

Congress leaders break ranks with Rahul Gandhi on Iran war, LPG supply

At least four senior Congress leaders have differed with the party high command's line on the war in Iran and the LPG situation in India. While Rahul Gandhi is attacking the Modi government, Kamal Nath, Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari have backed the government's handling of the crisis.

New Delhi.(Agency) After Operation Sindoor, the war in Iran and the LPG supply situation that seem to have created a difference of opinion within the Congress. Several senior leaders, including Kamal Nath, Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari have differed in their opinion from Rahul Gandhi's on the Modi government's handling of the war in the Middle East and the fuel supply situation in India.

However, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor called it "responsible statecraft". Rahul Gandhi urged the Centre to condemn Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's killing. Days after Khamenei's death, India's foreign secretary Vikram Misri signed the condolence book at the Iranian embassy in New Delhi, marking India's first official response.



right thing". On Thursday, two senior Congress leaders — former Union Minister Anand Sharma and Madhya Pradesh's former Chief Minister Kamal Nath — lauded the Centre's handling of the situation. In a series of posts on X, Anand Sharma complimented the government and called for unity. He lauded India's diplomatic handling of the West Asia crisis as "mature and skillful".

Jacuzzi, fountain: BJP slams Jharkhand govt over 'Rs 100 crore Sheesh Mahal' project

The BJP has accused the Hemant Soren government of planning a lavish Rs 100 crore "Sheesh Mahal" CM residence with luxury features like a pool, jacuzzi, and fountain.

Ranchi.(Agency) A political controversy has erupted in Jharkhand over the proposed Chief Minister's residence project, with the BJP alleging that the Hemant Soren-led government is constructing a "Rs 100 crore Sheesh Mahal" equipped with luxury features.



Shah Dev also drew comparisons with Delhi, claiming that Chief Minister Hemant Soren is following the path of Arvind Kejriwal, alleging that a similar "Sheesh Mahal" was constructed there using public funds. He further claimed that while the official cost of the main building has been pegged at around Rs 47 crore, the total expenditure could rise to nearly Rs 70 crore when other components are included.

'Soft PR or bold advocacy?': Top issues Raghav Chadha raised in Parliament

Aam Aadmi Party members alleged Raghav Chadha raised public issues just to do his soft PR. Here's a look at the issues that Chadha raised in the House.

New Delhi.(Agency) Raghav Chadha, one of the key figures in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), was removed as the Rajya Sabha deputy leader by his party itself. In response, Chadha questioned, "Did I commit any offence?"



companies as they provide a 28-day plan for a monthly recharge and call it a recharge scam. He elaborated that with a 28-day recharge, the

public ends up paying for 13 recharges a year. Chadha urged the telecom companies to prepare plans with 30-31 day cycles. Chadha also demands that the unused data of the day must be carried forward for the customer.

Yogi Adityanath warns of 'love jihad, land jihad' in Assam, says only NDA can stop demographic shift

Yogi Adityanath Assam rally saw the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister accuse Congress and AIUDF of promoting infiltration, asserting NDA will ensure security, development and cultural preservation.

New Delhi.(Agency) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that only the BJP-led NDA can free Assam from infiltrators and prevent demographic change.



been in power for 60 years in Assam. But it only encouraged infiltration, violence and riots. It put the local culture and heritage under threat," he said, campaigning for Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) candidate Dipak Kumar Das in Barpeta.

India has come through solidly from recent global shocks that tested its resilience: EAM Jaishankar

Jaishankar stressed that there is no getting away from building robust national capabilities, which he noted is the most effective way for de-risking and developing leverage.

New Delhi.(Agency) External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said India has navigated recent global shocks with resilience, in an apparent reference to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.



depth of globalisation. "No one can dispute that multiple global shocks have recently tested our resilience and that India has come through them solidly," Jaishankar added.

Uttarakhand govt eyes population control law after UCC: Dhama

CM Dhama emphasised that the primary objective is to maintain existing demographics and prevent unauthorised demographic shifts.

DEHRADUN.(Agency) Riding on the momentum of successfully implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)—making it the first state in India to do so—the Uttarakhand government is now signalling its intent to bring a population control law.

Development Push Continues Under CM Mann in Punjab; Projects Worth Crores Inaugurated in Moga

The Sikh Times MOGA, 4 April: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Saturday reaffirmed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Punjab Government's development push, inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of projects worth several crores in Moga, even as he outlined a governance model centred on infrastructure expansion, farmer security, and administrative reform.



conducted genocide of the generations of Punjab by promoting and patronising drug trade. These leaders not only patronized the drug trade but, according to reports, even used official vehicles to sell or distribute drugs."

selected Akalis but they proved to be traitors and always backstabbed the state and its people. When the farming community was fighting for its rights, the Akalis supported the Modi government on draconian farm laws just to save their berth in the Union Ministry."

News box

Youth fires at man for objecting to rash driving in Faridabad, flees leaving gun behind

GURGAON.(Agency)

A dispute over rash driving in Faridabad's Ballabgarh escalated dramatically after a youth allegedly opened fire at a man who had asked him to slow down. A police complaint has been filed in the matter. The incident took place on Balaji College Road under the Adarsh Nagar police station limits. The complainant, Vivek, said he was heading to work around 10.30am when he noticed a youth riding a motorcycle recklessly with a young woman seated behind him. When he objected and asked the rider to drive properly, an argument broke out between the two. "The situation escalated quickly, and the youth, along with the woman, started assaulting him," an officer said. Vivek told police that during the altercation, the youth pulled out a pistol from his bag and pointed it at him. He added that he tried to snatch the weapon to defend himself, and during the scuffle, a shot was fired that grazed his face. Before the accused could fire another round, Vivek managed to take away the pistol. Hearing the gunshot, locals gathered at the spot, prompting the accused and the woman to flee. In their haste, they abandoned their bag, the firearm and the motorcycle at the scene. Police teams reached the spot after receiving information and took the seized items into custody. An officer said, "CCTV footage from the area is being examined to identify and trace the accused. Efforts are underway to arrest both the youth and the woman involved in the incident."

Jewellery shop manager steals cash, 20 gold rings

GURGAON.(Agency)

A store manager at a jewellery shop on Golf Course Road allegedly fled with Rs 1.28 lakh and 20 gold rings from a jewellery store on Golf Course Road. The theft took place at House of Ring, where the accused, Vishal Yadav, was employed as a store manager. Complainant Sumit Garg alleged that the employee absconded with the stolen cash and jewellery and sought strict legal action along with recovery of the valuables. CCTV footage from the shop allegedly captured the accused pocketing cash. A detailed check of the store later revealed that Rs 1.28 lakh in cash and 20 gold rings were missing. Police have registered an FIR against the suspect under Section 306 (theft by a clerk or servant of property in possession of their employer) of BNS at DLF Phase 1 police station. In a separate incident, Mandeep Kumar, a legal executive with SG Encon (Reliance Jio), lodged a complaint pertaining to theft of a 1.74 KW SMPS unit from a telecom tower located at Nathupur village in DLF Phase 3. According to the complaint, the theft came to light on March 25 after a site alarm was triggered. Technician Vivek Anand reached the location and found the equipment missing. The company staff attempted to trace the stolen unit but were unsuccessful, following which the matter was revealed to police, following which a case was registered at DLF Phase 3 police station. Police said both matters are under investigation. Cases have been registered under relevant provisions of BNS and teams have been deployed to trace the accused in the jewellery theft and identify those involved in the telecom equipment theft.

LPG supply rebounds in Noida and Ghaziabad, but panic triggers queues at agencies

NOIDA.(Agency)

Long queues, frayed tempers and instances of cylinders being snatched from delivery vans continue to play out outside gas agencies in Noida and Ghaziabad, even as officials insist that supplies have nearly stabilised since the disruption triggered by the West Asia conflict earlier this month. According to officials, it is anxiety that is fuelling this "chaos". "Consumers, unsure of timely deliveries, are rushing to agencies within a day of booking instead of waiting the standard 48 hours. Many in these queues already have confirmed bookings, but prefer not to risk delays. This is leading to crowding and disorder at distribution points," an official said. The situation is worse for those without valid LPG connections — a group heavily reliant on the black market until now. With illegal supply chains drying up, many such users have begun approaching authorised agencies, often unsuccessfully. In some areas, this desperation has escalated into mobs intercepting delivery vehicles and forcibly taking cylinders away with them. As a result, this has disrupted supply for legitimate consumers. Officials said several such incidents had occurred in Harola (Sector 5), Gejha (Sector 93) and Sector 23, where crowds gathered as early as 7am and rushed to intercept delivery vans.

'Burning diya' sparks fire in Ghaziabad highrise flat

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

An apartment on the third floor of a high-rise society was gutted in a fire that broke out around 1pm on Friday. There were no casualties as the family living in the flat had gone out. However, the fire department officials said there was a heavy property damage. A video accessed by TOI shows flames rushing through the flat and smoke billowing out of the balcony of Classic Residency. The smoke affected the residents living in the upper floors. "We noticed the fire around 1pm. Immediately, the maintenance staff and security guard tried to put out the flames with the fire equipment we have in the society. We informed the fire department and tried to control the situation," a resident of the society said. AOA president of the society Vikash Chaudhary said the fire department took a long time to respond to their call. There are more than 40 high-rise societies in Raj Nagar Extension, but there is no fire station in the area, and the nearest fire station is in the Kotwali area, which is 30 minutes away. Ghaziabad's chief fire officer Rahul Pal said they were informed about the fire at 1.21 pm.

Ghaziabad man gets 2 years' jail for not returning wife's belongings

GURGAON.(Agency)

A Kavinagar man was sentenced to two years in jail under Section 406 of the IPC (criminal breach of trust) for failing to return assets belonging to his wife. The couple married in 2008, and the case seeking the return of household items given to the groom by the woman's parents, along with a separate dowry case, has been pending for more than 14 years. A fine of Rs 5,000 was also imposed. Additional chief judicial magistrate Sharjil Khan said that a review of the list of belongings filed on record and the legal notice dated Dec 22, 2011, reveals that the complainant, Niraj alias Malishka, requested the return of her belongings from the accused Sandeep Rana, which were not returned even after the notice was served. Rana himself stated in cross-examination that he possessed many of the items mentioned in the list. The accused's

contradictory statements supported Niraj's claim that he misappropriated her belongings.

The matter is linked to an FIR registered with the Kavinagar police station for criminal breach of trust, which is linked to another case of dowry, causing hurt and criminal intimidation. Niraj told the court that she married Rana on July 11, 2008. She claimed her parents spent about Rs 10 lakh on bridal gifts at the time of the wedding. However, her in-laws demanded an extra Rs 4 lakh as dowry. When her family could not meet that demand, she was forced to cut ties with her maternal family and was later thrown out of the house while she was pregnant on Jan 4, 2010. She presented a list of items that were given to her during marriage and also produced a copy of the legal notice that she served upon Rana on Dec



22, 2011. The notice went unanswered, following which a case of criminal

breach of trust was filed against Rana and his mother, Rashmi Singh, who later died in the course of the case proceedings and her name was abated. Niraj told the court that her divorce case is still pending for a hearing. Meanwhile, her estranged husband has been disposing of all her bridal gifts—items she has been asking for ever since she was forced to leave her matrimonial home in 2010. Niraj and her father, Jitendra Singh, appeared as prosecution witnesses, whereas Sandeep and his brother-in-law testified as defence witnesses. Having heard both sides, the court observed that the statements of witnesses reveal that Niraj was given household items, furniture, jewellery and Rs 2,50,000 in cash by her father at the time of her marriage and keeping in view Rana's contradictory statements, declared him guilty of criminal breach of trust.

Rain, thunderstorms, high winds likely in Gurgaon on weekend

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city witnessed light rain in some parts of the city on Friday evening, bringing down the temperature by nearly three degrees. The day started on a partly cloudy note and a sunny afternoon. By evening, the city witnessed a light rain spell, accompanied by gusty winds up to speeds of 40 kmph. IMD issued an orange alert for Friday and Saturday, warning of thunderstorms, lightning and strong winds ranging between 40 kmph and 70 kmph. Light to moderate rainfall is likely to continue through Saturday under the influence of an active western disturbance.

The maximum temperature settled at 32.8°C, a slight drop from 35.9°C recorded a day earlier. The minimum temperature was recorded at 22.4°C at the



Gurgaon KVK observatory, while the NorthCap University monitoring station registered a minimum of 22.6°C. Meteorologists said two successive western disturbances are expected to affect northwest India this week, with peak activity on April 3-4 and again around April 7. The current system is seen as a cyclonic circulation over south

Afghanistan and adjoining Pakistan, extending from lower to upper tropospheric levels. Additionally, upper-air cyclonic circulations over northeast Pakistan and Haryana are further intensifying atmospheric activity over the region, increasing the likelihood of thunderstorms and gusty winds. Compared to Thursday, the average maximum temperature saw a drop of 3.6°C and remained 1.7°C below normal for the state. The highest maximum temperature in Haryana was recorded at 34.8°C in Nuh. "A gradual fall in maximum temperatures by 3-5°C across Haryana till April 4, followed by a slight rise of 2-3°C on April 5 and 6. Another dip of 3-5°C is expected between April 7 and 9. Temperatures are likely to remain normal to below normal till April 9," the

Mixer truck applies sudden brakes & causes rear-end crash on Dwarka away, biker critically injured

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 28-year-old man sustained serious injuries on Tuesday after his motorcycle ramed into a mixer truck which had suddenly applied brakes seconds earlier and become stationary o the Dwarka Expressway. The injured, Alok Kumar, is a resident of Sikanderpur.

According to the complaint filed by his brother Ankit Mishra, they were returning home on separate motorcycles after finishing work when the accident took place. "As Alok reached a stretch near the expressway, a mixer truck, allegedly being driven at high speed, applied sudden brakes in the middle of the road. Alok's motorcycle crashed into the rear of the truck," the complaint stated.

The truck driver fled the spot leaving behind the vehicle. Ankit, who was riding behind, rushed to his brother and arranged

a vehicle to take him to a private hospital in Sector 90, where he was admitted with severe injuries and excessive blood loss. Police said the injured was declared unfit for statement at the hospital. Based on the complaint and medico-legal certificate



(MLC), an FIR was registered under sections 281 (rash driving) and 125(a) (act endangering life) of the BNS at the Sector 37 police station. "We are looking at the details of the owner of the truck and will send a notice to them. A team is also

analysing CCTV footage and trying to nab the truck driver," an officer said.

In a separate incident, an 11-year-old boy was injured after the autorickshaw he was travelling in overturned near Hanuman Mandir in Bilaspur on Monday. The child, Dev Kumar, accompanied by his mother, was going to school when the accident occurred. His father, Billa, in his complaint, stated that the autorickshaw driver was driving negligently. The boy suffered injuries to his head, leg and chest in the accident and was taken to a private hospital in Sector 87, where he was declared unfit to make a statement. Police registered a case under sections 125(a) and 281 of the BNS after the father approached the police station on Thursday.

An officer said, "We are looking at the sequence of events to determine the cause of the accident. The auto driver is also being identified and necessary action will be taken against him as per legal procedures."

'Infra checks must before nod': Expert panel's S+4 policy roadmap back in focus after HC stay

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana govt's expert committee report on stilt-plus-four (S+4) residential buildings has returned to the centre of legal and planning debate after Punjab and Haryana high court stayed the policy, citing inadequate infrastructure and apparent dilution of key safeguards proposed by the panel. Hearing a batch of petitions, HC restrained the state govt from acting on its July 2, 2024, notification that allowed S+4 floors on residential plots. It underlined that infrastructure capacity could not be ignored while permitting high-density construction. The expert committee report filed in June 2023 proposed a detailed framework for allowing S+4 buildings, but only with riders. Its central recommendation was a mandatory infrastructure capacity audit before any additional floors were permitted, especially in developed sectors. The committee said S+4 buildings in existing colonies should be allowed only in blocks abutting roads at least 12 metres wide and supported by adequate,

or augmentable, infrastructure, including water supply, sewerage, drainage and parking. The revised rules, however, extended permissions in HSVP sectors to roads as narrow as 10 metres, prompting concerns that the policy had moved away from the committee's original framework. The panel also prescribed a clear implementation sequence — preparation of a standard operating procedure (SOP), submission of a detailed audit report within three months, and final approval by the deputy commissioner after technical verification. The high court observed that the audit mechanism was necessary to prevent further strain on civic infrastructure, which is already under pressure in many parts of Gurgaon. A key finding of the report was the distinction between new and existing sectors. The committee supported S+4 buildings in upcoming areas where infrastructure could be planned in advance, but warned against blanket approvals in older colonies where civic systems

were already stretched. Consultations held across Gurgaon, Faridabad and Panchkula recorded recurring concerns from stakeholders. These included internal roads effectively reduced to 4-5 metres because of encroachments and utilities, acute parking shortages, traffic congestion, structural risks to adjoining buildings, misuse of stilt areas for commercial purposes, and mounting pressure on sewer, drainage and water networks. The report also flagged that a large number of permissions were being granted on narrow roads and small plots, raising questions about long-term sustainability. Official data cited in the report showed that by March 2023, around 24,600 building plans had been approved and more than 11,400 occupation certificates issued, indicating that the policy had already been implemented at scale even before the revised notification. After the 2024 changes, approvals accelerated further. In the city alone, 7,000 to 8,000 building plans were sanctioned in colonies and

sectors, and more than 1,500 occupation certificates were issued. While this reflected strong uptake, it also coincided with growing complaints from residents over infrastructure stress and deteriorating quality of life. The committee's recommendations went beyond the question of whether S+4 construction should be allowed. It called for revisions to Haryana Building Code, 2017, strict action against misuse of permissions to infrastructure augmentation plans, and regular public disclosure of approvals. Most importantly, the panel stressed that permissions in many cases should follow prior infrastructure upgrades, not run parallel to construction or come afterward. HC's interim order reflected many of these concerns. It observed that roads, sewer systems and drainage network in the city were already under severe pressure and might not be able to absorb increased density without advance upgrades. A court-appointed

inspection reinforced that concern. It found that roads officially recorded as 10-12 metres wide often had motorable carriageways of only 4-5 metres,

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Development Push Continues Under CM Mann in Punjab; Projects Worth Crores Inaugurated in Moga

