

Women's Reservation Bill: PM Modi to address Lok Sabha on April 16

A total of 18 and 10 hours has been allocated in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha for the discussion on the bill in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, respectively.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak in the Lok Sabha on the Women's Reservation Constitutional Amendment Bill on April 16, and is expected to provide the legislators with a detailed roadmap regarding the bill, sources familiar with the development told.



Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha for the discussion on the bill in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, respectively.

WHAT IS WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL? The amendment aims to increase the total number

The bill works in line with the Women's Reservation Act that was passed in 2023. The act ensures a 33 per cent reservation for women in both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, but it has yet to be implemented due to the pending delimitation exercise.

Meanwhile, the bill has triggered a major political controversy, with several political parties criticising the government for the proposed delimitation exercise, stating that it will reduce their representation of the non-Hindi speaking states' representation in the Parliament.

If the government proceeds to implement the reservation before delimitation, another constitutional amendment will be required. Parliament will need to amend Section 5 of the Act, which currently links women's reservation to a delimitation exercise following the first census after the law's commencement.

BJP's Samrat Choudhary takes oath as new Bihar CM

New Delhi.(Agency)

Senior BJP leader Samrat Choudhary on Wednesday took oath as the 21st Chief Minister of Bihar, marking a decisive political reset in the state by installing the BJP's first-ever government and bringing the curtain down on Nitish Kumar's two-decade-long dominance over the Hindi heartland state.



His elevation also carries caste significance in Bihar's complex political landscape. Choudhary becomes only the second leader from the influential Koeri community to occupy the Chief Minister's post.

Choudhary also joins the ranks of Bharat Ratna awardee Karpoori Thakur as one of the few leaders in Bihar to have held both the posts of Deputy Chief Minister and Chief Minister.

Short news

Mayawati seeks separate quota for SC, ST, OBC women within proposed women's reservation

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Wednesday called for a separate quota for women belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes within the proposed 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

Ashok Gehlot revives 2020 Rajasthan crisis, targets BJP and Sachin Pilot amid political clash

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Former Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, who recently drew attention for deploying his "Intezaar Shastra" to corner the Bhajanlal Sharma-led government in Rajasthan, has once again revived the Rajasthan political crisis of 2020, reigniting debate within the state's political landscape.

Kharge convenes meeting of Congress top brass to discuss women's quota law, delimitation

Bihar.(Agency)

Congress has alleged that when the intent behind a bill is "mischievous" and its content "devious", the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge held a meeting with senior party leaders at his residence in Delhi on Wednesday to discuss strategy on the women's reservation law and a proposed delimitation amendment, ahead of a special three-day sitting of the Parliament.



attend, while some may send representatives due to ongoing state election commitments. Notably, the Congress has alleged that when the intent behind a bill is "mischievous" and its content "devious", the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous.

the House has been convened from April 16 to 18, during which amendments to the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', more commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, will be brought for its implementation in 2029.

Her children work for Centre: Arvind Kejriwal's fresh plea seeking judge's recusal

New Delhi.(Agency)

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday filed an additional affidavit before the Delhi High Court, seeking the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing the excise policy case in which he is an accused.



presented during the hearing. "I state that in the present case, the Learned Solicitor General of India is appearing before this Hon'ble Court for the Central Bureau of Investigation, is opposing my recusal application, and is arguing the revision petition against the discharge order passed in my favour.

I respectfully state that this gives rise to a direct and serious appearance of conflict of interest," the former Delhi Chief Minister said in his additional affidavit. He added, "The very law officer and legal establishment representing the prosecuting side before this Hon'ble Court is also part of the institutional mechanism by which Central Government cases and Government work are allocated to the immediate family members of the Hon'ble Judge hearing the matter".

Centre gives Z security to Raghav Chadha after Punjab removes his Z+ cover

The Union Home Ministry's decision follows a threat assessment report prepared by the Intelligence Bureau, which recommended enhanced protection.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha has now been provided Z category security cover by the Centre based on an existing threat perception, according to sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs.



protection. The development comes just hours after the Punjab government, led by the AAP, withdrew Chadha's earlier Z+ category security cover, which had been provided by the state police. The withdrawal was being seen as significant given the ongoing tensions between Chadha and the AAP leadership.

