japanese Garden, Sector 31 (Rs 33.29 lakh), high mast lighting in Sector 15 green belts (Rs 21.54 lakh), and street and park lighting in Sectors 37, 38 and 44 (Rs 17.45 lakh and Rs 6.50 lakh) were approved. Road safety improvements, including installation of cat-eyes and median markings in Sectors 34, 35 and 43, will cost Rs 15.74 lakh.

Community infrastructure projects include renovation and soundproofing of a community centre in Mauli Jagran (Rs 31.23 lakh), construction of an open kitchen (Rs 13.14 lakh), and provision of furniture (Rs 2.66 lakh). A deep bore tubewell in Vikas Nagar (Rs 27.42 lakh) and stamped concrete work near a gurdwara in Khudda Ali Sher (Rs 47.26 lakh) were also approved, as per MC. Civic body officials said the approved works are aimed at strengthening basic civic infrastructure, improving public amenities and enhancing the overall urban environment across Chandigarh.

Got solar systems installed at certain auditors' houses, paid CREST project director: Former bank manager

Statement forms part of the remand papers submitted by the police before a local court; accused remanded in 3-day custody

Chandigarh.(Agency)

A former bank manager of the IDFC First Bank, Sector 32 Branch, has alleged in his disclosure statement that he paid for installation of solar systems at certain auditors' residences at their instance, routing the payments from his personal accounts to CREST project director Sukhwinder Singh Abrol.

The statement was made by Rishav Rishi and forms part of the remand papers submitted by the police before a local court, which on Monday granted three days custody of the accused, along with two other bank employees Abhay Kumar and Seema Dhiman.

The three were produced before the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class Dr Prikshit, where the Chandigarh Police sought remand

of seven days of the three, for investigation into FIR no. 2, registered by EOW (Economic Offences Wing) of Chandigarh Police.

Police told the court that custodial interrogation of the accused is required to recover the system on which the alleged forged FDRs were prepared, verify the role of bank officials and municipal corporation employees, and identify other co-accused. The police submitted that the remand was necessary to ascertain the modus operandi and conduct cross-examination with other suspects.

On hearing arguments of the defence counsel and the

prosecution, the court granted four days' remand of accused bank officials. Advocates A S Sukhija, Deepanshu Bansal, and Shahzad



Singh Jeji have been appearing on behalf of accused bank officials. Advocate P K Dogra has been appearing for IDFC First Bank.

In his disclosure statement recorded during interrogation, Rishi stated

that the FDR receipts and statement of bank account no. 99988877765 shown to him during the investigation do not bear his signatures, nor have he issued these FDR receipts or bank statements.

Rishi alleged that "...the bank accounts of the Municipal Corporation and Smart City were handled by A b h a y K u m a r (Relationship Manager on behalf of IDFC First Bank) while from the Municipal Corporation side, all transactions related to these accounts were dealt with by its employee, Anubhav Mishra, Accountant..."

Rishi also claimed that "...the blank FDR receipt forms were taken by Anubhav Mishra from Priyanka

Bhatoa, a teller of IDFC First Bank Sector 32 Branch... I have never signed any such documents. These FDR receipts and bank statements have been prepared by Anubhav Mishra and Abhay Kumar..."

Referring to a transaction reflected in the bank statement, he stated that "a transaction dated September 1, 2025 amounting to Rs 4,98,61,578 was made from the municipal corporation account to the bank account of Sunlive Solar," adding that it "was approved by bank authoriser Seema Dhiman on the basis of approvals" from Shamim Darr, government business banking relationship manager of MC, Chandigarh and Dhirender Pratap, regional head of IDFC First Bank, alleged Rishi in his disclosure statement.

Strict monitoring on petrol, diesel and LPG in UP; Over 17,000 raids conducted so far

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh government is in full action mode to ensure the smooth supply of petrol, diesel, and LPG across the state. To curb black marketing and illegal sales, a total of 17,581 raids and inspections have been carried out since March 12.

During this period, 33 FIRs have been registered against LPG distributors, while 189 FIRs have been lodged in other cases, leading to the arrest of 17 individuals, officials here on Tuesday said.

Additionally, prosecution proceedings have been initiated against 224 people.

Following directives issued at the Chief Secretary level, district administrations across the state are actively monitoring the situation. District Supply Officers and local administrative officials are conducting regular inspections to ensure timely availability of gas cylinders and fuel to consumers. At present, the supply of petrol and diesel in the state remains completely normal. There are 12,888 petrol pumps operational across the state.

Between March 27 and 29, thousands of kilolitres of fuel were sold. Currently, around 91,000 kilolitres of petrol and 1.15 lakh kilolitres of diesel are available in stock.

The government has appealed to the public not to panic or hoard fuel.

The LPG situation is also reported to be satisfactory. Through 4,107 gas distributors across the state, cylinders are being supplied to consumers as per bookings, and sufficient stock is available. The government is also focusing on expanding the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network.

In a meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary, instructions were issued to expedite pending approvals and increase the number of PNG connections.

Meanwhile, the central government has also permitted a 20 percent additional allocation of commercial LPG cylinders from March 23. To monitor the supply system, a 24-hour control room has been set up at the Food and Civil Supplies Commissioner's office. Control rooms are also operational in all districts to continuously track the situation.

The government has reiterated that there is adequate availability of petrol, diesel, and LPG in the state, and strict action will continue against any form of black marketing or hoarding.

8 Indians died, 1 missing in various incidents amid Middle East war: Govt

Amid the escalating Middle East war, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that eight Indian nationals have been killed and one remains missing in various incidents across the region.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid the escalating West Asia conflict, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday said eight Indian nationals have lost their lives while one remains missing in "various incidents" in the region. At an inter-ministerial briefing here on the West Asia situation, Additional Secretary (Gulf), MEA, Aseem R Mahajan, also said, "Yesterday, an Indian national unfortunately lost his life in an attack in Kuwait." "We express our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased. Our Mission in Kuwait is in touch with the family of the deceased and is coordinating closely with the local authorities to render all support and for the early return of his mortal remains to India," he said. On March 20, at an inter-ministerial briefing on the West Asia situation, Mahajan had told reporters that six Indian nationals had lost their lives while one remained missing



in "various incidents."

On Monday, he shared an update, saying, "Eight Indian nationals have unfortunately lost their lives and one Indian national remains missing in various incidents."

The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia recently said that an Indian national was killed in Riyadh due to the "recent events of March 18."

The ministry also shared that since February 28, around 5.5 lakh passengers have returned from the region to India. The MEA on Monday reiterated that it continues to closely monitor the evolving situation in the Gulf and West Asia region.

"We continue to call for restraint and de-escalation, and at the same time emphasise on dialogue and diplomacy, as a means to an early end to the conflict," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

He also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 28, spoke to the Crown Prince and PM of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and discussed with him the ongoing conflict in West Asia and agreed on the need to ensure freedom of navigation.

