

Delimitation, not women's reservation, is real issue:

Sonia Gandhi attacks Centre

Delimitation and not women's reservation is at the heart of the Centre's move to convene a special Parliament session from April 16 to 18, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi said. She warned that the delimitation proposal amounts to an "assault on the Constitution."

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delimitation, not women's reservation, is the core issue behind the Centre's decision to convene a special session of Parliament from April 16 to 18, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi said, warning that the delimitation proposal is "extremely dangerous" and an "assault on the Constitution."

In an op-ed in The Hindu, Sonia Gandhi cited unofficial information about the government's delimitation plans, expressing concern that they could significantly alter political representation and undermine constitutional principles.

Her remarks come amid renewed focus on the Women's Reservation Bill, also known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, which provides for one-third reservation for women in legislative bodies and was passed in 2023. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to all political parties seeking support for an amendment to the law. The proposed move aims to delink its



implementation from the 2027 Census and instead base it on the 2011 Census, ensuring the reservation comes into force ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha election.

In the op-ed, Sonia Gandhi emphasised that any delimitation exercise that expands the strength of the Lok Sabha must ensure fairness in political representation, not merely rely on numerical calculations.

She reiterated that delimitation, not the implementation of women's reservation, is the core issue behind the government's legislative

push, cautioning that the proposed exercise could have far-reaching implications.

She alleged that PM Modi was using the women's reservation push to "delay and derail" the caste census, while attempting to secure political advantage ahead of elections in West Bengal, Assam, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

Sonia Gandhi said PM Modi's outreach to opposition parties for support of proposed bills comes even as election campaigning peaks in states like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

She argued that the "extraordinary hurry" to convene the session suggests a calculated attempt to put the Opposition on the defensive and shape the political narrative. Accusing PM Modi of being "economical with the truth," she described the move as reflective of a "my way or the highway" style of governance. Referring to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, the Rajya Sabha MP noted that it introduced Article 334-A, mandating one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, to be implemented after the next Census and subsequent delimitation.

BJP sends Shivraj Singh Chouhan to pick Bihar CM

PATNA.(Agency)

The BJP on Sunday appointed union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan as the central observer to oversee the selection of its legislative party leader in Bihar who will replace Nitish Kumar as the chief minister.

"The parliamentary board of the BJP has appointed Shivraj Singh Chouhan, union minister for agriculture and farmers welfare and rural development, as the central observer for the election of the leader of the BJP's legislative party in Bihar," BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said in a notification.

BJP legislative party meeting is likely to be held on April 14. Chouhan is reaching Patna on the same day. Later, NDA legislators will endorse the name of the BJP legislative party leader as the next CM, sources said. Kumar took oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha on April 10.

Earlier in the day, JD (U) national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha said the process of forming the new government in Bihar would begin after April 13.

Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary is considered as the frontrunner for the Chief Minister's post. Other top contenders to the post include union minister of state for home Nityanand Rai and deputy chief minister Vijay Kumar Sinha, ministers Dilip Jaiswal and Shreyasi Singh. Name of BJP MLA from Digha Sanjeev Chaurasia is also doing the rounds.

Nitish is likely to resign as CM on April 14 after chairing a cabinet meeting, which is likely to approve important proposals. A new NDA government headed by a BJP CM is likely to be sworn in on April 15, sources said. JD (U) leader and minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary said the new CM of the NDA would be elected upon the recommendation of BJP.

Short news

Bengal will reply to 'bombs with votes', says Amit Shah; claims BJP will form double-engine government



New Delhi.(Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that the people of West Bengal will respond to bombs with votes and bring about a 'double-engine' government for the BJP in the upcoming assembly elections.

Shah made the statement while addressing an election rally at Mayureshwar in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

In his address, Shah claimed that Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was trying to terrorise the state's majority community.

He further claimed that this election was for driving out infiltrators from the state and the country.

He said EC has sent adequate central forces to the state to ensure free and fair elections. "TMC goons should stay home on poll day, else they will be sent to jail after May 4," he added.

SC declines to quash CBI FIR against Lalu Prasad Yadav in land-for-jobs case

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

In a major setback to the former Bihar chief minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo, Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Supreme Court on Monday in its order refused to quash the CBI FIR in the land-for-jobs case against him.

A two-judge bench of the apex court, headed by Justice M M Sundresh and also comprising Justice N Kotiswar Singh, however, granted exemption to the 77-year-old former Bihar chief minister from appearance before the trial court during the proceedings in the case.

While refusing to quash the First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation in the land-for-jobs scam case, the apex court allowed Yadav to raise the issue of the applicability of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act in the case.

Earlier in July 18 last year, the top court in its order also had refused to stay the trial proceedings against him going on before a special court in Delhi in the case.

The land-for-jobs scam case came out to the fore, during his tenure as railways minister from 2004 to 2009. On May 29, the Delhi High Court while dismissing Yadav's petition for stay of the trial in the land-for-jobs scam case, had said that there were no compelling reasons to stay the proceedings. While refusing to stay the trial court's proceedings, the High Court had issued notice to the CBI on Yadav's plea for quashing of the CBI FIR and posted the hearing on August 12.

Women's reservation is 21st century's most important decision: PM Modi

Bengaluru.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India is on the verge of taking one of the 21st century's most significant decisions, calling the proposed women's reservation move a historic step dedicated to "Nari Shakti" at the Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India is set to take one of the biggest decisions of the 21st century, calling the proposed women's reservation legislation a historic step dedicated to "Nari Shakti," while addressing the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, PM Modi said, "Amidst these crucial milestones in the country's journey of development, India is about to take one of the biggest decisions of the 21st century. I am saying with great responsibility that this is one of the



important decisions among the important decisions of the 21st century. This decision is dedicated to Nari Shakti. Dedicated to Nari Shakti Vandan."

He described the move as one that will turn the vision of the past into reality and make

social justice a core part of governance and decision-making.

"This decision is dedicated to women's power. It is dedicated to the veneration of women's power. Our country's Parliament is close to creating a new history. A new history that will realise the concepts of the past. One that will fulfil the resolutions of the future.

A resolution for an India that is egalitarian, where social justice is not just a slogan, but a natural part of our work culture, our decision-making process.

The time has come to end decades of waiting, from the state assemblies to the country's Parliament; it is 16th, 17th and 18th April," he said.

DKS: The man perpetually waiting in the wings

New Delhi.(Agency)

In politics, as in life, we are told that loyalty and hard work are the surest paths to reward. It is a comforting belief, that if you stand by your party through storms, you will eventually find your place in the sun. But for DK Shivakumar, the Congress party's indefatigable troubleshooter, that promise must feel increasingly hollow.

In the intricate theatre of Indian politics, he is learning the hard way that loyalty is often praised in public, only to be sidelined in private. Shivakumar is routinely entrusted with the party's most delicate operations, yet curiously kept at arm's length from the grand prizes of power. We saw this play out again ahead of the recent biennial Rajya Sabha elections.

When a group of Congress legislators from Odisha appeared in Bengaluru—sparking speculation that they had been moved to prevent cross-voting—Shivakumar found himself at the centre of the storm. Yet, when pressed by journalists, his response was characteristically restrained. He insisted he had not "brought

them there," and was merely following instructions from the leadership.

It was a classic Shivakumar moment: dutiful, cautious, and quietly revealing. It hinted at a recurring, somewhat uncomfortable truth within the Congress ecosystem—responsibility flows downward, but recognition rarely travels upward.



For years, Shivakumar has been the party's dependable crisis manager, the man called upon when the ship is rocking. His reputation as a master political operator was cemented during the dramatic 2019 Karnataka crisis. As coalition partners defected and the government teetered on the brink, he worked relentlessly to hold together a fragile alliance, arranging safe houses, coordinating logistics, and managing the chaotic arithmetic of a floor test. Those efforts ultimately failed and the government fell. Yet within the party,

Shivakumar's stature only grew: a loyal soldier willing to fight even unwinnable battles. The pattern repeated itself in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Whenever the Congress needed someone to negotiate, persuade, or apply pressure, Shivakumar was the go-to man.

Cars Burnt, Roads Blocked: Haryana Move Sparks Noida Workers' Protest

Legendary singer Asha Bhosle died on Sunday, April 12, in Mumbai. She had been admitted to hospital due to extreme exhaustion and a chest infection, according to her granddaughter Zanai Bhosle.

Noida.(Agency)

A massive protest by factory workers in Noida has turned violent, with agitators vandalising vehicles and throwing stones as police try to bring the situation under control. Visuals show protesting workers vandalising a police van and other vehicles at Phase 2 of Noida, where several factories are located. The workers from several industrial units are protesting in demand of a salary hike and other benefits. Reinforcements have been rushed to the spot to prevent any untoward situation. The protests have led to traffic congestion on key roads in Noida on a Monday morning. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath



has said workers must get their due and industries must follow labour laws. He, however, directed authorities to take strict action against anti-social elements trying to instigate workers.

Over the past few days, the factory workers have been protesting in demand of a wage hike and better working conditions. The protests began after the Haryana government announced a 35 per cent hike in the minimum wage for unskilled workers, raising it from Rs 11,274 per month to Rs 15,220. The minimum wage of semi-skilled workers in Haryana has been hiked from Rs 12,430.18 to Rs 16,780.74 per month. The minimum pay for skilled and highly skilled workers have also been hiked by 35 per cent.

India's Aggressive Energy Diplomacy In Middle East To Restore Oil Imports

The UAE is India's trusted strategic partner in the middle east, from which substantial quantities of crude oil and natural gas are imported. Bilateral trade between the two nations reached \$100 billion in 2024-25.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Global oil and gas supply chains severely disrupted due to the 40-day-long conflict in the Middle East, India has launched a special diplomatic initiative as the two-week ceasefire allows some relief.

The diplomatic initiative is focused on the resumption of oil and gas imports. India has already established direct diplomatic contact with key oil and natural gas-producing countries in the middle east - specifically Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

As part of this special initiative, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met the UAE President Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed, in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

Later, in a post on social media platform X, he said: "It was a distinct honor to meet with the President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, in Abu Dhabi today. I conveyed warm greetings on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed my gratitude for the efforts undertaken to ensure the safety and security of the Indian community during the West Asia conflict. I also thanked him for his guidance on further strengthening our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

The UAE is India's trusted strategic partner in the middle east, from which substantial quantities of crude oil and natural gas are imported. Bilateral trade between the two nations reached \$100 billion in 2024-25.

In January, both countries set an ambitious target to double their bilateral trade to US\$ 200 billion by 2032.

Earlier, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri had visited Qatar.

## Short news

## FIR against Mewati singer Aslam for 'objectionable' content in song

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Cyber police in Nuh have registered a case against Mewati singer Aslam for allegedly broadcasting objectionable content on social media through his newly released song, officials said. The action follows a complaint filed by an official from the district's social media monitoring cell, on the basis of which an FIR was registered. Police teams have been deployed to apprehend the singer at the earliest.

According to the complaint, the song, uploaded on the singer's YouTube channel, contains material that promotes unlawful activities. Police said the track features visuals and lyrics that allegedly glorify the possession of illegal weapons and reference criminal acts, including issuing threats for extortion and firing incidents at various locations. Nuh police chief Arpit Jain earlier directed strict monitoring of social media platforms and enforcement against content promoting criminal behaviour. "Such content contributes to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity in society and may negatively influence young viewers by portraying crime as acceptable behaviour," an official said. A police spokesperson added that the process to take down the YouTube channel and other linked social media accounts, including Facebook, has been initiated in coordination with the platforms concerned. Nuh police also said similar action will be taken against other individuals or channels found circulating objectionable content online.

## Accused acquitted in dowry death case, court orders separate case against complainant for contradictions

Noida.(Agency)

A fast track court of an additional sessions judge acquitted a man and his father of dowry death charges after all prosecution witnesses turned hostile and said the man's wife died of natural causes. While ordering both the accused to furnish personal bonds of Rs 25,000 and one surety of the like amount each, Judge Saurabh Dwivedi also ordered that a separate complaint under Section 344 CrPC (giving false evidence) be registered against the complainant, the woman's uncle, for changing his statement in court from what was recorded by police. The matter is linked to an FIR registered with the Greater Noida police station on Oct 20, 2018, by Narvar Singh against Amit and his father, Brahm Singh, after the death of his niece, Chanchal, on the same day. In his complaint, Singh alleged his niece was married to Amit on Nov 20, 2011, and ever since, she was tortured for dowry by her in-laws. He alleged that she died of the torture meted out to her for the demand of a car and cash. Based on the complaint, police registered a case under sections 498A (wilfully harming a woman for dowry), 304B (unnatural death of a woman within seven years of marriage, linked to dowry) of the IPC and Section 3/4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act. During trial, the father and the mother of the deceased woman, Vinod Singh and Surendri, did not support the prosecution narrative and said their daughter was never harassed for dowry. She died of natural causes after developing a lung infection. Both were declared hostile by the prosecution.

The prosecution's case became further weak after the complainant, Singh, corroborated the statement of his elder brother and said he put his signature on a white piece of paper and had no idea about the contents of the FIR. He also said that his niece died of natural causes and was never tortured for dowry.

Citing Allahabad High Court judgement of 2015 in Ashok Kumar Sharma vs State of UP, the court said that a presumption under Section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act can be made against the accused only if the court finds that the deceased died due to dowry within seven years of marriage under unusual circumstances and that the deceased died due to cruelty or harassment caused by the demand for dowry immediately before death.

## UP steps in, Ghaziabad cuts property tax rates by up to 40%

Noida.(Agency)

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC) on Saturday approved a 35-40% cut in property tax rates, ending a year-long standoff after UP govt stepped in with revised slabs. The decision, cleared by GMC's executive committee, reduces the maximum levy from Rs 4 to Rs 3.40 per sq ft and will take effect from April 15.

The rollback follows months of protests by residents and political friction within the civic body, with the issue gaining urgency ahead of next year's assembly elections. The state govt's intervention, communicated through a formal directive on Friday, broke the deadlock between elected representatives and officials over the extent of the hike introduced earlier this year.

Under the revised framework, property owners who have already paid tax at higher rates will be compensated through staggered adjustments. Officials said the excess amount will be offset over three years, with one-third of the surplus credited annually against future tax liabilities, forming the core of the relief package tied to the rollback.

The new rate structure varies by road width. Properties along roads wider than 24 metres will now be taxed at Rs 3.4 per sqft, down from Rs 4. For those on 12-24 metre roads, the rate has been reduced to Rs 2.8 per sqft from Rs 3.8 per sqft. In areas with roads narrower than 12 metres, the levy has been cut to Rs 2.3 per sqft from Rs 3.50. Before April 1, 2025, these rates were significantly lower, intensifying resistance when the revised slabs were introduced. The controversy over the tax hike had placed the BJP-led civic body in a difficult position. BJP holds the mayor's office, two assembly segments covering the municipal area and a majority in the 100-member house.

## CBI court frames corruption charges in Rs 52L bank fraud case in Ghaziabad

Noida.(Agency)

A special court has framed charges against a man in a bank fraud case amounting to over Rs 52 lakh. The CBI court on Friday charged Mudit Agencies proprietor Ajay Lohiya with conspiring with various private individuals to defraud the Kaushambi branch of Union Bank of India of Rs 52.6 lakh four years ago. Lohiya has been charged under various sections of IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act 1988. The court, while rejecting his discharge petition, found adequate proof in the preliminary findings of the CBI to continue with the charges levelled against him towards embezzling the funds in 2022. Special CBI Judge (ACB) Anand Prakash Singh said that Lohiya — along with co-accused Shivansh Agarwal, Sharad Gupta, Mukesh Mittal, Anil Singhal and Ravi Kumar Garg — entered into a criminal conspiracy to gobble up and misuse the cash credit (CC) limit loan amount of Rs

20 crore — sanctioned to Agrawal, the director of Shri Shantinath Impex — from Union Bank of India (Mid-Corporate Branch, Kaushambi) in 2016. Agarwal submitted a loan application on Sept 6, 2016 as director of Shri Shantinath Impex requesting a cash credit limit of Rs 20 crore against the mortgage of the company's shares and books of account. The company said in its application that it was offering as collateral the equivalent mortgage of a commercial property measuring 1,163.08 square yards located in Sahibabad's Prakash Industrial Estate. The value of the property was stated to be approximately Rs 24 crore. Investigation revealed that after the loan was sanctioned, the amount was embezzled by Agarwal in connivance with director of Indra Tubes Pvt Ltd Gupta, director of MM Tubes Pvt Ltd Mittal, director of Simple Tubes Pvt Ltd Singhal, director of JR Distributors Garg and applicant proprietor of Mudit Agencies Lohiya. "In

pursuance of this criminal conspiracy, you received Rs 52,65,117 from the account of M/s Shantinath Impex Polytubes into the account of your firm, Mudit Agencies. On the same day, you issued two cheques for Rs 25,07,506 and Rs 27,57,530 and transferred the said amount through RTGS to the account of Shivashish Polytubes, of which Agarwal was the director, without transacting any business. You played an active role in the embezzlement and layering of the said amount.

Thus, you, along with your co-accused, committed offences punishable under Section 120-B read with sections 420, 468 and 471 of IPC and Section 13 (2) read with 13 (1) (d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which are within the knowledge of this court," the court said. A case in the matter was registered on the basis of complaint lodged by regional head, Union Bank of India, Meerut, Pawan Kumar Gaur on March 8, 2019,

against Agarwal, Amit Agarwal and Shri Shantinath Impex through its director, Valuer and Architect, RM & Associates RM Gupta, proprietor of M/s Global Valuers & Associates, Nanak Chand Gupta and other unknown persons for the offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery in order to cheat and using genuine and forged documents. The investigation also revealed that on Sept 30, 2016, an amount of Rs 52,65,117 was transferred from the CC limit account of Shri Shantinath Impex to the account of Mudit Agencies at Punjab National Bank. According to the account opening form of Mudit Agencies, Lohiya is the sole owner and authorised signatory of the bank account. Subsequently, on the same day, two cheques for Rs 25,07,560 and Rs 27,57,530 were issued through RTGS from the Mudit Agencies account in favour of Shivashish Polytubes Pvt Ltd. During the investigation, nothing came on record.