Contd...Front page

People must unite and teach them a lesson by routing them out of the state. Sukhbir Badal, Raja Warring, Pratap Singh Bajwa and others are alien to Punjab as they have nothing in common with the people." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "From their schooling to wardrobe and habits, nothing matches with common Punjabis. These leaders are unaware of the problems faced by the people as they have scant knowledge of Punjab. They have never even visited the fields and are unaware of the hardships faced by farmers." He added, "People voted massively for these traditional parties, but previous governments looted Punjab. These leaders drained resources like parasites and even today they have no agenda except hunger for power. They compete with each other in abusing me and sending videos to their high command." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "These leaders have no vision for Punjab and are driven by personal ambitions, where-

as our government is making strenuous efforts to make Punjab a frontrunner state. The day is not far when Punjab will become the number one state in the country." Highlighting achievements of the government, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann asserted, "We have taken path-breaking initiatives for holistic development of Punjab. We have fulfilled all promises made to the people. The government is providing 600 units of free electricity to every household without discrimination." He added, "Since our government assumed charge, 90% households are getting zero electricity bills. For the first time in Punjab's history, farmers are getting eight hours uninterrupted daytime electricity for irrigation. The government has spent ₹6500 crore on rejuvenating canal systems, and for the first time, 1365 villages are getting canal water." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Earlier only 21% canal water was used for irrigation, which has now increased to 68% and will reach 85% by the coming

paddy season. As many as 6900 km long, 18349 water courses have been revived to ensure water reaches tail ends, benefitting farmers immensely." He added, "Those leaders at whose residences canals used to stop never bothered about this. Such decisions can only be taken by leaders who understand ground realities, not those who studied in convent schools in hills." On employment, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "We have launched a Rozgar Kranti by providing more than 65,000 government jobs purely on merit, without recommendation or bribe. Record private investments have created more than 7 lakh employment opportunities in the last four years." He further said, "Punjab has 43,000 km of link roads and we have launched a major project for their repair and upgradation, along with maintenance for the next five years. The government is also exploring putting high tension wires underground to facilitate farmers." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "This will provide relief to farmers as

high tension wires pose a huge risk to them and their crops. The scheme will begin from my native village, where work will start soon." Announcing welfare initiatives, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "A new Takseem scheme will ensure division of land within 30 days and will be implemented across Punjab from April 13, 2026. People should resolve disputes through mutual understanding." He appealed, "People should enroll for ₹10 lakh cashless treatment under Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna. This scheme provides free treatment in government and private empanelled hospitals." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann added, "Under Mawan Dheeyan Satkar Yojna, ₹1500 per month is being provided to women from Scheduled Caste categories, while ₹1000 per month is being provided to women from all other categories. This will help households and ensure dignity for women." He said, "Taxpayers' money belongs to the people and is being spent on development,

schools, hospitals and roads. Earlier it was lost to corruption, but now leakages have been plugged." Emphasising education, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Quality education is the panacea for poverty. No freebie can eliminate poverty, but education can open doors of progress and prosperity. We are leaving no stone unturned to improve education." He added, "While we talk about education, health, power and agriculture, other parties only talk about grabbing power. People have rejected these opportunist leaders who only work for their families." On wheat procurement, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Aarthiyas are trying to pressure the government, but we will not succumb. The government will increase procurement quota of cooperative societies to ensure smooth procurement." Meanwhile, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann laid the foundation stone of several development projects in Moga including electricity projects, municipal road renovation and upgradation of

major roads. He reiterated the commitment of the Punjab Government to build a rangla and vibrant Punjab. Earlier, AAP Punjab Prabhari Manish Sisodia said, "Bhagwant Singh Mann is the most popular Chief Minister in the country. The government has taken path-breaking initiatives for every section of society. If any other party comes to power, they will stop these welfare schemes as seen in Delhi." The scale of infrastructure works underway in Moga underscores a decisive and execution-driven governance model, with major investments being channelled into roads, urban infrastructure, and power systems. The 47.70 km long Moga-Baghapurana-Kotkapura road is being upgraded at a cost of ₹46.98 crore, including ₹43.79 crore for construction and ₹3.19 crore for maintenance, while the 22.72 km Moga-Dharamkot road is being renovated at a cost of ₹29.98 crore, strengthening connectivity across key towns and villages. Urban development works

worth ₹88.62 crore are being executed by the Municipal Corporation, with an additional ₹11.60 crore worth of tenders in the pipeline. These include ₹7.58 crore for redevelopment of main roads, ₹7.66 crore for other roads, ₹4.16 crore for a multi-storey community hall, ₹2.19 crore for a street vending zone at Old Dana Mandi, and ₹97 lakh for beautification of key city landmarks including Geeta Bhawan, railway underbridge, Jutti Market, Partap Road, and the main bazaar, along with

the construction of a clock tower at Guru Nanak College Chowk. In the power sector, projects worth crores are strengthening electricity infrastructure, including installation of a 220 KV transformer at Rasungawala costing ₹9.82 crore, a 20 MVA transformer costing ₹2.62 crore, and a 132 KV transformer at Sosan costing ₹4.22 crore, alongside ₹3.74 crore being spent on upgrading the distribution system in Moga city.



Shri Bulu Chik Baraik from TMC party filled nomination at Mal Assembly constituency, SDO office in the presence of Mahua Gope, and Tama Ghosh for the West Bengal Vidhansabha election 2026.

Woman, 'lover' held for husband's stabbing

New Delhi: A 24-year-old woman and her lover were arrested in central Delhi for stabbing her husband and attempting to disguise the attack as a random assault, police said on Friday. The arrested have been identified as Laxmi, 24, and Karan, 22. The victim, a resident of Baljeet Nagar, sustained multiple stab wounds and is being treated at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. Police said the incident occurred on March 24. The hospital informed Patel Nagar police after the victim arrived, and he was declared unfit to give a statement. Laxmi initially claimed her husband was attacked by two or three unidentified assailants in a park while procuring food. Investigators scrutinised CCTV footage and found discrepancies in her account. It emerged that Laxmi and Karan, who had a past relationship, plotted the attack after her marriage with the victim soured. On the day of the assault, Laxmi called Karan to her home, which escalated into an argument, and he stabbed the victim multiple times. Karan was apprehended under Shadipur flyover on March 25 and Laxmi was subsequently arrested.

CM Bhagwant Singh Mann Pays Surprise Visit to Advanced Cancer Institute at BFUHS, Reviews Facilities & Patient Care

BATHINDA, 4 April 2026: In a decisive push to upgrade cancer care in Punjab, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann conducted a surprise inspection of the Advanced Cancer Institute at Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (BFUHS) on Saturday, ordering a comprehensive overhaul of infrastructure, technology, and manpower while asserting that there will be no compromise in treatment standards. Setting a clear direction for transformation, the Chief Minister announced that the institute will be developed into a world-class healthcare centre, with the introduction of advanced facilities including robotic surgery and immediate steps to strengthen staffing, aimed at significantly enhancing

patient care across the Malwa region. During a surprise visit to the hospital, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann reviewed the functioning of the institute and interacted with key stakeholders to assess ground realities and identify areas requiring immediate attention. "The purpose of the

visit is to support and strengthen the institution rather than to find faults, with the broader objective of transforming it into a premier healthcare centre for the entire state," he asserted. The Chief Minister affirmed, "The Advanced Cancer Institute at Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (BFUHS) will be equipped with world-class facilities. The

hospital is already imparting quality healthcare services to patients in the core Malwa region, and our effort is to further strengthen it into a premier healthcare centre across Punjab." Highlighting the need for continuous upgradation, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "The motive of the visit is not of fault finding but of hand holding to develop this institute as a premier healthcare centre across the state. During the visit, I interacted with all key stakeholders to apprise myself of the ground realities and the needs of this advanced institute." Focusing on improving patient outcomes, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann announced that several need-based facilities will be introduced

in the institute. "Concerted efforts will be made to further ensure the well-being of patients by introducing several need-based facilities. Robotic surgery will also be introduced in this apex hospital so as to benefit patients in a big way," he said. Underscoring the urgency of modernising treatment methods, he added, "Necessary steps will be taken for introducing robotic surgery in this hospital at the earliest, and no stone will be left unturned for this." Addressing staffing concerns, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann noted that the hospital currently faces a shortage of personnel and assured prompt action. "I have come to know that

there is a shortage of staff in the hospital, so necessary steps will be taken for pumping in more manpower in the larger public interest," he said. Reaffirming the Punjab Government's commitment to accessible healthcare, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Ayushman card holders and beneficiaries of the Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna are entitled for treatment in this apex cancer care hospital. The Punjab Government is committed to providing quality healthcare services to all people of the state."



Over 21,000 challans in 7 days, in Gurugram

Gurugram: The Gurugram traffic police issued 21,901 challans to commuters for flouting traffic rules like wrong side driving, driving without seat belt, riding without helmets, drunk driving etc. The traffic police issued these challans only in a week from January 4 to 11, with fines amounting to over Rs 1.78 crores. It includes 13,331 challans issued on the ground. According to traffic police data, 1,907 challans were issued for driving on the wrong side, 829 for road marking violations, 781 for pillion riders without helmets, 1,013 for driving without seat belts, 750 for driving without helmets, 299 for drunk driving, 1148 for wrong parking and 356 for dangerous U-turn. A total of 8570 challans were issued through cameras which include 5402 for no entry, 1739 for over speeding, 934 for lane change, 101 for pillion rider without helmet, 150 for driver without seat belt, 109 for pollution, 65 for driver without helmet, 22 for triple riding and 48 for front passenger without seat belt. Action was taken on wrongly parked vehicles and on heavy vehicles changing lanes on highways causing inconvenience to commuters. People driving without helmets, seat belts and under the influence of alcohol, were also penalised. "In order to maintain road discipline and curb road accidents, special surveillance is being maintained on NH-48, Dwarka Expressway and Delhi-Mumbai Expressway with the help of NHA cameras and drone technology," said DCP traffic Rajesh Mohan.

5 killed, several injured as house collapses after explosion in Ayodhya

Ayodhya: At least five people were killed and several others were injured after a house collapsed following a powerful explosion in Pagla Bhari village under the Pura Kalandar police station area of Ayodhya on Thursday, officials said. Circle Officer (CO) Shaileendra Singh told that several people were still feared trapped under the debris, and rescue operations were underway. "Five people have died in the explosion, a few have been injured, and efforts are on to rescue those trapped. The cause of the blast is not yet clear," Singh said. Upon receiving information about the incident, the police, the fire department and the local administration teams rushed to the spot. Rescue workers have been using excavators to clear the rubble, while nearby houses have been evacuated as a precautionary measure. Officials have appealed to residents to stay away from the accident site to facilitate rescue efforts. Senior police and administrative officers are supervising the operation and have begun an investigation to determine the cause of the explosion. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognisance of the incident and expressed deep condolences over the loss of lives. According to an official statement, the Chief Minister has directed senior officials to rush to the spot, ensure proper medical treatment for the injured, and personally oversee the ongoing rescue and relief operations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, INDU CHAUHAN W/O NARENDER SINGH CHAUHAN R/O N-129/1, T-HUTS, KHILONA BAGH DIST NORTH WEST DELHI-110079 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as INDU KANWAR in my minor son namely HARSH VARDHAN SINGH CHAUHAN aged 13 years in his school record and birth certificate No.MCDOLIR-2211-005020356. The actual name of mine is INDU CHAUHAN which may be amended accordingly

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that CHANDER VEER S/O RAMJI LAL R/O C-157 Vikas Vihar Uttam Nagar West Delhi Delhi-110059 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as CHANDER PAL in my minor daughter namely KIRTI aged 15 years in her birth certificate No.MCDOLIR-0110-004425168. The actual name of mine is CHANDER VEER which may be amended accordingly

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, hitherto known as Laxman Yadav alias Bhavikshan Yadav S/O Bechan Yadav R/O Gram Debra, Post Bela, Thana Babubarhi, Ward No-02, Bela, PO Bela, Dist Madhubani, Bihar-847224 Has changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bhavikshna Yadav.

NAME CHANGE
I, NEETAS DEVI Wife of No-320484W Rank-HAV Name-DHARMENDRA SINGH R/O VILL-SHUNDAS, P.O-MURSAN, DIST-HATHRAS, U.P. 204213 has changed my name from NEETAS DEVI to NITESH DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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

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

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

NAME CHANGE
I, SANTOSH KUMAR S/O VISHVA NATH PRASAD residing at PLOT NO-58859, FLAT NO-2, STREET NO-5, HAVENS GARDEN MATIALA, DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR GUPTA for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, Anil Balakrishna Panicker s/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/O A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

NAME CHANGE
I, ANITA BANSAL W/O PAWAN BANSAL residing at B-504, MAYURDHWAJ APARTMENT, I.P. EXTN, EAST DELHI-110092 have Change my name to ANITA RANI BANSAL for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Jyoti pal W/O Sunil Kumar R/O WZ-125, Village Begumpur, North West Delhi, -110086, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Jyoti in my minor Daughter Yashika aged 14 years in her school cords and birth certificate no MCDOLR09368299. The actual name is Jyoti Pal.

NAME CHANGE
I, PUNNAM DEVI Wife of No-14913053K Rank-HAV Name-NARENDER SINGH R/O C-7, LAXMI GARDEN, NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043 have changed my name from PUNNAM DEVI to POONAM DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Executive Magistrate, Delhi.

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

NAME CHANGE
I, SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY S/O LATE SH. LAXMAN CHAUDHARY Permanent R/o Parsauni Khrohdar, Sitamarhi, Bihar-843325 and Presently Residing at Plot No. B-20, Second Floor, Dass Garden, Baprola Vihar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SANJAY CHOUDHARY in my minor daughter namely SHIWANGI CHOUDHARY aged 17 years in her 10th class Marksheet. The actual name of mine is SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY, which may be amended accordingly.

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

NAME CHANGE
I, SANTOSH KUMAR S/O VISHVA NATH PRASAD residing at PLOT NO-58859, FLAT NO-2, STREET NO-5, HAVENS GARDEN MATIALA, DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR GUPTA for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, Anil Balakrishna Panicker s/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/O A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

NAME CHANGE
I, ANITA BANSAL W/O PAWAN BANSAL residing at B-504, MAYURDHWAJ APARTMENT, I.P. EXTN, EAST DELHI-110092 have Change my name to ANITA RANI BANSAL for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Jyoti pal W/O Sunil Kumar R/O WZ-125, Village Begumpur, North West Delhi, -110086, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Jyoti in my minor Daughter Yashika aged 14 years in her school cords and birth certificate no MCDOLR09368299. The actual name is Jyoti Pal.

NAME CHANGE
I, PUNNAM DEVI Wife of No-14913053K Rank-HAV Name-NARENDER SINGH R/O C-7, LAXMI GARDEN, NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043 have changed my name from PUNNAM DEVI to POONAM DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Executive Magistrate, Delhi.

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

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

NAME CHANGE
I, S VANITHA W/o No. 14838283N Rank-HAV/MT Name-RAAMESH P R/O VILL-SEDRAMPUTTU, PO-SEDRAMPUTTU, TEH-POLLUR, DIST-THIRUVANNAMALAI, TAMIL NADU-632315, have changed my name from S VANITHA to VANITHA R for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 15/07/2025 before Notary Public, Kupwara.

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

NAME CHANGE
I, SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY S/O LATE SH. LAXMAN CHAUDHARY Permanent R/o Parsauni Khrohdar, Sitamarhi, Bihar-843325 and Presently Residing at Plot No. B-20, Second Floor, Dass Garden, Baprola Vihar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SANJAY CHOUDHARY in my minor daughter namely SHIWANGI CHOUDHARY aged 17 years in her 10th class Marksheet. The actual name of mine is SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY, which may be amended accordingly.

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

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

NAME CHANGE
I, SANTOSH KUMAR S/O VISHVA NATH PRASAD residing at PLOT NO-58859, FLAT NO-2, STREET NO-5, HAVENS GARDEN MATIALA, DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR GUPTA for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, Anil Balakrishna Panicker s/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/O A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, NIDHI AGGARWAL YADAV D/o VIRENDER KUMAR AGGARWAL, and Ex. Wife of AMIT YADAV, R/O H No.E-12, Hauj Khas, South West Delhi-110016, declare that I got divorce from my Ex. Husband AMIT YADAV vide Court Decree HMA No. 603/2019 dated 30 - 04-2019, further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NIDHI AGGARWAL. I also have changed the name of my minor son namely AAYAN YADAV, aged 16 years and my minor daughter namely ARSHIYA YADAV, aged 13 years and they shall hereafter be known as AAYAN AGGARWAL and ARSHIYA AGGARWAL respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

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

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

NEWS BOX

Artemis II's Moonbound Astronauts Capture Earth's Brilliant Blue Beauty

World. (Agency)

The Artemis II astronauts have captured our blue planet's brilliant beauty as they zoom ever closer to the moon.

NASA released the crew's first downlinked images Friday, 1 1/2 days into the first astronaut moonshot in more than half a century. The first photo taken by commander Reid Wiseman shows a curved slice of Earth in one of the capsule's windows. The second shows the entire globe with the oceans topped by swirling white tendrils of clouds. A green aurora even glows, according to NASA.

"It's great to think that with the exception of our four friends, all of us are represented in this image," said NASA's Lakiesha Hawkins, an exploration systems leader. She added the mission was going well.

As of late Friday afternoon, Wiseman and his crew were more than 110,000 miles (180,000 kilometers) from Earth and were quickly gaining on the moon with another 150,000 miles (240,000 kilometers) to go. They should reach their destination on Monday. The three Americans and one Canadian will swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, hang a U-turn and then head straight back home without stopping. They fired Orion's main engine Thursday night that set them on their course. After Mission Control shifted the position of their capsule, the entire Earth complete with northern lights filled their windows.

"It was the most spectacular moment, and it paused all four of us in our tracks," Wiseman said in a TV interview.