Airfares set to rise, Aviation Minister calls on states to cut tax on jet fuel

Sources indicated that the ministry is also holding separate meetings with state government officials and is hopeful of reaching a solution soon. Global ATF prices have nearly doubled since the West Asia conflict began on February 28.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid rising fuel prices due to the Middle East war, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu has appealed to state governments to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF). Sources told India Today that Naidu has reached out to state Chief Ministers, urging them to reduce the tax burden and provide relief to airlines as well as passengers. His outreach comes just before ATF prices will be revised on April 1, which will lead to a spike in airfares. "States such as Delhi have VAT as high as 25%. Delhi has had 'good times' for years now. In the wake of the West Asia conflict, they should cut the VAT. Delhi CM Rekha Gupta is humble and would possibly understand the need of the

hour," sources in the Ministry of Civil Aviation said. Notably, Delhi is home to one of the busiest airports in the world. The Indira Gandhi International airport



is believed to have catered to nearly 79 million passengers in 2024-25. Maharashtra, home to one of the busiest airports of India - the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport -

charges 18% VAT on ATF. Poll-bound Tamil Nadu charges the highest VAT on ATF - 29 percent.

Sources indicated that the ministry is also holding separate meetings with state government officials and is hopeful of reaching a solution soon.

Industry insiders argue that a reduction in VAT on ATF could provide some relief to airlines. For the past few weeks, Indian operators have been appealing to the ministry to urge states to reduce the tax burden on aviation fuel.

Global ATF prices have nearly doubled since the West Asia conflict began on February 28. As per the IATA tracker, the weekly average price of ATF was \$99.40 per barrel on Feb 27.

India eyes global market with BrahMos-equipped warships: A game changer for friendly nations

Armed with lethal BrahMos missiles, this stealthy warship offers an "affordable yet lethal" solution for maritime security in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, critical for nations facing escalating threats and seeking agile, high-firepower naval defense.

New Delhi.(Agency)

As the Middle East remains a crucible of conflict and maritime trade routes face unprecedented threats, India has turned its defence strategy from self-reliance to global influence. In a landmark diplomatic and military move, New Delhi has announced plans to export its Next-Generation Missile Vessel (NGMV), a stealthy, high-tech warship armed with the lethal BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, to friendly nations across Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The decision comes as escalating tensions in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean have sent shockwaves through global energy supply chains. With ship safety at an all-time low in sensitive corridors like the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, nations are desperate for agile, high-firepower solutions. India's NGMV is positioning itself as the premier "affordable yet lethal" choice for navies looking to secure their economic zones without the price tag of a massive destroyer. Despite its compact size of approximately 1,450 tonnes, the

NGMV is designed for "Sea-denial", the ability to prevent an enemy from using the sea. Its primary sting comes from eight BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, capable of striking both enemy vessels and coastal targets with pinpoint accuracy from vast distances.

To defend against the modern threats of drone swarms and missile strikes, now common in the Middle East conflict, the vessel is packed with a multi-layered defence suite: 24 VL-SRSAM missiles for air defence.

76mm main guns and AK-630M CIWS (Close-In-Weapon System). VSHORADS (Very Short Range Air Defence) for immediate

aerial threats. Engineered for modern naval warfare, the NGMV features a stealth design specifically crafted to minimise radar and infrared signatures. This makes it a "ghost" in sensitive maritime environments.

In terms of speed and range, the warship can be deployed on long-range missions with a speed of 35 knots and a capacity of 2,800 nautical miles. About 80 to 90 crew members will be deployed on each ship.



Pink elephant in controversial photoshoot died a month ago: Here's what happened

New Delhi.(Agency)

A row has broken out after a foreign artist shared a photoshoot featuring a pink-painted elephant on social media, triggering debate over animal welfare. The art photographer, Julia Buruleva, faced heavy backlash from internet users, with a larger section of people expressing concern about the elephant and accusing her of exploitation. The model in the photoshoot is identified as Yashasvi, and the shoot was conducted a year ago. According to an NDTV report, the elephant in the frame was a female named Chanchal. She belonged to the Hathi Gaon (Elephant Village) area.

The President of the Hathi Gaon committee, Ballu Khan, confirmed that the elephant was coloured with the gugal, and the paint was removed within 30 minutes after the shoot.

Khan also confirmed that Chanchal died a month ago, and at that time she was 70 years old. Following this, several users claimed that Chanchal's death is linked to the photoshoot, but there is no evidence to support these allegations.

However, the local handlers and officials clarified that Chanchal was 70 years old, which is an advanced age for an elephant. They also said that she died due to natural causes.

The timing of the photoshoot went viral, and news of her death has triggered outrage among the public, as some urged officials to take strict actions and give clear guidelines on the use of animals for commercial activities. The controversy began when a Russian photographer, Julia Buruleva, painted an elephant pink and staged a shoot at an abandoned Ganesha temple in Jaipur in November 2025.

But the controversy erupted in 2026 after her post went viral. She came forward and expressed her intentions behind the photoshoot. Buruleva clarified that she spent six weeks in Jaipur and saw elephants everywhere in the state, and with the city's iconic pink colour, she drove her idea by mixing both.

City gets light showers, IMD forecasts drizzle for first week of April

New Delhi.(Agency)

The capital witnessed light rain in some parts of the city on Monday, with the minimum temperature settling at 20.4 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted light showers in the capital in the first week of April. The possibility of very light rain or drizzle has been predicted for March 31 and for April 3 and 4.



On the other hand, the minimum temperatures over the next two days are expected to fall and range between 17 and 19 degrees Celsius. Additionally, this week will generally witness partly cloudy skies across the city. The ongoing spell of unusual weather in March, now leading to April, is linked to a series of western disturbances affecting northwest India. These disturbances have been influencing the region since March 15 and are approaching at a lower altitude than usual, impacting weather patterns over Delhi. As a result, isolated parts of the city might experience high wind speeds and light rain, IMD officials said.

On the air quality front, the Air Quality Index was recorded in the "moderate" category with a reading of 180 at 4 pm. According to the CPCB, an AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'. After months of severe AQI levels in the national capital, the month of March has brought respite.

How A Fight At A Nightclub Ended In Death Of Ex-Army Brigadier On Morning Walk



Retired Brigadier Mukesh Kumar Joshi was hit by a stray bullet during a morning walk in Dehradun.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Hours before a retired Army brigadier, Mukesh Kumar Joshi, was killed by a stray bullet in Uttarakhand's Dehradun on Monday, two groups had fought over a bill at a nightclub. The argument broke out at a nightclub, 'Zen-G', between Aditya Chaudhary and Mohit Agarwal, an employee at the club, Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pramendra Singh Dobal told a press conference on Monday evening. It escalated when Mohit and two other staff members allegedly smashed the windows of Chaudhary's new Scorpio N car.

Chaudhary then left the club and waited nearby with his friends to confront the staff. When Mohit and other employees left the club in their employer's Delhi-registered Fortuner in the morning, Chaudhary and his friends chased them. During the chase, one of Chaudhary's associates, Shantanu Tyagi, fired at the Fortuner to force it to stop, triggering an exchange of fire between the two groups. A video has also surfaced showing the black-coloured Scorpio N chasing the white Fortuner.

One of the bullets then struck 74-year-old retired Brigadier Mukesh Kumar Joshi, who was out for a morning walk with his friends. He later died in hospital. The Fortuner then went out of control and crashed into a roadside tree, following which Aditya and his friends thrashed people in the SUV, including Rohit Kumar and Akhlaq.