## Illegal parking and broken service lane choke Old Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Encroachment and illegal parking along Old Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road near the Industrial Development Colony have turned the stretch into a daily bottleneck. The problem is most visible along the service road of the IDC area flanked by automobile showrooms and other commercial establishments.

Vehicles parked outside these outlets occupy most of the service road, leaving little room for traffic to pass. Residents also flagged the poor condition of the service lane, pointing to broken patches and uneven surfaces that further slow down traffic. "The service road is almost unusable. Cars of visitors for showrooms or other establishments are lined up throughout the day, and there is barely any space left for vehicles to move. The road's condition is so bad that vehicles have to



slow down. During rains, it becomes worse," said Sandeep Paul, a regular commuter. The main carriageway, already narrow because of the Sukhrali flyover, faces a similar problem. With vehicles also being parked along the roadside of the main road, the effective width for moving traffic reduces further, leading to frequent traffic jams. Kalyan Singh Sharma, a resident of Sector 14, said, "A

major bottleneck is created right where the flyover ends, with vehicles parked along the road and traffic merging from the IDC area." An MCG official acknowledged the issue and said corrective steps are underway. "Work on improving the internal roads of the IDC has already started, and the remaining portion will be taken up along with drainage development," the official said, adding that enforcement action will be intensified. "We are coordinating with traffic police to remove encroachments. Notices are being issued, and challans will be imposed on violators. Police deployment will also be ensured to keep the road clear and maintain smooth traffic movement," he said.

## Road leading to school, condos littered with craters, flood-prone

Noida.(Agency)

Residents of Sector 2 and nearby areas in Greater Noida West have raised concerns over the poor condition of a road linking a private school with high-rise housing societies, a route used regularly by schoolchildren. They said the stretch has become a safety hazard because of potholes, a broken surface and frequent waterlogging after rain. On April 8, a school bus got stuck in one of the potholes. "The incident is a clear indication of negligence on the part of the authorities," said Rashmi Pandey, president of GB Nagar Vikas Samiti, a local social body. "It's unacceptable that our children's safety is compromised while the administration appears to be indifferent to the challenges faced by ordinary citizens." Seeing the crime will face charges. According to Himanshu



Rajput, vice president of the Samiti, the road is plagued by persistent issues such as large potholes, a broken surface, and waterlogging. "Hence, it creates a grave

threat to the safety of commuters, particularly school-going children," said Rajput. Residents of the sector, including those from Samridhi Grand Avenue society, have also expressed growing frustration and concern about the state of the road, which has seen heavy construction vehicles parked improperly, exacerbating traffic disruptions and heightening the risk of accidents. "We demand immediate action from the Greater Noida Authority to address these issues," said Sanjay Singh, a resident of the area. In a formal letter addressed to the GNDA CEO, Pandey outlined specific demands which included immediate repairs of the road, filling of potholes, effective management of waterlogging, and regulation of heavy vehicle parking to ensure safety for residents, particularly children.

## After wage protests, Noida promises weekly off, double pay for overtime

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After two days of protests by factory workers over low minimum wages, the Noida administration on Sunday rolled out a set of safeguards aimed at easing tensions across the industrial belt. It announced a compulsory weekly off for all workers, double pay for overtime and work on weekly holidays, annual bonus before Nov 30, salary disbursement by the 10th of every month, medical cover, workplace safety measures and a formal complaints system to address harassment.

The decisions were taken at a joint meeting at the Noida Authority office in Sector 6, attended by district magistrate Medha Rupam, Authority CEO Krishna Karunesh, police commissioner Laxmi Singh and other officials. Senior labour department officials, including principal secretary MKS Sundaram and labour commissioner Markandey Shahi, joined virtually. Rupam said the administration had spent the past few days holding talks with industrial units and was committed to protecting workers' interests. She said factories had been asked to ensure a weekly off for every worker and pay double if anyone is made



to work on that day. Overtime, too, must be paid at double the rate. The administration also said workers would be paid their annual bonus before Nov 30. To deal with complaints of harassment, a committee headed by a woman will be set up. Officials said factories must also ensure workers are treated with dignity and provided medical cover and safe working conditions.

The protests had intensified in Phase 2 after Haryana govt recently raised monthly minimum wages from Rs 14,000 to Rs 19,000, a jump of about 35%. In UP, however, the minimum wage remains around Rs 13,000, a gap that has sharpened resentment among workers in the city's factories. Sundaram said UP govt was in the process of revising labour laws and strengthening

## 24 industrial plots up for grabs across Greater Noida sectors

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority has launched a scheme offering 24 industrial plots across multiple sectors to attract investment and boost industrial growth. The plots are located in Ecotech-1 (Extension 1), Ecotech-6, Ecotech-8, Ecotech-10, Ecotech-11 and Sector 16. Officials said the move aims to enhance Greater Noida's appeal as a manufacturing and logistics hub and leverage the region's proximity to Noida International Airport.

Applicants will be evaluated on parameters including financial strength, net worth and potential for employment generation, with additional weightage for start-ups, export-oriented units, women entrepreneurs, SC/ST applicants and expansion proposals. Shortlisted applicants will be called for interviews before final allotment.

Plot sizes range from around 9,000 square metres to 1 lakh square metres, offering flexibility to both small and large enterprises. The registration amount is 10% of the premium, based on the current industrial rate of Rs 35,000 per sqm.

Ecotech-1 (Extension 1) will have seven plots, while Ecotech-8 will have five plots. Ecotech-10 will have two plots and Ecotech-11 six plots. Sector 16 will have three plots, and Ecotech-6 will have the largest plot of 1 lakh sqm, estimated to be worth Rs 350 crore.

Officials said the plots can be used for industries including agro and food processing, handloom and textiles, electronics manufacturing, semiconductors, electric vehicles, defence and aerospace, data centres, dairy and poultry, and renewable energy.

Applicants can apply through the Nivesh Mitra portal or the authority's website. The scheme was launched on April 11, and the last date to apply is May 12. Allottees can either pay the full premium within 90 days or 40% within 60 days and the balance over four years in half-yearly instalments. Plots will be allotted on a 90-year leasehold basis.

## THE SIKH TIMES

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# Salwan fee dispute escalates: Results withheld, 40 students face removal, parents protest

New Delhi: The standoff between parents and Salwan Public School, Mayur Vihar Phase III, intensified on Friday after over 40 students allegedly

Directorate of Education (DoE). The dispute centres on a reported fee hike of over 57 per cent in the past two years, which parents claim was implement-

where we met Director Veditha Reddy. She said she would ensure no results are withheld and no student is struck off on the basis of a fee issue."

back to 2015-16. However, parents have disputed this claim, terming it misleading and inconsistent with official records. According to parents, the DoE has conducted statutory audits of the school's financial accounts since the 2016-17 academic session, during which multiple discrepancies and irregularities were flagged. In light of these findings, proposals submitted by the school for fee enhancement were examined and rejected for successive academic sessions up to 2023-24. Parents argue the continuation of the earlier approved fee structure is therefore not arbitrary, but a direct outcome of the school's inability to justify a lawful fee increase before the regulatory authority. In notices issued to students, the school cited legal provisions to defend its actions, stating: "At present, as per the well-settled legal position, unaided recognised private schools do not require any prior approval of the Director of Education before fixing

their fees in each academic year." It further said: "Under Rule 35 of the Delhi School Education Act Rules, 1973, the school is empowered to strike off the name of a student in case of non-payment of fees." Meanwhile, some parents have moved the Delhi High Court, where the matter — including

cases involving younger students — is currently under hearing. Repeated attempts by 'The Tribune' to seek a response from the school principal, Richa Sharma Katyal, remained unsuccessful.



had their results withheld and were issued notices for removal over non-payment of increased fees, prompting protests outside the campus. Parents alleged despite repeated representations, the school has neither released results nor responded to their concerns. The problem has resurfaced weeks after similar expulsion notices were withdrawn following intervention by the

ed without mandatory approval from the DoE. Some parents further alleged students have been denied entry to classes and, in some cases, sent back home. On Friday morning, parents gathered outside the school in protest before approaching the DoE, where they met Director Veditha Reddy. A parent told 'The Tribune', "We protested outside the school and then went to the DoE,

An earlier advisory issued by the DoE on January 28 had explicitly directed the school not to withhold results, deny mark sheets, discriminate against students, or strike off names over non-payment of unapproved fee hikes. Parents alleged these directions have not been adhered to. The school has maintained that it cannot continue operations in the 2025-26 academic session on a fee structure dating

## Auto driver arrested after pregnant Delhi Police constable injured in accident

New Delhi: An autorickshaw driver has been arrested after a pregnant Delhi Police constable sustained serious injuries in a road accident near Motilal Nehru College in South Campus, an official said on Wednesday. According to police, a PCR call regarding the accident was received at the South Campus police station on April 2. An investigating officer reached the spot and found a damaged autorickshaw, with a loading tempo stationed ahead on the roadside. "Both drivers — Vijender Singh, a resident of Jaitpur, and Aditya Kumar, a resident of Chhawla — were present at the scene, but no complainant was found," the officer said. Police later received information about a medico-legal case (MLC) related to the incident from the AIIMS Trauma Centre. The

injured woman, identified as Dzutotalu Rhakho, a resident of Munirka village, was declared unfit to give a statement at the time. On April 5, the constable, who is posted in the Security Unit of the Delhi Police, recorded her statement. She told police that she was travelling in an autorickshaw from the Security Lines to Munirka along with two colleagues when the accident occurred. According to her statement, a loading tempo ahead of the autorickshaw applied sudden brakes, following which the autorickshaw allegedly being driven in a rash and negligent manner — collided with it. She sustained injuries to her knee in the incident. "Based on her complaint, a case was registered. The autorickshaw driver,

Vijender Singh, has been arrested," the officer said. Both vehicles involved in the accident have been seized, and further investigation is under way.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, No-16021743Y Rank-HAV Name- MAHENDER SINGH Presently residing at WARD NO-4, VILL- SARDAR PURA BASS BHOLA, PO-JOGI-WALA, DIST-HANUMANGARH, RAJASTHAN-335503, have changed my father's name from DAULAT RAM TO DOULAT RAM for all future purposes and in my service records my father's date of birth wrongly mentioned as 10/05/1969 instead of his correct date of birth as 01/01/1965 vide Affidavit dated 11/04/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**Public Notice**  
I, Sneha D/O Ravi Anand R/O House no-D/99, Gali no.6, Bhikam colony, Ballabgarh, PO-Ballabgarh, DIST- Faridabad, Haryana - 121004 UNDER-TAKE THAT I SNEHA CHANGE MY NAME Chirag Prajapati AND GENDER AS MALE. I SNEHA HENCE-FORTH BE KNOWN AS Chirag Prajapati S/O Ravi Anand. THE ABOVE STATEMENT MADE BY ME IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF. IF ANY LEGAL ISSUE ARISES IN THIS REGARD AT ANY STAGE, I WILL BE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAME AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATION WILL NOT BE LIABLE AS FOR ANY CONSEQUENCES ARISING THEREFROM.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Abhay Uppal S/O Sanjeev Uppal R/O 120, Bhai Parmanand Colony, Delhi 110009, declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as Saloni in my Passport No. AH711290. The actual name of my wife is Saloni Uppal

**NAME CHANGE**  
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**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Sunil Sharma S/O V.P. Sharma, R/O D-1/150, First Floor, Sector-16, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi - 110089 have changed my name to Sunil Kumar Sharma for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Usha Setia, W/O Om Prakash Setia, R/O H.No. 134, New Colony, Gurgaon, Haryana - 122001, declare that my name earlier written as Usha Setia is now bifurcated as Usha (First Name) & Setia (Surname). Both names belong to one person.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Ashish S/O Sunder Lal Mittal, 169-170-171, POCKET-C-7, ARIHANT PUBLIC SCHOOL, ROHINI, Rohini Sector-7, PO:Rohini Sector-7, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi, 110085 have changed my name to Ajay Kumar Mittal for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, RANGBEEER SINGH S/O ANOOP SINGH R/O H.NO-7, SHIV MANDIR STREET NO-1, MAUJUPUR, DELHI-110053 have changed my name to RAMBIR SINGH.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, GULSHAN S/O SURENDER CHAUHAN R/O H.No-A-952, DABUA COLONY, FARIDABAD, HARYANA-121001 have changed my name to GULSHAN CHAUHAN.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, PRABHABAI DNYANESHWAR AGASHE legally mother of Army no - 2808405N, Rank - Nk, Name - AGASHE BHIMSEN DNYANESHWAR, Presently residing At - Belati Buz, Post- kawalewala, Teh - Tirora, Dist - Gondiya, State- Maharashtra, Pin- 441914 have changed my date of birth 12/02/1956 to 01/01/1953 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, RADHABAI RATHOUR legally mother of Army No-15797006F, Rank-Nk, Name - SHIVKUMAR RATHOUR, Presently residing At Post- Jaitihari, Teh- Jaitihari Dist- Anuppur, State- (M.P), Pin- 484330 have changed my date of birth 01/07/1973 to 01/11/1973 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NAND LAL RATHOUR legally father of Army No-15797006F, Rank-Nk, Name - SHIVKUMAR RATHOUR, Presently residing At Post- Jaitihari, Teh- Jaitihari, Dist- Anuppur, State- (M.P) pin-484330 have changed my Date of Birth 19/08/1968 to 01/01/1968 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, DNYANU Legally father of Army No - 2809810X, Rank - Hav, Name - PATIL CHANDRAKANT DNYANU, Unit - 22 Maratha Light Infantry, Presently Residing At - Gholeshwar, Post - Nigadi (Kharud), Teh - Jath, Dist - Sangli, State - Maharashtra, PIN - 416404, Have Changed My Name From SHANTANTA SHANTABAI DNYANU PATIL And Date of Birth 01-11-1961 to 01-01-1950 For All Future Purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 13/04/2026 Before Public Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SHANTANTA Legally Mother of Army No - 2809810X, Rank - Hav, Name - PATIL CHANDRAKANT DNYANU, Unit - 22 Maratha Light Infantry, Presently Residing At - Gholeshwar, Post - Nigadi (Kharud), Teh - Jath, Dist - Sangli, State - Maharashtra, PIN - 416404, Have Changed My Name From SHANTANTA SHANTABAI DNYANU PATIL And Date of Birth 01-11-1961 to 01-01-1950 For All Future Purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 13/04/2026 Before Public Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, MANGARU RAHANGDALE legally father of Army no-2810214X, Rank-SEP, Name - RAHANGDALE RAJU MANGRU, Presently Residing At- SIRPUR, Post- BANATHAR, Teh - GONDIA, Dist- MAHARASHTRA, Pin- 441601 have changed my name from MANGARU RAHANGDALE to MANGRU RAHANGDALE and date of birth 07/10/1965 to 10/07/1965 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, PRAMILA BAI legally mother of Army no-2810214X, Rank- SEP, Name- RAHANGDALE RAJU MANGRU, Presently Residing At- SIRPUR, Post- BANATHAR, Teh - GONDIA, Dist- GONDIA, State- MAHARASHTRA, Pin- 441601 have changed my name from PRAMILA BAI to PRAMILABAI MANGRU RAHANGDALE and date of birth 13/12/1968 to 07/12/1970 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NARENDER S/O CHHOTELAL R/O PRAJAPAT MOHALLA, KILHORE PATTI, JHARSA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122003, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDER KUMAR FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NARENDER S/O CHHOTELAL R/O PRAJAPAT MOHALLA, KILHORE PATTI, JHARSA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122003, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDER KUMAR FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Guddu Kumar S/O Dashrath Prasad R/O Pali, Kaimur (Bhabua), Bihar - 821104, have changed my name to Dileep Kumar

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Vijay Shaw S/O Ayodhya Ram R/O Dunlop G.T.Road, ITI Collage, Keota (P), PO-Sahaganj, Dist-Hooghly, West-Bengal - 712104, have changed my name to Vijay Shankar Ram

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Afsana Khatoun W/O Late Abrar Ahmad R/O Pathan Patti, V.S.Mil, Gopalganj, Bihar-841428, have changed my minor son's name from Ehsan Ahmad aged 11 years to Sufyan Ahmad forever

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Khushi Setia, S/O Om Prakash Setia, R/O H.No. 134, New Colony, Gurgaon, Haryana - 122001, declare that my name earlier written as Khushi Setia is now bifurcated as Khushi (First Name) & Setia (Surname). Both names belong to one person.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Sanjay S/O Kishori Lal, R/O House No. 11869, Jahangir Puri, N. S Mandi, North West, Delhi - 110033 have changed my name to Sanjay Kumar for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Riya D/O Amrithal Sokalchand Jain, R/O 39, D BLOCK, maharaja agrasen hospital, ashok vihar phase-1, VTC: Ashok Vihar PO: Ashok Vihar, Sub District: Saraswati Vihar, District: North West Delhi, State: Delhi, PIN Code: 110052 have changed my name Riya Jain for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, No-15415943W, Rank-HAV Name-YOGESHWAR KUMAR Residing at VILL-SHISUBA, PO-JAMALPUR GOGRI, DIST-KHAGARIA, BIHAR-851203, in my service record my wife's date of birth wrongly mentioned as 14/09/1985 instead of her correct date of birth as 01/04/1985 Vide Affidavit dated 13/04/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NARAINDER KUMAR VERMA S/O NATHU LAL R/O A-155, 2ND FLOOR, GALI NO 1 HARDEV NAGAR DELHI 110084, CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDER KUMAR VERMA.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ROHIT S/O BABBAN NISHAD R/O H.NO 11/165 VILLAGE CHAUHAN PATTI DELHI 110094, CHANGED MY NAME TO ROHIT NISHAD.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Pooja D/O Madan Mohan Singh R/O H.No-296, Gali No-4, SHYAM COLONY, SEHATPUR, FARIDABAD, HARYANA-121003 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO POOJA SINGH FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SATHYAWAN SHARMA ISHWAR CHANDER SHARMA S/O ISHWAR CHANDER SHARMA R/O H.NO. 104, PLOTNO-130/131, AVENUE 69, SECTOR-69, BADSHAPUR, GURGAON, HARYANA-122101, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SATHYAWAN SHARMA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, POOJA D/O MADAN MOHAN SINGH R/O H.NO-296, GALI NO-4, SHYAM COLONY, SEHATPUR, FARIDABAD, HARYANA-121003 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO POOJA SINGH FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