Chadha, a prominent AAP leader elected to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab, had been enjoying Z+ security cover from the state government. However, sources indicated that this cover was withdrawn last week, amid an escalating rift within the party. The Centre's move to grant him Z category security shortly after has drawn attention in political circles.

Supreme Court pauses interim bail for Pawan Khera in case by Assam CM's wife

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major setback to Pawan Khera, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed a one-week transit anticipatory bail granted to the Congress leader by the Telangana High Court in a case registered by Assam Police based on a complaint filed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma.

The Supreme Court's order came in response to the Assam Police filing an appeal against the interim bail and arguing that the Telangana High Court did not have jurisdiction over the matter. While pausing the interim bail, the Supreme Court noted that Khera was free to seek relief from an appropriate court in Assam and that its order today would have no bearing in that case if the Congress leader chose to do so.

Last Friday, the Telangana High Court granted a one-week anticipatory bail to Khera, with a bench of Justice K Sujana allowing him time to approach the appropriate forum for anticipatory bail, noting that he could move within a week. The case arises from a complaint filed in Assam following allegations made by Khera against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma. Khera, at a press conference on April 5, had alleged that Riniki Bhuyan Sarma held multiple passports and owned foreign assets that were not disclosed in the Chief Minister's election affidavit. Based on these allegations, an FIR was registered in Guwahati, prompting legal proceedings against the Congress leader. While pausing the Telangana High Court order, the Supreme Court clarified that its order would not prevent Khera from seeking anticipatory bail before a competent court in Assam.

News box

Woman dies by suicide in Gurgaon, FIR against husband and in-laws for abetment

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 38-year-old woman died by suicide at her residence in Sector 48 on Monday evening. The police filed an FIR at Sadar police station against the husband and his relatives for abetment to suicide under BNS after the woman's family filed a complaint.

The deceased, Saroj, lived with her husband at Vipul World in Sector 48. She was a homemaker.

Police said a preliminary inquiry suggests that she had an argument with her husband shortly before the incident.

A police team reached the spot and initiated inquest proceedings. The body was sent for autopsy and later handed over to the family. Police said statements of family members and neighbours are being recorded to establish the sequence of events. Investigators are also examining whether there was any history of domestic discord or harassment. Officials said legal action will be taken on the basis of the findings of the investigation. No arrests have been made so far.

Feed from 100 cams checked, cops yet to trace uncle for rape & murder

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Police have made no headway in the rape and murder of a four-year-old girl, three days after her body was found.

Having checked over 100 CCTV cameras at railway stations and bus stands in Delhi-NCR, police are yet to arrest the girl's maternal uncle. The autopsy report confirmed that the girl was brutally raped and later strangled by her uncle, a resident of Muzaffarnagar.

On Saturday, the girl was found murdered under a parked car in the Teela Mor area. "The accused doesn't use the phone and that's why we don't get his exact location. We learnt that the accused is addicted to marijuana and that's why we checked more than 50 parks in the area," Shalimar Garden ACP Atul Singh said, adding that police have formed five teams and conducted raids at several places in Delhi-NCR, Muzaffarnagar and other places. The ACP also said that police got some CCTV cameras in which he was walking with the body and, in another footage, he was standing near the car, along Bikaner 80-Foot Road where he dumped the girl. In one footage, he was seen running towards Delhi.

A source in police said, during investigation, police learnt that for the last one year, the accused has not talked to his wife and children. His family stays in Muzaffarnagar.