US Girl Who Disappeared At 13 Found Alive After Decades In Major Breakthrough

World. (Agency)

A girl who disappeared as a child more than three decades ago has now been found alive, bringing a surprising turn to a long and mysterious case, reported People.com. A 13-year-old girl who vanished under suspicious circumstances in Arizona more than 30 years ago has now been found alive, officials announced. The Gila County Sheriff's Office reported on Wednesday that Christina Marie Plante, who disappeared decades ago without a trace from Star Valley, a small town located northeast of Phoenix, has recently been found. This breakthrough came following the sudden discovery of a new lead in the case. Officials did not disclose how she was found, but they noted that technological advancements helped generate new leads in the investigation. It also remains unclear exactly when and where she was located.

The blue-eyed, blonde-haired girl went to check on her horse at a stable near her home in May 1994, after which she disappeared. Missing person posters issued at the time described her as last being seen wearing a white T-shirt, multicoloured shorts, and black tennis shoes. Her disappearance was deemed suspicious, and officials had expressed concern that she might be in danger. According to officials, Christina's name was entered into a national database for missing children, and posters featuring her image were distributed locally, statewide, and across other parts of the country. They further stated that the case remained open and active for years, with investigators periodically re-examining evidence and pursuing new information as it became available.

Pakistan plans to repay \$3.5 billion loan to UAE in April amid reserve strain

World. (Agency)

Pakistan has opted to clear its entire USD 3.5 billion debt to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) within April, a senior cabinet minister said during a media briefing on Friday, putting to rest uncertainty after Abu Dhabi had recently shifted to short-term rollovers. The decision, taken by the political leadership, was conveyed to a group of reporters, with the minister confirming that the full amount would be repaid. However, parallel discussions are also underway on the possibility of converting part of the outstanding sum into investment. The Express Tribune quoted senior officials as saying. The repayment schedule has been finalised: USD 450 million will be returned on April 11, followed by USD 2 billion on April 17 and another USD 1 billion on April 23. Officials said arrangements are being made, with a likelihood that the funds could be drawn from the central bank's USD 16.4 billion foreign exchange reserves. Of the total amount, USD 450 million traces back to a one-year loan taken in 1996-97, which is now set to be cleared after nearly three decades. The move came amid shifting dynamics around the debt. Earlier, the UAE had shown reluctance to extend long-term rollovers, opting instead for short-term extensions. In January, two USD 1 billion loans maturing on January 16 and 22 were rolled over for just one month at an interest rate of 6.5 per cent, despite Pakistan seeking a two-year extension at roughly 3 per cent interest rate. Officials believe that the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict accelerated the decision-making process, culminating in the current repayment plan.

Under the USD 7 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and China had committed to maintaining a combined USD 12.5 billion in deposits with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) until the programme concludes in September 2027. Efforts to secure relief had continued in recent months. In December, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad requested a two-year rollover of USD 2.5 billion in UAE debt at a reduced interest rate. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also raised the matter with the UAE President, stating publicly that a rollover had been agreed, though without specifics.

Iran hunts crew member of crashed US jet after one reported rescued

President Donald Trump told NBC the F-15 loss would not affect negotiations with Iran, saying: "No, not at all. No, it's war."

TEHRAN. (Agency)

Iranian and American forces were racing each other early Saturday to recover a crew member of the first US fighter jet to go down inside Iran since the start of the war.

Tehran said it had shot down the F-15 warplane, while US media reported American special forces had rescued one of its two crew members, with the other still missing. Iran's military also said it downed a USA-10 ground attack aircraft in the Gulf, with US media saying the pilot was rescued.

The war erupted more than a month ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran that killed supreme leader Ali Khamenei, triggering retaliation that spread the conflict throughout the Middle East, convulsing the global economy and impacting millions of people worldwide. US Central Command did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the loss of the F-15, but White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said: "The president has been briefed". President Donald Trump told NBC the F-15 loss would not affect negotiations with Iran, saying: "No, not at all. No, it's war." "Valuable reward"

A spokesperson for the Iranian military's central operational command said "an American hostile fighter jet in central Iranian airspace was struck and destroyed by the IRGC Aerospace Force's advanced air defence system". "The jet was completely obliterated, and further searches are ongoing." An Iranian television reporter on a local official channel said anyone who captured a crew

member alive would "receive a valuable reward". The US military has announced the loss of several aircraft during Iran operations, including one tanker that



crashed in Iraq and three F-15s shot down by Kuwaiti friendly fire. Retired US brigadier general Houston Cantwell -- who has 400 hours of combat flight experience -- said key goals for downed pilots include

determining their location and figuring out how to communicate. "My priority would be, first of all, concealment, because I don't want to be captured," he told AFP.

Blown-out windows
Fresh strikes meanwhile hit Israel, Iran, Lebanon and Gulf countries -- and large blasts rocked northern Tehran, an AFP journalist said. Israel said it had launched a wave of strikes in the Iranian capital, alongside parallel attacks in Beirut.

Strikes by all sides have increasingly targeted economic and industrial sites, raising fears of wider disruption to global energy supplies. In the area around a bridge west of Tehran that was targeted by the United States, an AFP reporter saw a villa and residential buildings with blown-out windows -- but no military installations. According to the martyrs foundation of Alborz province, cited by the official IRNA agency, the attack killed 13 civilians and wounded dozens.

Officials say one crew member of downed US aircraft rescued from southwestern Iran

DUBAI. (Agency)

A US fighter jet was shot down in Iran on Friday and one crew member was rescued, officials said, the first aircraft downed since the war began nearly five weeks ago. It marked a major escalation in the conflict just two days after President Donald Trump said in a national address that the US has "beaten and completely decimated Iran" and was "going to finish the job, and were going to finish it very fast."

A channel affiliated with Iranian state television claimed Friday that a US fighter pilot ejected from their aircraft over southwestern Iran. The US military launched a rescue operation after the media report. Social media footage showed American drones, aircraft and helicopters flying over the mountainous region where the Iranian channel said at least one pilot bailed out of the fighter jet.

President Donald Trump has been briefed about the downing of a US

warplane in Iran that has triggered a major search and rescue operation for the crew, the White House said Friday. Iran fired on targets across the Mideast on Friday, as Tehran kept the pressure on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors, despite US and Israeli



insistence that Iran's military capabilities have been all but destroyed. Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and its tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas

transits in peacetime, have roiled stock markets, sent oil prices skyrocketing, and threatened to raise the cost of many basic goods, including food. Television anchor urges residents to hand over any pilot. The anchor on the Iranian channel urged residents to hand over any "enemy pilot" to police and promised a reward for anyone who did.

The channel is in Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, an intensely rural and mountainous region that spans over 15,500 square kilometers (5,900 square miles). Authorities also urged the public to search for the pilot in neighboring Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province. Throughout the war, Iran has made a series of claims about shooting down piloted enemy aircraft that turned out not to be true. Friday was the first time that Iran went on television urging the public to look for a suspected downed pilot.

Tamil Nadu-Born Rini Sampath 1st South Asian In Washington DC Mayoral Race

Washington. (Agency)

Rini Sampath, a Tamil Nadu-born candidate, has become the first South Asian person to secure a place on the ballot for Mayor of Washington, DC, marking a milestone in the city's political history. Sampath, who was born in Theni in India and moved to the United States at the age of seven, said the moment carried personal and broader community significance.

"It's so meaningful to me to be the first South Asian person to make the ballot for DC Mayor. I moved to the United States when I was seven years old in pursuit of the American dream, and I'm in this race to make sure that dream actually works for DC residents," she said. Her campaign confirmed that more than 4,500 people signed her petition to qualify for the ballot.

"I'm thrilled to have had over 4,500 people sign my petition to get me on the ballot for DC Mayor. South Asians contribute so much to our economy but

see very little representation in government. I hope my candidacy inspires others to run and do good for their neighbours, and I hope you'll join our campaign," Sampath said. According to campaign material, Sampath is a 31-year-old government contractor who has lived in the US capital for over a decade. She has positioned her campaign around basic civic services and governance reforms.

"As Mayor, my priority will be to make sure our city lives up to its basic commitments to our residents: Fill the potholes. Stop the catastrophic wastewater spill in the Potomac. Lower prices. Improve 911 wait times," she said, outlining her agenda.

Her campaign slogan underscores this focus, emphasising fixing basic services, strengthening neighbourhoods, and lowering the cost of living. In her campaign messaging, Sampath draws a contrast with what she describes as entrenched leadership

in City Hall. "Why would you give a promotion to someone who has failed at the basic functions of their job?" she said, referring to the "current front runners in the DC Mayors race" as "political insiders who have served on the city council for years." She added, "We all know DC government is broken," pointing to recent snowstorms that left "streets and sidewalks... unpassable and dangerous," with "trash piled up" and "waterlines burst because of aging infrastructure." Sampath has also framed her candidacy as that of an outsider. "I'm not a politician. I'm not backed by any special interest groups. I'm a federal contractor who spent my career improving government programs and citizen services," she said. "We need someone new. We need to go back to basics and fix our roads and sidewalks and city services." Her personal story features prominently in her campaign narrative.

3,500 In Iran, 19 In Israel, 13 In US: The Deaths In Six Weeks Of Middle East War

World. (Agency)

Thousands of people have been killed across the Middle East in the Iran war, which began when the U.S. and Israel struck Iran on February 28. Those strikes triggered Iranian attacks on Israel, U.S. bases and the Gulf states, while opening a new front in Lebanon.

Here are the latest death count reported. Reuters has not independently verified them. U.S.-based rights group HRANA said 3,531 people have been killed since the war erupted. It said 1,607 of those were civilians, including at least 244 children. The group says its data comes from field reports, local contacts, medical and emergency sources, civil society networks, open-source materials and official statements. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said that at least 1,900 people have been killed and 20,000 injured in Iran in the U.S.-Israeli strikes so far. It was not clear if those figures included at least 104 people who the Iranian military said were killed in a U.S. attack on an Iranian warship off Sri Lanka on March 4.

LEBANON

Lebanese authorities say 1,368 people have been killed in Israeli strikes since March 2, including at least 124 children. More than 400 fighters from Hezbollah have been killed since the Lebanese armed group launched attacks in a new war with Israel on March 2, two sources familiar with the group's count told Reuters. It is unclear if the death count reported by the authorities includes the fighters. At least nine Lebanese soldiers have been killed since March 2 in Israeli strikes on Lebanon, with most of the casualties in southern Lebanon, according to the Lebanese army. Meanwhile, three United Nations peacekeepers from Indonesia were killed in two separate incidents in southern Lebanon, one from a roadside explosion, the other involving a projectile.

IRAQ

At least 108 people have been killed since the start of the crisis, according to Iraqi health authorities. Those include civilians, members of the Iran-affiliated Shi'ite Popular Mobilisation Forces, U.S.-allied Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, police and army. One foreign crew member was killed in an attack on tankers near an Iraqi port, according to port security officials.

ISRAEL

Missiles launched from Iran and Lebanon have killed 19 people in Israel, according to Israel's ambulance service. The Israeli military said 10 of its soldiers were also killed in southern Lebanon. Separately, Israeli forces misfired and killed an Israeli farmer near the border with Lebanon on March 22.

UNITED STATES

Thirteen service members have been killed. Six were confirmed dead after a U.S. military refuelling aircraft crashed over Iraq, the U.S. military said.

Pak Reduces Petrol Prices, Announces Free Public Transport Amid Energy Crisis

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

State-run public transport in Pakistan's capital and most populous province will be free for the coming month, officials said Friday, after the government drastically raised fuel prices due to the Iran war.

The announcement came after street protests and long queues of motorcycles at fuel stations triggered by a late-night decision to impose a 42.7-percent rise in the price of petrol to 485 rupees (US\$1.74) per litre.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif backpedaled late Friday, saying he was reducing the levy and setting petrol prices at 378 rupees per litre. "This decrease will be applicable for at least one month," he said in a televised national address. "I promise I will not rest until your life is back to normal," he added.

Sharif did not reduce the price for diesel, which will remain at 520 rupees per litre following a 54.9-percent price hike. All public transport in Islamabad will be made free of cost for the general public for the next 30 days, starting tomorrow (Saturday), Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi wrote on X. The government will

bear a burden of 350 million rupees, he added. The chief minister of Pakistan's most populous province, Punjab, also lifted the cost of travel for state-run public transport, and announced "targeted subsidies" for trucks and buses. Maryam Nawaz Sharif urged operators not to pass on increased costs to passengers, adding: "We promise to relieve the public of economic burden as soon as conditions improve." In Sindh, the provincial government in Pakistan's biggest city, Karachi, announced similar subsidies for motorcyclists and small farmers.

The US-Israel war on Iran, launched on February 28, has plunged the Middle East into conflict, with Iranian retaliatory strikes hitting targets across the Gulf and virtually freezing shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The key waterway normally sees about a fifth of the world's energy supplies pass through it, much of it bound for Asia. The government has unveiled a raft of austerity measures designed to save fuel, including moving

many government offices to a four-day workweek, extending school holidays and moving some classes online. Pakistan is classified as a lower-middle-income country, with roughly 25 percent of its 240



million population living in poverty, as per World Bank data.

The government hiked fuel prices by 20 percent in early March but has spent weeks resisting further increases, and insisting that it could absorb higher prices and not pass them on. On Friday, dozens protested in the Punjab capital Lahore, calling on ministers to reverse the decision.

"The government, overnight, has dropped a 'petrol bomb' on its people," Naveed Ahmed, a 39-year-old protester, told AFP.

"Our nation cannot bear this situation right now. This storm of inflation must be stopped, and relief should be provided to the public," he added. Several Asian countries have hiked fuel prices or implemented other measures to address the crisis sparked by the Iran war. On Thursday, Bangladesh increased prices of liquefied petroleum gas used for cooking and compressed natural gas used in some cars by 29 percent. Earlier this week, the International Monetary Fund warned that vulnerable economies, such as Pakistan, did not just face pressure from higher energy prices, but from supply chain snarls as well. The IMF announced on March 28 that had reached an initial agreement with Pakistan to unlock a new \$1.2-billion package as part of its support programmes for the country. "The rise we are seeing is not due to the (Iran) war, but to pressure from the IMF, pressure that must be resisted," said another protester in Lahore, Hafiz Abdul Rauf.

NEWS BOX

Woman techie from Kerala on trekking goes missing in Kodagu

MADIKERI.(Agency)
A woman trekker, who is a techie from Kerala, went missing from Tadiandamol, the highest peak of Kodagu district, on Thursday. The police, forest officials and local residents have launched a search operation to trace her. Sharanya GS (36), who hails from Kerala, was visiting Kodagu when she went missing.
On Thursday morning, a group of around ten trekkers started on the Tadiandamol trail in the morning after receiving permission from the forest department.
Sharanya, a solo traveler from Kochi in Kerala, arrived at the foothill of the peak alone and sought permission to trek the trail. But as the belt has wild elephant movement, foresters at the checkpoint asked her to join the other trekkers and walk the trail with them. But while the other trekkers returned from the peak in the evening, Sharanya was missing. The foresters at the checkpoint immediately got into action and started the search operation. The police, who had been alerted, too joined them along with local residents. The search continued till midnight, but could not trace Sharanya.
5 teams, dog squad search for missing techie
The search operation resumed early on Friday morning with five teams -- three from the forest department and two with the police and local residents. Madikeri DCF Abhishek confirmed that drones and dog squad are being used to track her.
“We are searching at all possible locations. The trek path of Tadiandamol is not tough and trekkers can easily find their way back in two to three hours,” he opined. The police, meanwhile, are looking at all possible angles and investigating the matter.

How can a shaky CM ensure Congress win in Karnataka bypolls, says BJP leader Ashoka

DAVANGERE.(Agency)
Leader of Opposition R Ashoka on Friday taunted Chief Minister Siddaramaiah that he is not even certain of continuing in the top post for the five-year full term.
Ashoka asked how could a shaky CM guarantee the Congress victory in Davanagere South byelection. He called the CM casteist for conducting caste census in the state.
He pointed out that even the Congress MLAs have admitted that Guarantee Schemes have stalled development works in the state. Instead of issuing notices to the Congress MLAs, Chief Minister is criticising the BJP. The CM is raising the issue of LPG and petrol price rise in the bypoll campaign since he has no other issues, he added.
“When Siddaramaiah stepped down as CM in 2018, the state’s loan stood at Rs 23,000 crore. The government has to repay loans made by previous governments. For the last three years Siddaramaiah has become ‘Sullu Ramaiah’ by not giving a clear picture about the state’s fiscal situation. The CM is even taking credit for the centrally sponsored Anna Bhagya scheme, he said.
Meanwhile, former ministers CT Ravi and B Sriramulu too joined the byelection campaign trail for the BJP.

If not for our guarantees, people would have suffered, says Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar

DAVANGERE.(Agency)
Lauding the foresight of former minister Dr Shamanur Shivashankarappa, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday said the development work undertaken in Davanagere is truly remarkable and compares with projects in Bengaluru.
He told media persons, “98% of women in the constituency are beneficiaries of guarantee schemes. Around 60,000 women are availing the Gruhalakshmi scheme, while 61,000 families are beneficiaries of the Gruha Jyoti scheme. Annabhagya has benefited 1.45 lakh people. Regardless of the opposition maligning our initiatives, women firmly assured me that they will vote for the Congress candidate.”
He said, “Shamanur Shivashankarappa has served society in this region with remarkable distinction by building hospitals, community halls and educational institutions that continue to benefit vast sections of people. I also met several traders, who told me that under Shivashankarappa, their businesses thrived and they did not encounter any major difficulties. I was particularly encouraged to witness well-laid roads and improved housing.” He said, “Shivashankarappa provided 15,000 homes to the poor and ensured separate land allotted for all communities. We are confident that people will elect Samarth Shamanur with an even larger margin than Shivashankarappa.”
He said, “We are confident of winning both Davanagere South and Bagalkot bypolls. In these times, when prices of risen because of war in West Asia, our guarantee schemes have brought relief to the poor. I urge the Centre to ensure timely and proper supply of essential commodities, including LPG.”

9 of family, including 6 kids, killed as vehicle plunges into well in Nashik

The family members were residents of Dindori and were returning after attending an event organised by a coaching class at a banquet hall in the Shivaji Nagar area.