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**NAME CHANGE**  
I, LAXMAN S/O SINGODAN R/O 434, E-Block, JJ Colony, Shakur Pur, Tri Nagar, Sarawati Vihar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed the name of my minor son MUKENDER aged 17 years and he shall hereafter be known as L. MUGUNDAN.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, HIRTHO known as SEHAR RAFI ALIAS SEHAR QURESHI D/O RAFI AHMED W/O ABRAR QURESHI R/O 3476, Gali Theela, Bari Hindu Rao, Delhi G.P.O., PO-Delhi, Dist-North Delhi, Delhi-110068 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as HEENA BEGUM.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, PRABHAT KUMAR JAIN S/O SUPARSHAW KUMAR JAIN R/O Kharsa No-14/22, Gali No-16, A-2 Block, Chandan Vihar, West Sant Nagar, Burari, North Delhi, Delhi-110084 have changed the name of my minor daughter ALISHA JAIN aged 13 years and she shall hereafter be known as ALYSIA JAIN

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, HIRTHO known as ROHTASH S/O PRATAP SINGH R/O D-83, DDA Flats, Mata Sundari Road, Darya Ganj, Central Delhi, Delhi-110002 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ROHTASH CHOUDHARY.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, BABBAN S/O CHOTE LAL R/O H.NO 11/165 VILLAGE CHAUHAN PATTI DELHI 110094, CHANGED MY NAME TO BABBAN NISHAD.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, JASWINDER SAHNI W/O Kanwaljeet Singh Sawhney R/O H.No.280, Near Radisson Hotel., Bhera Enclave, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087, have changed my name to JASWINDER KAUR SAWHNEY permanently

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SANCHIT KAMAL KANT SHARMA S/O Kamal Kant Sharma, R/O A-1003, Elite Homz, Sector-77, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201301, have changed my name to SANCHIT SHARMA permanently.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ROMA W/O Sanchit Sharma R/O A-1003, Elite Homz, Sector-77, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201301, have changed my name to ROMA SINGH permanently

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## Over 700 kg of banned crackers seized, 2 held

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have seized 725 kg of banned firecrackers in two separate operations carried out in Dwarka and Najafgarh areas and nabbed two people for illegally stockpiling the crackers, an official said on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, a team raided a house in Uttam Nagar and apprehended Gaurav Gupta, the officer said, adding that 77 kg of firecrackers were recovered from his residence. Gupta, who earlier sold firecrackers with a valid licence till 2022, continued the trade despite the ban on the sale and use of prohibited fireworks, the police said. In another raid, the team apprehended Rajeev Kumar (52), a resident of Najafgarh, after recovering 648 kg of illegal firecrackers stored at a storage unit in Shyam Vihar. The items were kept under the guise of a carton storage unit in a densely populated area, posing a serious threat to public safety, the police said. Further investigation is on to identify the supply chain and other persons involved, they added.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)**  
N.I.T. No. 367031  
Name of work and its location  
"Fitment of mechanical and electrical items during MLR schedule"  
Approx. Cost of work Tender Cost: Rs.18042757.63/- including GST (Rs. One Crore Eighty Lac Forty Seven Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Seven and paise Sixty Three Only)  
Earnest Money Rs. 3.61,000.00/-  
Completion period of Work 12 months of date of issue of letter of acceptance  
Cost of Tender document on cash/by post NIL  
Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender Upto 12:00 hrs on 25.04.2026  
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in  
Tender No. 367031 Dated: 11.04.2026 1232/2026  
**Serving Customers With A Smile**

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, BABBAN S/O CHOTE LAL R/O H.NO 11/165 VILLAGE CHAUHAN PATTI DELHI 110094, CHANGED MY NAME TO BABBAN NISHAD.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, JASWINDER SAHNI W/O Kanwaljeet Singh Sawhney R/O H.No.280, Near Radisson Hotel., Bhera Enclave, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087, have changed my name to JASWINDER KAUR SAWHNEY permanently

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SANCHIT KAMAL KANT SHARMA S/O Kamal Kant Sharma, R/O A-1003, Elite Homz, Sector-77, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201301, have changed my name to SANCHIT SHARMA permanently.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ROMA W/O Sanchit Sharma R/O A-1003, Elite Homz, Sector-77, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201301, have changed my name to ROMA SINGH permanently

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## NEWS BOX

## Donald Trump tells Pope Leo XIV to 'stop catering to the radical left,' escalating feud over Iran war

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

President Donald Trump delivered an extraordinary broadside against Pope Leo XIV on Sunday night, saying he didn't think the U.S.-born global leader of the Catholic Church is "doing a very good job" and that "he's a very liberal person," while also suggesting the pontiff should "stop catering to the Radical Left."

Flying back to Washington from Florida, Trump used a lengthy social media post to sharply criticize Leo, then kept it up after deplaning, in comments on the tarmac to reporters. "I'm not a fan of Pope Leo," he said. Trump's comments came after Leo suggested over the weekend that a "delusion of omnipotence" is fueling the US-Israel war in Iran. While it's not unusual for popes and presidents to be at cross purposes, it's exceedingly rare for the pope to directly criticize a US leader, and Trump's stinging response is equally uncommon, if not more so.

"Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy," the president wrote in his post, adding, "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon." He repeated that sentiment in comments to reporters, saying, "We don't like a pope who says it's OK to have a nuclear weapon." Later, Trump posted a picture suggesting he had saint-like powers akin to those of Jesus Christ. Wearing a biblical-style robe, Trump is seen laying hands on a bedridden man as light emanates from his fingers, while a soldier, a nurse, a praying woman and a bearded man in a baseball cap all look on admiringly. The sky above is filled with eagles, an American flag and vaporous images. All of that came after Leo presided over an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday, the same day the United States and Iran began face-to-face negotiations in Pakistan during a fragile ceasefire. The pope didn't mention the United States or Trump by name, but his tone and message appeared directed at Trump and U.S. officials, who have boasted of U.S. military superiority and justified the war in religious terms.

## AI Use Rises At Workplaces, But Employees Still Choose Not To Use It: Report

Tehran. (Agency)

More American workers are experimenting with artificial intelligence in their jobs, but skepticism is still widespread.

New Gallup polling finds that while more employees are using AI frequently in their work, there's been an uptick in alarm that new technologies will replace their jobs. Many workers who are not using AI say they prefer to work without it, have ethical objections to the technology or worry about data privacy. The poll, conducted in February, points to a divergence in how AI is reshaping American workplaces. Some find it to be a gamechanger for productivity and efficiency, while others are concerned about its potentially negative impacts.

Social worker Scott Segal said he regularly uses AI to find information that will help connect his elderly and vulnerable patients to health care resources in northern Virginia. While he knows that the human connection and care he brings to that work is important, he also believes that AI could soon replace him. "I'm planning ahead," said Segal, 53. "I think everyone who works in a replaceable field or trade should be planning ahead." Roughly 3 in 10 employees are frequent users of AI in their jobs, meaning they use it daily or a few times a week. About 2 in 10 are infrequent users, using AI tools at work a few times a month or a few times a year. The Gallup poll found that about 4 in 10 workers say their organization has adopted AI tools or technology to improve organizational practices. About two-thirds of those workers say AI has had an "extremely" or "somewhat" positive impact on their individual productivity and efficiency at work.

## Cash-Strapped Pak To Receive \$5 Billion Financial Aid From Saudi, Qatar

Islamabad. (Agency)

Cash-strapped Pakistan is set to receive USD 5 billion in financial support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, providing a critical buffer for its fragile external position, according to a media report on Sunday.

The expected inflows come at a crucial juncture as Islamabad prepares to repay USD 3.5 billion to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this month and faces pressure on its foreign exchange reserves, the Dawn newspaper said. To avert pressure on Pakistan's weak foreign reserves, Saudi Arabia and Qatar will provide USD 5 billion in financial assistance, the report said, quoting sources in the finance ministry. The development coincides with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's visit to Washington to attend the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings and advance Pakistan's economic diplomacy. Aurangzeb will participate in the meetings scheduled from April 13 to 18, where he is expected to hold engagements with senior officials of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Policymakers view these interactions as part of a broader strategic outreach, with indications that traditional factors such as strict programme conditionalities or reliance on third-party guarantors, including the UAE, may carry less weight in the current context. The IMF has stipulated that Pakistan's three key bilateral creditors -- Saudi Arabia, China and the UAE -- must maintain their cash deposits with the country until the completion of the ongoing three-year programme. It seems the UAE will be replaced by Qatar, the Dawn report said. Ahead of his departure, Aurangzeb met Saudi finance minister Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jadaan in Islamabad, who also called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reflecting continued support at a time when Pakistan has announced plans to clear its UAE debt.

# Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán is ejected after 16 years in a European electoral earthquake

**It was a stunning blow for Orbán — a close ally of both U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin — who quickly conceded defeat after what he called a "painful" election result.**

BUDAPEST, Hungary. (Agency)

Hungarian voters on Sunday ousted long-serving Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after 16 years in power, rejecting the authoritarian policies and global far-right movement that he embodied in favor of a pro-European challenger in a bombshell election result with global repercussions.

It was a stunning blow for Orbán — a close ally of both U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin —

who quickly conceded defeat after what he called a "painful" election result. U.S. Vice President JD Vance had made a visit to Hungary just days earlier, meant to help push Orbán over the finish line. Election victor Péter Magyar, a former Orbán loyalist who campaigned against corruption and on everyday issues like health care and public transport, has pledged to rebuild Hungary's relationships with the European Union and NATO — ties that frayed under Orbán. European leaders quickly congratulated Magyar.

His victory was expected to transform political dynamics within the EU, where Orbán had upended the bloc by frequently vetoing key decisions, prompting concerns he sought to break it up from the inside.

It will also reverberate among far-right movements around the world, which have viewed Orbán as a beacon for how nationalist populism can be used to wage culture wars and leverage state power to undermine opponents. It's not yet clear whether Magyar's Tiszsa party will have the

two-thirds majority in parliament, which would give it the numbers needed for major changes in legislation. With 93% of the vote counted, it had more than 53% support to 37% for Orbán's governing Fidesz party

Jubilant erupted along the Danube. In a speech to tens of thousands of jubilant supporters at a victory party along the Danube River, Magyar said his voters had rewritten Hungarian history.

"Tonight, truth prevailed over lies. Today, we won because Hungarians didn't ask what their homeland could do for them — they asked what they could do for their homeland. You found the answer. And you followed through," he said.

On the streets of Budapest, drivers blared car horns and cranked up anti-government songs while people marching in the streets chanted and screamed. Many revelers chanted "Ruszkik hazra!" or "Russians go home!" — a phrase used widely during Hungary's 1956 anti-Soviet revolution, and which had gained increasing currency amid Orbán's drift toward Moscow. Turnout in the election was nearly 80%, according to the National Election Office, a record number in any vote in Hungary's post-Communist history.



and looked set to win 94 of Hungary's 106 voting districts. "I congratulated the victorious party," Orbán told followers. "We are going to serve the Hungarian nation and our homeland from opposition."

## IMF sounds alarm on long-term economic scarring from West Asia conflict

WORLD. (Agency)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the ongoing Middle East conflict has unleashed a significant global economic shock, with wide-ranging implications for growth, inflation, and energy markets. Speaking in a curtain-raiser address ahead of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, Georgieva said the conflict has disrupted oil and gas flows, damaged critical infrastructure, and intensified uncertainty across global trade and transportation networks. "The conflict has caused considerable hardship around the globe. My heart goes out to all people affected by this war and all wars," she said. Georgieva highlighted that major

energy hubs, including liquefied natural gas facilities in the Gulf region, have suffered serious damage and



could take years to fully recover, raising the risk of prolonged supply constraints. Citing Qatar's Ras Laffan complex as an example, she noted its strategic importance as a major LNG

production centre, adding that it has faced severe disruption since early March and may require several years to return to full capacity. Describing the situation as a "classic negative supply shock," the IMF chief warned that even under an optimistic peace scenario, global growth is likely to slow. She added that more than 80 per cent of countries, largely net oil importers, remain highly exposed to rising energy costs and external imbalances. Georgieva urged policymakers to avoid unilateral measures such as export restrictions and price controls, cautioning that such steps could worsen global instability and inflationary pressures. Instead, she called for coordinated and flexible policy responses.

## Netanyahu picks close aide Roman Gofman as Mossad director amid security challenges

**Considered a close ally of the prime minister, Gofman has played a key role in coordinating military directives and has represented Netanyahu on various assignments.**

UNITED NATIONS. (Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has appointed Major General Roman Gofman as the next director of Mossad, formally known as the Israeli Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, following approval from the government's advisory committee on senior appointments. The decision, cleared by a panel chaired by former Supreme Court president Asher Grunis, was confirmed by Netanyahu in a post on X on Sunday. He described Gofman as an "outstanding officer—bold and creative,"

highlighting his "resourcefulness" and unconventional thinking, particularly during the ongoing conflict. Gofman, who has served as Netanyahu's military secretary for the past two years, is set to assume office on July 2, 2026, for a five-year term, according to



a statement from the Prime Minister's Office. He will succeed David Barnea, whose tenure concludes in June.

The appointment comes at a sensitive moment for Israel's security establishment, amid persistent regional tensions and evolving

intelligence challenges. Considered a close ally of the prime minister, Gofman has played a key role in coordinating military directives and has represented Netanyahu on various assignments. Born in Belarus, Gofman immigrated to Israel in 1990 at the age of 14. He rose through the ranks of the Israel Defense Forces Armoured Corps, eventually becoming a division commander before moving into senior strategic roles. During the October 7, 2023 attack led by Hamas, Gofman was commanding the Tzeelim training base. He reportedly rushed to the Gaza border and was seriously wounded in a firefight near Sha'ar Hanegev Junction.

Prior to his current role, Gofman also drew attention for a policy paper advocating continued Israeli military control over the Gaza Strip following the defeat of Hamas—a stance that sparked debate within security and policy circles.

## Not His Rival: US bishops push back on Trump's attack on Pope

JAKARTA. (Agency)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has strongly criticised US President Donald Trump over his recent social media remarks targeting Pope Leo XIV, saying the pontiff should not be drawn into political rivalries. In a statement issued Sunday, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the USCCB, expressed disappointment over the President's comments, describing them as inappropriate and divisive.

"I am disheartened that the President chose to write such disparaging words about the Holy Father," Coakley said. "Pope Leo is not his rival; nor is the Pope a politician. He is the Vicar of Christ who speaks from the truth of the Gospel and for the care of souls."

The response follows a series of posts by Trump on Truth Social in which he sharply criticised Pope Leo XIV, escalating tensions between the White House and the Vatican. In his remarks, Trump took aim at the Pope's stance on US foreign policy, particularly regarding global conflicts and diplomatic engagement. He argued that the pontiff's views were misguided and accused him of being "weak on crime" and ineffective on international affairs. Trump also suggested that Pope Leo's election was indirectly linked to his own presidency, claiming that the Church elevated an American pontiff in response to his leadership. He further criticised the Pope's engagement with figures he characterised as politically left-leaning and urged him to refrain from commenting on political matters. The President defended his administration's policies, citing what he described as strong law-and-order measures and an assertive foreign policy approach. He also reiterated his opposition to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and defended US actions abroad. The controversy comes after Pope Leo XIV, the first American-born pontiff, voiced concerns over Washington's handling of international conflicts, including tensions involving Iran. The Pope has consistently called for diplomacy, peace, and humanitarian consideration in global affairs.

The exchange marks a notable escalation in what has become an increasingly strained relationship between the US administration and the Vatican, highlighting the broader intersection of politics and religious leadership on the global stage.



## Philippines accuses Chinese fishermen of cyanide dumping in disputed South China Sea reef

MANILA. (Agency)

The Philippines accused Chinese fishermen on Monday of pouring cyanide in waters in the Spratly Islands, a flashpoint in the disputed South China Sea that has been the site of violent confrontations with Chinese vessels. Beijing claims the strategic South China Sea in nearly its entirety, despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. The Philippines' National Security Council (NSC) alleged the poisoning began last year around Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly chain, which sits near vital shipping lanes and is reputedly rich in minerals. "The use of cyanide on Ayungin Shoal is a term of sabotage that seeks to kill local fish populations, depriving Navy personnel of a vital food source," NSC assistant director-general Cornelio Valencia told a news conference, using the Philippines' term for the reef. These actions also "threaten our Navy personnel" through exposure to contaminated water, eating poisoned fish, as well as eroding corals, Valencia added.

Manila and Beijing have a long history of maritime territorial disputes in the hotly



contested waterway, including a violent clash in June 2024 in which Chinese coastguard personnel wielding knives, sticks and an axe boarded Philippine Navy boats. Valencia said Manila raised the

alleged poisoning with Beijing at a recent meeting but has received no formal reply. The Chinese embassy did not immediately respond to AFP's requests for comment on Monday. Valencia said that reef damage

from cyanide poisoning could also compromise the structural foundations of the BRP Sierra Madre, a World War II-era warship on which the Filipino troops are stationed. Manila deliberately grounded the vessel on the shoal in 1999 to stake its claim to the territory. Philippine Navy spokesman Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad said Filipino troops had seized 10 bottles of cyanide from sampan boats launched from Chinese fishing ships in February, July and October 2025. He said that soldiers observed another Chinese sampan crew poisoning waters near the shoal last month, adding that the shoal's waters later tested positive for cyanide. None of the troops aboard the warship have tested positive for the poison, Trinidad added. Valencia and Trinidad both alleged the fishermen's mother ships worked for the Chinese Navy. Valencia said the NSC planned to submit a report next week to the Philippine foreign ministry which could become the basis for a diplomatic protest. Manila has also ordered the navy and coastguard to step up patrols "to prevent further environmental harm" in the area, he added.