Aditya and his group then hid their Scorpio N on a forested stretch and fled. The police then received a phone call about the "road rage" incident and began investigation. During the probe, they took Rohit and Akhlaq into custody for questioning. They initially claimed the shooting was carried out by the occupants of the Scorpio N following a dispute over overtaking. They later admitted to possessing weapons themselves and confessed to having opened fire as well.

Police later recovered the Scorpio N from a forested stretch along Thano Road and seized both vehicles.

Two country-made pistols, four live cartridges and two spent shells were also recovered.

Four people, including Aditya Chaudhary, nightclub owner Sandeep Kumar, Rohit Kumar and Akhlaq, have been arrested. Kumar's nightclub, which remained open through the night in violation of rules, has been sealed, Dobal said. Several accused who were in the Scorpio N - Shantanu Tyagi, Kavish Tyagi, Sameer Chaudhary and Vaibhav -- are currently on the run. Dobal said that the Scorpio N occupants are predominantly students from Delhi and Bihar, who are currently studying in Dehradun.

AAP MP Raghav Chadha Calls For Paternity Leave Law In India

AAP MP Raghav Chadha stressed that the presence of a husband is crucial for a woman immediately after childbirth.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Raghav Chadha has once again drawn attention during the ongoing Parliament session by raising a key social issue demanding that paternity leave be made a legal right in India. Speaking in the House, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP argued that caregiving responsibilities after childbirth should not fall solely on mothers. "When a child is born, both parents are congratulated, but the responsibility of caregiving falls disproportionately on the mother," Chadha said, emphasising the need for a more balanced approach. He highlighted that fathers are often forced to choose between their jobs and supporting their families during one of the most critical phases of life. "A father should not have to choose between caring for his newborn and keeping his

job. Similarly, a mother should not have to go through childbirth and recovery without her partner's support," he added.

Chadha stressed that the presence of a husband is crucial for a woman immediately after childbirth, not only for emotional support but also for shared caregiving. "Caregiving is a shared responsibility. Our laws must reflect that," he asserted. Chadha in the past has been vocal on several issues which are related to a large number of people. He raised consumer and public interest issues such as online delivery timelines, airline charges on luggage, and packaged juices for health.

His remarks come at a time when the judiciary has also echoed similar

sentiments. Earlier this month, a bench of the Supreme Court of India comprising Justice J.B. Pardiwala and



Justice R. Mahadevan, while hearing one matter, observed that while a mother's role in a child's development is undeniable, the father's role is equally important and cannot be ignored. The

court noted that parenting is a shared responsibility and that fathers should have the opportunity to actively participate in a child's early development.

At present, India does not have a specific law mandating paternity leave in the private sector. While maternity leave is governed under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, paternity leave remains outside the purview of labour legislation.

For government employees, paternity leave is recognised under the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972. As per these rules, male government employees are entitled to 15 days of fully paid leave, which must be availed within six months of the child's birth and is limited to up to two surviving children.

NEWS BOX

More chaos in PSL: Shaheen Afridi fined for breaching security protocol

New Delhi. (Agency)
Lahore Qalandars have imposed a fine of PKR 1 million on their captain, Shaheen Shah Afridi, for breaching Pakistan Super League (PSL) security protocols. The decision follows allegations by Punjab police accusing Afridi of violating established security rules at the team hotel. The incident involved unauthorised visitors being allowed into a players' hotel room despite explicit refusals from PSL and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) security officials. Lahore Qalandars, in their statement, said the fine was imposed to maintain discipline and uphold accountability within the team. While underscoring that the matter arose from a misunderstanding rather than any deliberate



attempt to violate established procedures, Lahore Qalandars reiterated its full respect for all security protocols," the statement said. "The organisation reaffirmed its commitment to strict adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and emphasised the importance of continued clarity and alignment in the communication of protocols to prevent similar situations in the future. The episode took place on a Saturday night when four visitors, reportedly known to Sikandar Raza, spent nearly three hours in one of the players' rooms. This occurred despite repeated denials for permission from both the PCB's security manager and PSL CEO Salman Naseem

WHAT WAS AFRIDI'S SECURITY BREACH ABOUT?

The controversy began when the Qalandars' liaison officer requested approval for Raza's acquaintances to visit the hotel room. The request was denied due to security concerns, and a subsequent appeal by the team owner Sameen Rana to the PSL CEO was also rejected. Despite these refusals, Afridi and Raza allegedly escorted the visitors into the players' room, reportedly ignoring resistance from on-duty security personnel.

CSK has no place for doubts: Hussey backs players to rise back from RR thrashing

MUMBAI. (Agency)
Chennai Super Kings batting coach Mike Hussey backed his players to stay confident despite a heavy defeat to Rajasthan Royals, insisting there is no room for doubt after just one game in IPL 2026. Hussey stressed that the team will continue to trust its batting group and avoid overreacting to the result. CSK endured a disappointing start to their campaign, going down by eight wickets in Guwahati after being bowled out for 127. Speaking after the loss, Hussey maintained that the result does not change the team's belief in its batting group. "100%, we'll still be backing this team. No questions about that. There's no doubt about that. I'm sure a few guys will say, in hindsight, maybe I could have played a bit differently, but on another day it comes off, and they change the momentum of the game. I don't want our batsmen moving forward to have clouded thoughts or put doubts in their minds, because I don't think players perform at their best when they are second-guessing

themselves," Hussey said in the post-match press conference. "I would prefer them to come in with a clear attitude and a clear plan on how they want to play, assess the conditions quickly, and then back themselves. If it comes off, great. If it doesn't, that's sometimes cricket. So I don't want this performance to cloud or put doubt and fear into our team," he added.



HOW CSK READ THE GUWAHATI PITCH WRONG
The Guwahati surface, which had been under covers due to rain, offered early movement and assistance to seamers, something RR exploited perfectly after opting to bowl. Reflecting on the conditions, Hussey admitted that CSK could have adapted better to what the pitch offered.

Ryan Williams debut hints at new Indian football era despite chaos

Ryan Williams is set to make his India debut in a dead rubber against Hong Kong. While the campaign has faltered, his arrival hints at a potential shift in India's footballing future.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Ryan Williams is set to make his long-awaited debut for India national football team against Hong Kong national football team, offering a glimpse into a possible new direction for Indian football despite a turbulent AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign. The Australian-born winger's arrival comes at a time when results have faltered, but the need for transition has become more urgent than ever. India head into their final AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifier in Kochi on March 31, with little left to play for in terms of qualification, yet the occasion carries significance beyond the standings. With the

campaign already derailed, the focus shifts to signs of change, and Williams' inclusion could be one such indicator.

Speaking to Sportstar ahead of his highly-anticipated debut, Williams reflected on his journey to donning the Blue Tigers jersey and realising his dream. "There have been two kinds of relief. The first was getting the Indian passport in my hand, which took a lot longer than we would have liked, and then, being eligible to play now," he said.

"As long as I'm fit, and I'm playing well — scoring goals, assisting and making a difference in the team — any chance that I get to put the Indian jersey on, I'll take it...I just don't know how many people would be willing to give up their passports to come and play. If there were a dual (passports) thing, or you could play with the OCI card, that would be cool," he added. Williams' journey to the national team has been anything but straightforward. Having previously represented Australia, he renounced his citizenship to become eligible for India through his Anglo-Indian roots, marking a rare and symbolic step that reflects both personal commitment and structural gaps in

Indian football's eligibility framework. **WHY WAS RYAN WILLIAMS DEBUT DELAYED?**

Williams' journey to the Indian national team has been far from straightforward. The 32-year-old, born in Perth, qualified



through his maternal roots and completed his citizenship process in late 2025. However, his debut was delayed due to pending FIFA clearance and a No Objection Certificate from Football Australia, which prevented him from being registered in time for India's earlier fixture against Bangladesh.