Mumbai.(Agency)
Nine members of a family, including six children, were killed after the vehicle they were travelling in fell into a well in Dindori, nearly 20 km from Nashik in Maharashtra, on Friday night. The family was returning from a function when the incident occurred.
The police suspect the driver did not notice the well in the dark while driving past the Shivaji Nagar area and lost control of the multi-purpose vehicle. Though the local police launched a rescue operation and roped in cranes and swimmers, none of the passengers could be rescued alive.
The police identified the deceased as Sunil Dargude, 32, Reshma Sunil Dargude, 27, Asha Anil Dargude, 32, Khushi Anil Dargude, 14, Madhuri Anil Dargude, 13, Shreyas Anil Dargude, 11, Rakhi Sunil Dargude, 11, Shravani Anil Dargude, 11, and Samruddhi Rajendra Dargude, 7. The family

members were residents of Dindori and were returning after attending an event organised by a coaching class at a banquet hall in the

accident in Dindori, where a vehicle has fallen into a water body, causing multiple fatalities. In July last year, seven members of a family, including a two-year-old child, were killed in a road accident near Dindori after the car they were travelling in collided with a motorcycle, and plunged into a roadside drain.
The victims were returning to their hometown of Sarasale in Dindori after attending a child’s birthday celebration in Nashik when the Alto car they were travelling in collided head-on with an oncoming motorcycle. The impact caused the car to veer off the road and overturn into a water-filled drain.
After the incident, Dindori residents had demanded better lighting, speed controls, and improved road maintenance on this stretch, which is known for its sharp turns and inadequate signage.



Shivaji Nagar area when the incident occurred. An officer from the local Dindori police station said they were trying to ascertain how the driver did not spot the well. “We are looking for eyewitnesses and checking CCTV footage to get clarity on the incident,” he added. This is the second such

Force majeure on Mumbai skyline: How a distant war in West Asia is stalling city’s big public infrastructure push

From the Elphinstone bridge dismantling to the Thane bullet train depot, contractors on major public infrastructure projects in Mumbai have invoked force majeure, warning that LPG shortages and rising material costs could delay deadlines and push up project costs

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)
A global conflict entering its second month is starting to show up on the building sites in Mumbai, which is in the middle of one of its most ambitious public infrastructure build-outs in decades.
Contractors on at least three major projects — the Sewri-Worli Connector, Metro Line 6, and the Thane depot for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train — have invoked force majeure, an uncontrollable and unavoidable event that affects work, warning that shortages of LPG and imported construction material could push up costs and blow past deadlines. Others, not yet in writing, have told The Indian Express that the price variation clause will be invoked when bills are due. The trigger is the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has forced cargo ships onto the longer Cape of Good Hope route, adding 6,000-10,000 nautical miles, up to 20

extra days at sea, and Rs 1.5-3.5 lakh per container. Research firm ANAROCK Group, in



a March 19 report, estimated steel costs have risen 20%, with cascading hikes across aluminium, bitumen, tiles, ceramics and more. For high-rises, the added burden works out to Rs 50 per square foot. On the ground, the consequences are more immediate.

At the dismantling of the 112-year-old Elphinstone bridge — a critical component of the Sewri-Worli Connector — LPG is central to the work. Gas cutters are used to slice through century-old steel using a combination of fuel gas and oxygen. “For the last stretch of dismantling, we needed 20 LPG cylinders,” said an official from Space Chem Engineers Pvt Ltd, the contractor under the Maharashtra Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation (MRIDC). A cylinder that cost around Rs 2,000 now costs Rs 7,000, said the sub-contractor.
With September deadline bearing down on them, delaying the work was not an option. The sub-contractor drew from past stock and procured at escalated prices, and this was conveyed to MRIDC in a letter late March. An MRIDC spokesperson, however, said they were not aware of the matter. Managing director Rajesh Jaiswal did not respond to questions.

Bengaluru man shoots dead stepbrother’s pet dog claiming crop damage



BENGALURU.(Agency)
A 60-year-old man shot dead his stepbrother’s pet dog with a country made gun, claiming it had damaged his cauliflower crop. It is alleged that the accused and his wife had a dispute with the stepbrother regarding shares in an ancestral property, and this claimed the life of the two-year-old dog. It is also said that the crop was damaged by street dogs, and the pet dog was not at fault.
N Venkatesh (63), a resident of

Nalluru in Devanahalli taluk, filed a complaint against his stepbrother Narayanaswamy and his wife Nagamma for killing his pet dog. The accused are residents of Reddyhalli and the incident happened near the complainant’s house, around 9.15pm on Tuesday.
“My dog had not spoiled his crop, it was damaged by street dogs. Narayanaswamy and his wife wanted a reason to pick a fight with us, and shot my dog. Before killing the innocent dog, they

pointed the gun at me, my wife and daughter-in-law and issued life threats. The entire incident has been captured on CCTV,” Venkatesh said. A video of the incident has gone viral.
Venkatesh’s father had two wives, and Narayanaswamy is the son of the second wife. The ancestral property is said to be divided among four sons. Venkatesh, who also runs a chicken stall, lives in his farmhouse in Nalluru. Adjacent to the complainant’s house, the accused had cultivated cauliflower, which was damaged when stray dogs entered the field.
An officer said, “The case is under investigation and legal action is being taken against the accused couple. We are checking if the accused has a licence to carry a gun.”
Channarayapatna police of Doddaballapura sub-division registered a case against the couple under the Indian Arms Act, 1959, Prevention of Animal Sacrifice Act, 1959, and other sections of the BNS.

GBA’s 15 per cent building deviation relief sparks outrage; civic groups call it ‘reward for violators’

BENGALURU.(Agency)
Two days after the Karnataka government’s draft notification was put out, regularising 15 per cent building deviation from the sanctioned plan in the five city corporations under Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), civic forums call the move outright discrimination against owners following building bylaws, and providing a ‘helping hand’ to violators.
“Constitutional rights, like light and ventilation, are blocked due to violation of bylaws. The decision is against the Supreme Court stay on Akrama Sakrama in 2017, and also the Supreme Court guidelines against deviation and unauthorised construction in 2024, and more importantly, against the 74th Amendment provisions that give powers to local bodies to take such decisions,” said R Rajagopal from Bengaluru Coalition.
Echoing him, MK Sridharan,

coordinator of Civic Solutions, said the draft notification is an example of bad governance on the part of the legislature and executive. “If the decision goes to court, it may not stand a chance of scrutiny under the law.”
CN Kumar of FORCE, Jayanagar Residents’ Welfare Association, pointed out that the decision will lead to extreme densification of urban areas. He stated that the people who follow rules are not taken into consideration, and GBA is only helping the law violators. “Not a single case has been booked against engineers for failure of law enforcement. After the SC order in 2024, a lot of buildings are not getting Occupancy Certificate, and with this relaxation, many such buildings will be accommodated. There is talk now that even bigger buildings with violations will be given relaxations in the coming days. Where is this going to end?” rued Kumar.

Andhra Pradesh HC questions government over appointing special officers to panchayats

Alpesh Limbachiya BJP return ahead of Vadodara civic polls comes nearly three years after suspension over defamation allegations involving former Mayor.

Ahmedabad.(Agency)
NEARLY THREE years after the BJP suspended Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) corporator Alpesh Limbachiya for a period of six years over his alleged involvement in a case of “defamation” of the then Mayor Nilesh Rathod by way of an anonymous letter alleging corruption, the Vadodara city BJP welcomed Limbachiya back into the party fold on Friday.
The move comes ahead of the April 26 civic polls and a day after the party completed its two-day exercise of “gathering a sense” about the popularity of aspiring candidates. Limbachiya was also the Ruling Party Leader in the civic body at the time of his suspension in July 2023 following his arrest by the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) for allegedly defaming Rathod by releasing an anonymous letter. The letter, which had

surfaced on July 8, 2023, was sent by post to all the office-bearers and elected representatives of the BJP as well as other prominent party leaders. In the letter, Rathod was accused of ‘favouring builders’, corruption and siphoning off money from the funds of MLA Yogesh Patel, among other allegations.
On Friday, Vadodara city unit President Jayprakash Soni welcomed Limbachiya along with other office-bearers at the party office. Limbachiya’s inclusion into the party fold does not come as a surprise as he was spotted with several BJP leaders at public events in the past few weeks, even putting up photos on social media.
Following his suspension, Limbachiya — an outgoing corporator from Ward 17, from which Rathod is also elected, remained a corporator in his independent capacity.

Sources said the party decided to accept Limbachiya back into the fold as he had



made “multiple requests” and “expressed regret” over the controversy. Moreover, Limbachiya is known to wield considerable influence in his ward and the inclusion gives BJP an edge.

When contacted, Soni told this newspaper, “The inclusion of Alpesh Limbachiya into the party is not an election move... He had been in touch with us for a long time and was requesting the party to take him back with the assurance that he will work in a disciplined manner. The party has observed how he has behaved in the last three years and his conduct during the time of his suspension. So accordingly, the decision was taken to bring him back.”
In the 2023 case of the Crime Branch, apart from Limbachiya, his two relatives — Amit Limbachiya and Aakash Nai had also been arrested for their alleged involvement in printing and distributing the anonymous letters. Limbachiya remained unavailable for comment on Friday.

‘My son is still alive’: As family performs his last rites, Ahmedabad boy’s heart continues beating — in another teen

Hyderabad.(Agency)
When the Akbaris, a family largely of medical practitioners in Ahmedabad, came to know that their 17-year-old son Krish Akbari was declared brain dead by doctors at a hospital following a road accident, they knew that nothing can be done to save him.
His father Dr Ravi Akbari, a practising physiotherapist, says after discussions, the family decided to donate Krish’s organs. “We thought, if he cannot survive, then at least he can give life to others,” Dr Akbari said.
The family donated his organs, benefiting six other people, three of them teenagers. “Even as his last rites were being performed, his heart continued beating inside a 13-year-old boy from Bhavnagar in an operating theatre,” Dr Ravi Akbari says.
“By the time the cremation was over, the transplant of his heart was complete. In a way, my son is still alive,” he said.
His hands were donated to someone in Faridabad and lungs to a 22-year-old in Ahmedabad. His kidneys went to two teenagers, and corneas will give sight to someone. A Class 12 science student, Krish was riding a two-wheeler to his tuition centre on a busy road on March 28 when a mini truck on the opposite lane blew the horn to drive away a blue bull on the road. The startled bull jumped across the divider onto the boy.
“Krish had no time to react. The weight and force of the blue bull was so much that it directly hit his face. His left side of the face was bleeding and the eye was damaged.
Locals called the 108 ambulance and Krish was aware enough at the time to give them his mother’s phone number. We reached the spot immediately, but a lot of blood loss had already occurred,” says Dr Akbari.

Cheaper weight-loss drugs raise safety concerns

ON March 10, this year, India's drugs controller, in collaboration with state regulators, initiated action to curb possible malpractices in the pharmaceutical supply chain and prevent the unauthorised sale and use of weight-loss drugs whose generic versions were recently launched in India, leading many to consider them a panacea. The market has been inundated with so-called 'miracle' solutions for diabetes control and weight loss. However, noted for their potential in combating obesity, weight loss drugs may have implications beyond their intended purpose. Clinicians have observed that some individuals taking weight-loss medications for conditions such as type 2 diabetes or obesity exhibit reduced tendencies towards addictive behaviours, including alcohol consumption, tobacco use and even compulsive shopping. Weight-loss drugs have a long history, and the therapeutic effects and adverse reactions of conventional drugs are well known.

The relationship between weight-loss drugs and dependency remains complex and not fully understood. While studies suggest that GLP-1 receptor agonists might help reduce cravings, it is not clear if this effect translates to a higher risk of dependency. No studies have examined the experiences of semaglutide users beyond the side effects documented in efficacy studies. The potential for misuse and dependency is under investigation, and more research is needed to fully understand the implications of these drugs. This makes medical supervision essential, not optional. The surge in generic medicine launches occurred because the patent protection in India for semaglutide, the key active ingredient used in Ozempic and Wegovy — the diabetes and anti-obesity medications manufactured by Danish pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk — expired on March 20, 2026. Consequently, these medications for combating diabetes and obesity are now more readily available and significantly cheaper. While public response to these drugs is proving to be a "gold mine" for pharmaceutical companies, the use of these drugs without prescription is likely to cause complications and ultimately force consumers to seek medical help.

A study on 'The Ethics of Ozempic and Wegovy' published in the November 2025 edition of the Journal of Medical Ethics, addresses related ethical concerns. But it does not provide conclusive reasons for not prescribing semaglutide for weight loss. These drugs are increasingly being seen as 'miracle' treatments and have gained popularity. Since mid-March, more than a dozen Indian pharmaceutical companies launched affordable generic versions of these anti-diabetic-cum-weight loss medications in the market. They are now available in both liquid and tablet forms. The cost of vial-based drugs starts around Rs 1,290, whereas that of premium pre-filled pens goes up to Rs 8,000. Although generic drugs are driving the prices down, original branded medications continue to dominate the premium segment of the market — both in pricing and market positioning.

GLP-1 (Glucagon-like Peptide-1) receptor agonists are just the start of modern anti-obesity treatments. It took over 20 years to develop these drugs, and in the next decade, many patents for other obesity medicines will expire, making effective treatments more affordable. Currently, 193 potential anti-obesity drugs are under development. These new medications work by targeting hormones that control appetite and metabolism via the brain. Dual-agonist drugs, like tirzepatide, activate two hormone receptors: GLP-1, which reduces appetite and slows digestion, and GIP, which improves insulin function. Together, they lead to greater weight loss than single-hormone therapies. Some GLP-1 combinations, such as semaglutide and cagrisema, add other hormones like Amylin, which also slows digestion and controls appetite. entgh novel therapeutic formats.

A human-made tragedy called Punjab

There is a need for a multi-stakeholder consensus to pull the state out of its endemic morass

PUNJAB is virtually bankrupt and in the vicious stranglehold of a narco-militancy colloquially called gangsterism. In these columns, I wrote two pieces last year — "Why a new deal for Punjab is essential" (March 10) and "Punjab must push for a fair deal" (March 19). Unfortunately, both fell on collectively deaf political ears. While the first article outlined the acute and endemic structural problems bedeviling the state, the second had traced the fact that in the wake of a horrendous Partition — called Ujara (devastation) in Punjabi — the political leadership of PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) and East Punjab singularly failed to negotiate a special constitutional arrangement for Punjab.

In contrast, other states struck special constitutional terms with the Union in the form of the now-repealed Article 370 (Jammu & Kashmir) and Article 371A-J (Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka, respectively). Punjab is perhaps the only border state that did not endeavour to get a special constitutional deal despite being a victim of the blood-spattered vivisection of India in 1947. Punjab's trifurcation in 1966 may have worked well for Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and perhaps for a certain section of the 'political elite' in the state, but economically and structurally, it has not served the larger interests of Punjab. The political weight in national affairs of an undivided Punjab brought about by the merger of PEPSU and East Punjab on November 1, 1956, waned after its trifurcation on November 1, 1966. In fact, a number of scholars believe that Punjab and Bengal were partitioned by the British in 1947 to control the periphery of India by creating rump states as the Cold War had commenced. This shifted the centre of political gravity to the Hindi heartland. Try and visualise the political heft and influence of an undivided Punjab and Bengal in an undivided and independent India.

What followed the trifurcation was a turbulent decade and a half, succeeded by 15 years of religious extremism, separatism and terrorism from 1980 to 1995. It was substantially sponsored by Pakistan and a diasporic fringe. Civilian governance processes were substantially impacted as a consequence. Though the spectre of terror was finally culled by the end of 1995, Punjab never recovered from the toxic legacy of those dark days.

Three decades later, how does Punjab measure up? Its debt

will stand at Rs 4.47 lakh crore by the end of the 2026-27 financial year. About 23% of the state's revenue receipts amounting to Rs 28,755 crore will service interest payments. Debt repayment in the 2025-26 financial year — payment of principal and interest — amounted to Rs 43,194 crore. In effect, the state is borrowing to pay interest on existing debt rather than spend on development. In 1996, Punjab's debt was only Rs 15,250 crore. By 2002, it had doubled to Rs 32,496 crore. The debt, therefore, is not militancy-related but a consequence of populist and profligate spending over the past 30 years by successive governments. The consequence is that on May 31, 2025, Punjab had the second highest debt-to-GSDP ratio (46.6%) in the country — trumped only by Arunachal Pradesh at 57%. Punjab has to stop doling out freebies. The state just

national population is 5.2%. Gujarat, like Punjab, is a border state. Punjab is the sentinel of the nation, but has lost the political will to surmount the crises that consume it. After the proscription of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, the neighbouring country nimbly switched gears to enable a narco-militancy from 1995 itself, drawing upon its control of the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. It was only around 2010 that the Hukumrans started grasping the import of that strategy. By then, substantial damage had already been done. Three decades of narco-militancy have effectively crippled two generations in Punjab. This has directly impacted the state's law and order, with rampant gangsterism virtually holding it to ransom today. With 84% of the peasantry holding two to five acres of land, agriculture as a stand-alone occupation is becoming increasingly unremunerative. Punjab's water table has declined by 40-100 cm per year over the past three decades, compounding the agrarian crisis. As the state is bereft of any heavy industry worth the name, besides having a marginal service sector and a lack of focus on skilling in its education ecosystem, the young generation vacillates between frustration and hopelessness, looking for avenues of escape or easy money. While Punjab's challenges intensified, its political discourse became increasingly bitter and vendetta-driven. It has remained submersed in a toxic loop of a "he said, she said" discourse for decades, with social media-driven reel culture no becoming the cherry on the proverbial cake.

The Vidhan Sabha met for only 17 days in 2022, 12 days in 2023, 12 days in 2024, 15 days in 2025 and for only seven days in 2026 till now, whereas this should have been the forum for a serious debate to build a political consensus on a roadmap to pull Punjab out of its endemic morass. Between 2017 and 2022, the Vidhan

Sabha met for a mere 85 days out of its 1,825-day term. Earlier Assemblies did no better. Punjab's socio-economic and governance imperatives are now beyond the ability of any one individual or political party to surmount. There is a need to forge a multi-stakeholder consensus as the late Dr Manmohan Singh had crafted when he carried out the national economic reset of 1991. Three-and-a-half decades later, it still holds. As a two-term MP and a former Union Minister from Punjab now representing the capital of both Punjab and Haryana, it is my appeal to all political parties and right-thinking people to come together and apply themselves to restoring the lost glory of what was once the majestic Punjab of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.



can't afford it. Another interesting statistic: in the 2023-24 financial year, at current prices, Maharashtra's share in India's GDP stood at 13.46%; Tamil Nadu contributed 8.93%; Uttar Pradesh 8.77%; Karnataka 8.49%; and Gujarat 8.05%. By contrast, Punjab contributed a mere 2.4% to the national GDP. Herein lies the paradox. As of 2021, Punjab was still contributing 7.7% of the PBORs (Personnel Below Officer Rank) to the Army, though its share of the national population is a meagre 2.3%. This is despite the Recruitable Male Population (RMP) Rule introduced in 1965 that has systematically whittled down Punjab's recruitment in the armed forces over the past 50 years.