Police said they received a Dial 112 call around 8pm on Saturday about the child's body lying under a white car. She was missing for more than eight hours by then. The body was sent for an autopsy and forensic teams collected evidence from the spot. Police said that the accused raped the girl at his rented room, which was taken by him one month ago near the victim's house. The girl was the second of three siblings. Her parents work as daily wagers. According to the family, the child was taken from outside her home around noon, when only she and her grandfather were present. Her grandfather is blind. On Saturday afternoon, he came to the house while the girl was sitting outside eating ice cream and took her away, saying he would buy her more things. After the girl's mother returned home and realised her daughter was missing, the family began searching for her in the neighbourhood. Hours later, the family was informed by police about the body. At the hospital, they identified her as their daughter. An FIR has been registered against the accused under Sections 103 (1) (punishment for murder), 238 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offenders) and 65 (2) (rape) of BNS and relevant sections of the POCSO Act at Teela Mod police station.

Wage hike sets bad precedent, will stress industry: Noida Entrepreneurs' Association

Noida.(Agency)

Noida Entrepreneurs' Association (NEA), which represents over 3,000 registered industrial units in the city, said the revision of minimum wages in the immediate aftermath of the recent violence would not only set a "wrong precedent" but also affect margins at a time when export units are already going through a tough phase because of the war in West Asia.

NEA president Vipin Malhan said protesters torched properties and held the govt ransom to get their demands met. "The high-power committee had invited NEA, which gave suggestions against immediate revision of wages, as it would set a wrong precedent, as next time, some other people will also protest and resort to violence. This will also put additional burden on the industries," he said. He added that a Rs 3,000 increase in salaries of five lakh industrial workers in Noida would cost the industry Rs 150 crore per month. GB Nagar has around 10,000 manufacturing units and 15 lakh registered workers.

Sudhir Srivastava, who runs a wire harness manufacturing unit in Sector 59, said the committee's decision to revise wages would be complied with, but said its timing was not suitable. "The factory workers went berserk and damaged properties in different industrial sectors unchecked. They damaged our properties, and now we are forced to pay a revised salary. We had suggested to the committee that the salary should be revised in one or two months once the matter cools down," he said. Srivastava said his factory, which employs 150 workers, would face an additional expense of about Rs 7.5 lakh per month due to the revision. He added that industries are already under stress due to rising input costs, noting that copper, used in wire manufacturing, has increased from Rs 800 per kg to Rs 1,200 per kg. He also pointed to disruptions in sea routes amid the US-Iran conflict, which affected exports and put constraints on petroleum imports that added to operational strain.

Following the recent unrest, some workers left Noida for their native places, while several factories and companies remained shut on Tuesday over safety concerns. A single day's closure is estimated to cost industries around Rs 2,000 crore, Srivastava said. Rakesh Kohli, who operates a small unit manufacturing ceiling fan components in Sector 10, said his factory has remained closed for the past three days.

Can't survive on Rs 11,000': From highway blockades to arson and arrests, how wage protests spread across Haryana, UP

Noida.(Agency)

Protests over minimum wage implementation intensified across parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, with factory workers blocking roads, clashing with police, and triggering a wider law-and-order response across industrial hubs. In Faridabad's Sarai Khawaja area, employees of an automotive components unit staged demonstrations for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, demanding enforcement of the revised minimum wages announced by the Haryana government. The protest briefly escalated when workers attempted to block a key service road along the Delhi-Agra Highway near a Motherson facility, prompting police intervention. Around 1,000 workers from the morning shift gathered near the factory around 8am, disrupting traffic movement. Police said 23 protesters were detained and an FIR registered after efforts to clear the road. The unrest

follows Monday's large-scale blockade of the Delhi-Agra National Highway near Prithla village in Palwal, as well as in Sarai Khawaja, where traffic remained paralysed for hours. Protesters alleged exploitative conditions, claiming they were being made to work up to 16 hours a day for a monthly salary of around Rs 11,000. "With rising prices, survival on such wages is impossible. When we protested, police resorted to lathi-charge," one worker alleged. Officials, however, attributed the agitation to misinformation and a lack of clarity regarding the wage revision. Authorities said industries have been directed to inform workers that the revised wages, approved by the state cabinet on April 8, will be effective retrospectively from April 1. The new minimum wage has been fixed at Rs 15,220 per month, according to the government. Police said the situation in Faridabad was brought under control by the afternoon. "We