He had been part of the national camp and even travelled with the squad, but missed out on matchday inclusion due to the documentation delay. Now fit and available, Williams is set to finally make his competitive debut.

With experience across English football, including stints at Fulham and Portsmouth, along with time in Australia and India with Bengaluru FC, Williams brings a different profile to India's attack.

WHAT INDIA VS HONG KONG MEANS FOR JAMIL?

For head coach Khalid Jamil, the match is less about points and more about salvaging belief. This is a very important match for us," Jamil said in the pre-match press conference. "We must not take it lightly. We are ready for this game, and we need your support, especially this time. We should not think too much about the past. Even though we are out, we want to finish on a good note."

India are set to finish at the bottom of the group and are still searching for their first win in the campaign. In that context, avoiding a winless run becomes a key objective, even in what is otherwise an inconsequential fixture.

Ravindra Jadeja offers first real measure of the CSK trade narrative

New Delhi. (Agency)
When news broke of the trade between Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings, with Ravindra Jadeja heading to RR and Sanju Samson moving the other way, the early consensus tilted heavily in Chennai's favour. Viewed through a long-term lens, it made sense. Samson was firmly entrenched in India's T20I setup and had just produced the tournament of his life, finishing as Player of the Tournament as India defended their T20 crown in Ahmedabad. Jadeja, meanwhile, had stepped away from T20 internationals after the 2024 title win, and questions lingered over whether he still had the tools to thrive in the shortest format. Those doubts were not entirely misplaced. In a format increasingly tilted towards power-hitting, where bowlers are routinely taken apart, Jadeja's role had begun to feel less defined. Could he still dictate terms with the ball, or would he be reduced to containment in an era that rewards aggression?



RETURN TO CRAFT
As the early days of IPL 2026 have shown, however, experience continues to find a way. Much like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, Jadeja has once again demonstrated that class can adapt, recalibrate, and remain relevant. In Guwahati, on a surface that appeared far more helpful to seamers, Jadeja quietly went about reminding everyone what makes him such a valuable T20 operator. While the spotlight naturally drifted towards the new-ball movement and the quicks who exploited it, Jadeja carved

out his own influence in conditions that did not necessarily scream for spin.

There was no dramatic reinvention, no sudden unveiling of mystery. Instead, it was a return to the basics that have defined his success over the years. Subtle changes of pace, relentless accuracy, and a keen understanding of match-ups allowed him to stay ahead of the batters. His dismissal of Sarfaraz Khan was a case in point. Slowing it down to around the high-80s, Jadeja drew the batter into a stroke that arrived a fraction too early. It is a trap many fall into against him, the assumption that pace will remain constant, only to be undone by that slight variation. Against Shivam Dube, the challenge was of a different nature. Dube is among the most destructive spin hitters in the format, and the match-up has historically favoured the batter. Jadeja, though, did not retreat from it. Instead, he leaned into the contest.

KKR piling pressure on Cameron Green? Australia head coach raises price tag concerns

Mumbai. (Agency)
Kolkata Knight Riders all-rounder Cameron Green finds himself under early scrutiny in IPL 2026, with questions emerging around his role and impact after the loss to Mumbai Indians. However, Australia head coach Andrew McDonald has backed the 26-year-old, highlighting the weight of expectations that come with being a high-value all-rounder. Green, who was bought by KKR for Rs 25.2 crore, did not bowl in the season opener at Wankhede, where KKR's attack struggled to defend 220. His absence as a bowling option was evident as MI chased down the target comfortably, exposing a lack of depth in KKR's attack.

However, Andrew McDonald suggested that expectations around Green might be too high, while backing the 26-year-old to find his balance soon enough. "There's huge expectation within the IPL, and there's huge expectation with any all-rounder that shapes an Australian team. It's not unfair, but there is an expectation around all-rounders that they contribute in a certain way," McDonald said while speaking on SEN Radio.

"It's almost like they want them to average 45 with the bat and average less than 30 with the ball. And there's been very few that do that. I'm sure that his career will trend upwards... We know he's good enough. He's just got to balance out all those expectations, and in particular, playing all three formats, which is a significant challenge for any cricketer," he added.

WHY IS CAMERON GREEN NOT BOWLING FOR KKR?

Green's absence with the ball in the opener led to questions, especially after KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane hinted at the team combination improving once he resumes bowling.

It was later clarified by Cricket Australia that Green is currently managing a back niggle, which requires him to stay away from bowling for around 10 to 12 days. The KKR management is fully aware of the situation, and his workload is being managed carefully.

This restriction significantly impacted KKR's balance against MI, particularly with the team already missing key bowling options like Harshit Rana and Akash Deep, while Matheesha Pathirana remains unavailable.

Without Green's additional overs, KKR's bowlers came under heavy pressure. Varun Chakravarthy went wicketless, while Vaibhav Arora and Blessing Muzarabani were taken apart by MI's openers.

Praggnanandhaa holds joint lead in Candidates after hard-fought draw vs Wei Yi

R Praggnanandhaa held Wei Yi to a draw to stay joint leader after two rounds of the Candidates. The second round saw a calmer day, with most games ending without a winner.

Paphos. (Agency)
R Praggnanandhaa continued his steady start to the FIDE Candidates tournament, playing out a comfortable draw with black against Wei Yi in the second round on Monday to remain in joint lead with 1.5 points. After a strong opening-round win over Anish Giri, Praggnanandhaa once again looked in control, applying slight pressure out of a French defence despite playing with the black pieces. However, Wei Yi chose a safe route, steering the game towards simplification as pieces were

exchanged at regular intervals. The game eventually transitioned into an opposite-coloured bishops endgame, where Praggnanandhaa held an extra pawn but could not make further progress. With White's position solid, the players agreed to



a draw after 46 moves. While the opening round had produced three decisive results, the second round saw a more cautious approach across boards. Giri settled for a draw with Fabiano Caruana, while Javokhir Sindarov shared the point with Matthias

Bluebaum. In another game, Hikaru Nakamura was holding a theoretically drawn rook-and-pawn endgame against Andrey Esipenko.

WHAT HAPPENED IN CANDIDATES WOMEN'S SECTION?

In the women's event, Divya Deshmukh missed a golden opportunity to take sole lead after letting a winning position slip against compatriot R Vaishali.

Divya had found a strong tactical idea in time trouble but faltered in execution, allowing Vaishali to escape with a resourceful counter that included a queen sacrifice to force a draw. Jiner Zhu also failed to convert a near-winning position against Kateryna Lagno, who salvaged a draw through a timely rook sacrifice under pressure.

Elsewhere, Bibisara Assaubayeva drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina, while Zhongyi Tan shared points with Anna Muzychuk.