By comparison, Gujarat contributes 2.4% of the manpower to the armed forces, while its share of the

Haryana govt's order to buy sports gear in one day absurd

It is about the timeless ritual to exhaust budgets within the financial year

NOTHING captures the spirit of government efficiency quite like asking over 14,000 schools to spend Rs 12.8 crore in a single day. In Haryana's latest administrative masterstroke, sports infrastructure is to be built not on playgrounds, but on paperwork completed at breakneck speed. The directive would be impressive -- if procurement were an Olympic sport. School committees, presumably, are expected to identify needs, scout vendors, compare prices, ensure quality and finalise purchases, all before the ink on the order dries. One can only admire the faith that the authorities have in their superhuman abilities. Of course, there is a simpler explanation. This is less about sports and more about the timeless ritual of March-end spending, where the race is not to achieve outcomes but to exhaust budgets within the financial year. In this annual festival of fiscal urgency, prudence is optional and



utilisation certificates are the real trophies. The idea of decentralising purchases to schools is, on paper, results.

commendable. In practice, however, autonomy delivered at the last minute resembles a surprise exam with no time to read the question. Faced with impossible deadlines, committees are left to either rush through purchases or perfect the art of backdated compliance. The real winners in such situations are rarely the students. Instead, urgency creates fertile ground for inflated prices, questionable quality and creative accounting. It promotes an ecosystem that thrives when scrutiny takes a back seat to speed. Vendors, too, are unlikely to complain about such efficiency.

If the goal is to promote sports, the government might consider giving schools something radical: time, planning and perhaps a calendar that does not end in a sprint. Until then, this one-day spending exercise risks producing less sporting excellence and more administrative gymnastics, with predictably underwhelming

Land sharks emerge in Himachal again

➔ The Chester Hill Housing scam, a real estate project in Solan district, reveals the ugly face of 'land sharks'.

A few months ago in these columns (The Tribune, December 4) it was highlighted that the bedrock of Himachal Pradesh's identity and higher human development index compared to other states are based on land reforms. It was emphatically argued that the efforts by various players including 'land sharks' — a nexus of real estate builders, bureaucrats, and politicians, is hell bent upon diluting land reforms particularly section 118 of the Land Reforms and Tenancy Act. These 'land sharks' are pushing for land use change as section 188 protects the agricultural land, especially in the rural Himachal from sale-purchase to non-agriculturists and is strict on land use change. In such a background the 'land sharks' are determined to dilute the act in guise of attracting investments for developmental trajectory. The recent Pandora's box opened in the state speaks volumes of hell bent efforts in land transfers, and why dilution of the act is so pertinent for such efforts to advance. The Chester Hill Housing scam, a real estate project in Solan district reveals the ugly face of 'land sharks'.

Before I place the Chester Hill details, let me state for clarity that it may be argued as to why a bureaucrat or someone who has lived in the state for decades together or even born here should not find his abode in the hills? So what is wrong if they are bypassing some of the laws to find a house in the state. There is a difference between buying a house for habitat and pumping in money for speculating land and using the authority of the state in possessing multiple properties in such housing projects most of which are benami deals. Such projects make the process convenient for the 'land sharks' to park their money—both legal and illegal in the state. And this is no development. The Chester Hill Story and How the System was Appropriated

The facts disclose a deeply disturbing pattern wherein the different levels of administrative and police machinery appear to be functioning in a coordinated manner to suppress lawful inquiry, shield offenders, and facilitate illegal concentration of valuable land resources.

The SDM inquiry is the foundational document exposing systematic illegality in the Chester Hill-2 and Chester Hill-4 projects involving approximately 275-278 bighas of land. Project proponents engaged in material misrepresentation before HPRERA, falsely projecting the scope of operations across Districts Solan and Shimla to obtain approvals under false pretences. Unaccounted funds were channelized into land acquisition by inducing agriculturists, and recorded purchasers lacked financial capacity, acting merely as name-lenders, clearly indicating benami transactions. The transactions were structured in violation of Section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972. These findings establish not isolated irregularities but a coordinated scheme of illegality requiring immediate criminal investigation.

Instead of acting upon the SDM's findings, it is alleged that the orders were arbitrarily set aside. Further, when the Municipal Commissioner, Solan detected illegal constructions in Chester Hill, they were trivialised and judicial powers under Section 151 CPC, were usurped despite no such provision in the act, to set aside her order. This is just one case that came to light owing to some judicious intervention by few officers (in the above case both women) who followed the book, but then they were reprimanded. There are many such instances where the law of the land has been violated and the ease of land deals allowed thus benefitting the 'land sharks'.

Why Himachal is a Lucrative Destination and the perils of such development projects

If an average urban resident in India's metropolis and big cities is losing 11% of his life span because of pollution and other related challenges, hill states, and particularly Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand becomes favourable destinations for not just their retirement plans to live in



but also to work from home eco-system. The future of jobs as has been estimated by different agencies owing to large scale investments and broad direction of Artificial Intelligence led development is changing the nature of built habitat of working. In Kerala Urban Commission we estimated that a large chunk of new jobs may not require the same spatial dimension which in the past was required for the different stages of industrial revolution-I, II, and III. This being the IVth state is seen differently. In an environment that is not fit for living such real estate projects are attracting lots of speculative capital entry into the hill states. However, owing to the land reforms act and stringent conditions bypassing such projects with 'Chester Hill' like deals is one of the forms. And it is precisely because of this reason that the investments

are coming only in the border districts of the state for its better connectivity to the mainland.

An outside observer may believe that it is a good thing to have such investments and why not legalise such inflight of capital to the state? This is a tricky and risky wicket? Why? Because still around 85% of the people are living in rural areas and 54.6% are employed in primary sector, i.e., agriculture and other allied activities. Such projects are rampantly converting large parts of agricultural and grasslands which are natural fodder for the cattle into real estate. This has been worsening the agricultural production eco-system which is already in deep crisis.

Even the Supreme Court has observed the large environment footprint which the state has to be mindful of is the massive impact it brings on to the ecology and micro climate of the region because of these real estate projects. Since most of these are energy guzzlers with an addition of motorist transport these projects have a severe impact on micro climate as well. In a water audit done by some villages it is estimated that the natural water sources are drying because of various reasons and on top of that most of real estate projects are digging deep into the mountains for extracting water—something unheard of in the hilly terrain as the people have always been dependent upon surface water. This inversely affects the existing water aquifers and thus turn villages into dry zones thus pushing more people out from the agricultural sector.

What the minimum that the government should do is to not just protect the existing law of the land but ensure that a broad consensus is built on the developmental trajectory based on some of the foundations principles of 'carrying capacity' as well. Himachal and for that matter the entire Himalayan range now kept under seismic zone VI cannot afford to further enhance its vulnerability.

ATM card helps identify man killed in Ganderbal 'encounter'

Srinagar.(Agency)
An ATM card recovered from the body of a man killed in an "encounter" in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district on April 1 helped investigators establish his identity, official sources said. The Army had claimed on April 1 that a terrorist was killed during a joint operation with police at Arhama in Ganderbal. However, the slain man's family identified him as Raashid Ahmad Mughal, 28, a commerce postgraduate, and asserted he had no terror links, demanding a probe into what they termed a "fake" encounter.

Amid the controversy, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the encounter, promising justice. Several political leaders, including Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, had also called for an investigation.

Official sources said the deceased's face was badly damaged during the encounter, making identification difficult. During a search of the body, police recovered an ATM card, which became the key document leading to his identification.

Using the ATM card details, police traced the identity of the deceased and contacted his family. His brother, Ajaz Ahmad Mughal, was immediately approached by Jammu and Kashmir Police and questioned about Raashid. He was later taken to the Police Control Room (PCR), where he identified the body as that of his brother, Raashid Mughal.

Police have meanwhile questioned several people, including another brother, Imtiyaz Ahmad, to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the killing. Investigators are also examining how the slain man reached the location where the "encounter" took place.

Himachal: Shanta Kumar condemns Jharkhand ritual killing, seeks death penalty for accused

Dharamshala.(Agency)
Former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh and former union Minister, Shanta Kumar today expressed deep shock and anguish over a horrifying incident reported from Jharkhand, calling it a blot on a civilized society.

Referring to the incident in a village in Hazaribagh district, he said a woman allegedly sought treatment for her ailing son from a tantric, who advised that a "sacrifice" of a young unmarried girl was required to cure the boy. Misled by the tantric's claims, the woman reportedly agreed to the ritual involving her own 13-year-old daughter.

Shanta Kumar termed the incident extremely tragic and unfortunate, stating that such acts are beyond imagination in today's society. He said it was deeply disturbing that a mother could be driven to such an extent in an attempt to save her son.

He urged the government to take immediate and strict action against all those involved in the crime and demanded the harshest possible punishment, including the death penalty, to ensure that such incidents do not recur in the future.

IHM Hamirpur trainees have earned renown both at home and abroad: Balbir Singh

Hamirpur.(Agency)
While extending his best wishes to all the students, the SP, Hamirpur, Balbir Singh Thakur has said that the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Hamirpur, has achieved significant milestones within a very short span of time; its students are currently employed in numerous major companies and have earned a distinguished reputation both within the country and abroad. For this success, the students and their parents—as well as every member of the institute's staff—deserve to be congratulated.

He said this during the 14th annual function, 'Udaan-2026', of the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Hamirpur—located in Salasi. He said that the fields of hotel management and hospitality offer boundless opportunities for the youth across the globe. Young people should make the most of these opportunities.

The SP emphasized that in today's competitive era, possessing a specific skill set is absolutely essential for achieving success. Institutions like IHM Hamirpur play a pivotal role in the skill development of the youth.

He presented awards to students who demonstrated exemplary performance in various academic, sports, and extracurricular activities. Speaking on the occasion and conveying his best wishes to all the students, ADC and Acting Principal Abhishek Garg noted that this annual festival is not merely a day to award students for their achievements, but also a day to celebrate their hard work and dedication in a festive spirit.

He urged the students to move forward in life with unwavering diligence and discipline, thereby ensuring a golden future for themselves. Earlier in the program, Puneet Banta, the Head of Department at the institute, presented the annual report. He highlighted that, consistent with previous years, IHM Hamirpur has once again achieved a 100 percent placement rate this year.

Mechanical Department powers NFR's growth with key milestones and innovations

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 04th April: The Mechanical Department of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) recorded significant achievements during FY 2025-26, with a strong focus on safety, modernization and capacity enhancement. Operationally, NFR strengthened its maintenance capabilities, expanded train services and augmented coach capacity, enhancing overall efficiency and ensuring a safer, more reliable and passenger-centric travel experience. The improvements in onboard safety systems have significantly upgraded fire safety standards, while advancements in maintenance practices and infrastructure have contributed to better reliability and service quality. Key milestones such as the overhaul of specialized assets and modernization of coaching stock have further improved operational readiness, passenger comfort and hygiene, reinforcing NFR's commitment to safe, efficient and customer-focused railway services. In terms of operational expansion and modernization, NFR achieved several firsts. Maintenance of the Vande Bharat

Sleeper Train has been initiated at Kamakhya Coaching Depot. Additionally, maintenance of eight Amrit Bharat trains and New Guwahati. To cater to growing demand, 22 coaches were augmented across 21 trains. A Test Rake has also been



has begun in the zone. Infrastructure augmentation included commissioning of two new Self-Propelled Accident Relief Medical Equipment (SPARME) at New Bongaigaon commissioned in the Rangiya division to enhance the accuracy of weight in Electronic In-Motion Weigh Bridge (EIMWB), further strengthening opera-

tional efficiency. In a major safety initiative, 3416 Aerosol-based fire suppression systems have been installed in electrical panels across coaches, while manual Fire Detection and Suppression Systems in all pantry and power cars have been successfully upgraded to automatic systems, significantly improving onboard safety standards. Marking a historic achievement, the first-ever POH of a Tower Car was successfully completed at New Bongaigaon Workshop in November 2025. Further strengthening maintenance capabilities, the Mid-Life Rehabilitation (MLR) of LHB coaches has commenced at New Bongaigaon Workshop, with the first upgraded coach expected to roll out by April 2026. Passenger amenities were also enhanced through the refurbishment of 49 Rajdhani Express coaches, while all seven rakes of Avadh Assam Express were renovated at Dibrugarh Workshop to improve hygiene and comfort standards. These achievements underscore NFR's sustained focus on innovation, safety and improved passenger experience, marking FY 2025-26 as a year of notable progress.

MMSBY row: 55,000 Punjab govt staffers refuse health cards over low coverage concerns

Punjab MMSBY scheme has been rejected by over 55,000 government employees, who cite low treatment package rates and concerns over existing medical reimbursement benefits.

Chandigarh.(Agency)
More than 55,000 regular clerical employees with nearly 46 Punjab government departments, under the banner of the Punjab State Ministerial Services Union (PSMSU), have refused to opt for the Mukh Mantri Sehat Bima Yojana (MMSBY) after the union held a virtual meeting on March 29, stating that "the health packages for various diseases have been fixed, and the amounts are too low". PSMSU state president Gurnam Singh Virk said, "On March 30, the union formally communicated the decision to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Health Minister Dr Balbir Singh and Punjab Chief Secretary KAP Sinha that no union employee was keen to get their health cards under MMSBY."

However, the health minister told The Indian Express that he had not received any formal representation from the union. "I have not yet received their representation," he said.

Explaining the reasons behind the decision, Virk said, "We have studied the scheme and found the health packages for various diseases have been fixed, and the amount is



very low. Also, employees have expressed their apprehension that opting for MMSBY can lead to discontinuation of the existing reimbursement system and the monthly medical allowances."

"Moreover, the Punjab government has long

been defaming union employees and not fulfilling our demands. Thus, the union has decided not to get our health cards made under the scheme," Virk, currently posted as the personal assistant to the Faridkot Deputy Commissioner, said.

Virk explained that regular employees are entitled to a monthly medical allowance of Rs 500 and can also reimburse medical bills as per the prescribed government norms. The reimbursement facility covers employees, pensioners and their dependents, and allows treatment in both government and private hospitals, he said.

The Punjab government launched MMSBY in January, projecting it as a universal health insurance scheme offering coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh per family annually. The scheme has around 2,359 treatment packages, each with fixed rates determined by the state.

On Rotary International president-elect Babalola's top list global push to end polio

Rotary president-elect Olayinka Hakeem Babalola visited Zirakpur to launch a new AI literacy project for youth and reaffirm Rotary's global goal to end polio.

Mohali.(Agency)
Rotary International president-elect Olayinka Hakeem Babalola on Friday outlined his key strategic priorities: eradicating polio worldwide, expanding membership, and promoting youth-focused AI literacy, among others.

Addressing the media on the sidelines of a leadership seminar, 'Srijan 2026 - A New Beginning', in Zirakpur, Babalola stressed the urgency of inclusive and accelerated global development.

Calling for peace, he urged political leadership to end ongoing hostilities in West Asia, stating that "humanity must come first". Babalola said, "Rotary consistently supports war-affected populations, particularly in post-conflict

rehabilitation and rebuilding communities devastated by violence." Highlighting future goals, Babalola said, "Rotary aims to increase its global membership from over 1.2 million to 1.25 million within the next five years. The organisation remains committed to its flagship mission of polio eradication, while strengthening global grant partnerships focused on environmental sustainability, basic education and disease prevention."

A major regional announcement included the proposed 'AI Functional Literacy for Youth' project in the Chandigarh Tricity. The initiative aims to equip young people with essential digital and artificial intelligence skills, reflecting Rotary's shift towards innovation-driven service

and deeper youth engagement. The two-day seminar organised by Rotary Districts 3080 and 3090 brought together over 500 leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Chandigarh. District Governor-Elect Dr Rita Kalra described 'Srijan 2026' as a platform for leadership development and collaboration. She noted that the seminar featured interactive sessions, networking opportunities, and cultural programmes celebrating unity and diversity.

In a parallel development, the Department of Posts, Chandigarh Division released a Special Cover commemorating the Rotary event at GPO Sector 17. The cover will be available to the public during the April 3-4 event.

Multi-crore MC, CREST scam: Bank official used driver, his wife to float shell firms

Police probe revealed that entities such as Capco Fintech Services, R S Traders, and Swastik Desh Project were created as intermediaries to layer transactions.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Chandigarh Police's probe into the multi-crore Municipal Corporation (MC) and CREST scam has uncovered that shell companies, which were used to siphon off public funds, were allegedly floated in the names of a driver and his wife to mask the identities of the real beneficiaries.

According to disclosures in the alleged Rs 75-crore Chandigarh Renewal Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society (CREST) scam, huge sums of public money were diverted through bank accounts opened in connivance with officials, routed via shell entities, and later

invested in real estate to generate profits. Three IDFC FIRST Bank officials — Rishav Rishi, Abhay Kumar, and Seema Dhiman — have allegedly told police during interrogation that CREST accounts were opened in their branch with the involvement of CREST officials. These accounts, as per Chandigarh Police remand papers, became conduits for siphoning funds through a network of shell firms.

Police probe revealed that entities such as Capco Fintech Services,



R S Traders, and Swastik Desh Project were created as intermediaries to layer transactions.

In his disclosure, accused Vikram Wadhwa stated that government

funds were first transferred into these companies accounts before being routed into his personal accounts.

The probe has further found that bank accounts of the Municipal Corporation (MC) were opened at an IDFC FIRST Bank branch in Sector 32 by then manager Rishav Rishi in alleged collusion with civic officials. Fake fixed deposit receipts (FDRs) amounting to nearly Rs 116 crore were also created as part of the fraud.