## Short news

## 7 Dead As Speeding Truck Runs Over Pilgrims On Gujarat Highway



**Surendranagar.(Agency)**

Seven people, including six pilgrims, died after being run over by a speeding truck on a Gujarat highway on Sunday night. The group of pilgrims were travelling on foot from Gadhka village in Rajkot to a temple in Dekawala. While on the Lakhtar-Viramgam Highway near Surendranagar's Bhaskarpara, the pilgrims were attempting to pass a stationary dumper parked on the roadside for a tire change. At that moment, the truck hit around ten people from behind. The collision was so devastating that six pilgrims died on the spot. Passers-by alerted the police about the accident, who arrived at the spot soon after. The dumper driver, who was also hit by the truck, died during treatment at a hospital in Viramgam. Such was the impact of the collision that authorities were forced to use shovels to collect the remains of some of the bodies.

## Gherao of judicial officials in Malda: NIA arrests ISF member, detains Congress candidate

**BENGALURU.(Agency)**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which took over the investigation into the gherao of seven judicial officials involved in the SIR adjudication process in Malda two weeks ago, made its first arrest in the case on Sunday. The central agency arrested a panchayat member belonging to the Indian Secular Front (ISF), Golam Rabbani, and detained the Congress candidate from Mothabari Assembly constituency Sayem Chowdhury, and his seven associates, sources said.

Chowdhury was picked up with his associates while he was campaigning in the Alinagar panchayat area on Sunday.

"We are questioning Chowdhury and verifying his involvement in the incident. If we get proper evidence against him, he will be arrested," a senior NIA official said.

Earlier, West Bengal CID, which was probing the incident, had arrested 35 people, including AIMIM activist and lawyer Mofakkerul Islam.

Sources said that NIA arrested Rabbani after his name cropped up during the questioning of the AIMIM member.

According to the CID, Mofakkerul Islam is the mastermind of the case who allegedly incited people to gherao the BDO office and was seen giving an instigating speech just before the incident.

The NIA has sought the custody of all 35 people arrested by the CID. Rabbani, meanwhile, is being brought to Kolkata.

"NIA officials think that from Rabbani they will be able to reach the other masterminds of the incident," an NIA official said.

On April 1, people angry over the deletion of voters' names from the electoral roll following the adjudication process gheraoed Kaliachowk-II BDO office. They did not let the seven judicial officials, including three women, leave the BDO office.

## Redesigned Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project to be ready by 2028; panel to oversee repairs

**HYDERABAD.(Agency)**

Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday said the redesigned Kaleshwaram project would be operationalised by 2028. He held a review with officials and constituted a steering committee to oversee the repair works.

At the review, the minister confirmed that AFRY India had been finalised as the design consultant and would work as a joint venture with IIT Bombay. He instructed the design team to work round the clock, seven days a week.

"We need the design as early as possible," Uttam said, adding that the rehabilitation designs would be sent to the Central Water Commission (CWC) for approval.

He asked the consultants to remain in constant touch with Irrigation Secretary Parikshit Mehra and to bring any issues directly to his notice.

The design process will be backed by comprehensive geophysical, geotechnical, soil and hydraulic modelling studies. The minister directed that all required tests and data collection be completed on priority.

He said the state government was determined to bring the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages of the project back into operation at the earliest. The minister directed fast-tracking of rehabilitation works under a time-bound programme.

## Uttarakhand Weather: Bright sunshine raises heat in plains, snowfall on Dharchula peaks, clear skies until April 15

**Uttarakhand experienced bright sunshine on April 13, raising heat levels in the plains, while snowfall was recorded on high Himalayan peaks near Dharchula. The Meteorological Department says clear weather will continue until April 15, with possible changes and fresh cold conditions from April 16.**

**Dehradun.(Agency)**

The weather in Uttarakhand remained dry and clear on Monday, April 13. Bright sunshine increased the heat in the plains, while snowfall was reported on the high peaks of Dharchula in Pithoragarh district. According to the Meteorological Department, clear skies will continue until April 15, but conditions may change again from April 16.

**Heat returns to the plains**

After recent rains brought relief, the past three to four days of dry weather have raised temperatures in the plains. Dehradun witnessed strong sunshine since Sunday morning, causing discomfort during the day. While mornings and evenings remain mildly cool, daytime heat has returned to troubling levels.

**Snowfall in high Himalayan areas**

In the high Himalayan region of Munyari,

peaks above 6,000 meters experienced snowfall in the afternoon. The effect of this snowfall was also felt in the lower areas, where cold winds began to blow by evening.



Similarly, Dharchula saw deteriorating weather conditions on Sunday afternoon, with snowfall on surrounding peaks. This has led to persistent cold in Pithoragarh district.

**Mixed conditions across the state**

While the plains are facing rising heat, the mountainous districts are experiencing a mix of cold winds and snowfall. The Meteorological Center reported that the weather will remain dry across Uttarakhand until April 15. Clear skies are expected to dominate, which may further increase daytime temperatures in the plains.

**Weather is likely to deteriorate again in the mountainous**

From April 16, the weather is likely to deteriorate again in the mountainous areas. The Meteorological Department has predicted thunderstorms, rain, and a possible cold spell in districts like Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudrapur, Bageshwar, and Pithoragarh. Residents have been advised to remain cautious, especially in high-altitude regions where snowfall may continue.

## Vrindavan boat tragedy: Toll reaches 15 as 2 more bodies recovered from Yamuna

**Ludhiana.(Agency)**

The death toll in the Vrindavan boat tragedy climbed to 15 as of Monday morning after search teams recovered two more bodies from the Yamuna River in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district and at least one person still remains missing, said the Ludhiana police.

Last Friday, a boat ferrying pilgrims from Punjab capsized at the Keshi Ghat in the holy town of Vrindavan. The pilgrims were mostly from the small town of Jagraon in Ludhiana district, and some others from Ludhiana city and other districts of Punjab.

Himanshu Jain, Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana, told The Indian Express that bodies of two more victims, Monika and Yash Bhalla, both from Ludhiana city, were fished out Monday. Pankaj Malhotra

of Jalalabad is still missing.

Jain said the Ludhiana district administration was in constant touch with their counterparts in



At least 37 people were on the boat when it reportedly collided with a drum of a pontoon bridge leading to the accident. While 10 bodies were recovered on day one, three more were subsequently found as the families of missing persons from Punjab continued to camp on the riverbank. One body was recovered on Saturday, and two more on Sunday morning.

The tour to Vrindavan was organised by the Jagraon-based Banke Bihari Club and a motley group of 132 people in two buses had left for the pilgrimage on April 9. Hours later, on April 10, a group of 30-40 people went boating at Keshi Ghat, where the tragedy struck.

What has sparked widespread outrage is the alleged negligence of the boatman and contractor, as well as the lack of safety measures. A video of the pilgrims chanting "Radhe Radhe" moments before the accident showed that none of them was wearing a lifejacket

## 51 mandals in Andhra Pradesh likely to face severe heat stress

**APSDMA warns of rising intensity across North Coastal, Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra; temperatures touch 43.8°C in Kadapa region**

**VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)**

Severe heatwave conditions are likely to prevail across 51 mandals in the State on Monday, including nine in Srikakulam district, 18 in Vizianagaram, 15 in Parvathipuram Manyam, one in Alluri Sitarama Raju, three in Polavaram and Anakapalli, and two in Eluru. In addition, heatwave conditions are likely in two mandals of Srikakulam, five in Vizianagaram, Anakapalli, and Kakinada, four in Alluri Sitarama Raju and Eluru, nine in Polavaram and Godavari, three in NTR, two in Palnadu, and one in Nandyal. According to the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster

Management Authority (APSDMA), while 51 mandals are expected to face



severe heatwave conditions on Monday, another 49 mandals may experience heatwave conditions. The

intensity is expected to increase further on Tuesday, with severe heatwave conditions in 57 mandals.

APSDMA Managing Director Prakhar Jain noted that North Andhra districts are likely to be particularly affected by heatwave conditions, while Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions may record high maximum temperatures. People have been advised to take necessary precautions in view of the rising temperature.

Meanwhile, high temperatures were recorded across several parts of the State on Sunday. Pottipadu in Kadapa district recorded 43.8°C, followed by Varadapalem in Tirupati at 43.1°C, and Nandyal at 42.9°C.

## 6 killed, 7 injured as bus returning from wedding procession rams truck in UP

**Lucknow.(Agency)**

Six people were killed, and several others injured after a bus collided with a truck in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur, police said. According to SP Gyananjay Singh, the bus was carrying passengers returning from a wedding procession when it crashed into the truck. Police teams rushed to the spot immediately, launched an investigation, and began relief work. The victims were taken to a hospital, where six were declared dead on the spot, while seven injured persons are undergoing treatment.

Singh said the truck has been removed from the site and traffic has returned to normal. Family members of the victims have reached the location, and legal proceedings are underway. There were a total of 12 people on the bus, and one of them remains unidentified, possibly the driver.

In a similar incident on April 11, at least 10 people were killed and around 25-30 others injured in a horrific road accident in Bihar's Katihar district. The accident took place near Gerabari when a pickup vehicle collided head-on with a bus on National Highway 31, near the Korha-Phulwaria Basgadh stretch. According to police, all the victims were members of the tribal community and were returning to their homes from Jharkhand. The deceased include both men and women.

## Nashik IT firm case | Harassment, conversion FIRs: BPO suspends 7 employees

**Mumbai.(Agency)**

Seven out of the eight employees of a Nashik-based BPO named as accused in FIRs under charges of sexual harassment and religious conversion have been suspended, the company said, adding the HR manager, who is the eighth accused, is still under scrutiny. Seven accused have been arrested, while one is on the run.

A statement released by the company on Sunday said that it "has a long-standing zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form". "We have always ensured the highest standards of safety and wellbeing of our employees at the workplace," it said.

"As soon as we were made aware of the matter in Nashik, we took swift action. The employees being investigated, have been suspended pending inquiry. We are cooperating with the local law enforcement authorities, and any further action will be based on the conclusion of this investigation," it added. While seven



employees were arrested by the police between March 26 – when the first FIR was registered – and April 10, one of them, Nida Khan, is on the run.

The arrested accused have been identified as Asif Ansari, Shafi Sheikh, Shah Rukh Qureshi, Raza Memon, Tausif Attar, Danish Sheikh and the firm's HR manager.

It was on March 25 that a woman employee of the BPO in the Mumbai Naka area approached the Deolali Camp police station alleging that between 2022 and 2026, three of her colleagues, including a woman, hurt

her religious sentiments. She further accused one of her male colleagues of maintaining a relationship with her, with promises of marriage, while he was already married.

Given the sensitivity of the allegations, Nashik Police which was at that time investigating the allegations of sexual exploitation of self-styled godman Ashok Kharat, began a wider probe and recorded statements of others at the BPO.

By April 3, a total of nine complaints had been registered, filed by eight women and one man, alleging sexual harassment as well as instances of religious harassment by the accused.

Several complainants also claimed that despite reporting the matter to the company's human resources department, no action was taken, following which the HR manager was named as accused in the case and subsequently placed under arrest.

Of the seven arrested, six are currently in judicial custody, while the HR manager arrested on Friday is in police custody till Monday.

## India's obsession with Pakistan

IN the bad, old days when ordinary Indians and ordinary Pakistanis were allowed to meet each other for lunch in Lahore, dinner in Patiala, weddings in Karachi and funerals in Qadian, you often heard — interspersed with tidbits about Omar Sheikh, the London School of Economics-educated terrorist released for the IC-814 hijacked passengers, and his favourite Islamabad bookstore — Pakistanis reflecting on the deep, strategic tie between Pakistan and China. The “all-weather relationship” between the two countries, they said, “was higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the seas and sweeter than honey.”

In today's mixed-up world, this could be a line straight out of Dhurandhar 3, the sequel — make no mistake, Aditya Dhar is already making detailed notes about India's continuing obsession with Pakistan, despite the fact that we have zero official ties with our western neighbour. The fact remains that street talk often explains foreign affairs jargon much better than the jargon itself.

So while there will only be three countries represented today in Islamabad's Serena Hotel, the venue for the face-to-face peace talks between the US and Iran at the end of the 39-day-long war — the almighty Americans represented by US Vice-President JD Vance, the battered but undefeated Iranians led by Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf (most leaders are either dead, like Ali Larijani, or wounded, like the Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei) and the Pakistanis, likely led by Trump's “favourite Field Marshal” Asim Munir — there are a few other nations in the shadows who will play more than a supporting role in this movie. China, Russia, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the UAE. Look carefully at these names, dear Reader, and note how the global order is being shaken and stirred in a hotel managed by the Aga Khan Development Network — the first Aga Khan, only old-timers with a penchant for history will remember, was Indian. The reason China is not in the room is because it is playing a powerful role outside — backing Pakistan. China has bailed out Pakistan for several decades, year after year, and built its roads and highways and ports and invested in its military, its air force, its nuclear and missile programme — the Pakistanis will admit, off-the-record over coffee in a F-6 restaurant in Islamabad, that they are a client state of their “all-weather friends.” But even China would not have been able to play this key role in the peace negotiations if Pakistan did not already have relationships with all the players. That's why there are two clear lessons from the war in West Asia. The first, be humble, never arrogant. (Deng Xiaoping said it beautifully with his 24-character guideline, “taoguang yanghui,” meaning, “hide your strength, bide your time.”) Certainly, it's not just the US and Israelis who have been forced to eat humble pie by a far weaker Iran. Closer home, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's evocative characterisation of Pakistan as a “dalaal,” or broker, may come to haunt India, as the “dalaal” brokers the most important global negotiations in decades. Many colleagues in the media are tying themselves up in knots wondering how to describe the Pakistani role today — is it a powerful mediator, an irrelevant messenger, a backroom boy, or just a weak nation living on the edge, being pulled apart by famine, war and terrorism? Perhaps it's all these labels or none of them. As Dhurandhar 2 crosses Rs 1,000 crore at the box office in India, perhaps the real question is, Why is India so obsessed with Pakistan when we are supposed to hate it so much? The second lesson from the West Asia war is that Tier Two nations like India and Pakistan cannot afford to take sides. Now India already seems to have learnt that lesson on the West Asia crisis, as it tries to claw back to the centre after having swung early in the direction of Israel. That's why it boggles the mind why Jaishankar is in the UAE on the day Pakistan is brokering a truce between Iran and the US — the UAE were a favourite target of Iran in this war, because they were seen to be allied with the US, and therefore Israel.

## Chinese lessons from the war in West Asia

The PLA's effectiveness in translating insights into operational capability will be critical not only in a US-China contingency, but also across other theatres, including South Asia

American wars in the Persian Gulf have consistently shaped the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA's) understanding of modern warfare and doctrinal reform. The Gulf War in 1990-91 exposed Beijing to the revolution in military affairs, revealing the obsolescence of its reverse-engineered Soviet arsenal in high-technology conflict. A decade later, the Iraq War drove the PLA to a decisive shift towards joint warfare and joint operational commands, which engineered the theatre command reforms of 2015-16, restructuring China's higher defence echelons. The ongoing US-Israeli-Iran war is, similarly, being closely observed by Beijing, generating important doctrinal takeaways to steadily inform adjustments in force structure, operational concepts and broader military outlook. The first focus is on saturation warfare as a central operational theme. The widespread use of low-cost, slow-moving Shahed drones has demonstrated how inexpensive systems can degrade high-value air-defence assets, such as THAAD and MIM-104 Patriot. This reinforces Beijing's belief that mass can offset technological superiority and that drones can be used as ammunition. Even layered defences, namely, Iron Dome and Iron Beam, face saturation limits, enabling repeated penetration by missiles and drones. The integration of cluster munitions into missile payloads further compounds the challenge, forcing defenders to expend multi-million-dollar interceptors against cheaper threats, thereby eroding efficiency and resilience in air defence systems. The PLA has observed the exhaustion of American munitions and the lack of industrial depth to replenish them quickly as a serious weakness. Notably, nearly 80 RIM-161 Standard Missile 3 interceptors were expended in just 12 days, roughly a year's worth of production. And if Iran, with its relatively modest production infrastructure, has put a strain on US interceptor inventories, China's large industrial base and surge capacity, combined with saturation tactics, would be even more brutal for the adversary. The implication is clear — production sovereignty, end-to-end supply chain control and surge manufacturing capability are key to shaping the trajectory and sustainability of any confrontation. A second theme in this discourse is the vulnerability of maritime chokepoints for China and the global economy. The Chinese discourse terms this “strategic suffocation”, the risk that disruption of energy, trade and sea lanes could destabilise its import-dependent

economy. Two chokepoints are central to this — the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. Although Beijing can diversify energy import sources and trading routes and expand overland dependence on Russia and Central Asia through pipelines, the persistent vulnerability of maritime chokepoints demands a durable strategic response. This requires a doctrinal shift in the PLA Navy from an excessive emphasis on near-seas defence to credible far-seas protection. Given the inherently fluid nature of maritime control, aptly described by Zhang Wenmu as “drinking through a straw held by others”, China must prioritise the expansion of its naval power-projection capabilities. In this context, strengthening offensive naval assets, particularly aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines, and enhancing capabilities in Djibouti and Gwadar (Pakistan) for naval deep-sea-



basing, are essential to secure long-term energy flows and sustain economic resilience.