Confused Chennai's selection strategy faces scrutiny after Rajasthan horror

IPL 2026, RR vs CSK: Former India spinner Piyush Chawla criticised the five-time champions for looking confused and underprepared during their eight-wicket loss to Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)
Former cricketer Piyush Chawla slammed Chennai Super Kings, saying that the five-time champions looked confused and underprepared in the IPL 2026 clash against Rajasthan Royals. On Monday, CSK slumped to an eight-wicket defeat at the Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati, attracting



criticism from Chawla. Chawla said that with Dewald Brevis injured, CSK should have utilised Sarfaraz Khan in a better way. The Super Kings brought Sarfaraz as an Impact Sub after they were reduced to 19 for three in 3.1 overs. Sarfaraz

scored 17 runs off 12 balls before Ravindra Jadeja dismissed him LBW. Chawla, who played a solitary season for CSK in 2020, said that Sarfaraz should have batted higher up the order for the Super Kings and should have been in the starting XI.

"CSK did not look ready at all. As I mentioned earlier, they looked really confused, and when a team lacks clarity, these things tend to happen," Chawla told ESPNcricinfo.

"Sarfaraz Khan batted at No.3 for Mumbai this season and had a strong run. But if CSK really wanted him in the top order, especially with Dewald Brevis injured, he should have been in the playing XI from the very beginning - the same applies to Urvil Patel," Chawla added.

SUPER KINGS CRUMBLE IN GUWAHATI
CSK endured a forgettable outing against Rajasthan Royals, getting bowled out for 127 in 19.4 overs. Reduced to 94 for nine in 15.3 overs, they were at one stage in danger of being dismissed for under 100. However, Jamie Overton's 43 off 36 balls gave the total some much-needed respectability. In reply, the Royals chased down the target with 47 balls to spare, thanks largely to Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's explosive 52 off just 17 deliveries, which included four fours and five sixes.

US Defense Secretary's broker looked to buy defence fund before Iran attack

New Delhi.(Agency)

A broker for US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth attempted to make a big investment in major defense companies in the weeks leading up to the US-Israeli attack on Iran, the Financial Times reported on Monday, citing three people familiar with the matter. Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said on X the story was "entirely false and fabricated" and demanded a retraction. The FT report said Hegseth's broker at Morgan Stanley MS.N contacted BlackRock BLK.N in February, about making a multimillion-dollar investment in the asset manager's Defence Industrials Active ETF, shortly before the U.S. launched military action against Tehran. According to the FT report, the investment discussed by Hegseth's broker did not ultimately go ahead as the fund, which launched in May last year, was not yet available for Morgan Stanley clients to buy. The FT report did not say how much discretion the broker had to make investments on Hegseth's behalf, or whether Hegseth knew what the broker was doing. "Neither Secretary Hegseth nor any of his representatives approached BlackRock about any such investment," Parnell said. BlackRock declined to comment on the report, while Morgan Stanley did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment. The report on the investment attempt comes amid a wider scrutiny of trades made in financial and prediction markets ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's major policy decisions. Some of these decisions have been preceded by well-timed bets, leading some experts to raise questions about whether information had somehow leaked ahead of time.

India's economy to jump 6.5% in FY27 despite high crude oil prices: report

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's economic momentum is running into a wall it did not build. Rising crude oil prices and tightening energy supplies — both products of the ongoing conflict in West Asia — are expected to shave growth to 6.5 per cent in the financial year beginning April, according to a fresh assessment by ratings agency ICRA. The number is not alarming in isolation. A 6.5 per cent expansion is still faster than most large economies manage. But the direction matters as much as the figure — and the direction has shifted, driven almost entirely by forces outside India's control. Perhaps the more immediate concern for ordinary households is what happens to prices. ICRA expects consumer price inflation to rise to 4.3 per cent in FY27, up sharply from an unusually benign 2.1 per cent in FY26. The jump is not driven by domestic demand running too hot — it is being pushed by the energy channel. Higher crude oil prices feed through into transport costs, power tariffs, fertiliser prices, and ultimately into the food and manufactured goods that households buy every month.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee finds itself in an uncomfortable position as a result. Growth is softening, which would normally argue for rate cuts to provide stimulus. But inflation is heading upward at the same time, which limits the room to ease.

ICRA's assessment is that the MPC will most likely hold rates steady for an extended period rather than move aggressively in either direction — watching the situation rather than acting on it. The RBI is expected to keep managing liquidity in the banking system to cushion the impact without formally cutting borrowing costs.

The West Asia Factor

Before the conflict escalated, the picture looked considerably brighter. High-frequency economic indicators through early 2026 were showing healthy trends — reasonable consumption growth, solid GST collections, and improving manufacturing activity.

RBI defers capital market exposure norms to July 1, tweaks acquisition finance rules

Kolkata.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday deferred the implementation of its revised capital market exposure framework by three months to July 1, 2026, following representations from banks and industry stakeholders flagging operational challenges and seeking clarity on certain provisions.

The amended directions, originally issued on February 13 and slated to come into effect from April 1, aim to provide an enabling framework for bank financing of corporate acquisitions, rationalise lending limits against shares and units of REITs and InvITs, and introduce a more principle-based approach to lending to capital market intermediaries (CMIs).

The central bank said it received feedback from banks, CMIs and industry associations highlighting interpretational and operational issues. After further consultations, it decided to extend the timeline and introduce clarifications to smoothen implementation. Among the key changes, the RBI expanded the definition of acquisition finance to include mergers and amalgamations. It clarified that such financing can be extended only for acquiring control over a non-financial target company.

In cases where the target is a holding or parent company with subsidiaries, lenders must ensure that the criterion of "potential synergy" is met on a consolidated basis. The RBI also allowed acquiring companies to avail acquisition finance for on-lending to subsidiaries — both domestic and overseas — for the purpose of acquiring a target entity. Further, the regulator specified that refinancing of acquisition finance can be undertaken only after the acquisition process is fully completed and control has been established.

ITR forms for AY 2026–27 out: Who can file ITR-1 and when should you choose ITR-2

The income tax filing season is here again, and the first step is knowing which form to pick.

While ITR-1 works for many, others may need ITR-2, but how do you decide which one applies to you

New Delhi.(Agency)

The income tax season is quietly knocking on the door again. If you are someone who usually waits till the last moment to file your return, here's your early heads-up: The government has already rolled out the forms for the next assessment year, giving taxpayers a clear runway to get started. ITR FORMS FOR AY 2026–27 NOTIFIED

On March 30, 2026, the government notified income tax return (ITR) forms from ITR-1 to ITR-7 for the assessment year 2026–27. This means individuals, pensioners, professionals and other taxpayers can now begin preparing to file their returns. The deadline to submit ITR for most individual taxpayers remains July 31, 2026. Filing early not only reduces last-minute stress but also helps in faster processing of refunds. A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT CHANGE IN ITR-1

One change in ITR-1 (also known as Sahaj) is likely to make life easier for many taxpayers. Here, it must be noted that ITR-1 can now be used to report income from up to two house properties. Earlier, taxpayers with two houses had to move to more detailed forms like ITR-2 or ITR-3.