reached the spot, engaged with workers, and cleared the road by 2 pm. Preventive action was taken against 23 individuals," said a local SHO, adding that efforts are underway to identify others involved. In a parallel development, Palwal police have also registered a case against unidentified protesters involved in the highway blockade, invoking charges related to unlawful assembly, rioting, and obstruction of public ways under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, along with provisions of the Highway Act. CCTV footage is being scanned to identify those responsible. Another group of workers staged a sit-in outside a company office in Faridabad's Sector 37 on Tuesday morning. The protest continued for several hours before police dispersed the gathering, detaining around 20-25 employees, who were later released. While workers alleged forceful eviction, police maintained the action was necessary to restore order. The ripple

effects of the wage issue were also visible in Noida, where recent protests turned violent, prompting a massive security clampdown. Uttar Pradesh DGP Rajeev Krishna said electronic and CCTV evidence has identified individuals and groups allegedly responsible for instigating unrest. "Action is being taken based on concrete evidence. We appeal to workers not to be misled by vested interests," he said, adding that the situation is now under control. According to police, nearly 42,000 workers had protested across 83 locations in Noida on Monday, though violence was limited to two areas. More than 300 people have been detained so far, with seven FIRs registered. Police Commissioner Laxmi Singh said authorities are also probing the role of organised networks, pointing to the creation of multiple WhatsApp groups used to mobilise workers via QR codes.

Nandal gang shooter arrested after encounter in Haryana, pistol seized

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The special task force (STF) of Haryana Police on Tuesday arrested a key member of the Deepak Nandal gang following an encounter near Bandhwari village. Police said Nivesh alias Dilla is one of the shooters of the gang. Nivesh, a resident of Jajal village in Sonapat district, was nabbed in the wee hours after he opened fire on a police team attempting to intercept him. Police returned fire in self-defence and overpowered the accused, who sustained a bullet injury in his leg during the exchange. He was later admitted to Civil Hospital in Sector 10 for treatment. An illegal pistol was seized from his possession, police said. According to STF officials, specific intelligence inputs were received on April 13 indicating that Nandal, who is operating his gang from abroad, tasked Nivesh with carrying out a firing at the office of a Gurgaon-based businessman for extortion. Acting on the tip-off, the STF team laid a blockade near Bandhwari.

motorcycle rider to stop. Instead, the suspect tried to flee and fired multiple rounds at the team. Two bullets struck the bulletproof jackets of sub-inspector (SI) Vivek and probationary SI Vikas,



preventing injuries," a police officer said. A case was registered against Nivesh under sections 109(1) (attempt to murder), 121(1) (voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt to deter a public servant from his duty), 132 (assaulting or using criminal force against a public servant to prevent them from discharging their duties), 221 (voluntarily obstructing a public servant from performing their

official duties) of BNS and under the Arms Act at DLF Phase-1 police station. During preliminary questioning, police found that Nivesh was an active member of the gang and was involved in supplying weapons in previous incidents, including a firing case in Karnal. He, according to the investigators, is also suspected to have facilitated weapons in a Feb 2026 firing incident targeting a businessman in Gurgaon in which shooters fired a gunshot outside his office located at Golf Course Road. Police said the accused was wanted in connection with an FIR registered on Feb 26, 2026, at DLF Phase-1 police station. STF officials said interrogation is underway to gather details about other members of the gang and its network. Last year, Nandal was named in three FIRs in the city alone — for engineering the firing on rapper Rahul Yadav alias Fazilpuria's car on Southern Peripheral Road on July 14, the contract killing of property dealer Rohit Shokeen on Aug 4 and the firing at real estate company MNR Buildmark's

Doctors at Noida hospital save toddler who swallowed lithium battery

Noida.(Agency)