Intelligence constitutes the third major theme in the Chinese discourse. The decisive role of precise, actionable intelligence in targeting high-value leadership has become crucial. Beijing believes deep internal infiltration within the Iranian leadership was a critical enabler. Accordingly, the PLA Daily warned that internal vulnerabilities and sabotage pose critical threats. This provides a further push to anti-corruption and political ‘absolute loyalty’ campaigns in China, especially in the PLA. Technical intelligence, particularly space-based intelligence capabilities, has also emerged as a crucial enabler. Chinese systems such as Jilin-1 and BeiDou-3 have provided persistent imagery, secure connectivity, and real-time data transfer for use in combat operations. The high-frequency, multi-

spectral intelligence availability is steadily eroding the traditional fog of war, giving rise to a transparent “glass” battlefield. Beijing has reportedly used operational data from the Iranian theatre to code its BeiDou-3 for enhancing its capacity to detect and classify advanced platforms such as the F-35 and strategic bombers.

These developments compress decision cycles and shorten the kill chain, enabling precise targeting of mobile and high-value assets, including stealth fighters and carrier groups. For the PLA, the lesson is clear — the integration of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance across domains will be indispensable to future high-technology warfare, in which electronic sovereignty and anti-jamming resilience will be critical.

The fourth observation is stark — high-intensity war rapidly erodes readiness. The US fighter availability in this conflict began at above 85 per cent, falling off sharply after the second week as cannibalisation of parts and crew exhaustion affected sortie rates. Operational tempo has translated quickly into system fatigue for frontline platforms like the USS Gerald R. Ford while logistical realities have compelled the US to redeploy key air defence assets from South Korea. Beijing perceives that the US capacity to fight in two major conflicts simultaneously remains circumspect.

The fifth major lesson underscores the vital role of early-phase electronic warfare and deep underground command systems. Despite US bunker-busting strikes, key Iranian capabilities have survived due to hardened facilities and shoot-and-scoot tactics, underscoring Beijing's focus on depth, redundancy, concealment and underground infrastructure investments. Finally, horizontal escalation has emerged as a key lesson for the PLA. Beijing can make the risks of hosting American forces outweigh the benefits of alliance commitments. Forward bases in places such as Luzon (Philippines) and Okinawa (Japan) would be especially vulnerable, making them central to any high-stakes escalation strategy. In addition, by threatening vital sea lanes and chokepoints in the region, China could impose direct economic costs on US allies and pressure them to stay out of a conflict. These lessons from the conflict in Iran apart, the PLA's effectiveness in translating these insights into operational capability will be critical not only in a US-China contingency, but also across other theatres, including South Asia.

## Punjab's wheat woes: Align purchase rules with realities of weather

As many as 518 out of 697 lakes have either disappeared or are shrinking.

PUNJAB's wheat bowl is once again at the mercy of the weather — and the rigidity of policy. Unseasonal rains and strong winds have damaged crops across 1.3 lakh acres, while higher moisture and lustre loss threaten to push large quantities of wheat outside the fair average quality (FAQ) norms. In such a scenario, the state's demand for relaxation in procurement specifications is both justified and urgent. The anomaly lies in the Centre's response. Rajasthan, which faced similar disruptions earlier due to its advanced harvest cycle, has already been granted relaxations. Punjab, where harvesting has been delayed by continuing western disturbances, is still waiting for Central inspection teams. This staggered approach creates a perception of unequal treatment, even though the underlying agrarian distress is comparable. The consequences of delay are immediate. Farmers bringing produce with moisture



levels as high as 15% and visible lustre loss risk price

cuts or rejection in mandis. With yields already expected to drop by 4-5 quintals per acre, procurement rigidity will translate into direct income loss. For a state deeply dependent on MSP-backed procurement, such uncertainty can quickly spiral into distress sales. The anxiety was evident in the protest call by arhtiyas. Their decision to call off the strike after assurances from the state government has brought temporary relief, but this truce depends on swift policy action. Any delay could reignite tensions and disrupt procurement operations.

This recurring crisis exposes a deeper flaw. The country's procurement system still relies on static, one-size-fits-all norms even as climate variability intensifies. Ad hoc relaxations are only a stopgap. What is needed is a responsive framework linking procurement norms to real-time crop conditions and allowing graded pricing. Punjab's plea is not merely for relief, but for reform.

## AAP faces test of performance in Punjab

Recent elections show that anti-incumbency is no longer decisive. Performance now determines electoral fate

HAVING completed four years in office recently, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is gearing up for a tough Punjab Assembly election. Recent Assembly elections in the country have shown that anti-incumbency is not the only decisive electoral factor. Rather, it is the performance of the government that matters the most, apart from other factors, like organisation, leadership, resources and a social support base. Since the AAP in Punjab lags in the other factors as compared to its rivals, the Congress and BJP, it is performance that will be the crucial factor for the party. One way to gauge the AAP's performance is to look at the pre-poll promises made by the AAP. The party, in its 2022 election manifesto, reiterated its promise to combat corruption, organised crime, drugs and unemployment and go for investment in education and health sectors in line with its ‘Delhi model’.

Poll guarantees also included freebies like cash transfers to women and subsidised electricity to every household. To address the issue of the state's indebtedness, the party promised to bring in fiscal reforms and cut down public expenditure that had gone up due to the prevailing VIP culture. With the farmers' protest against the three farm Bills ongoing at that time, the AAP promised that it would take measures to address agrarian distress and said that it would lead to an end to farmer suicides.

The party also promised to punish the perpetrators of the desecration of the Sikh holy scripture and the subsequent police firing incident in 2015, an emotive issue for the Sikhs. In its latest report card, the Bhagwant Mann government claimed to have fulfilled all its poll promises, the latest being cash transfer to women above 18 years of age. Among its achievements mentioned in the card are Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics providing free treatment (up to Rs 10 lakh) to the poor, an improvement in the conditions of government schools, providing

uninterrupted supply of free electricity to farmers even during daytime, an extension of the canal irrigation facility and the creation of thousands of jobs. It also recently declared Anandpur Sahib and Amritsar as holy cities. However, the party's electoral chance will be hit due to the government's lack of success on some fronts. First, its inability to check the worrisome rise in gangsterism, ransom-seeking and daylight killings in the state. Mafias in sectors like transport, reta bajri (sand), liquor and cable — named in the party's past manifestos continue to flourish. The AAP government, in its enthusiasm to acquire farmland for colonisation, is alleged to be in collusion with the land mafia. Second, farmers remain debt-ridden and suicides are still being reported, though the numbers have gone down. Third, despite the setting up of many more integrated deaddiction and rehabilitation centres across the state and arrests of drug peddlers, the government's all-out war against the drug trade and menace has not met with much success, indicating an entrenched nexus. Fourth, the government's record on combating corruption has not been up to the mark. Some senior party leaders, including legislators and ministers, have been forced to resign after facing corruption charges. The promised Jan Lokpal Bill never came about, nor was the existing office of Lokpal strengthened. Fifth, the party's promise to end VIP culture remains hollow. Worse, state resources and assets are kept at the disposal of Delhi-based AAP leaders, a charge doing the rounds after the Raghav Chadha episode. Sixth, incidents of terror attacks in

recent years, including the grenade attacks on the intelligence wing headquarters, a police station and the Punjab BJP headquarters in Chandigarh, have ignited fear among people. Seventh, the state's growing indebtedness is being blamed on the government's reckless populist policies and financial imprudence. The party's promise to bring a turnaround in the economy has fallen flat as salaries and pensions are being delayed.

Unemployment levels remain high, the migration of youth continues and the promise of providing a guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) for every crop remains a

incumbency against the entrenched Congress and Akali Dal but also due to a faint hope of the voters for AAP's ability to revive the lost glory of the beleaguered state, the forthcoming elections would be a tough battle in view of the party's performance deficit.

This, despite the party winning byelections in Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal and Ludhiana West in the last two years. However, these results indicate that the party remains in electoral contention. An incumbent party remains the favourite in byelections.

The BJP has the advantage of having resources, a committed cadre and a core constituency. Being in power at the Centre for the third term, it now has a firm grip over the institutions and apparatuses. Armed with turnout leaders, it would contest with full force in all Assembly seats, enthused by the 18% vote that it got in the 2024 elections. The Congress, though ridden with factionalism, continues to retain decent support among both Hindus and Sikhs in the state. At the same time, with a weak high command, factional fights in the party are likely to intensify. The Akali Dal, having lost its core constituency, despite its encouraging performance in the recent local elections, and its attack on the AAP, does not seem to have much of a chance. The upcoming Assembly election will be a three-party contest once again, but with a difference. The third party in the triangular contest will be the BJP, not the Akali Dal. The electoral issues would be the same as the last time. They would figure in the manifestos of all parties. The tenor of campaign rhetoric will be as shrill as ever.



non-starter. Aam Aadmi Canteens also remain non-starters. Eighth, while schools have become better, higher education institutions are in a pretty bad situation due to the lack of government support. Given the fact that the AAP landslide win was not merely due to anti-

# UP girl, duped by lover to drug her family, steal; then he rapes her with friends

A man in Uttar Pradesh allegedly lured a girl into a trap, convincing her to drug her family members and steal jewellery from her home. After carrying out the act, the accused then sexually assaulted her.

## Bijnor. (Agency)

A minor girl, 15, was allegedly lured, drugged into assisting a crime, and later gang-raped in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district, prompting swift police action and multiple arrests.

According to the complaint, the incident took place on the night of April 5. The accused, identified as Titu Pal, had developed a friendship with the minor over the past six months through regular phone conversations. He worked as a motorcycle mechanic in Haridwar and has a criminal history, with six cases registered against him in different police stations, though the girl was unaware of this.

On April 5, Titu Pal allegedly met the girl during the day and gave her a sedative,

instructing her to mix it in her family's food at night so they would fall unconscious. He also asked her to collect jewellery and cash from the house before eloping with him. Following his instructions, the minor allegedly mixed the drug into the family's dinner, after which her family members fell unconscious.

Later that night, Titu Pal arrived at her house. The girl took gold and silver jewellery along with Rs 10,000 in cash and left with him. He then told her that some of his friends were nearby and that they would meet them before leaving the area. He took her to a room in a banquet hall near the village, where he, along with three accomplices, allegedly raped her.

After the assault, the accused fled the scene

with the jewellery and cash brought by the girl. The minor managed to return home and informed her family about the incident. Upon receiving the information, police officials rushed to the spot, and senior officers also reached the village to assess the situation and record statements.

Police registered a case based on a complaint filed by the girl's mother. They took Titu Pal and two of his associates into custody, along with a juvenile involved in the case. A fourth accused, identified as Ritesh, remains absconding. Police said the stolen jewellery and cash are believed to be with him, and efforts are underway to trace him. The girl lives with her mother and two younger sisters, while her father works in Saudi Arabia.



## Short news

### India rejects China renaming places in Arunachal, flags impact on ties

#### Arunachal Pradesh. (Agency)

India on Sunday said China's move to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory to manufacture "baseless narratives" cannot alter the reality but could impact ongoing efforts to normalise bilateral ties. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi "categorically rejects" any "mischievous attempts" by the Chinese



side to assign such names to places which form part of the Indian territory. India had reacted sharply when China resorted to renaming certain places in Arunachal Pradesh in May last year as well as in April 2024.

"India categorically rejects any mischievous attempts by the Chinese side to assign fictitious names to places which form part of the territory of India," Jaiswal said.

"Such attempts by China at introducing false claims and manufacturing baseless narratives cannot alter the undeniable reality that these places and territories, including Arunachal Pradesh, were, are, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he said. Jaiswal said these actions by the Chinese side "detract from ongoing efforts to stabilise and normalise India-China bilateral ties".

"China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create a better understanding," he said. Jaiswal was responding to a media query on the issue.

### BDS student found dead in Kerala, family alleges caste discrimination

#### Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

A 22-year-old first-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student, Nithin Raj R.L., was found dead on April 10 after allegedly falling from a five-storey building on the campus of Anjarakandy Dental College in Kannur, Kerala, triggering serious allegations of faculty harassment, caste discrimination and skin tone bias.

Nithin, a native of Nedumangad in Thiruvananthapuram district, was discovered critically injured on the college premises on Friday afternoon and was rushed to hospital, where he was later declared dead. Chakkarakkal police have registered a case of unnatural death and launched a probe into the circumstances surrounding the incident. His family, who work as daily wage labourers, alleged that Nithin had been facing sustained mental harassment from the head of the department and other teachers. They claimed he was repeatedly targeted over his caste identity and skin tone. The family specifically accused the department head, Dr M K Ram, of threatening to cut his internal marks, an allegation that has intensified concern over the case.

The incident has also drawn the attention of the Kerala State Human Rights Commission, which has registered a suo motu case and directed police to submit a detailed report into the matter.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor posted on X, "Deeply anguished to learn of the tragic death of Nithin Raj, a young BDS student from Thiruvananthapuram, at Kannur Dental College, Anjarakandy. Audio recordings now reveal what his family has long alleged — relentless verbal abuse, casteist slurs, threats, and deliberate academic sabotage by faculty.

## 30 Karnataka Congress MLAs reach Delhi, seek meeting with top brass for berths

**Around 30 Karnataka Congress MLAs are camping in Delhi to meet top leadership to build pressure for a Cabinet reshuffle in the Siddaramaiah-led state government and seen ministry berths.**

#### Bengaluru. (Agency)

A group of around 30 Congress MLAs from Karnataka has converged in New Delhi, escalating pressure on the party leadership for a cabinet reshuffle and inclusion in the state ministry.

Several legislators have already stationed themselves at Karnataka Bhavan, with more arriving through the day, taking the strength of the group to nearly 30. The MLAs are scheduled to hold a breakfast meeting on Monday morning before meeting senior AICC leaders, including KC Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala.

The move marked a coordinated push by ministerial aspirants, who are now waiting to meet AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge after his return to Delhi from Bengaluru later



in the day. The legislators are also expected to seek time with Rahul Gandhi, depending on his availability.

The show of strength followed a strategy meeting held over dinner in March, where the group decided to collectively press for a cabinet rejig in Karnataka. The demand has

gained urgency in recent weeks, with MLAs arguing that several leaders have already held ministerial positions multiple times, leaving limited space for others.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Congress MLA Belur Gopalakrishna said the delegation would urge the leadership to prioritise those who have not yet been accommodated.

"There are leaders who have been given chances three, four, even five times. We are going to request that those who have not yet been accommodated be given an opportunity," he said, adding that the visit is solely focused on securing ministerial positions.

Another MLA, Ashok Pattan, said the demand reflects a broader call for equitable representation within the party.

## Perfume, silence and skeleton, How a father hid daughter's death in UP's Meerut

**A locked house in Meerut hid a chilling secret for four months before police discovered 34-year-old Priyanka's skeletal remains inside. Her father, who had vanished after allegedly living with the body for days, was later traced, deepening a mystery now under police investigation.**

#### Meerut. (Agency)

A shocking case surfaced in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut on Friday after the skeletal remains of a 34-year-old woman, Priyanka, were recovered from her home nearly four months after her death. The body was found in an advanced state of decomposition, almost reduced to a skeleton.

Priyanka lived with her father, Uday Bhan Biswas. According to relatives, the house had remained locked for around four months, and both father and daughter had been missing from the neighbourhood during that period. After repeated efforts to trace him, family members allegedly found Uday Bhan at a tea stall in Begum Bagh. When questioned, he initially claimed Priyanka had been admitted to a hospital in Dehradun due to ill health. However, after further

interrogation by relatives, he allegedly admitted that she had died and that her body was still inside the house. Police were immediately informed and broke open the



lock to enter the house, where Priyanka's remains were discovered in skeletal condition. Family members said the house was filled with old papers and scrap, while the father allegedly claimed he had sprayed perfume inside to suppress the

smell. Relatives also alleged that he stayed inside the house with the body for three to four days after her death.

Neighbours said they had limited interaction with the family but knew Priyanka had been unwell and was often taken for treatment by her father in a rickshaw. They added that neither of them had been seen for the past four months.

Priyanka's cousin Biswajit Biswas said she had been suffering from illness for a long time and was also undergoing treatment for mental health issues. The family further claimed that Priyanka's mother had died in a similar manner in 2013, after which both father and daughter had been living in depression and isolation.

Police said the matter is under investigation and further details will be shared once evidence-based findings emerge.

## 159 candidates detained in Jharkhand excise constable exam leak probe

#### Ranchi. (Agency)

A major suspected paper leak racket linked to the Jharkhand excise constable recruitment examination was uncovered in Ranchi after police detained 159 candidates from an under-construction house.

According to the administration, the raid was carried out late in the evening after police received a confidential tip-off that candidates had been gathered at the location, in Rargaon under the Tamar police station area and were being made to memorise likely examination questions before the test. During the operation, officials recovered four sets of question papers along with answer keys.

Preliminary scrutiny found that some of the recovered questions matched the actual examination paper. Out of the 120 questions in the exam, one Khortha language question was confirmed to have leaked, while another was found to be a partial match. However, officials clarified that there is no



conclusive evidence yet to confirm a complete paper leak.

The details were shared during a joint press conference attended by IAS officer Prashant Kumar, the Ranchi Deputy Commissioner and the Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police. Investigators identified the alleged mastermind as Atul Vats, who is said to be linked to a solver gang and has previously been accused in similar examination fraud cases.

Police said the gang had allegedly struck deals worth around Rs 15 lakh with candidates. The accused had also reportedly collected admit cards and other documents from the aspirants as part of the operation.

Taking a strict stand, the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission chairman announced that all 159 detained candidates would be debarred from future commission examinations. Police are continuing efforts to trace other members of the gang, and further action in the case is underway.