This tweak may look minor, but it simplifies filing for many salaried individuals who own an additional house,

especially those with a self-occupied property and another one on rent. ITR-1 is meant for resident individuals with simple income sources such as salary,



pension and limited other income. However, there are clear restrictions on what can be reported through this form. If your income includes business or professional earnings, you cannot use ITR-1. The same applies if you have

short-term capital gains or long-term capital gains under section 112A exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh. Certain types of income also make you ineligible, such as lottery winnings, income from race horses, or income taxed at special rates under specific sections. Cases involving income apportionment under section 5A are also excluded. However, if you do not qualify for ITR-1, the next option is usually ITR-2. This form can be used by individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who do not have income from business or profession. It is typically suitable for those with multiple income sources, including capital gains, more complex financial arrangements, or income that needs to be clubbed from a spouse or minor child. On the other hand, ITR-2 is not meant for those earning income from a business or profession.

Are buyers choosing paint for identity, not just performance

New Delhi.(Agency)

For decades, India's paints industry has been driven by performance claims such as durability, finish, washability, and price. Packaging, by contrast, has largely remained functional and has been designed to signal product hierarchy rather than create emotional resonance. That paradigm is now shifting, with a new approach placing cultural identity at the centre of how paint is presented and perceived.

SHIFT FROM FUNCTION TO IDENTITY

A broader transformation is underway in India's premium home improvement market, where aesthetics now extend beyond walls into the products themselves. This shift is reflected in new luxury interior paint lines featuring packaging inspired by the artistic traditions, typography, and architectural motifs of Tamil Nadu. This direction aligns with a growing consumer preference for rooted, culturally expressive luxury.

Unlike conventional paint buckets that rely on colour bands and finish

descriptors, culturally inspired packaging draws from regional design language, incorporating visual cues from temple architecture, typography inspired by Tamil script, and references to local artistic traditions.



The result is a product positioned not merely as paint, but as a curated lifestyle offering aligned with the emerging "India Modern" aesthetic. CHANGING BUYER BEHAVIOUR AND DEMAND

The paint market is evolving not only in terms of technology but also in consumer expectations. Today's buyers increasingly seek products that reflect

their identity and values, rather than just deliver functional outcomes. Rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and growth in luxury housing are reshaping demand patterns. Affluent homeowners and NRIs investing in premium real estate across cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai are looking for interior solutions that reflect individuality and cultural connection. In this context, packaging has emerged as a subtle yet powerful differentiator, particularly in the premium segment. Paint purchases are no longer purely transactional. Consumers are drawn to products that tell a story. When packaging reflects craftsmanship and cultural depth, it reinforces authenticity and elevates perceived value.

PACKAGING AS A DIFFERENTIATOR IN PREMIUM SEGMENT

Among younger homeowners and design-conscious buyers, culturally inspired packaging is gaining strong traction.

Australia investigates tech giants over social media ban breaches

SYDNEY.(Agency)

Australia is investigating Facebook, TikTok and YouTube for possible breaches of the country's under-16 social media ban, accusing the big tech companies on Tuesday of "failing to obey" the world-leading laws. Australia in December banned under-16s from a raft of the world's most popular social media sites, citing the need to protect young minds from "predatory algorithms" filled with sex and violence. Three months since the landmark laws came into effect, Australia's online safety watchdog found a "substantial proportion of Australian children" were still scrolling banned platforms. "Australia's world-leading social media laws are not failing. But big tech is failing to obey the laws," Communications Minister



Anika Wells told reporters. "Australia will not let the social media giants take us for mugs." Australia's eSafety Commission flagged "significant concerns" about Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube. "None of this is impossible. None of this is even difficult for big tech, who are innovative billion dollar companies," Wells said. "If these companies want to do business in Australia, they must obey Australian laws." Australia would

decide any punishments by mid-2026. Tech companies face fines of up to \$33.9 million (Aus\$49.5 million) under the laws. More than five million accounts belonging to underage Australian users have been removed since the laws came into effect, the eSafety Commission said. A growing body of research suggests too much time online is taking a toll on teen well-being. Australia's ban has been hailed as a godsend for parents sick of seeing children glued to their phones. It has also drawn interest across the globe — with Malaysia, France, New Zealand and Indonesia among the nations now eyeing similar measures. Although social media companies have pledged to abide by the laws, they have warned the measures could instead push teenagers into dark.

Opening a women-centric bank account? Here's what to actually look for

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's financial inclusion journey has made remarkable strides in recent years. According to government data, women today account for nearly 39 percent of bank account holders and contribute close to 40 percent of total deposits in the country. Participation is even stronger in rural regions, where women hold over 42 percent of bank accounts. These numbers reflect a positive shift towards greater engagement with formal banking systems. However, account ownership alone does not always translate into meaningful financial empowerment or informed financial decision-making. For many women, financial choices are closely tied to household stability, long-term planning, day-to-day expense management, and securing the future of their children. In this context, women-centric bank accounts have emerged as financial solutions designed to support these priorities.

WHY WOMEN-CENTRIC BANK ACCOUNTS ARE GAINING ATTENTION

Women are increasingly playing a central role in managing household finances and contributing to savings and investment decisions. Yet, for a long time, banking products were designed with a generic customer profile in mind, often overlooking the specific financial needs and behavioural patterns of women.

Women-centric bank accounts were introduced to bridge this gap. The aim is not merely to create a separate category of savings account, but to integrate features that align with real financial priorities.

When thoughtfully designed, these accounts can help strengthen savings discipline, provide financial protection, and make banking services more accessible and convenient. They can also play a crucial role in enabling greater economic freedom for women, which often creates a ripple effect strengthening household resilience, improving financial decision-making, and contributing to broader

socio-economic development. WHAT FEATURES SHOULD YOU ACTUALLY COMPARE

As the concept of women-centric banking gains popularity, it is important to



recognise that not every account labelled as "women-focused" necessarily delivers meaningful benefits. Evaluating the features offered can help women make more informed choices. One key aspect is support for savings growth. This may include preferential interest rates on savings balances or deposits, easier access to recurring deposit options, and bundled

solutions that help convert regular savings into structured financial plans. Such features can play a significant role in building wealth over time and supporting long-term goals. In addition, some accounts offer reward programmes and special discounts on everyday purchases and healthcare services, which can add tangible value to regular spending while supporting overall well-being.

Another important consideration is financial protection. Many banks now offer integrated insurance benefits such as accidental cover or basic health protection. These features can enhance financial resilience by providing support during unforeseen circumstances. Convenience is equally critical. Digital banking platforms, mobile applications, simplified account services, and easy transaction monitoring can encourage greater participation particularly among first-time account holders or those transitioning from informal savings practices.

What is tax-loss harvesting and how can it help you save tax

New Delhi.(Agency)

As March comes to an end, it's that time again when a new financial year brings a fresh set of rules. From income tax to train tickets, several changes kick in from April 1, 2026 — and some of them could quietly affect your daily expenses and planning. Here's a simple look at what is changing from April 1, 2026. A NEW INCOME TAX LAW COMES INTO FORCE

A major shift this year is the introduction of the Income Tax Act, 2025, which replaces the old 1961 law. The focus is on making tax rules easier to follow. One noticeable change is in the language. Instead of using 'Assessment Year' and 'Previous Year', the system will now follow a single term — 'Tax Year'. For many taxpayers, this could make filing returns less confusing.

FORM 130 TO TRACK Tdeparture, compared to the earlier 4-hour window. Cancellations made between 8 and 24 hours will fetch a 50% refund, while those between 24 and 72 hours will see a 25% deduction. Even if tickets are cancelled more than 72 hours in advance, only partial refunds will be given as per applicable changes.