Police investigations indicate that these shell firms were set up with the alleged involvement of Nalini Malik, former chief finance officer of the Smart City project, along with Sukhwinder Singh Abrol, CREST project director, and other MC officials.

Significantly, Capco Fintech Services was registered in the names of Bhupinder Singh and Sapna, who is the wife of Hemraj — a driver employed by Rishi. Another firm, R S Traders, was registered in the name of Hemraj. Meanwhile, Swastik Desh Project was floated in the name of Swati Singla, wife of accused Abhay Kumar, and her brother.

UP: Three men die after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Meerut

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Meerut.(Agency)

Three men died late today evening after allegedly consuming country-made liquor in the Daurala police station area of Meerut district, officials said.

According to reports, the victims had purchased liquor from a government-authorized shop and consumed it together around 7:30 PM near the outlet. After returning to their respective homes, their health suddenly deteriorated. They began experiencing vomiting and severe stomach pain before collapsing unconscious.

Family members rushed the three men to a private hospital, where they died one after another during treatment.

The deceased have been identified as Jitendra (45), a resident of Dayanandpuri Ward No. 12, Daulat (25), a resident of Saraswati Colony and Sachin. Both Jitendra and Daulat worked at a grocery shop owned by Sachin, son of Baburam, who also reportedly consumed liquor with them.

Following the deaths of all the three, angry family members created a ruckus at the hospital, demanding strict action. Senior district officials, including the District Magistrate Dr. V.K. Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Avinash Pandey, reached the hospital and later inspected the liquor shop. The Excise department conducted a raid at the shop from where the liquor was purchased. Authorities seized empty tetra packs and several cartons of liquor from the premises. Two individuals, including the salesman, have been taken into custody for questioning.

Dr. Prafull Chauhan, Emergency Medical Officer at Aryavart Hospital, stated that initial observations suggest the possibility of consumption of a toxic substance. However, the exact cause of death will be confirmed only after the post-mortem report. Police officials said that approximately nine cartons from the same batch had been sold, but no other cases of illness have been reported so far. All remaining liquor stock from the shop has been seized for testing.

The families of the deceased have filed complaints against the liquor vendor and are demanding strict legal action. Authorities have assured a thorough investigation, and further steps will be taken based on the Excise department's report.

To gain political mileage: Congress slams govt's special Parliament session

The three-day session will pass key Constitution amendment bills aimed at increasing the number of Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816, enabling the implementation of the women's reservation law at the earliest.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Congress has criticised the government for calling a three-day special parliament session from April 16, calling it a violation of the Model Code of Conduct. The party alleged the session has been convened to gain political advantage ahead of polls in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The three-day session will pass key Constitution amendment bills aimed at increasing the number of Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816, enabling the implementation of the women's reservation law at the earliest.

Asserting that the government's push for a rushed delimitation exercise would have "dangerous consequences", Congress MP

Jairam Ramesh, who is in-charge of the party's communications, said, "The only objective of this special session is to grab political mileage to influence polls in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Could it not have been called after 15 days?"

Ramesh said that the government only wrote about amending the women's reservation law in its letters to Opposition parties, adding that there had been no official communication or proposal on delimitation.

"The government has taken a one-sided



decision to call the session when campaigning would be on for polls in West

Bengal and Tamil Nadu and the Model Code of Conduct is in place," he said.

The Congress also cautioned against any haste in amending the Constitution over the delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies, saying it is a sensitive matter and the government must tread carefully, otherwise the exercise might put several states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala at a significant disadvantage.

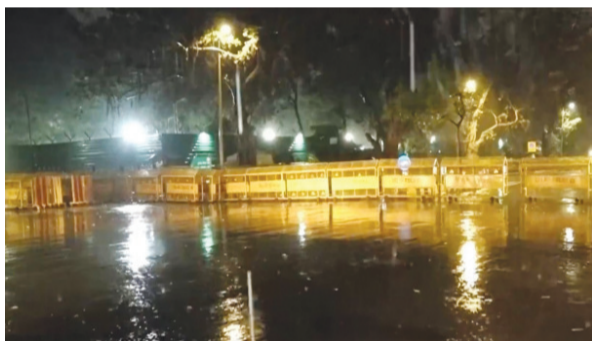
He said that smaller states and those in the south, north-east, and west would suffer massively. "With the proposed bill, Uttar Pradesh's strength will zoom to 120

while Kerala will crawl up to at best 30," he claimed.

Mallikarjun Kharge (Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha) and Rahul Gandhi (Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha) will meet senior Congress MPs and then hold discussion with other Opposition leaders before April 16 to strategise on this matter. According to the government calendar, both Houses of Parliament were scheduled to adjourn sine die (for an indefinite period) on April 2. While elections in Puducherry, Assam and Kerala are scheduled for April 9, polls in West Bengal will be held in two phases on April 23 and April 29. In Tamil Nadu, polls will be held in a single phase on April 23.

Cloudy skies, rain likely in Delhi as IMD issues yellow alert

New Delhi.(Agency)
The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds of speed 30-40 kmph for Saturday. Cloudy skies are expected through the day, with thunderstorms and rain likely in the afternoon and evening. Although rain brought relief from heat in Delhi on Friday, the national capital saw a slight increase in



the minimum temperature on Saturday. The minimum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 20.7 degrees Celsius, 1.9 degree above the normal and a 1.5 degree increase from a day before. The maximum temperature is expected to reach 33 degrees Celsius.

The air quality index was recorded at 177 (moderate) at 9 am on Saturday, as compared to 266 (poor) recorded on Friday, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) for Delhi has forecast the AQI to remain in the moderate category for the next few days, PTI reported.

33 prototypes shortlisted to fix Delhi's air pollution crisis

New Delhi.(Agency)
Nearly 33 prototypes shortlisted under the Delhi government's 'innovation challenge' to address air pollution are set to enter the second phase of trials, officials familiar with the matter said on Friday. The shortlisted prototypes include solar-powered, pole-mounted dust traps; filterless devices that capture smoke, dust, and carbon; electrostatic mist sprayers; smart dust-suppression and monitoring systems; and retrofitted, vehicle-mounted air purifiers designed to improve the emission quality in cars. Selected from a large pool of applications, these innovations were showcased at the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi in January this year as part of an exhibition. The challenge, launched by the Delhi government, seeks to identify practical and scalable solutions to tackle the city's air pollution.

According to an official, "The innovation challenge is now ready to enter the second phase. Trials will begin, and the government will provide the necessary infrastructure for their implementation."

Another official said the trials are expected to commence in the first week of May and conclude within three months.

An eight-member expert committee, led by IIT Professor Sagnik Dey, will evaluate the proposals to determine the most practical and cost-effective solutions to curb air pollution. The selected innovations will subsequently be adopted by the Delhi government for operational use. An official added that a meeting will be held on Monday to finalise the trial framework and the arrangements for its execution.

"The current plan is to proceed with trials for all 33 innovations. As the process advances, we will begin narrowing down the most effective technologies," the official noted.

Additionally, according to the guidelines, winning projects will be eligible for incentives from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, including Rs 5 lakh upon successful evaluation by the expert committee and up to Rs 50 lakh for solutions verified by National Physical Laboratory-equivalent labs and recommended for government adoption.

JNU students' body alleges neglect of library, bias for private coaching firm

The union claimed that the condition of books and reading spaces had deteriorated, sparking questions about preservation and student access.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Jawaharlar Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) on Friday alleged poor maintenance of the Dr BR Ambedkar Central Library and raised concerns over preferential access allegedly granted to a private coaching institute on campus.

In an official statement, the union said it had conducted a "comprehensive survey" of the library in recent weeks and identified several infrastructural issues. These included broken windows, exposure of books to dust & moisture, and the lack of proper cataloguing. The union claimed that the condition of books and reading spaces had deteriorated, sparking questions about preservation and student access.



The JNUSU also flagged administrative issues, alleging that the post of chief librarian has remained vacant, with an acting librarian holding charge for several years. It further alleged that repeated concerns regarding the upkeep and functioning of the library have not been adequately addressed.

The matter came to a head on Thursday, when members of the students' union organised a poster-making and display activity outside the library to highlight these concerns. According to the union, security personnel initially intervened and restricted the pasting of posters on certain walls, allowing them only on designated notice boards after discussions. The union further alleged that posters of a private coaching institute, StudyIQ, were displayed prominently on the outer walls of the library, and that students were prevented from pasting their material over these advertisements. It questioned how a private entity was allowed to use campus spaces for promotion while students.

Delhi court convicts ex-cop for forgery, threats

The court further noted that the accused had custody of the case files in her capacity as investigating officer, giving her the opportunity to manipulate the documents.

New Delhi.(Agency)
A Delhi court convicted a former sub-inspector for forging signatures of senior police officers on chargesheets and filing them in court, terming her action "an attack upon the sanctity of judicial records".
Judicial Magistrate Saurabh Goyal also found SI Kavita Mathur guilty of sending a threatening message to a senior officer. The judge held her guilty of committing forgery of public documents and using them as genuine for deceiving official processes. According to the prosecution, the accused was posted as an SI at Palam village police station in 2015 when she forged signatures of the then assistant commissioner of police and the then station head officer on several final reports and charge sheets relating to FIRs. She subsequently filed these documents before the court as genuine despite knowing that the signatures of the senior officers were forged. While convicting the accused, the



judge took note of the direct testimony from the purported signatories, independent corroboration by witnesses, the CFSL scientific report, the court record entries, and the accused's demonstrated conduct, which pointed " cogently to the accused's culpability". The court further noted that the accused had custody of the case files in her capacity as investigating officer, giving her the opportunity to manipulate the documents. "When an accused files with a court a document which contains false signatures purporting to be of public functionaries, and when this is done by the accused in her official capacity as an IO, the offence moves beyond private deception to an attack upon the sanctity of judicial records,"

the judge said. The judge said that the defence offered no credible alternative explanation which could dispel the chain of incriminating circumstances. "The cumulative effect of prosecution evidence leads to the inference that the prosecution has proved its case beyond reasonable doubt," the court said.

Rs 5K penalty for illegal selling in Delhi Metro

Instances of unauthorised selling and solicitation have been reported in the past.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Selling or offering goods without authorisation in the Delhi Metro will soon attract a penalty of up to Rs 5,000, following the passage of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, in Parliament on Thursday. The bill seeks to decriminalise certain minor offences by converting them into civil penalties. Among the provisions



amended is Section 73 of the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002, which deals with unauthorised sale or solicitation within metro premises and coaches.

At present, offenders can be fined between Rs 100 and Rs 400 for such violations. The amendment significantly increases this amount, replacing it with a penalty that may extend up to Rs 5,000.

The government has argued that the revised framework will ensure quicker resolution of such cases and act as a deterrent against unauthorised commercial activities inside the metro premises.

Instances of unauthorised selling and solicitation have been reported in the past. In December last year, a passenger flagged the presence of individuals distributing religious material and seeking donations inside metro coaches.

"With the revised penalty structure, authorities expect stricter compliance and better regulation of activities within the Delhi Metro network," said a DMRC official.

How pilots survive in enemy territory: Inside story of US Air Force survival system

After a US F-15E fighter jet was shot down in southern Iran, uncertainty now surrounds the fate of one of its pilots. On one side, Iranian forces are searching the area, while on the other, US special forces have launched a mission to locate and recover the pilot.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The most dangerous moment in any war often comes when a fighter jet loses control, whether due to a malfunction, missile strike, or other causes, and crashes in enemy territory. In such situations, pilots are forced to eject and survive on hostile ground. Recent reports of an F-15E crash in Iran, where two pilots ejected, underline this risk. While one pilot has been rescued, the other remains missing, with survival hinging on the systems and training carried onboard. For such high-risk scenarios, the United States Air Force has developed an advanced survival system, a combination of technology,

strategy, and rigorous training designed to maximise a pilot's chances of survival and rescue.

A SYSTEM BUILT ON SURVIVAL DOCTRINE

The system is not limited to a single kit but is a layered setup. It includes a survival kit attached beneath the ejection seat, a survival vest worn by the pilot, and additional gear such as helmets, radios, and weapons. Together, these support the four key principles of survival: Survival, Escape, Rescue, and Evasion (SERE).



Pilots undergo specialised SERE training that prepares them to endure harsh conditions, evade enemy forces, resist capture, and ultimately reach rescue

teams. The training emphasises adaptability and decision-making rather than dependence on equipment alone.

WHAT THE SURVIVAL KIT CONTAINS

The most critical component is the survival kit that deploys with the parachute during ejection. Once on the ground, it becomes the pilot's lifeline.

Communication and navigation tools are prioritised, survival radios enable contact with rescue teams, while compasses, signal mirrors, and GPS beacons help pilots determine and transmit their location.

NEWS BOX

Two bad innings don't define Sanju Samson: CSK coach defends struggling opener

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sanju Samson's start to life with Chennai Super Kings has come under early scrutiny, but head coach Stephen Fleming has backed the star batter to bounce back. After two underwhelming outings to begin IPL 2026, Fleming insisted that Samson's quality remains unquestioned and that a turnaround is only a matter of time. Samson's much-anticipated move from Rajasthan Royals had come with significant expectations, especially as CSK transition into a new era and the batter himself winning Player of the tournament in India's 2026 T20 World Cup triumph. However, scores of 6 and 7 in his first two games have sparked debate around his form. Speaking after CSK's loss to Punjab Kings, Fleming played down concerns and urged patience. "He is not going to score every time. It's T20 cricket and he just nicked one today. But, he is in good form. He is training well. And when he gets going, he is often a match-winner. So, two innings don't define an area of concern."



Samson's struggles have been evident in both outings so far. He fell for 6 off 7 balls against his former side Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati, dismissed by Nandre Burger, before managing just 7 off 7 balls in his Chepauk debut, where Xavier Bartlett got the better of him. With just 13 runs from two innings at an average of 6.5, the numbers underline a slow start. Yet, within the CSK camp, there is little sense of alarm. Samson's career has often followed a similar pattern, quiet beginnings followed by strong middle-phase contributions, something the team continues to bank on.

CSK'S HORRID IPL FORM CONTINUES

While Samson's form has been a talking point, CSK's broader struggles have added to the pressure. Their defeat to Punjab Kings extended a worrying trend, with the five-time champions now enduring six consecutive losses at home. Despite posting 210 on the board, CSK failed to defend the total at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. Priyansh Arya set the tone with a blistering 39 off 11 balls, while Shreyas Iyer anchored the chase with a fluent half-century as Punjab chased down the target in just 18.4 overs.

IPL Play of the Day: Chatur, chalak, chanchal Chahal chokes CSK at Chepauk

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Has Yuzvendra Chahal discovered an anti-ageing drug that people are not aware of? In the three months that he did not play any professional game at all, has he found a juaad that is fuelling this late resurgence in his Indian Premier League career?

It might just feel that way.

We saw a glimpse of that in Punjab's season opener against Gujarat Titans in Mullanpur, where Chahal picked up the wickets of Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler, helping his side restrict Gujarat to a below-par total. The wickets, however, came off attacking shots that the batters mistimed and were caught in the deep. Heck, in Buttler's case, the ball looked destined for the stands, until Xavier



Bartlett plucked it out of thin air, putting a dent in Gujarat's innings. Playing against Chennai Super Kings at the fortress Chepauk, Yuzvendra Chahal quietly changed the course of the game with a three-over spell that will not scream from the scorecard but will linger in the memory. He did not bowl his full quota, picked up just one wicket, and conceded 21 runs. And yet, he is India Today's Play of the Day, where we look beyond the Player of the Match award and zoom in on the exact phase that tilted the game. Today, from Chennai vs Punjab, it is Chahal's three overs, a spell from hell if you were wearing yellow, that turned the game in Punjab's favour.

Before getting into that, a quick look at how the match unfolded. IPL: CSK vs PBKS

On Friday, April 3, Punjab Kings chased down 210 runs against Chennai Super Kings in just 18.4 overs. Opener Priyansh Arya and captain Shreyas Iyer led the charge, guiding Punjab to their second straight win of the season. Priyansh was awarded Player of the Match for his blistering 39 off 11 balls in the powerplay, setting the tone for the chase.

Earlier, Chennai Super Kings huffed and puffed after being sent in to bat.

IPL 2026: How Ricky Ponting transformed PBKS into a six-hitting force

IPL 2026: Ambati Rayudu revealed Ricky Ponting's unique squash-ball trick behind better six-hitting. The method may explain PBKS's rise as one of IPL's most explosive batting sides.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India batter Ambati Rayudu has revealed a fascinating detail behind Punjab Kings' rise as one of the IPL's most explosive batting sides, pointing to a unique six-hitting technique introduced by Ricky Ponting. The former India batter explained how Ponting used a simple squash ball inside a batter's glove to unlock better bat speed, a method he believes is now reflecting in PBKS's power-hitting surge. Having worked closely with Ponting during their time at Mumbai Indians, both as teammates and later under his

coaching, Rayudu explained how the method helped him personally while also highlighting its wider impact. Speaking to ESPNcricinfo, he credited Ponting's approach for PBKS's growing reputation as a six-hitting force.

"A point about Ricky Ponting — I've made this earlier as well — he is a brilliant coach when it comes to helping batsmen hit a lot of sixes. He actually put a squash ball in my glove during games to free up the bottom hand, and that improves bat speed. And it is no surprise that Punjab have been hitting so many sixes, because he's the head coach and has an amazing way of making you practise those six-hitting skills. I think that is one really, really important reason," Rayudu said. "Everybody can hit sixes, but getting that bat speed through the ball is very, very important. I think that gives you a lot of confidence. And always, it's confidence that helps you hit success more than your ability or strength. It is confidence, backed up by bat speed," he added. Rayudu's insight comes at a time when PBKS have built a strong

identity around aggressive batting. After finishing runners-up in IPL 2025, they have carried that momentum into the 2026 season, already smashing 23 sixes in just two matches — 14 against Gujarat Titans and



nine against Chennai Super Kings.

Historically, PBKS have been among the leading six-hitting teams in the IPL, with 1,686 sixes to their name, but under Ponting, the approach has become more structured and intent-driven. Batters like Shreyas Iyer and Prabhsimran Singh have thrived in this setup, combining confidence with clean ball-striking.