## Ground Report: Identity Politics In Coal Belt Asansol Ahead Of Bengal Polls

**Located along the banks where the rivers Damodar and Ajoy converge, Asansol was once a dense forest land where large numbers of Asan trees were found, giving the area its name.**

#### Asansol. (Agency)

Located along the banks where the rivers Damodar and Ajoy converge, Asansol was once a dense forest land where large numbers of Asan trees were found, giving the area its name. The decline of the coal economy, marred by illegal mining and identity politics, has played a major role in deciding the fate of electoral battles in the Asansol Dakshin seat. This remains true during the high-pitched 2026 Bengal polls, spoke to political workers and candidates of arch-rivals Trinamool Congress and BJP to ascertain the trends of this high-voltage election.

In the British era, when coal and railways

began to flourish in Bengal, Asansol - one of the largest cities in the state, falling under Paschim Burdwan - started attracting job-seeking workers from across the country. Since then, Hindi-speaking voters and identity politics have played a significant role in the Asansol Dakshin seat during every election.

The bus stand of Asansol is a melting pot that reflects the political mood of the city. A unique trend can be observed here during elections. Each morning, supporters of all political parties gather at the bus stand area for tea, openly discussing and debating politics before heading out for their daily campaigns. spoke to some of those



supporters. Dharmendra Singh is a long-time BJP karyakarta in Asansol. He has been given the responsibility of campaigning across several civic wards of the city. Singh said, "We witnessed 34 years of leftist rule in the state. During that entire

period, nothing substantial was accomplished in Asansol. When the Trinamool Congress, under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, came to power, we believed that Asansol would finally see development. However, the people have seen no real benefit over the last 15 years." Singh said the TMC is unnecessarily making non-vegetarian food a political issue. He said, "We observe that, in the run-up to the elections, there is absolutely no discussion regarding Asansol's development; instead, the conversation revolves solely around fish and meat. My question is this: are fish and meat unavailable in Uttar Pradesh.

# We can't be blinded by elections: SC backs voters' right to be on rolls amid SIR

**The Supreme Court flagged concerns over the Special Intensive Review (SIR) of electoral roll revision in poll-bound West Bengal, asserting that voters have a continuing right to be on the election roll.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Supreme Court on Monday flagged key concerns over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, while pointing out that voters have a continuing right to remain on voter lists and that the process must not be distorted by the pressure of conducting elections.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi was hearing a writ petition filed by voters whose appeals against exclusion from the electoral rolls are pending before appellate tribunals. The petitioners have sought extension of the cut-off date for freezing of electoral rolls, arguing that they should be allowed to vote in the upcoming Assembly elections if their appeals succeed.

The rolls, as per the Election Commission of India (ECI), have been frozen as on April 9. "Voters have a continuing right to remain on election rolls. The right to remain a voter in

the country in which you were born is not only a constitutional right, but also an emotional one. We need to protect it. We cannot get blinded by the dust and fury of impending elections," the Supreme Court bench noted.

At the outset, the Chief Justice indicated reluctance to interfere, observing that the tribunal should be allowed to decide the pending appeals. Counsel for the petitioners, however, alleged that the ECI was not cooperating with the appellate process by failing to produce relevant records.

Justice Bagchi, meanwhile, stressed the need for a "robust appellate mechanism" to effectively examine grievances raised by voters removed from the rolls.

During the hearing, the bench also pointed to

what he described as procedural deviations in the West Bengal SIR exercise. They noted



that the Election Commission had introduced a new category termed "logical discrepancy" in West Bengal, unlike other states.

"See in your final list you did not delete the 2002 list members. When the Bihar SIR was

argued, the submissions of ECI were unequivocal that 2002 list members need not give any documents. Please see your written submissions in the Bihar case. You had said the 2002 electorate need not give documents," it said.

Justice Bagchi further noted that even judicial officers, given the scale and pace of adjudication, may have committed some errors during the process.

"If you go through 1,000 documents a day, if accuracy is 70 per cent then the activity should be rated as excellent.

So margin of error will be there, and we need a robust appellate forum," he said.

Assembly elections in West Bengal will be held in two phases on April 23 and 29 and votes will be counted on May 4.

## 4-year-old raped, killed by maternal uncle in Ghaziabad; body found under parked car

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped and killed by her maternal uncle in Ghaziabad, police said Sunday. The child's body was found under a car parked on the side of the road around 8 pm on Saturday, they said. The accused uncle is currently on the run, officers said. According to the police, officers on routine patrol duty spotted the body of the child.

Initial inquiry revealed that her maternal uncle had taken her to his residence on Saturday, after which he allegedly raped and subsequently murdered her, the police said.

"A police mobile unit received information regarding a girl's body lying on the roadside. During the initial investigation, we found out that her maternal uncle had taken her from her residence to his on the pretext of playing together. Instead, he took her to his room... He later murdered her and disposed of the body in an attempt to conceal the crime," a senior police officer said.

Based on a police complaint filed by the child's father, an FIR was registered under sections 103 (1), 238, 65 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, police said. "Based on the complaint received in this matter, a case has been registered and necessary legal action is being taken," the officer also said.

According to the FIR, the father said in the complaint that the accused had taken the minor girl to his room around 12 pm on the pretext of playing with her. "When she did not return, even in the evening, I asked him (the accused) where she was, to which he said he had dropped her. I then searched for her and found the body under a car," the father alleged.

## Delhi govt releases draft EV policy: Benefits you can draw if planning to switch to electric soon

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Delhi government released a draft of its Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy 2026 on Saturday that revised the purchase incentives for some categories of vehicles.

How much will you benefit while buying your next EV? Here's a breakdown.

### Two-wheelers

The government has proposed a tapering incentive, including for electric two-wheelers. This means that if you buy a vehicle in the first year after the introduction of the policy, you will get a higher incentive compared to the second year, and so on.

The policy offers a subsidy of Rs 10,000 per kWh of battery capacity (up to a maximum of Rs 30,000) in the first year. It gets cut in the second year by one-third to reach Rs 6,600 per kWh of battery capacity (up to a maximum of Rs 20,000), and is halved to Rs 3,300 per kWh of battery capacity (up to a maximum of Rs 10,000) in the third year. Only electric two-wheelers with ex-factory prices of less than Rs 2.25 lakh are eligible.

For instance, TVS iQube, the most sold electric two-wheeler in India, costs around Rs 1.15 lakh in Delhi. The certified capacity is 2kWh, which means it will cost roughly Rs 95,000 in the first year, Rs 1.02 lakh in the second and Rs 1.08 lakh in the third year of the policy.

If you get your old Delhi-registered petrol or diesel two-wheeler of BS-IV standard or below scrapped and buy a new electric two-wheeler within six months, the government also offers a Rs 10,000 scrapping incentive. So the new electric two-wheeler will cost Rs 85,000 in the first year, Rs 92,000 in the second year and Rs 98,000 in the third year of the policy.

### Four-wheelers

While the government has not offered a direct purchase incentive on buying electric cars, it has sought to incentivise petrol or diesel car users through a scrapping incentive. Those who have Delhi-registered cars of BS-IV standards or below will be eligible for an incentive of Rs 1 lakh if they get their vehicles scrapped and purchase an EV within six months. An exemption from road tax and registration fees for EVs also remains valid as in the previous policy.

## ISIS Iraq handler directed Indian plotter to radicalise juvenile

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Days after a 28-year-old man was arrested for allegedly plotting terrorist strikes in Delhi and other sensitive locations, a probe has revealed that the accused, Rizwan Ahmad, was in contact with Abu Osama, an Iraq-based handler, police said Sunday.

Osama would allegedly send him directions related to recruitment of juveniles and radicalisation of youth in India for ISIS operations. Ahmad also procured components for IEDs and radicalised three-four youths.

A source in the Delhi Police Headquarters said Ahmad is a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar. "He was arrested from his residence on April 4 following credible intelligence about his ISIS affiliations and recruitment activities," the source said.

The counter intelligence unit of the Delhi Police Special Cell had received inputs indicating that Ahmad, along with another Mumbai

resident, were planning attacks in India, officers said. An FIR was registered on March 28 under Section 61(2) of the BNS and several sections of the UAPA. "A raid at Ahmad's residence uncovered incriminating evidence, including potassium



nitrate, citric acid monohydrate, alarm clocks, electrical wires, batteries, and indicators — materials used to assemble IEDs," the source said. "Examination of his mobile phones, a seized register revealed chats and written notes on preparation, manufacturing

explosives, linking him to ISIS recruitment and anti-national activities," the source added.

During questioning, Ahmad allegedly told police that he was in touch with Osama. Osama's identity is under verification. "He started scanning social media platforms and started approaching people who were posting 'anti-national' content," the source said. In 2016, he was arrested, first by the Mumbai police and later by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) — subsequently convicted and awarded an eight-year jail term. "He came out of jail in 2024 and started doing some odd jobs. But after a few months, he started posting messages on social media again and got in touch with his handler who asked him to make a crypto wallet to receive funds from him. He had shortlisted a juvenile and was planning to send him to Nepal for training," the source said.

## Umar Khalid seeks open SC hearing in review against bail denial in Delhi riots case

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Former JNU student Umar Khalid on Monday filed a review petition in the Supreme Court, seeking an open court hearing to challenge its January 5 order denying him bail in the 2020 Delhi riots larger conspiracy case. The case relates to allegations that Khalid and others were part of a broader conspiracy behind the violence.

The plea, mentioned before a bench, seeks reconsideration of the earlier ruling and requests that the matter be heard in an open court. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Khalid, urged the court to allow a public hearing instead of the usual in-chamber consideration for review petitions.

The bench indicated it would examine the request and decide the course of the hearing. According to the cause list, the matter is scheduled to come up for hearing on April 15 (Wednesday). Khalid's review plea challenges the Supreme Court's order, which denied bail to him and

co-accused Sharjeel Imam. The court had then observed that the prosecution material disclosed a prima facie case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), citing their alleged "central and formative role" in the conspiracy. The bench had held that the material on record indicated involvement in planning, mobilisation and strategic direction of the alleged conspiracy, going beyond localised or sporadic acts, and therefore did not justify granting bail at that stage.

At the same time, the court had granted bail to other accused in the case, including Gulfisha Fatima, Meeran Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohd Saleem Khan and Shadab Ahmed, noting that Khalid and Imam, another JNU student, stood on a "qualitatively different footing". The court had also placed a restriction that Khalid and Imam could renew their bail pleas only after the examination of protected witnesses or after one year from the January 5 order.



## 'AIIMS' for East Delhi: Why Delhi is merging three major hospitals into one super unit

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

**One hospital is overwhelmed, another is underused, the third is stretched in its own way. The Delhi government has proposed a solution: merging them into a single, autonomous medicine super-institution modelled on AIIMS.**

The casualty department of Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital in East Delhi is a study in relentless pressure. Parbati Devi (56) lies on a stretcher outside the ward, waiting to be seen by a doctor. Her husband Kushal Singh, who has brought her here after yet another epilepsy seizure, says he does not know where else to go. They have tried the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) in nearby Shahdara, but doctors are often unavailable there. GTB, for all its strain, remains the only reliable option.

A few steps further in, the medicine ward is no different. Daani Ram (61), a daily wage labourer from Nand Nagri, shares a bed with another patient. Daani cannot afford private healthcare; the overflowing government hospital is the only choice that he

has. At Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) barely two kilometres away, the scene is starkly different. The



sprawling hospital at Tahirpur in Northeast Delhi is essentially empty — entire sections of the gastroenterology ward lie vacant. Beds are unoccupied, corridors unhurried.

As a semi-paid tertiary care facility in a city where vast numbers rely on free government treatment, the RGSSH struggles to draw patients — even as GTB buckles under the weight of approximately 6,000 OPD visitors and 250 admissions per day, and an average bed occupancy rate of 104%, according to figures on the hospital website.

This is the paradox at the heart of East Delhi's public health system: one hospital is overwhelmed, another is underused, and a third — the Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI) — is situated somewhere between these two, but stretched in its own way.

The Delhi government has now proposed a solution to resolve this imbalance: merging these three hospitals into a single, autonomous medicine super-institution modelled on the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

## 'My salary increased by Rs 39 last year': Voices from Noida's angry garment workers

**Following four days of demonstrations in Noida Phase 2, workers cite unrealistic targets, lack of PF benefits**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

As a four-day-long protest by garment workers in Noida Phase 2 took a violent turn on Monday morning, with incidents of stone pelting, vandalism and arson being reported, several protesters had just one thing to say: their salaries are barely enough to meet living expenses.

The protests started on Friday. Workers who took part in it are engaged in the industry and export business. From an 18-year-old from Sambhal to a 28-year-old from Bihar, The Indian Express speaks to three workers who were part of the demonstrations:

**Surender Kashyap (18)**

Works for Anubhav Apparels in Noida's Sector 49 as a measurement checker

Hails from Sambhal, UP

Kashyap pointed out that salaries of workers in Manesar, near Gurgaon, have been increased to Rs 20,000 for eight hours of work. "So why not ours?" "I earn Rs 13,000, pay rent of Rs 4,000... a gas cylinder now costs Rs 400, how should we manage?" he asked.

He also said the target set by his employer is very unrealistic. "They set a target for 70 pieces an hour and if we don't supply, they humiliate us. For years, they have given a mere Rs 320 hike... They force us to work at night... If we're unwell, they say don't come next time. And if we don't work on Sunday, they threaten to fire us."

**Rahul (25)**

Works in the export line

Hails from Kannauj, UP

Rahul has been doing the job since 2018. He is married, with two children aged three and one.

"I earn Rs 13,500 — I do not save anything and can't send any money home. I have to pay Rs 5,000 for room rent, Rs 4,000 for ration. Some money is deducted for PF, so I'm only left with Rs 3,000 in the end to feed my family of 4. How can I manage? How do I educate my children?" said Rahul

"Last year, my salary was increased by just Rs 39! The HR doesn't listen to us.

## NEWS BOX

## Phil Salt not overthinking IPL 2026 form: Focused on impact over milestones

New Delhi. (Agency)

Phil Salt brushed aside concerns around his form in IPL 2026 after delivering a match-winning knock for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Mumbai Indians, saying his focus remains on impact rather than milestones. Salt smashed a blistering 78 off 36 balls at the Wankhede Stadium, setting the tone for RCB's commanding total of 240. The innings, which earned him the Player of the Match award, came at a time when questions were being raised about his consistency this season. "There's a few highs and a lot of lows, and you can't ride both of them. Just stay as even as you can, and I'm just pleased I could come out and put a performance in for the lads," Salt said after the match.

"Some of these grounds aren't the most bowler-friendly, so you've got to keep the mentality that you're going to keep going at the opposition. And then not forget your assets as a player. It's about being a match-winner, isn't it?" he added. "I know I can't get runs every game, nobody can. But if I can be as impactful as possible, then I'm on the right



path," Salt said. Salt's innings was built on pure intent. He took charge in the powerplay, attacking from the outset and putting Mumbai's bowlers under pressure. His ability to take on spin stood out, including a sequence where he hit three consecutive sixes off Mitchell Santner. While Virat Kohli anchored the innings with a steady half-century, Salt's early assault ensured RCB gained the upper hand. The momentum was later carried forward by captain Rajat Patidar, whose quickfire knock pushed the total beyond 240. With the ball, RCB maintained control through the middle overs, with Suyash Sharma and Krunal Pandya ensuring Mumbai never fully recovered despite a late push. HOW HAS SALT'S IPL 2026 BEEN SO FAR? Salt's season has been a mix of starts and setbacks. He began with a low score against Sunrisers Hyderabad, followed by a decent contribution against Chennai Super Kings, before registering a duck against Rajasthan Royals.

## Sinner sinks Alcaraz to win Monte Carlo Masters, returns to No.1

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Jannik Sinner beat Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to win the Monte Carlo Masters for the first time on Sunday and reclaim the world number one ranking from his Spanish rival. Sinner downed Alcaraz 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to capture his third ATP 1000 title of the year after completing the "Sunshine Double" last month with victories in Indian Wells and Miami. The 24-year-old Sinner joins Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal as only the third player to win four successive ATP 1000 titles. He also triumphed in Paris at the end of last season. "We came here trying to get as many matches as possible, getting good feedback before other big tournaments coming up. Today was a high level from both of us," Sinner said. "It was a bit windy, a bit breezy. Different conditions from what the tournament has brought. The result is amazing. Getting back to No.1 means a lot for me... I am very happy to win a big title on this surface, I haven't done it before."

It was the first meeting between Sinner and Alcaraz since the Italian prevailed at the ATP



Finals in November. Sinner, who is now 7-10 in his career against Alcaraz, will return to the top of the rankings on Monday. He has won his last 17 matches and becomes the first man since Djokovic in 2015 to win the first three ATP 1000 titles of the season.

"It is impressive what you are achieving right now," Alcaraz said to Sinner during the trophy ceremony. "Just one man had won the 'Sunshine Double' and Monte Carlo and you are the second." Alcaraz had won his past 17 matches on clay, dating back to last season when he lifted titles in Rome and at Roland Garros. He admitted Sinner performed better when it mattered most on Sunday.

"I would say that the important moments, the important points, I didn't play well. I think I had so much opportunities in the match that I didn't take," said Alcaraz.

## Man City closes in on Arsenal in Premier League title race with 3-0 win over Chelsea

## Second-placed City has the chance to cut the gap at the top to three points with victory against Arsenal at the Etihad.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Manchester City issued a huge statement of intent in the race for the Premier League title with a 3-0 win at Chelsea on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's team moved to within six points of leader Arsenal ahead of next weekend's top of the table clash between the two teams. City also has a game in hand. Nico O'Reilly, Marc Guehi and Jeremy Doku all scored in a blistering second-half performance at Stamford Bridge as City took full advantage of Arsenal's shock defeat to Bournemouth on Saturday. "We know that we still have everything in our hands," Doku said. Tottenham's survival fight took another blow after a 1-0 loss to Sunderland left it rooted in the relegation zone.

In coach Roberto De Zerbi's first game in charge, Spurs fell to a 16th league loss of the season. Its 14-game winless run in the league dates back to Jan. 1. Nordi Mukiele's deflected shot sealed the game at the Stadium of Light and plunged Tottenham's campaign deeper into crisis.