PAN APPLICATION RULES GET TIGHTER

Applying for a PAN card will now require clearer proof of date of birth. With the financial year ending today, investors are making last-minute moves to reduce their tax outgo. While many focus on popular options like ELSS or deductions, there is another strategy that often gets overlooked; tax loss harvesting.

This year, the tax saving strategy has become even more relevant. Stock markets have seen volatility and many investors are sitting on losses in equities. At the same time, assets like gold and silver have delivered strong returns, leading to higher tax liability for some investors. This creates a unique situation. What looks like a loss in one part of the portfolio can actually help reduce tax on gains in another. Archit Gupta, Founder & CEO, Clear has explained that tax loss harvesting is not just about saving tax today through his LinkedIn post. In some cases, it may be smarter to pay a small amount of tax now to save a much larger amount in the future.

WHAT IS TAX LOSS HARVESTING

Tax loss harvesting simply means using losses from one investment to reduce the tax on gains from another.

Shakti Shalini: Viineet Kumar Singh To Play Antagonist In

Aneet Padda

Starrer? What We Know

After being lauded for his performances in Chhaava alongside Vicky Kaushal, and in Jaat starring Sunny Deol, actor Viineet Kumar Singh has been roped in for another exciting project- 'Shakti Shalini'. In this upcoming horror-comedy, he will be seen playing the antagonist, reports Variety India. The film is headlined by Aneet Padda, known for Saiyaara, and Vishal Jethwa, who has impressed audiences with performances in Homebound and Mardaani 2.

Viineet Kumar Singh In Aneet Padda's Shakti Shalini

Viineet has already begun filming for Shakti Shalini, and his casting as the villain is expected to add a compelling layer to the story.



'Shakti Shalini' marks the sixth instalment in the 'Maddock Horror Universe,' following 'Stree,' 'Bhediya,' 'Munjya,' 'Stree 2' and 'Thamma.' The film is directed by Aditya Sarpotdar, who has earlier directed Munjya and Thamma. This project also brings Vishal Jethwa and Aneet Padda back together after the 2022 film 'Salaam Venky,' in which their on-screen chemistry had been noted as one of the standout aspects.

About Shakti Shalini

Last year, Aneet Padda was confirmed as the lead of 'Shakti Shalini', the next big chapter in the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe. Her character was officially introduced in the post-credits scene of Ayushmann Khurrana starrer Thamma, which was released in theatres on 21st October 2025. Her character was described as "the creator, the destroyer, and the mother of all," in the teaser.

The film was officially announced for release on December 24, 2026. However, the producers are reportedly weighing the option of shifting the date, as Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's "King" is slated to hit theatres on the same day.

Meanwhile, Viineet Kumar Singh was recently seen in Netflix's "Hello Bachhon," a biographical drama web series in which he portrayed Alakh Pandey, the founder of the educational technology company Physics Wallah Limited. Directed by Pratish Mehta and created by The Viral Fever (TVF), the show also stars Vikram Kochhar and Girija Oak in significant roles.



Ameesha Patel Drops Throwback Pics From Her Birthday Celebration With Salman Khan In LA



Actress Ameesha Patel treated her Instagram Family with some lovely throwback pictures from her fun birthday celebration in Los Angeles with Salman Khan. The birthday celebration, which took place during a world tour, included a sweet cake-cutting ceremony.

The first pic from the post showed Salman and Ameesha standing next to each other. While Ameesha is all smiles, Salman has a goofy expression on his face. These two are also surrounded by some others who joined the 'Gadar' actress for the cute cake-cutting ceremony.

In the second image, Salman seems to be saying something into Ameesha's ear.

She captioned the post, "Throwback to my Birthday celebrations in Los Angeles USA— whilst on our world tour !! Sweetest bday cake cutting with @beingsalmankhan being his cutest self as always (sic)", followed by red heart emojis. Ameesha keeps on sharing constant updates from her life on social media.

Recently, Ameesha got stuck in the New York snowstorm, but she decided to make the most of the unfortunate situation.

She gave an insight into her snowy escapade by uploading a video on social media with the caption, "NEW YORK – stuck in the blizzard n flights can't take off — so might as well make the most of the SNOWFALL @kuunalgoomer @shabspatel100."

The video featured the 'Humraaz' actress walking through knee-deep snow on the streets of New York, dressed in warm winter wear.

We can also see her making snowballs and playfully enjoying the snowfall with her friends. Ameesha carefully strolls through thick layers of snow, laughing and soaking in the freezing atmosphere. Work-wise, Ameesha made her Bollywood debut in 2000 opposite Hrithik Roshan in "Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai". After a blockbuster debut, she further cemented her position in the industry with films such as "Gadar: Ek Prem Katha", "Humraaz", "Bhool Bhulaiyaa", and "Race 2". Ameesha was last seen on screen in "Gadar 2", in which she reprised her popular role as Sakeena.

Rajat Dalal Ties The Knot With His Girlfriend; Ranveer Singh Poses With Shah Rukh Khan At A Star-Studded Party



Bigg Boss 18' and 'The 50' fame Rajat Dalal has tied the knot with his girlfriend. The reality TV star left fans surprised as he shared some stunning pictures from his wedding ceremony on Sunday. Dressed in elegant traditional attire, Rajat looked every bit the joyful groom, while his bride complemented him perfectly. However, he chose to keep her identity private for now. The photos show the couple posing against the serene backdrop of a river, and the wedding moments looked straight out of a fairytale!

Shah Rukh Khan has been spotted with Ranveer Singh at a Mumbai party amid ongoing chatter about his silence on Dhurandhar: The Revenge. The viral photo has caught attention as fans continue to wonder why none of the three Khans have publicly reacted to the film's massive success. Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar: The Revenge has been dominating the box office, crossing Rs 1,200 crore worldwide within 10 days. While several celebrities have praised the film, some fans have noticed that Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan have not commented on it so far.

Virat and Anushka's public displays of affection at cricket matches are nothing new. Their IPL stand moments have gone viral multiple times over the years, with fans always keeping a close eye on Anushka's reactions whenever Virat is at the crease or in the field. The moments, caught on camera during RCB's opening match against SRH at Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, are now all over X and trending hard. Anushka was in the stands watching Virat smash a half-century off just 33 balls. The moment he reached the milestone, he turned towards her, blew kisses, and she returned them without hesitation.

Aditya Dhar's film Dhurandhar 2, starring Ranveer Singh, has been shattering box office records ever since it was released on March 19 in theatres. Ram Gopal Varma has been praising the film extensively on social media ever since he watched it. Now, in a note on X (formerly Twitter), he questioned the film industry's silence over Dhurandhar 2, and said that it is shocking. He questioned whether the industry is stunned by the film's brilliance, warning that ignoring a 'dinosaur' like Dhurandhar 2 would be sheer folly.



Sonam Kapoor

And Anand Ahuja Blessed With Second Child: 'Our Hearts Have Expanded'

Some news just makes hearts a little warmer today, and this one is definitely in that category. The Kapoor-Ahuja household seems to be buzzing with extra joy, and fans have a lot to smile about. Actor Sonam Kapoor shared on Instagram that she and husband Anand Ahuja have welcomed their second child, a baby boy. "With immense gratitude and hearts full of love, we are delighted to announce the arrival of our baby boy today, 29th of March 2026," she wrote.