WHAT IS PONTING'S SPECIAL SIX-HITTING TRICK?

The technique itself is simple but effective. A squash ball is placed inside the batter's bottom-hand glove, creating a slight bulge that prevents the player from gripping the bat too tightly with the lower hand.

This allows the top hand to take control, improving bat swing and generating better bat speed through the hitting arc. The added resistance also helps players develop a freer swing, reducing stiffness and enabling more powerful contact. Interestingly, a similar method was used by Ponting's former Australia teammate Adam Gilchrist during the 2007 World Cup, based on advice from his coach Bob Meuleman. The principle remains the same — free the hands, trust the

HOW PBKS THRASHED CSK IN CHEPAUK

PBKS's batting philosophy was on full display against Chennai Super Kings at Chepauk. Chasing 210, they approached the target with clarity and aggression, never allowing the required rate to climb out of control.

IPL 2026: Shreyas Iyer fined Rs 24 lakh for 2nd over rate offence. Is he facing ban

BARCELONA. (Agency)

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer has been fined Rs 24 lakh after his side were found guilty of maintaining a slow over-rate during their IPL 2026 clash against Chennai Super Kings at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. This was PBKS' second offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct. Under Article 2.22, the penalty did not stop with the captain. The rest of the Playing XI, including Impact Player Priyansh Arya, were also hit with fines of Rs 6 lakh or 25 per cent of their match fees, whichever is lesser, adding to a costly outing off the field despite the dominant win. Despite the off-field setback, PBKS delivered a commanding performance on the field, comfortably chasing down a 210-run target against CSK. It was a result that highlighted both their batting depth and attacking approach, even as the slow over-rate ruling slightly dampened the aftermath of an otherwise dominant night.



WILL SHREYAS IYER FACE A BAN?

Despite this being Punjab's second slow over-rate offence of the season, Iyer will not face a suspension even if the team commits another breach in the upcoming matches. That is largely due to a key rule change introduced by the IPL ahead of the 2025 season. The tournament has done away with the earlier provision of a one-match ban for captains after three over-rate offences in a season. Instead, penalties are now limited to fines and in-game field restrictions, reducing the immediate risk of suspension for repeat offences. However, a broader system is now in place. The IPL has aligned its Code of Conduct with the ICC by introducing demerit points. Any sanction imposed by the match referee leads to points being added to a player or official's record, which remain valid for 36 months. Accumulation of these points over time can still result in suspensions, making discipline a longer-term concern rather than an immediate one.

Jos Buttler just one innings away from best: GT coach backs star batter

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Jos Buttler may be going through a lean patch, but Gujarat Titans assistant coach Aashish Kapoor believes the England star is just one innings away from rediscovering his best. Backing the experienced opener, Kapoor stressed that players of Buttler's calibre inevitably bounce back, even after difficult phases. Buttler's recent form has come under scrutiny following a disappointing T20 World Cup 2026 campaign, where he managed just 87 runs in eight innings. He has also had a slow start to IPL 2026, scoring 38 off 33 balls in GT's opening loss to Punjab Kings. Speaking ahead of their clash against Rajasthan Royals, Kapoor expressed confidence in Buttler's ability to turn things around. "He's a top player, and there's no doubt about it. I don't think you people doubt that either. Yeah, he had a bad 1-1.5 months, which can happen to any player, and has happened to most top-class players, including Sachin

Tendulkar and Virat Kohli, who had such patches. But these players always come back." "Now, he must be really eager because such players have great pride in



themselves to do well. You could see the way he batted in the last match as well, trying to apply himself and wanting to make a statement that he's back in form. It's a matter

of one inning for such players to return to form, and I think he's on the right path, so it shouldn't be a problem."

Buttler's struggles come despite his stature in white-ball cricket. He remains England's highest run-getter in T20Is, with 4037 runs in 155 matches, and was a key figure for Gujarat Titans last season, scoring 538 runs in 14 matches during IPL 2025. With GT set to face Rajasthan Royals, the spotlight will once again be on Buttler to deliver. Rajasthan come into the game with momentum after a commanding win over Chennai Super Kings, while Gujarat will be keen to bounce back after their opening defeat.

HOW BUTTLER CAN REVIVE HIS FORM IN IPL 2026

For Buttler, IPL 2026 presents more than just another tournament. It is an opportunity to reset after a difficult international stretch and reaffirm his place as one of the leading white-ball batters in the game.

Shirts or sponsor boards Why IPL jerseys do not look good at all

CHENNAI. (Agency)

You can be a CSK fan, wrapped in yellow, cheering for MS Dhoni as your thala. Or you could be an RCB diehard, married to red and blue, riding on Virat Kohli's intensity every single game. But across loyalties and colours, there is one thing most fans will agree on, the IPL jerseys just don't pack the same punch anymore. A kit in any sport is more than just a uniform. It becomes part of your identity, blending individuals into a collective. Australia's yellow and green meant trouble for opponents. Brazil's yellow in football carried the unmistakable Joga Bonito flair. And closer home, the Indian team's light blue kit in the 2000s, with the Sahara logo and tricolour streaks, remains etched in memory. These jerseys were works of art, and everyone wanted one in their personal collection. But with IPL kits today, that emotional pull feels missing. When the IPL began in 2008, jerseys were central to a team's identity. Chennai's yellow signalled dominance. Kolkata's black and gold became iconic. Rajasthan's blue built

instant recall. Over time, however, that connection has faded. The reasons are not hard to spot. Sponsor clutter, inconsistent design choices, and a lack of identity have turned jerseys into something closer to advertising space. Add to that the question



of value, and it has also quietly fuelled the rise of counterfeit jerseys, a problem we will come back to later. To understand where things are going wrong, we turn to someone who has been at the centre of India's design ecosystem.

That voice is Aaquib Wani.

Wani has been one of the key figures behind

India's recent cricket kits, worked with IPL franchises like Rajasthan Royals, and designed for the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics. Few understand the intersection of design, branding and commercial demands in Indian sport better than him. And his insights don't come from the outside, they come from being in the room. He recalled a moment when Dream 11 became the sponsor of the Indian team. The red logo clashed with the blue Adidas stripes on the Test jersey, drawing criticism from fans. "I was on a flight from Ahmedabad to Delhi, and guess who I meet? Jay Shah. And I introduced myself to him." "And instantly he asked me, listen, what should we do about that Dream 11 red? I was like, make it blue. It should be one single colour on that jersey, and watch how it blends into it. I don't know if he heard me, or it was an internal discussion between them that they made that change," said Wani. It is a small example, but it captures the larger issue, design decisions matter, and when done right, they disappear into the fabric of the jersey.

Dembele leads PSG to victory ahead of Liverpool tie

The reigning European champions host Liverpool in the first leg of their quarter-final clash next Wednesday before going to Anfield for the return on Tuesday, April 14.

PARIS. (Agency)

Ousmane Dembele scored twice, including a stunning opening goal on the volley, as Paris Saint-Germain warmed up for their Champions League quarter-final showdown with Liverpool by beating Toulouse 3-1 on Friday to cement their place at the top of Ligue 1. Last year's Ballon d'Or winner smashed in a superb strike to give PSG the lead and then got the second from close range just after the half-hour mark, but in between Toulouse were gifted an equaliser after calamitous goalkeeping from home shot-stopper Matvey Safonov. Substitute Goncalo Ramos wrapped up the win

at the death, and the result ensures that Luis Enrique's side will finish the weekend on top of the French table. Their advantage is now four points from second-placed Lens, who play Lille away on Saturday.

"Today he showed why he is the Ballon d'Or," Luis Enrique said of Dembele. "That is why we love Ousmane."

PSG came into the weekend with a game in hand and their scheduled trip to title rivals Lens next week has been controversially postponed until May to allow them extra rest in between the two legs of the Liverpool Champions League tie. The reigning European champions host Liverpool in the first leg of their quarter-final clash next Wednesday before going to Anfield for the return on Tuesday, April 14 in a tie that is a repeat of the last-16 encounter last season which PSG won on penalties.

"It was important for us to just manage this game, playing on a Friday after an international break, because it is always tricky," Luis Enrique added. "These games can catch you out but I am very pleased with what I saw. It was difficult but I think we deserved the three points and that was important for us to keep the pressure on

Lens." Retaining the Champions League crown is the absolute priority for PSG, but they remain well on course to claim a fifth consecutive Ligue 1 title, and a 12th in the



last 14 years. Toulouse, meanwhile, are in mid-table and their season will now be defined by the outcome of their French Cup semi-final tie away to Lens, set for April 21.

PSG gave a rest at kick-off to several players who had just returned from long trips away on international duty, including captain Marquinhos and the Portugal trio of Nuno Mendes, Vitinha and Joao Neves. Safonov howler Among the players coming into the line-up was Brazilian centre-back Lucas Beraldo, who was surprisingly selected in

central midfield.

Dembele, who starred in the France side that beat Brazil in the United States last week, started a Ligue 1 game for just the eighth time this season. He marked it in style with his strike to give PSG the lead midway through the first half, nonchalantly swinging out his left leg on the edge of the box to meet a Mark McKenzie clearance and send the ball soaring into the top corner. Toulouse nevertheless drew level only four minutes later after a disastrous sequence of play by Safonov. The Russian initially came racing out of his box to attempt a headed clearance, only to be completely caught out by the bounce of the ball. He was saved by his defence who conceded a corner, but Safonov then failed to hold onto the resulting delivery and Danish defender Rasmus Nicolaisen gratefully headed in for Toulouse.

However, Safonov's blushes were soon saved by Dembele, who was left with an easy close-range finish on 33 minutes after Khvicha Kvaratskhelia nodded down a corner.

Dembele is now on his own as PSG's leading scorer this season on 14 goals in all competitions, with 10 coming in Ligue 1 including four against Toulouse.

Inside RBI's Dhurandhar move to support the rupee

New Delhi, (Agency)

The RBI pulled off a Dhurandhar move, complete with part-2 The Revenge, to stabilise a weakening rupee, reduce artificial demand for dollars, prevent speculative bets, and gain an upper hand in the Indian currency market.

Just like the blockbuster movie that set cash registers ringing, RBI's measures too felt like a thunderbolt, advancing the rupee by 1.8% to 93.10 on Thursday, which saw the biggest single-day appreciation in at least 13 years. Coming to the plot, which has its own twists and sub-plots, the RBI introduced measures that were among the toughest in over a decade. It clamped down on banks' speculative bets against the exchange rate, which was putting untold pressure on an already weakening rupee.

Our protagonist, the rupee was having a harrowing time and has been Asia's worst-performing currency for some time now. Its woes stemmed from multiple issues, including the tariff war, persistent foreign capital outflows, and now the rising global crude oil prices. Put another way, the rupee's troubles were akin to demon king Ravana's head. You cut one, another appears. Regrettably, the domestic currency fell 10% against the dollar in FY26—its worst annual rattle in over a decade. Further, it depreciated another 4% in March alone. RBI has been trying to stem the rupee's slide by selling dollars. If in 2025 it sold \$51 billion to contain volatility, last month it sold over \$30 billion. Still, the central bank's traditional arsenal of dollar sales and interest rate adjustments wasn't helping. That's because the principles of demand and supply were not the sole bearers of pricing in the Indian currency market. Easy money and greed were playing up the currency scene. Realising as much with a cold jolt of clarity, the RBI decided to go after banks' indulgence in what is called the arbitrage trade. But first, some basics on how banks were making money buying and selling dollars. Banks buy all the dollars the RBI supplies in Mumbai (onshore market), making a bet it would rise. They also take positions in offshore markets like Dubai, Singapore and London, where they bet the dollar would fall. If the dollar rises, they earn in India and lose offshore. If the dollar falls, vice versa. But how do they make money? The dollar is often priced higher in overseas markets than in Mumbai, and by holding dollars in India and betting against them abroad, they earn a risk-free profit. As of last Friday, ie, March 28, this business was pegged as high as \$140 billion.

Which companies sell 5-kg LPG cylinder? Know how to get it; no need of address proof

Kolkata, (Agency)

Amid supply disruptions of the 14.2 kg domestic LPG cylinders, the 5-kg LPG cylinder has been cited by many offering a ray of hope. The most significant point about the 5 kg cylinder is that it does not require an individual to have KYC compliance to buy a 5 kg cylinder. These smart options are sold by oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil, HPCL and BPCL. While the product of Indian Oil is branded Chhotu, BPCL has Bharatgas Mini and HP has Appu. Traditionally, these have been particularly beneficial for students, migrant workers and individuals living in rented accommodation. One can get hold of these 5 kg LPG cylinders by presenting an ID card.

As the US-Iran war escalated in West Asia, the biggest pinch that was felt by the common man in the first few weeks was that related to LPG cylinder supply disruption. As India imports more than 60% of its natural gas requirements from the region hit by the war, gas tankers could not move through the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the global maritime crude oil shipments pass. Price of the 5-kg LPG cylinder

The oil marketing companies have raised the price of the 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders on April 1 by Rs 195.5 and above depending on the city. While the 14.2-kg domestic cylinder has been spared a raise, the price of the 5 kg LPG cylinders has been raised by Rs 51. As a result the price of this cylinder is now between Rs 650 and Rs 700 in various cities. In any case, it is more affordable than the regular domestic cylinders and can be a stop-gap solution in a troublesome situation.

Cryptocurrency trading reached \$20.6 trillion in Jan-March 2026; Binance biggest exchange

Kolkata, (Agency)

Global cryptocurrency exchange activity has achieved unprecedented scale in the Jan-March period this year, data from CoinGlass, a prominent cryptocurrency data analytics platform show. Total trading volume of cryptocurrency has reached a staggering \$20.57 trillion in this period. Reports state that while this indicates a massive flow of liquidity in this asset class even during times of geopolitical uncertainty, it also revealed a clear dominance of derivatives trading over spot markets. It also points to a situation where sophisticated instruments constitute the bigger share of trading in an asset class. In the meantime, the US progressed towards Clarity Act, which paves the way for the crypto regulatory framework that US president Donald Trump vowed to create and turn his country into the crypto powerhouse of the world. Experts say it will contribute to reducing uncertainty in this sector and support innovation.

Not the peak trading level

Needless to say the amount of \$20.57 trillion — about 66% of the US GDP — stands for the cumulative value of all transactions on centralised and notable decentralised exchanges that are monitored by CoinGlass. Analysts point to the fact that though the headline figure appears very impressive, it does not represent the peak volumes.

Why KYC is everywhere and why it frustrates so many Indians

New Delhi, (Agency)

India has built one of the most sophisticated digital identity systems in the world. You can open a bank account without visiting a branch. You can invest, trade, insure, borrow, all from your phone. Your identity, at least in theory, is verified once and usable everywhere. And yet, in practice, the experience feels very different. You open a bank account and complete your KYC. Then you invest in a mutual fund, KYC again. You sign up on a fintech app, KYC again. Months later, you are asked to 'update' your KYC for an account you already verified. For millions of Indians, identity verification has quietly turned into a repetitive, never-ending process. At the centre of this contradiction lies a system that was meant to fix it all — Central Know Your Customer, or CKYC.

WHAT IS CKYC AND WHAT IT PROMISED?
CKYC was introduced to solve one of the most basic inefficiencies in India's

financial system: duplication.

Instead of submitting identity documents separately to every bank, insurer, mutual fund or broker, a user would complete KYC once. That information would be stored in a central registry managed by CERSAI, and institutions could access it using a unique 14-digit CKYC number. A PwC report notes that the objective was to create a single, standardised KYC record that could be reused across the entire financial ecosystem, reducing paperwork, improving efficiency, and making onboarding faster.

In simple terms, CKYC was meant to do for identity what UPI did for payments — create a common, interoperable layer.

But unlike UPI, CKYC has not delivered that seamless experience. **WHY KYC IS EVERYWHERE IN THE FIRST PLACE**

To understand why duplication persists, it helps to first understand why KYC exists at all. KYC has effectively become the entry point to the formal financial

like the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and sectoral regulations. Over time, the scope of KYC has expanded. What started with banks now includes:

mutual funds, insurance companies, stock brokers, fintech platforms, digital wallets

As the financial system digitised, regulators extended KYC requirements to ensure traceability, reduce fraud, and maintain oversight. But this expansion also created a new problem, repetition. Even though CKYC exists, institutions cannot simply rely on it.

"The law does not permit an entity to rely entirely on another institution's verification," Arora said. "Each entity must conduct its own due diligence, maintain its own records, and remain accountable if something goes wrong."



system," said Mayank Arora, Partner at The Chambers of Bharat Chugh. He explained that KYC requirements come from global anti-money laundering standards set by the Financial Action Task Force, which India follows through laws

HDFC Bank credit-deposit gap widens as loan growth outpaces deposits

New Delhi, (Agency)

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a widening gap between credit and deposit growth in the March quarter, as strong loan expansion continued to outpace relatively slower deposit mobilisation, keeping the bank's credit-deposit ratio elevated. The bank's gross advances rose around 17 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to nearly Rs 25 lakh crore as of March 31, compared to about Rs 21.4 lakh crore a year ago, according to an exchange filing. On a sequential basis, loan growth remained moderate, supported largely by retail and SME segments, while corporate lending continued in a calibrated manner. Retail loans once again drove incremental disbursements during the quarter. On the liabilities side, total deposits stood at approximately Rs 23.5 lakh crore, up from around Rs 20.5 lakh crore a year earlier. However, the pace of deposit growth lagged behind credit expansion, keeping the credit-deposit ratio elevated at around 106–108 per cent. The bank also saw

some pressure on low-cost deposits. CASA deposits grew at a slower pace, leading to a slight decline in the CASA ratio to about 37–38 per cent from 38–39 per cent in the previous quarter. This indicates continued



challenges in mobilising cheaper funds amid tight liquidity conditions. In a separate filing dated March 24, the bank said its Board of Directors will meet on April 18 to approve the audited financial results for the quarter and full financial year ended March 31. The

board will also consider a potential dividend for FY26 and decide the record date for the same.