Tottenham is two points adrift of safety with six games to go. Its plight wasn't helped by relegation-fighting Nottingham Forest drawing 1-1 with Aston Villa. Crystal Palace came back from 1-0 down to beat Newcastle 2-1 at Selhurst Park.

City's title charge gathers pace while Arsenal's form has hit a slump at the worst possible time. City made it three straight wins in a row after rolling over Chelsea. Victory followed triumph against Arsenal in the English League Cup final and the 4-0 rout of Liverpool in the FA Cup last week. While those three results all came in different competitions, City's charge has an ominous feel about it after twice chasing down Arsenal's lead to win the title in 2023 and

24. Second-placed City has the chance to cut the gap at the top to three points with victory against Arsenal at the Etihad. Guardiola called for respect for Arsenal when looking ahead to that title showdown.

"They have been the best team in this country,



in Europe, so far. Beating Arsenal once is so difficult, imagine beating them twice in a few weeks," Guardiola said. "I would like to say to my fans — respect Arsenal a lot, they are an extraordinary team. Come to join us from minute one because the players will do the

maximum." Rayan Cherki was the inspiration at Stamford Bridge — setting up goals for O'Reilly six minutes after halftime and Guehi in the 57th.

Doku rounded off the win in the 68th. The result didn't help Chelsea's bid to qualify for the Champions League, leaving it four points behind fifth-placed Liverpool.

Liam Rosenior's team has won just one of its last seven league games. Spurs' crisis deepens. The numbers just keep on getting worse for Tottenham. Now on its third coach of the season, it's more than three months since its last league win and just one point from a possible 24. This was a seventh defeat in eight games. If the hope was that De Zerbi would provide an immediate bounce in form after replacing Igor Tudor, it didn't come in a typically toothless display at Sunderland.

While the new coach could point to bad luck, given the nature of Mukiele's 61st-minute winner, which took a wicked deflection off Micky van de Ven, his team rarely looked like finding a way back into the match — even during 11 minutes of added time at the end.

## One Pandya had to win: Krunal relishing RCB's win over MI on Wankhede homecoming

BARCELONA. (Agency)

Krunal Pandya enjoyed a special outing at the Wankhede Stadium as Royal Challengers Bengaluru defeated Mumbai Indians, with the all-rounder getting the better of his brother Hardik Pandya. Reflecting on the moment, Krunal said it was always going to be a case of "one Pandya had to win."

RCB posted a massive total of 241 and went on to seal an 18-run win, with Krunal delivering a tight spell of 1 for 26 in four overs. On a high-scoring surface, his control through the middle overs proved crucial in slowing down MI's chase. Wankhede has always been close to my heart. I have played here for six years and was lucky enough to win three trophies in that time," Krunal said at the post-match press conference. "So it has always been special coming over here, and as I said last year as well, eventually the points were coming home only. One Pandya had to win, and I guess I was the lucky one in that," he added.

Krunal's performance stood out in a match dominated by runs. He not only kept things



tight but also picked up the key wicket of Suryakumar Yadav, breaking MI's momentum during a crucial phase. The contest also had a subplot, with Krunal facing Hardik in what turned into a competitive family battle. While Hardik managed a fighting 40, it was Krunal who had the last word as RCB held on to defend their total. The foundation for the win was laid by RCB's batting unit, with Virat Kohli and Phil Salt providing a strong start, before captain Rajat Patidar accelerated with a quickfire fifty.

HOW GOOD HAS KRUNAL BEEN FOR RCB?

Since moving to RCB from Lucknow Super Giants, Krunal has become a reliable figure in their setup. He played an important role in their title-winning campaign last season, contributing with both bat and ball. In IPL 2025, he picked up 17 wickets in 15 matches and chipped in with useful runs lower down the order.

## Should MI play Rutherford ahead of out-of-form Tilak? RCB loss raises questions

New Delhi. (Agency)

Mumbai Indians find themselves facing early questions over their team combination after their defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, with the spotlight now on whether Sherfane Rutherford should replace the out-of-form Tilak Varma in the playing XI. Tilak's struggles with the bat have been hard to ignore. Batting at No. 4, he has managed just 35 runs in four matches this season, with scores of 20, 0, 14 and 1, raising concerns about his consistency in MI's middle order. "If you look at our top five, these are match-winners. You can't really take anything away from them. Yes, they haven't started well, but those are world-class players," Rutherford said after the match. "When it's not going your way, I think it's important to support them and stand behind them. For me, I'm happy with where I'm at. I just hope the guys can come to the party pretty soon," he added.

"Otherwise, I'm pretty content, and I'm

willing to support the group. To win a tournament, it has to be a team effort, not just one individual," Rutherford said.

The debate intensified after MI's loss to RCB



at the Wankhede Stadium, where despite chasing a daunting 241, Rutherford's unbeaten 71 gave the hosts a late push and kept the margin respectable. In contrast, Tilak's early dismissal added to MI's problems in the chase. While the top order showed flashes, the inability to build

sustained partnerships left them with too much to do in the latter half. Rutherford, often used as an impact substitute, has quietly built a strong case. He has already scored 101 runs in four matches this season, showing the ability to accelerate under pressure and finish games.

## SHOULD MI STICK OR TWIST?

The numbers suggest Rutherford has been more effective so far, but the decision is not as straightforward.

Tilak has been a key part of MI's setup over the past few seasons, and his ability to anchor and accelerate makes him a valuable option when in form. The management may be reluctant to make a knee-jerk change early in the tournament.

Rutherford's comments also reflect the team's current mindset. Rather than rushing into changes, there is a clear emphasis on backing proven players and allowing them time to find rhythm.

## Hardik Pandya says Mumbai Indians will explore their options after poor start in IPL

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Hardik Pandya did not shy away from admitting that Mumbai Indians are searching for answers after another setback, saying the team will "explore options" following their defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Wankhede Stadium.

## IPL 2026, MI vs RCB: HIGHLIGHTS | SCORECARD

Chasing a daunting 241, Mumbai once again found themselves playing catch-up from the outset. The early loss of momentum in the powerplay, combined with wickets at regular intervals, left them with too much to do in the latter half of the innings. Reflecting on the performance, Hardik pointed to issues across both departments. "We lost too many wickets and at the same point of time, I think we conceded way too many runs as well. That was always going to be catch-up," he said.

That theme of chasing the game has been a recurring one. Hardik admitted that

Mumbai have struggled to take control early, whether with bat or ball. "In the last couple of games, as a bowling unit or even as a batting unit, we've been catching up rather than leading the game," he said.

RCB's imposing total of 240 exposed those



issues once again. Mumbai's bowlers were unable to contain the scoring through the middle overs, while their batting never found the sustained acceleration required in a chase of that magnitude. Hardik stressed that a reset is now necessary. "We really need to reflect, really need to see what best

we can do and how we can get that momentum and that click which we require," he said, adding that the team will reassess both batting and bowling combinations ahead of their next fixture. There are a lot of options which will be asked and explored. To be very honest, now a lot of things need to be rethought. Definitely, it's not working," he said.

A key concern remains the powerplay, where Mumbai have consistently lagged behind the opposition. "We are kind of trying to catch up in the powerplay in both batting and bowling," Hardik noted, underlining the need to start stronger.

One positive for Mumbai came in the form of Sherfane Rutherford, whose late onslaught provided some resistance. Hardik acknowledged his impact, saying Rutherford's power gives the team "extra cushion" and flexibility going forward.

Despite the loss, the message from the Mumbai camp is clear. Changes are on the horizon as they look to find momentum and regain control of their campaign.

## Setback for Vaishali in Round 12 of Candidates

## Inconsistencies throughout the middlegame prove costly for India GM as she loses to Zhu Jiner of China

BENGALURU. (Agency)

R Vaishali's hopes of winning the Candidates tournament took a beating as she went down to Zhu Jiner in Cyprus on Sunday. The Indian, sole leader with seven points coming into the 12th round, lost to the Chinese in 39 moves. It now means that there are three people separated by half a point as Bibisara Assaubayeva won again to lie 0.5 points off the top two. This is now set to be one of the closest finishes to a women's Candidates in its current form. A reminder; if more than one player finishes level at the top, tie-breaks with faster time-controls will be employed to decide the challenger for the world title. Of course, Anna Muzychuk could yet join the top of the leaderboard and make it a three-



way tie at the top. The 24-year-old, who had won four of her last six games coming into this round, had all the momentum in the world after beginning the competition a tad slowly. With the white pieces at her disposal, she also had the chance to take the initiative. But some inconsistencies throughout the middlegame meant Jiner built a head of steam as she launched a multi-pronged attack

with her major pieces targeting the white king. To Jiner's credit, she had several situations when she had to find only moves to retain her advantage but she found the best moves and Vaishali, who was also down on the clock, resigned in a hopeless position. Sinarov edges closer After more than two weeks of enthralling chess by Javokhir Sinarov, he arrived at the board with just

one intention. Do not lose, have a quick draw and hang around to see if he would become one of the youngest Candidates winners of all time. Anish Giri lived to fight another day but the Uzbek phenom knows he has almost guaranteed himself a shot at the world title later this year. Going into Round 13 on Tuesday — Monday is a rest day — he leads the field by two points. The only way the Open section will be live going into the final day will be if Giri wins in a game with, of course, the leader, Sinarov. The Dutchman, though, will have a small advantage as he will be playing with the white pieces.

If the 20-year-old can avoid defeat, he will be the challenger to D Gukesh's throne.

Results: Open (Rd 12): Javokhir Sinarov drew with Hikaru Nakamura, Anish Giri drew with Wei Yi, Matthias Bluebaum drew with Fabiano Caruana, Andrey Esipenko drew with R Praggnanandhaa.

Women: Zhu Jiner bt R Vaishali, Bibisara Assaubayeva bt Katerina Lagno, Anna Muzychuk drew with Aleksandra Goryachkina, Tan Zhongyi bt Divya Deshmukh

## 'Only an advisory': Centre refutes Tamil Nadu CM's claim on crop bonus

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Finance Ministry clarified on Sunday that it had sent an advisory to states to align their bonus policy to promote pulses, oilseeds, and millets, in line with the national priorities for nutritional security, self-reliance, and the need to reduce dependence on imports, and this was not a directive as alleged by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. Recently, Chief Minister Stalin, in a speech, had referred to a letter issued by the Ministry's Department of Expenditure, with regard to the bonus provided by state governments. "In this context, it is stated that the Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, had issued a D.O. letter dated January 9, 2026, to the Chief Secretaries of states to align their bonus policy to promote pulses, oilseeds and millets, in line with the national priorities for nutritional security, Aatmanirbharta, and sustainable agriculture. The letter was an advisory to states and was not a directive," the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The letter was written with the intent for states to align their agricultural policies with broader national priorities and complement them. Alignment with such goals is not a burden on states; it is a shared responsibility that serves farmers, consumers and the country as a whole, the statement said.

"Any attempt to portray it as an imposition or to deliberately misread its purpose is a distortion of the record," the statement said. The Centre announces the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various crops to support farmers. However, in many states, especially in northern India, crop production remains heavily skewed toward wheat and paddy. When state governments announce an additional bonus over and above MSP for these crops, it further encourages their cultivation, leading to reduced acreage under pulses, oilseeds, and millets, greater environmental stress due to water- and fertiliser-intensive farming, and higher import dependence for essential crops like pulses and edible oilseeds, it said.

## Why are Gold & Silver prices falling Factors explained

New Delhi, (Agency)

Gold and Silver prices came under pressure on Monday after tensions escalated in West Asia on the opening of the Strait of Hormuz following inconclusive Iran-US peace talks that triggered a surge in crude oil prices. The prices of the precious metals dropped across the MCX market, the international spot market, and the Indian bullion market. The rise in prices was driven by a strengthening global dollar and rising bond yields.

### MCX Gold Price

Gold prices on the domestic futures market MCX today declined by Rs 796 to Rs 1,51,856 per 10 grams. Silver prices also remained under pressure, declining to Rs 2,40,766 per kilogram, a decline of Rs 4,334. Gold and Silver prices also recorded fall in the Indian bullion market. Gold price was recorded at Rs 1,52,130 per 10 grams, while Silver fell to Rs 2,39,230 per kilogram. The decline in prices indicate that the metals are getting impacted due to the global tensions. Spot gold prices stood at \$4,720.09 per ounce, down \$42.81 (-0.90%). Spot silver was trading at \$74.4 per ounce, down \$1.86 (-2.44%). The strengthening of the dollar and rising US Treasury yields have put pressure on the prices of precious metals.

### Gold price fall reason

Gold prices declined around 2% to below \$4,700 per ounce on Monday, reversing gains from the previous week amid escalating geopolitical tensions. Commenting on the yellow metal, Ajay Suresh Kedia, founder of Kedia Advisory said, the US decision to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, effective from 10 a.m. Eastern Time, followed unsuccessful negotiations with Iran in Pakistan

## Ambanis lead Asia's 10 richest families in 2026: Check who else is on the list

New Delhi, (Agency)

Asia's richest families are getting even richer, and not always by doing what you might expect. While the world is busy talking about artificial intelligence (AI), many of these business dynasties are quietly earning from the industries that support it.

From metals and chips to banking and property, these families are riding a new wave of demand. Despite global market volatility, their combined wealth has surged, showing how traditional businesses are adapting to modern trends. The top 10 richest families in Asia have seen their fortunes climb sharply in 2026, reported Bloomberg. A big reason is the rising demand for infrastructure linked to AI—things like data centres, energy, and raw materials. At the same time, sectors like Hong Kong real estate have also bounced back, adding to overall wealth. Together, these trends are helping family-run businesses grow even in uncertain times.

**MUKESHAMBANI LEADS WITH \$89.7 BILLION**  
At number one is the Ambani family, with a net worth of about \$89.7 billion. Their flagship company, Reliance Industries, continues to expand across energy, telecom, retail and financial services.

In February, Mukesh Ambani revealed plans to commit up to \$120 billion towards AI infrastructure over a seven-year period.

**PROPERTY POWER KEEPS THE KWOK FAMILY STRONG AT \$50.2 BILLION**

The Kwok family, behind Sun Hung Kai Properties, holds the second spot with \$50.2 billion, the report mentioned. Their wealth is closely tied to Hong Kong's property market, which has seen signs of recovery. Even in a tech-driven world, real estate continues to play a key role in wealth creation.

Sun Hung Kai Properties revealed in March that JPMorgan will serve as the anchor tenant at Artist Square Towers in Hong Kong's West Kowloon, leasing six floors over a 10-year period, totalling nearly 250,000 square feet, according to the report.

# Jyoti CNC shares tumble up to 16%: What's behind the sharp fall?

**The sharp fall follows reports that French authorities have initiated a judicial probe into the company's subsidiary, Huron Graffenstaden SAS, over alleged violations linked to export control norms.**

New Delhi, (Agency)

Shares of Jyoti CNC Automation came under heavy selling pressure on Monday, plunging as much as 14-16% in intraday trade, as investors reacted to developments involving its overseas subsidiary. As of 11:51 am, the stock was down 113.15 points, or 13.81%, at 706.05 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The sharp fall follows reports that French

authorities have initiated a judicial probe into the company's subsidiary, Huron Graffenstaden SAS, over alleged violations linked to export control norms. The investigation has introduced a fresh layer of uncertainty around the company's international operations, triggering a steep selloff in the stock.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said French authorities have begun a formal judicial investigation into the subsidiary and certain employees over export controls related to dual-use machinery. It added that interim measures include restrictions on the subsidiary's director general, seizure of bank accounts worth around EUR 4 million, and attachment of certain properties.

**PROBE INTO FRENCH ARM RAISES CONCERNS**

Despite the developments, Jyoti CNC sought to reassure investors, stating that the subsidiary has refuted the allegations and will contest them.

The company also said that business

operations at Huron Graffenstaden continue as usual and that the



developments are not expected to have a material impact on its overall operations. It further noted that over 85% of the group's revenue comes from the standalone Indian entity, limiting the potential financial impact from the subsidiary-level developments. However, for investors, the concern is less about immediate impact and more about uncertainty. Legal proceedings in

overseas jurisdictions can be prolonged, and the lack of clarity on timelines or outcomes has weighed on sentiment. **SENTIMENT TURNS CAUTIOUS**

The latest trigger has come at a time when the stock was already under pressure, with a visible downtrend in recent weeks. Monday's developments appear to have accelerated selling, as investors reassessed risk in light of the new information. The broader market backdrop has also remained weak, with global cues turning negative amid rising geopolitical tensions and higher crude oil prices. However, the magnitude of the fall in Jyoti CNC suggests that the decline is largely driven by company-specific concerns. Going ahead, investor focus is likely to remain on further disclosures from the company and any clarity on the status of the investigation. Until then, sentiment around the stock may remain fragile, with volatility expected to persist.

## Can't discriminate between employees pensioners when enhancing DA, DR hike: Supreme Court's ruling explained

New Delhi, (Agency)

A significant relief for pensioners, the Supreme Court has ruled that the state cannot differentiate between serving employees and pensioners when enhancing Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) which are meant to counter inflation. A bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Prasanna B Varale dismissed appeals filed by the State of Kerala and the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and upheld the right to equality for retirees. The Court affirmed that inflation affects both serving and retired employees equally and held that setting different rates of increase of dearness benefits for the two categories is arbitrary and discriminatory. Both DA and DR are cost-of-living adjustments designed to offset inflation. DA is paid to serving government employees while DR is paid to pensioners. SC ruling on Dearness Relief

The apex court ruled that while employees and pensioners belong to different groups, the purpose of both

DA and DR is to counteract inflation.

The bench said, "Here, the retired employees are not only entitled to a pension but also dearness relief, which is revisable from time to time, based on



inflation. Thus, the issue is not of entitlement to the benefit but of differential rates at which those benefits are provided, dependent on whether the recipient is a serving or a retired employee."