She added, "Our family has grown, and with his arrival, our hearts have expanded in the most beautiful way. Vayu is overjoyed to welcome his little brother, and we feel deeply blessed by this precious new life who has filled our home with happiness and grace. We are grateful to begin this beautiful new chapter as a family of four. With love, Sonam, Anand & Vayu."

Friends and fellow celebrities were quick to share in their happiness. Kareena Kapoor commented, "Congratulations Sona and Anand," while Rhea Kapoor, Huma Qureshi, and several others reacted with red heart emojis. Sonam had confirmed her second pregnancy back in November 2025, posting a picture in a pink co-ord set with black stockings and heels, gently holding her baby bump. Her caption then was simple and sweet: "Mother" with a kissing emoji.



Try these Quirky summer concoctions to beat the heat

It's summer time and we have found a cool way to deal with the heat wave. Bringing their creative culinary side to the fore, they are preparing some refreshing summer coolers to stay hydrated. Some of the season-battered souls share their beat the heat drinks with us...

Magical mango-kokum mocktail

Necessity is the mother of all inventions says advertising professional, Sei Deshpande. She narrates how she invented a mocktail mixing aam panna and kokum sharbat when her mother's friends arrived at their home one day. "It was an impromptu effort as we had limited aam panna at home. I added cumin powder and chaat masala to enhance the flavour. It was loved by all and my mother was really proud," explains she and adds, "It is surely a refreshing change from those regular drinks and fruit juices. I make it regularly now on popular demand."

Wonderful watermelon mojito

Come summers and watermelons make their way to everyone's kitchens. An engineer Satyajit Mitra loves to experiment with this seasonal fruit every summer and this season he has perfected the watermelon mojito. "I tried some fruit beverages when I was in the US. Now, whenever there is a get together at our home I don a chef's cap and come



out with some amazing mocktail for them. This year, it is my watermelon mojito recipe that has garnered me a good feedback. This is one drink which kids also enjoy. I garnish it with pudina as for me the presentation is of utmost importance."

Mint Sharbat

Family members of homemaker Nikita Malu are smitten with the soothing Mint Sharba

solkadhi at home. "I first had this cool Konkani beverage while travelling to Goa. It was so tempting that I wanted to try it at home for my family. Though I do not cook regularly, I was glad when it turned out well. Solkadhi refreshes me to the core after the tiring day at work and I usually have it post dinner. Though I use actual coconut milk, one can use coconut power available in city super markets for quicker preparation."

Beneficial sattu sharbat

Another fantastic summer cooler that many we are enjoying is sattu sharbat. Chartered accountant Anjali Divecha says, "My husband is a foodie and this inspires me to experiment with innovative summer drinks. While I do make a variety of summer beverages, one drink which I always prepare is sattu sharbat which is good for digestion. In this crazy heat, it keeps the summer stroke at bay."



that she prepares these days. "Add a lot of mint, sugar syrup, soda and the refreshing sharbat is ready. It is a great coolant and a must have. It is more of an indianised form of mojito and is a quick preparation. I make it every alternate day."

Soothing Solkadhi

A young professional Neha Jain who is a self-confessed foodie makes



Recipe: Paneer Veg Rolls

Adelicious and easy to make lunch box dish or as an evening snack.

Paneer Veg Rolls

Image via YouTube video

Ingredients:

- Chapati - 8, readymade or premade
- Paneer - 200 gms, grated
- Capsicum - 1, finely chopped
- Onion - 1, finely chopped
- Spring Onions - 4, finely chopped
- Cumin Powder - 1 tsp
- Red Chilli Powder - 1 tsp
- Dry Mango Powder - 1/4 tsp
- Carrot - 2 tblsp, grated
- Corinader Leavess - little, finely chopped
- Oil as required
- Salt as per taste

Method:

1. Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
2. Saute the onions for a minute.
3. Add capesiums, carrot and saute for another minute or two.
4. Add paner and stir well.
5. After a minute add cumin powder, red chilli powder and salt.
6. Mix well.
7. Add coriander leaves, mango powder and stir again.
8. Warm the chapatis and place them on a flat surface.
9. Add 1 or 2 tblsp of the prepared filling mixture in the center.
10. Spread if desired.
11. Sprinkle spring onions and roll them tightly.
12. Serve at once or pack it for lunch.



Are you drinking the Right water?

Has sparkling water something to do with sparkling wine? Is RO water same as distilled water?? What is mineral water? Is flavoured water healthy? There are so many questions that accost us when we come across these various types of water in our day today life. Here is an attempt to clear some of the doubts around the

water we drink on various occasions. Infused water: Also known as detox water, it is one of the most popular drinks these days. Chopped fruits, vegetables and herbs are placed in a jar to which chilled water is added. It not only tastes delicious but is also super

healthy and is said to detoxify the body and aid weight loss.

Tonic water: Often used as a drink mixer for cocktails, Tonic water has a bitter flavor that comes from the quinine added to it. Initially it was used as a medical tonic. It was originally carbonated water laced with a large quantity of quinine that was intended for consumption in tropical regions where Malaria was prevalent. Now the quantity of quinine has come down and tonic water has found a place in bars and is popular with drink mixers.

Mineral water: Natural water from springs and fountains that are rich in minerals, salts and sulphur compounds is known as mineral water. In older days, people visited these 'springs' for a cure, but now these waters are mostly bottled and sold.

Flavoured water:

Flavoured water can be both DIY and artificially manufactured. To make it at home, place herbs and fruits in a jar and muddle with spoon. Add water and drink. It will have an amazing flavor. The ones manufactured have added artificial flavours.

Sparkling water: Sparkling water is a type of mineral water which has dissolved gases in natural form. But those manufactured artificially are basically carbonated water, but healthier because they do not have added sugar. Replacing regular water with sparkling water is not advisable because there are controversial reports on its health implications. They are said to leach calcium from bones and cause IBS if taken in large quantities.

RO water: Reverse Osmosis or RO as it is called uses high pressure to force water through a semi permeable membrane. It removes some dissolved salts, organics, bacteria and pathogens. However as the RO membrane ages in the filter it cannot be relied on removing all types of germs, especially viruses.

Distilled Water: It is the purest form of water (99.9%) and is obtained by the process of distillation i.e evaporating water to leave the contaminants behind. It is free from germs but also has no healthy dissolved salts.

Recipe: Apple Halwa

A simple, tasty and easy to make halwa with apple. Serve it as a dessert.

Ingredients:

- Apple - 1
- Unsweetened khoya - 1/4 cup
- Sugar - 1/4 cup
- Ghee - 1/4 cup
- Cardamom powder - 1/2 tsp



- Cashew nuts - 1/2 t b l s p , broken
 - Almonds - 1/2 tblsp, sliced
- Method:
1. Peel and grate the apple.
 2. Heat ghee in a pan over medium

3. Fry the almonds and cashew nuts for 30 to 60 seconds.
4. Add the grated apples and reduce flame.
5. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring from time to time.
6. Add the khoya, sugar and stir well.
7. When it reaches a halwa consistency and starts to leave the sides of the pan, add the cashew nuts, almonds and cardamom powder.
8. Remove and store it in an airtight container.
9. Serve as a dessert to any meal.