Looking ahead, analysts believe key factors to watch will be the bank's ability to accelerate deposit growth, improve CASA traction, and maintain stable margins. Meanwhile, the bank is also dealing with governance-related developments. Sources indicated that it does not plan to initiate legal action against former non-executive chairman Atanu Chakraborty following his resignation in March. Instead, the lender is focusing on strengthening internal processes, particularly in third-party sales practices. The bank has already taken disciplinary action in connection with the alleged mis-selling of AT-1 bonds in 2018-19, suspending three senior executives and penalising 12 other employees.

Oracle layoffs shock thousands: How much of your severance will actually reach your pocket?

SYDNEY, (Agency)

Oracle's latest round of layoffs, which has impacted nearly 12,000 employees in India and up to 30,000 globally, has brought fresh attention to severance pay—and more importantly, how it is taxed. While severance packages may appear generous at first glance, employees often receive significantly less in hand due to tax rules. Understanding how these payouts are treated under Indian tax laws is crucial before signing exit agreements. Reports suggest that Oracle has offered a structured payout to affected employees in India. This includes compensation based on tenure along with additional benefits such as leave encashment, gratuity (if eligible), and notice period pay. Some employees have also received extra ex-gratia payments as part of the package. The exact payout varies depending on factors like role, years of service, and

business unit, but overall, the structure combines multiple salary-linked components.

How Is Severance Pay Taxed?

In India, severance pay is not tax-free. It



is treated as part of your salary income under the category "profits in lieu of salary."

This means:

The full amount is added to your total annual income

It is taxed according to your applicable income tax slab

Additional charges like surcharge and cess may also apply

The timing of the payout also matters.

Compensation received before March 31 is taxed under the Income-tax Act, 1961, while payments after April 1 fall under the updated Income-tax Act, 2025—but the tax treatment remains broadly the same. **Are There Any Tax Exemptions?**

Some components of the severance package may qualify for exemptions, including: Gratuity (subject to limits and eligibility)

Leave encashment (as per prescribed rules) However, key exemption available under voluntary retirement schemes (VRS)—which allows up to Rs 5 lakh tax-free—is not applicable in this case, as Oracle's layoffs do not fall under VRS.



The escalation triggered a sharp rally in crude oil prices, which in turn strengthened the US dollar and reignited inflation concerns globally. A stronger dollar typically makes gold more expensive for holders of other currencies, thereby capping its upside. Analysts noted that this dynamic has played a key role in preventing gold from testing its previous highs despite heightened geopolitical risks. Adding to the pressure, recent US economic data has pointed to resilience in the world's largest economy. Better-than-expected nonfarm payroll numbers indicated that the labour market remains strong, which could ease immediate concerns around a slowdown. This has strengthened expectations that the US Federal Reserve may continue to maintain a hawkish stance on interest rates.

The first 30 days of FY27: 7 smart money moves to make in April

The new financial year has just begun, and April is the time to take charge. The decisions you make now can shape your money journey for the rest of the year. In our new 'MONEY MAKEOVER' series, we break down simple, smart steps to get started right.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Fast-forward a few months, and March often turns into a scramble—last-minute tax-saving, hurried investment decisions, and a feeling that things could have been handled better. But right now, in April, the pace is different. There's time to think, plan, and get things right without pressure. That's what makes the first 30 days of a financial year so important. April isn't just the beginning of FY27, it's your clean slate. A chance to organise your money, make smarter choices, and avoid

the usual year-end rush. What you do now can quietly shape how smooth, or stressful, the rest of your financial year turns out to be.

NEW TAX RULES, NEW GAME PLAN

This year begins with a major shift. The Income Tax Act, 2025 has replaced a system that had been in place for decades. The introduction of a single "Tax Year" may simplify things, but the real impact lies elsewhere—deductions.

Amit Suri, CFP and Director and CEO at AUM Wealth, puts it bluntly, "Don't assume last year's approach still works. The rules of the game have genuinely changed, and the penalty for assuming otherwise is a higher tax outgo that could have easily been avoided." With fewer deductions under the default new regime, the first step this April is simple—figure out what actually works for you. Also, most people think about taxes in March, when it's already too late to optimise. April gives you a full

year to plan smartly, especially around capital gains. Mishra says, "Tax planning is far more effective when done early, when all options are available—not in March, when choices are limited."



A SMALL WINDOW TO LOCK BETTER RETURNS

Interest rates are already on a downward path, and that has a direct impact on your savings. "The RBI has cut the repo rate cumulatively by 125 basis points since February 2025, bringing it down to

5.25%. The MPC has now paused further cuts while retaining a neutral stance, but the direction of travel remains downward over the medium term," says Suri.

April gives you a narrow window to lock in current rates before they dip further.

If you're slightly more comfortable with risk, debt mutual funds could also benefit in a falling rate cycle—but only if they fit your broader plan. **DOES YOUR PORTFOLIO STILL REFLECT YOUR LIFE?**

A new financial year is a good time to pause and ask a basic question: does your portfolio still match your reality?

Last year, many investors chased trending sectors like defence or PSU stocks. But good investing isn't about chasing returns. Prashant Mishra, Founder and CEO at Agnam Advisors, explains, "The goal is not to react to the market, but to ensure your portfolio reflects decisions you can live with during volatility."



'Grateful Beyond Words':

Sonam Kapoor

Cradles Her Baby Boy In FIRST Post After Second Delivery

Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja welcomed their second child, a baby boy, on March 29, 2026. Days after giving birth, Sonam took to social media to share a picture of the little one cradled in her arms, along with a photo of herself before the delivery. The actress attached her post with a long note. Sharing the glimpses, which have social media in awe, the actress thanked HN Reliance Hospital for the "most incredible experience" as she welcomed her second son into the world. She went on to thank her doctor, who has been a guiding light during both her pregnancies.

Sonam continued, thanking the entire team for their gentleness, empathy, and genuine care. She added, "It's not always something one expects in a hospital, but it absolutely should be, and it made this experience so meaningful." The post carries a picture of Sonam lying on a hospital bed, cradling her baby boy, as they both have their eyes closed. Meanwhile, the second picture shows her sitting and enjoying a meal.

Sonam and Anand announce the birth of a baby boy

Sonam and Anand had earlier shared the happy announcement on social media. "With immense gratitude and hearts full of love, we are delighted to announce the arrival of our baby boy today, March 29, 2026," the post read.

"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," it concluded.

Sonam's father, Anil Kapoor, also shared the post on social media and wrote, "And just like that... my heart has grown even bigger. ❤️ Welcome to the world, my little one, you are already so deeply loved. Vayu, you're a big brother now... and I know you'll be amazing. Thank you, Sonam and Anand... Nana's heart is full. Welcome to the madness, my baby—welcome to a lifetime of love."

Sonam Kapoor had confirmed her pregnancy back in November 2025 as she flaunted her baby bump in a stunning pink co-ord set. The actress tied the knot with Anand Ahuja in March 2018. The couple are already parents to a baby boy, Vayu, whom they welcomed in August 2022.



Anshula Kapoor

Celebrates 'Seoulful' Bachelorette Party Ahead Of Wedding With Rohan Thakkar

Anshula Kapoor is currently embracing a joyful pre-wedding phase, and her latest getaway is all things fun, heartfelt and, as she puts it, "Seoulful." Ahead of tying the knot with her long-time partner Rohan Thakkar, Anshula flew to South Korea for a bachelorette celebration with her closest friends.

A 'Seoulful' Celebration With Her Girl Gang

Taking to Instagram, Anshula shared a series of pictures offering a peek into her bachelorette trip in Seoul. In one of the standout moments, she is seen donning a white veil paired with a crown and oversized glasses that read "Bride to Be," flashing a playful Korean heart for the camera.

The trip appears to be a blend of laughter, indulgence and cherished friendships. In another photo, she poses with a friend in matching pink T-shirts that read, "Seoulsters for life before she becomes a wife."

From café hopping to enjoying croissants, cookies, bagels and drinks, the celebration captures a relaxed, joy-filled vibe. Captioning the post, she wrote, "Seoulsters for life. Bachelorette with my OGs."

Fans flooded the comments with love, calling the pictures "cute," "authentic," and full of "Seoul vibes."

Wedding Bells Around The Corner

Anshula Kapoor is set to marry Rohan Thakkar, with whom she went public in 2023. The couple has since shared glimpses of their relationship on social media, often highlighting their bond and shared moments. Rohan proposed to Anshula in New York's Central Park in July last year, and the two got engaged in October in an intimate ceremony attended by family members including Sonam Kapoor, Janhvi Kapoor and Khushi Kapoor, among others.

Sharing pictures from the ceremony earlier, Anshula had written, "02/10/2025. This wasn't just our Gor Dhana, it was love showing up in every little detail. Ro's favourite words have always been 'always and forever'—and today, they started to feel real in the sweetest way."

She added, "His love makes me believe fairytales don't just live in books, they live in moments like these. A room overflowing with laughter, hugs, blessings, and the people who make our world feel full. And then, Ma's love... quietly wrapping itself around us. In her flowers, in her words, in her seat, in the way her presence could still be felt everywhere."



Ramayana: Alia Bhatt Was Once Called 'Sita Ma', Why Didn't She Get Cast In Ranbir Kapoor's Film?



At the recently held teaser launch in LA, Ranbir Kapoor lauded Sai Pallavi as Sita and said that there couldn't have been a better casting choice for her role. However, much before the official announcement was made, there were reports that Ranbir Kapoor's wife and actor Alia Bhatt was in talks for the role in the big-budget film.

Why Did Alia Bhatt Not Get Cast As Sita?

He added that the moment meant a lot to him and made him incredibly happy. He said that following the interaction, he shifted his perspective, choosing not to dwell on the edited scenes. Instead, he embraced the opportunity of being part of a huge film like Dhurandhar and is now relishing its success.

While neither Ranbir Kapoor nor Alia Bhatt had confirmed these reports, there was significant speculation on social media. Pinkvilla had even reported that Alia Bhatt finally had to walk away from the project due to date issues. Some fans of the actress were left upset; however, they were still excited to see Ranbir as Ram. Alia Bhatt Reacted To Being Called 'Sita' The buzz didn't die down till the official announcement was made. Once, at the airport in Mumbai, the paparazzi even called Alia "Sita ma'am" and "Sita ma". The actress just said, "Arre", and walked past the shutterbugs, brushing off the comments. Some social media users had speculated that this could have been a publicity stunt by the actress.

Now, Ranbir Kapoor has affirmed that Sai Pallavi was the best choice for the role. Speaking to the media and fans in LA, the actor said, "We all know Sai is such a brilliant actor. You know, she's accomplished so much. The first day, I remember, when I saw her as Sita, I just looked at Nitesh sir, and we both just knew that we couldn't have cast someone better than her."

Ramayana Cast Meanwhile, the teaser was launched in India on April 2 on Hanuman Jayanti. Ramayana: Part 1 brings together a wide ensemble, including Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, Sunny Deol as Hanuman and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman. The film combines Indian storytelling traditions with global filmmaking expertise, including music by Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman.

Anjali Raghav Drops Case Against Pawan Singh, Action Continues Against Social Media Team



Haryana actor Anjali Raghav has withdrawn her complaint against Bhojpuri star Pawan Singh before the Haryana State Women's Commission following his public apology. However, the case is far from over, as proceedings will continue against members of the actor's social media team.

Complaint Dropped After Public Apology

According to reports, Anjali appeared before Commission chairperson Renu Bhatia in Faridabad on April 2 and informed the panel that she no longer wished to pursue the case against Pawan Singh. The actor himself did not attend the hearing. Officials confirmed that Anjali's decision came after Singh issued a public apology on social media over the controversy. Following her statement, the Commission removed his name from the case.

Allegations Against Social Media Team

While Anjali chose to step back from her complaint against Singh, she has levelled serious allegations against members of his social media team. She claimed that after a stage show incident in Lucknow last year, certain team members circulated her photos and videos in a misleading manner. She further alleged that her personal details, including her mobile number and photographs, were uploaded on pornographic websites, causing significant mental distress.

In her statement, Anjali reportedly named three individuals, including Bhivanshu and Akash, and sought strict action against them. The Commission has now included them in the case and directed them to submit their responses.

The next hearing is scheduled for April 6 in Panchkula, where all individuals named in the complaint have been asked to appear in person.

What Triggered The Controversy

The issue traces back to a promotional event in Lucknow for Pawan Singh's song Saiya Seva Kare, which also featured Anjali Raghav. A video from the event went viral, showing the actress appearing uncomfortable when Singh placed his hand on her waist during their stage appearance. Following the backlash, Anjali took to Instagram, saying she was "disturbed" by the incident and even stated that she would not work in the Bhojpuri industry again.



This summer, personalise your **Workout** to get in **Shape**

Mumbai's temperatures are soaring high and soon you'll be seeing people trying to beat the heat with shorts, halters, summer dresses and crop tops!

But before you do the same, you need to tone your arms, thighs, waist and shoulders, to flaunt your flirty summer wardrobe. Here are some season-specific exercises to incorporate in your fitness routine...

For shapely thighs, hips and butt

Squats: Three sets of 10 to 15 reps Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Lower yourself gently, like you are going to sit on a chair. Keep your toes behind your knees and push your weight on your heels. Straighten your legs to raise yourself back up. Keep your abs in and don't lean too far forward as you lower yourself. For extra toning, hold medium weights in your hands as you squat.

For toned arms

Bicep curls: Three sets of seven to 12 reps Stand straight with medium weights in each hand at arm's length. Keep your elbows close to your torso and rotate the palms until they are facing forward. Now, keeping the upper arms stationary, exhale and curl the weights while contracting your biceps. Do not use momentum to throw the weights up, and do not let them drop quickly on the way down.

For flat abs

Bicycling on the floor: Lie flat on your back on a yoga mat with your legs bent and feet flat on the mat. Bend your elbows, flare them out to your sides and place your fingers just behind your ears. Contract your abs, move the legs in a pedalling motion, touching the left elbow to the right knee. Focus on keeping the abs contracted during the entire exercise. Do not pull the head toward your legs with your hands, as it will strain your neck.

Common workout mistakes

you are making

You may chart out a great exercise routine for yourself, but it won't be any good if you make these mistakes:

Drinking coffee before exercising

Caffeine acts as a diuretic to your body, causing severe dehydration. So, when you consume it before a workout, your body loses fluids. The best way to stay hydrated is to drink water, especially in summer. This will keep you body cool.

Stepping out late for your workout

If you're a late riser, you may tend to put off your exercise routine for later in the morning. But this isn't a great idea, as during summers, the temperatures go up much earlier in the day. The heat can put your body at risk. Sleep early at night and do your exercises as early in the morning, even on weekends. If early in the day is not possible, work out late in the evening when it is cooler.

Not wearing spandex

Most people prefer wearing loose clothes while gymming. But these can cause chaffing, especially when you sweat. Go for options that aren't too tight or too loose. You can wear spandex beneath a loose T-shirt to prevent this.

Skipping a meal post exercising

Starving yourself after exercising won't make you lose any more weight. You need to refuel your body within 30 minutes after your gym session. So, apart from hydrating yourself, you can snack on a small meal, like a hard-boiled egg, a carrot or a shake.



Pool aquacises for fitness and fun

Low-impact and easy on the muscles, these workouts and games provide little risk of injury. Mumbai has been sweltering alright! At 36.9 degrees Celsius, we had the hottest day recently, and it's going to get worse. While we don't advocate

Enjoy playing tag on land? Now, try it in the water with Marco Polo. In it, players form two teams. The catcher has to yell "Marco" and the rest yell "Polo" as they swim around in a bid to avoid him.

Go on a Treasure Hunt

Make a list of 'treasures' that are to be found in the pool such as coins, rings and other small, but sinkable items. Let two teams read the list and try and find these. Coins are the hardest to find so the game is bound to provide hours of fun.

Pool Volleyball

One of the most popular activities is pool volleyball or net ball. The game follows the same rule as on land and uses a special net. It also

Hydrotherapy, is a part of alternative medicine, which involves the use of water for pain relief and treatment. The term encompasses a broad range of approaches and therapeutic methods that take advantage of the physical properties of water, such as temperature and pressure, for therapeutic purposes, to stimulate blood circulation and treat the symptoms of certain diseases. Bath temperatures typically ranged from 92°F to 97°F, so as not to cause injury to the patients.

Water therapy may be restricted to use in Physiotherapy, and as a cleansing agent. However, it is also used as a medium for delivery of heat and cold to the body, which has long been the basis for its application. Hydrotherapy involves a range of methods and techniques.

Various therapies used in the present-day hydrotherapy employ water jets, underwater massage and mineral baths. Hydrotherapy which involves submerging all or part of the body in water.

The Hydro Machine has pre installed Jets. These Jets shoots water on the body in periodicals (specified time periods). The water affects precisely on the chakras of the body. Eventually cleansing

Hydrotherapy an alternative form of medicine

and opening the desired chakras.

The Health and Healing Benefits of Hydro Therapy is it reduces muscle tension and pain rehabilitates injured muscles, boosts immune system, encourage detoxification and relieves stress.

In addition to the Hydrotherapy, Sea Salts are also used. Sea salts and Epsom salts, or magnesium sulfate, both commonly used in the beauty industry,

contain minerals that can help to enhance the skin. The magnesium in Epsom salts can reduce

inflammation, while sulfates flush out toxins. These salts helps in exfoliation, invigorates and cleanses and regenerates the skin.

Hence, it is usually recommended to have a Hydrotherapy along with the Bath Salts for the numerous benefits it does on the overall body.



wasting water in a rain dance, how about getting into a pool to cool down?

If all you did was swim so far, take a deep breath and jump in! Here are other ways ways to enjoy yourself...

Water Relay

Keep two buckets at either end of the pool and divide players into two teams, each having a mini surfboard and small mug tied to the board. Each player must fill the mug with water, get on to the board and swim across the pool to dump the water into the bucket on the other side. He or she must then hand the mug to a team mate, to take over. First to fill the bucket is the winner.

Marco Polo

needs pool depth as one needs movement to be able to jump and hit the ball. Use floating ropes to mark boundaries. Not only is this a calorie buster, but also needs controlled movements that helps tone your legs.

Aqua Noodle Water exercises are a huge draw as water provides 14 per cent more resistance than air, which means muscles get more toned in water. And there is almost zero impact on the bones, joints and muscles. Forget fancy machines and try the plastic noodle, which helps you stay afloat while balancing.

From a simple push and pull movement to squats and twists, there's a lot you can do with this.