"When those benefits serve a common purpose and are linked to inflation, and inflationary pressures do not discriminate between a serving employee and a pensioner, fixing different rates of enhancement of

dearness allowance and dearness relief has no rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved and is clearly discriminatory as well as arbitrary," the bench said. The bench said, "No doubt a financial crunch might be a guiding factor to defer disbursement of certain benefits or may justify separate dates for implementation of beneficial schemes. But once a decision is taken to provide certain allowances, as also to increase them, based on inflation, fixing a higher rate of increase for the ones who are serving than the ones who have retired, would be arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

### What was the DA case about

The dispute arose when the Kerala government approved an increase of DA for KSRTC employees by 14 per cent while restricting the DR for pensioners to just 11 per cent. Pensioners challenged this gap, arguing that both DA and DR are meant to counteract inflation and therefore there should not be any disparity in their rate increase.

## Crude oil prices surge nearly 10% to cross \$100 as US moves to block Hormuz

SYDNEY, (Agency)

International crude oil prices surged on Monday, climbing nearly 10 per cent and crossing the \$100 per barrel mark, following the US Navy's move to blockade the Strait of Hormuz amid stalled peace talks. Brent crude futures jumped 8.61 per cent or \$8 to hit an intraday high of \$103.40. Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude traded at \$105.63, up 9.38 per cent or \$9. On the domestic front, crude oil futures (April 20 contract) on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) were trading at Rs 9,850, up 7.61 per cent or Rs 697. The sharp rise in oil prices came after US President Donald Trump announced

the US Navy would begin blockading the Strait of Hormuz.

The US President said Iran had "failed to keep the waterway open" and warned



that the US would block "any and all ships trying to enter or leave" the Strait, citing concerns over maritime security and potential disruption to global oil supplies. Notably, the US and Iran had

agreed to a two-week ceasefire on April 8, aimed at easing tensions and ensuring the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route. However, the latest escalation indicates a breakdown in those efforts, raising concerns over supply disruptions.

The Strait of Hormuz is a vital transit route for global crude shipments, and any disruption has immediate implications for supply chains and prices. Meanwhile, domestic equity markets traded lower, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty plunging around 2 per cent in early trade amid rising global risk aversion.

In Asian markets, major indices traded in the red, with key indices -- the Nikkei, the Hang Seng, and the Kospi -- declining over 1 per cent each.

# US plans Hormuz blockade: What it means for India's crude oil, LPG supply

**India is already facing pressure on fuel and LPG supplies amid the West Asia conflict. With the US now planning a Hormuz blockade, could the situation worsen?**

New Delhi, (Agency)

India's energy supply chain through the Strait of Hormuz is under renewed focus after the United States said it would move to enforce a naval blockade targeting ships linked to Iran, following the collapse of talks between Washington and Tehran.

The US has indicated that the proposed action is not a blanket closure of the route and is aimed at vessels entering or leaving Iranian ports. The Strait of Hormuz remains open to other commercial traffic, and there is no official announcement of a complete shutdown of the waterway. With India already facing energy strain amid

the West Asia conflict, if the US pushes ahead with a naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, it could add to the pressure.

### HEIGHTENED HORMUZ RISK

India's imports of Iranian crude have remained negligible since 2019, when purchases were halted after US sanctions. It was during the ongoing West Asia conflict that India received its first Iranian crude cargo in seven years. Even so, the country continues to depend heavily on imports from other Gulf producers such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with shipments moving through the same route.

Despite recent tensions, India-bound cargoes have continued to transit the strait. Iran has allowed passage to what it describes as "non-hostile" vessels, including India-bound shipments, although access has remained tightly controlled and reduced.

There is, however, no clarity on whether Iran's current approach to allowing "non-hostile" vessels would continue if the

United States moves ahead with enforcement of its proposed naval blockade. The development has already had an impact on global energy markets. Crude oil prices have climbed above \$100



a barrel following the escalation, reflecting concerns over potential supply risks in a region that accounts for a significant share of global energy flows. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints, handling roughly a fifth of global oil trade. Any disruption to traffic through the narrow passage can have an outsized impact on global prices and supply chains.

While the US has said the proposed blockade is targeted at Iranian-linked shipping, even limited disruption in Hormuz can have wider effects on global energy flows due to the volume of oil and gas that passes through the route, The Guardian reported.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INDIA?

For India, the more immediate sensitivity lies in LPG supply. The country imports roughly 60% of its liquefied petroleum gas requirements, with a large majority of these shipments originating from the Gulf and transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, according to government data.

In recent weeks, LPG supply has tightened for commercial users such as restaurants and small businesses, as supplies have been prioritised for households. However, many households have also reported delays in domestic cylinder deliveries. The shortage has also led to a migrant exodus, according to a recent India Today TV report.



harassment or coercion. In an official statement, TCS said it acted swiftly after becoming aware of the matter. The employees under investigation have been suspended, and the company confirmed it is cooperating fully with law enforcement authorities. It added that further action will depend on the outcome of the ongoing probe. So far, at least six employees have been arrested in connection with the case. The arrests were made based on intelligence inputs received by the Nashik Police Commissioner's office. Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has taken note of the developments, calling the matter "very serious." He also commended the Nashik police for their prompt response. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to carry out a detailed probe. The police are also questioning a human resources official based in Pune.

# Shilpa Shetty

## Recalls Shooting Despite Burn Injury On Set: 'I Couldn't Wear The Outfit Next Day Because...'

Shilpa Shetty is one of the fittest actresses in the industry, known not just for her impressive filmography but also for her dedication to health and wellness. Over the years, she has balanced a successful acting career with a strong focus on fitness, inspiring many with her disciplined lifestyle. She made her debut in films with *Baazigar*, co-starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, released in 1993. Since then, she has carved a niche for herself in the industry with a mix of commercial successes and memorable performances, while also establishing herself as a prominent fitness icon. In a recent interaction, the actress revealed that success didn't come easily to her, adding that it required consistent effort and hard work over the years.

### Shilpa Shetty recalls an incident from a movie set

Shilpa recently appeared on the YouTube channel *Tomorrow, Today Show*, where she recalled an incident from her early days in the industry. She shared that filmmakers continued to approach her because of her strong commitment to her craft. She recalled an incident where she suffered a burn on her back but still returned to shoot the very next day, ensuring that the production did not incur any losses.



The actress said, "I remember I got burned by HMI light in a shot on my back. The shot was that I had to get out of frame and there was a baby light at the back and my back touched it. When you get a burn, you don't realise it that very second, only when it starts burning, you realise it. I still showed up the next day. I had to wear an outfit next day, but I couldn't wear it because I was burnt, so I wore it from the front and asked them to stitch it with threads so that I don't have to zip it. I worked so hard in my life so that nobody else faces losses because of me."

She stated that she continued to get work because people recognised her dedication and hard work,

adding that she always delivered and showed up, regardless of the circumstances. Meanwhile, Shilpa was last seen in Rohit Shetty's series *Indian Police Force*, alongside Sidharth Malhotra and Vivek Oberoi. Next, she has *KD: The Devil in the Pipeline*. It also stars Sanjay Dutt, V. Ravichandran, Ramesh Aravind, Reeshma Nanaiah, and Jisshu Sengupta.



## 'I Am Very Excited Because...': Ektaa Kapoor Plans Global OTT Expansion, Teases New Shows



Ektaa Kapoor has been a powerhouse behind various serials and movies. The filmmaker, who has brought the second season of her iconic show *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, is aiming to expand her content reach in the OTT space. The producer, who is awaiting the release of her upcoming film *Bhooth Bangla*, slated for release on April 17, spoke about expanding her reach in the OTT arena.

### Ektaa Kapoor to expand her reach in the OTT space

Sharing her plans, Ektaa Kapoor said, "I am making some shows. They haven't been announced yet. But I am working on it," and added, "I am very excited because my stories will be spread all over the world. And I want the whole world to listen to our Indian creators' stories. So, I want everyone to watch the shows I'm making, be it in Korea, Japan, Africa, or America. Everyone should watch Indian creators' stories."

### About Ektaa Kapoor's professional front

On the professional front, Ektaa Kapoor is currently geared up for her upcoming movie *Bhooth Bangla*. *Bhooth Bangla* carries massive expectations as it marks the reunion of Priyadarshan and Akshay Kumar after more than 15 years. Within hours of its trailer release, it sparked strong reactions on social media, with many fans praising the nostalgic vibe and comic timing. The film's ensemble cast, which includes Tabu, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, and Asrani, has also raised hopes that the movie will deliver a mix of spooky moments and laugh-out-loud comedy. Ektaa Kapoor has, in the past, produced many TV shows as well.

From *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, *Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki*, *Kahin Kissi Roz* to *Kasauti Zindagi Ki*, *Pavitra Rishta*, *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*, and many more, Ekta has been the woman behind these successful shows.

## Meryl Streep Has THIS To Say About Karan Johar's 'The Devil Wears Prada' Look



Filmmaker Karan Johar got the opportunity to interact with the "The Devil Wears Prada 2" stars Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway during his trip to Tokyo.

In tune with the theme of the film, their conversation ranged from the movie to fashion. Meryl even shared her views on KJo's outfit of the day.

20th Century Studios published a clip on their official social media handle in which Karan was seen talking to Meryl and Anne. We could hear Anne asking the Dharma head, "Do you judge their shoes?" To this, Karan replied, "All the time!" leaving Anne laughing. Meanwhile, Meryl observed Karan's choice of shoes for the occasion, who was wearing Prada footwear. Giving her nod, she said, "You have the perfect shoes on today!"

Earlier, Karan used social media to express his admiration for Meryl and "The Devil Wears Prada", confessing that he has seen the movie more than 47 times.

His post on Insta went, "This is not a caption. This is a confession. I am singularly obsessed and inspired by the unmatched brilliance of Meryl Streep. In many ways she has been my guru in the art of acting & portraying characters across cinema!! I have watched *The Devil Wears Prada* no less than 47 times. I have quoted it at dinner tables, in edit suites and in board meetings (no kidding!) So when I tell you that standing next to HER & them today, I felt the ground shift, please believe me. I tried very hard to be calm and composed but here's another confession—my knees were RATTLING!"

Sharing his experience of talking to Meryl and Anne, he continued, "They were both so warm and welcoming. This image is going in my will. Stay tuned, there's so much more...because I had a chat with the favourites of the season. OH and one more thing...that's all."

# Athiya Shetty

## TROLLED For Sharing Lata Mangeshkar's Photo While Mourning Asha Bhosle

The passing of Asha Bhosle on April 12, 2026, sparked an outpouring of grief across the country, but it also led to an unexpected controversy involving actor Athiya Shetty, who found herself at the centre of online backlash over a social media misstep.

### Athiya Shetty Faces Backlash Over Post

Athiya, daughter of Suniel Shetty, shared a condolence message on Instagram following Asha Bhosle's demise. However, she mistakenly posted a picture of Lata Mangeshkar, who had passed away on February 6, 2022.

The error was quickly noticed by users online, who pointed out the mix-up. Although Athiya deleted the post soon after, screenshots had already begun circulating widely, triggering criticism on social media.

### Netizens React



Several users took to X to call out the mistake, with reactions ranging from disbelief to harsh criticism. One user wrote, "Athiya Shetty Is Beauty Without Brains She posted a story with photo of Late Lata Mangeshkar instead of Late Asha Bhosle. Nepo kids just want to be relevant somehow, without hardwork or struggle and that's why their movies flop and they make such blunders."

A third user added, "It's really sad to see how careless people can be on serious

matters. Athiya Shetty shared a photo of Lata Mangeshkar ji while mourning Asha Bhosle ji is not just a small mistake, it shows a lack of attention. The least one can do is check before posting, especially in such moments. Just post a simple condolence message if your basic knowledge is zero."

### No Public Response Yet

Athiya Shetty has not issued any public clarification regarding the incident so far. However, she later shared a separate post mourning Asha Bhosle, paying tribute to the legendary singer.





# 3 ways to boost Your image at Work

You're not like everyone else. That's a fact. You have your own unique skillset, and that's what can give you a leg up over other people in your industry. The key word here is "can". Whether or not people recognise your talents and contributions depends largely on your personal brand -the collection of traits that first spring to mind when others think about you. So how do you make sure your brand is strong enough to stand out in today's competitive job market? There are some basic personal attributes that never go out of style: consistency, punctuality, communicating in a well-mannered fashion -and, when it comes to body language, direct eye contact and a firm handshake are

key. These go-to guidelines have been around for ages because they work. These days, though, they aren't the only tools in the shed. With the internet and social media becoming more ingrained in people's everyday lives, it is important to keep a few tips in mind:

### 1) KNOW YOUR NETWORK

Networking is an old standby and, like your favourite pair of jeans, it never goes out of style. Why? Simply put, nothing beats the personal element. Keeping a good working relationship with the people around you -even if they aren't going to be your next best friend -keeps professional avenues open, because 40 per cent of companies hire staff from employee

referrals.

This isn't limited to the people you already know. With a wealth of information online, it's easy to do research on executives, hiring managers, and other major players in your desired field. Get to know people digitally, then introduce yourself at conferences, fairs, and similar events. Show that you know them, and they'll be far more likely to remember you -and if you get an email address, remember to send a thank you note afterward to solidify your impression.

### 2) GET SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY

Pretty much everyone has at least one social media page, but whether you're tweeting, writing on a friend's timeline, or sending a LinkedIn post to your contacts, you should

adhere to certain guidelines. If you want to be seen as a professional, be sure to always use correct grammar and spelling. Use common sense. Remember when you were told, "don't post anything you wouldn't want your parents or grandparents to see"? Well, you probably don't want the leadership team at your dream job seeing your less-than-professional posts either. This doesn't mean you shouldn't post anything. In fact, hiring managers are often uncomfortable if they can't find people

more likely to turn to you for your expertise. I also recommend using your online social presence as a tool for showcasing your knowledge of the industry you're a part of -or the industry you're looking to become a part of -by publishing thoughtful posts on trends, industry news or other relevant topics.

### 3) USE TECH TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Formal paper resumes are fading away, and in some circles electronic resumes and cover letters are too. It can be helpful to post a resume on LinkedIn, so that people can see a full scope of your professional work, but is that really the best solution? This is 2016, and with technology at its current level of accessibility, there's no reason to rely on outdated means of communication if you can step up into the next generation. This is why video resumes are becoming more and more popular, with nearly 62 per cent feeling one will give them an edge over the competition.



Uploading a two minute video of your self outlining who you are, what you've done, and what you're doing next is sure to give you the advantage of differentiating yourself.

When you're feeling creative, make new content. This can be anything from writing a blog post, to getting work published, or even just cleverly hashtagging a great tweet. If you want to be regarded as an expert in your field, it's crucial to prove that you can be depended on for detailed, timely, and most of all, helpful advice -then maybe people will start writing to you for personal branding tips too. When you're someone that other people turn to for information, you'll find yourself skyrocketing to the top of your business.

## Social media etiquette to

# Keep in mind

In March this year, the Government of France issued a directive stating that even kids have a right to privacy and parents who post embarrassing photos of their kids on social networking sites can face prison or hefty fine once the kid grows up. For those who fancy putting up pictures and videos of their kids doing 'cute things' might want to reconsider what they post. A look at other antics that may also be considered annoying...

### Announcing unsure break-ups

Earlier this month, UpMa fans were in for a shock when actor Upen Patel announced his break-up with actress Karishma Tanna on social media. However, he later cleared the air claiming that all was well and it was only due to a fight. Fooling around people, victimising oneself and breaking up only to kiss and make up are tricks one should keep to oneself lest they regret it later.

### Tagging people

Not everyone 'feels awesome' with you and



If using social media as a dumping ground to vent out all your emotions is your thing, avoid. Everyone has their fair share of sorrows and unless updating sappy posts on social media solves your problem, skip it. Many a times, ranting about your work or targeting your colleagues with an indirect status that starts with 'some people need to...' can get annoying. Stop being a complaint box.

### The 'I like = I respect' sorts

Uploading sympathetic, patriotic posts and demanding respect by means of a single click is disrespectful right away. Only if giving respect was so easy! In the same breath, posts with 'Pass it to 9 people to avoid being unlucky in love' should not receive any love. And attention.

Uploading an entire album of your recent vacation

Right from the time you booked your tickets online to boarding your flight and capturing every sight, smell and sound may be alright but uploading 347 photos from a 10-day trip needs to stop. You could devote the same amount of time by narrating your travel tales to those interested and rather be resourceful with your suggestions.

### Unfiltered posts

Be it 'boast posts' of your feats, checking-in at the coffee shop next door or over-flashed images of food and people, oversharing kills. Those going overboard with sharing posts and not thinking twice over need to calm down.

46 others! Tagging people in posts, photos and videos that do not feature them or are irrelevant and do not concern them can get extremely bothering. Similarly, asking people to like or share your post, unless of course they want to, is a big no.

### Whiny, soppy posts

## How you're killing your productivity

You might be getting it right with tasks to do, but completely off when it comes to prioritising and setting aside the distractions.

1. By setting aside time for people who hog on your time, you're giving them a chance to not only eat up on your time but also the energy required to accomplish your tasks. They will want you to help them out with something or just while away time as you listen to what's happening in their life. Avoid. Tell them tersely how you need to finish something more important.
2. By stating things that are vague, you might be confusing your list. What you've said on the notepad might only be half of the work you are to

accomplish and in that case, it amounts to more than 'a thing' to do. By being more specific and detailed, you might add up to your jobs but will accomplish it better.

3. You may not be assigning time for the much-needed breaks and that's where you exactly falter. In order to keep going you need to keep taking breaks. And no, checking your social media accounts might not be the best pick. Go for a walk, listen to a song, have a glass of water, read up something.

4. distraction is but natural and leaving no scope for it in your plan is unfair. As long as you're not overdoing it and over-wandering, it's perfectly alright.