Doctors at a private hospital in Noida have saved a 20-month-old girl after she swallowed a lithium button battery, the ones usually found in toys. Experts said such batteries can cause burns and potentially life-threatening haemorrhage within hours if nearby blood vessels get damaged. In the first week of April, the child's parents noticed that she was unusually irritable and restless and took her to a private hospital. An X-ray there revealed that a circular foreign battery was lodged in her stomach. She was immediately taken to Fortis Hospital, where doctors performed an upper gastrointestinal endoscopy and found that a lithium button battery was present in her stomach. The parents told the doctors that the baby might have swallowed the button battery that was

inside one of her favourite toys. "Initially, the battery could not be identified, as it was lying beneath the food bolus," said Dr Shivam Kalia, who treated the child. "We first removed the food and then took out the lithium battery measuring 5 to 8 mm endoscopically. We also assessed the surrounding mucosa for any early signs of injury." The doctor said when lithium batteries come into contact with moist tissue, they generate an electrical current that leads to the formation of hydroxide ions, creating a highly alkaline environment. This can result in rapid tissue injury and can cause significant damage in as little as two hours after ingestion. "If not removed on time, such batteries can cause burns in the oesophagus or stomach lining, leading to complications such as deep ulceration, perforation and, in severe cases, life-

threatening bleeding if adjacent blood vessels are involved. The risk is particularly high in young children, where ingestion is often unwitnessed and early symptoms may remain nonspecific," the doctor said. In this case, early imaging and swift intervention proved critical. The battery was removed within a narrow time window, limiting exposure and reducing the risk of complications. The child remained clinically stable after the procedure, resumed oral intake and was discharged after a short period of observation without any immediate adverse effects. Timely diagnosis in such cases depends on maintaining a high index of suspicion. Symptoms such as sudden irritability, drooling, vomiting or refusal to eat should not be overlooked, especially in toddlers.

and Rajnagar Chowk. She directed engineers to complete the cleaning of drains, repair damaged infrastructure and ensure availability of resources before the onset of monsoon. Officials have been asked to ensure that preventive measures are implemented on time to minimise disruption to residents during the rainy season. Chanwaria also reviewed the sanitation in these areas. Officials have been directed to ensure garbage collection occurs on time and cleanliness is maintained so as to prevent clogging of drainage systems, which often contributes to waterlogging during heavy rain. She warned that negligence at any level would not be tolerated and stressed accountability in the execution of the planned measures. MCG faces recurring complaints of waterlogging in several parts of the city during monsoon, which causes traffic disruptions and inconvenience for residents.

Haryana plans mixed sweeping model in new safai policy shift

Noida.(Agency)

A policy shift in urban sanitation — call it a mixed sweeping model — may be on the horizon in the state.

This comes after key observations made by Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini that road sweeping is directly linked to the efficiency of door-to-door waste collection systems. This was communicated through the department of urban local bodies (ULB) to municipal corporations across the state. Once door-to-door garbage collection is fully streamlined and functioning effectively, the need for daily road sweeping is significantly reduced or may not be required at all, the note said quoting the CM. However, acknowledging practical challenges, the CM noted that it may take time to stabilise and fully implement door-to-door collection across urban areas. As an interim measure, Haryana govt has suggested a balanced approach: manual sweeping for six days a week and mechanical sweeping on alternate days, simultaneously. This arrangement, after a year, will be reviewed and then submitted for the CM's directions. "A revised RFP has been circulated and the CM has also instructed as follows: Once door-to-door collection is perfected, the daily sweeping is not required," the order said. MCG, however, already sent an estimate for

manual and mechanised road sweeping of the city for a period of five years. "We already sent the proposal for five years but we will now revise it to one year as per the ULB department directions," MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said. However, in a city like Gurgaon, where road dust is a major contributor to air pollution, experts warn that reducing sweeping frequency without robust dust-control measures could aggravate the problem.

Convenor of two groups — Gurgaon Residents Against Pollution and Making Model Gurgaon — Gauri Sarin said, "Given many challenges, road sweeping cannot be reduced or done away with at this stage." "Garbage-vulnerable points tend to emerge on roads when doorstep waste collection is not fully streamlined, which likely is the basis of the CM's observations. However, significant gaps remain. We still need to strengthen roadside infrastructure such as developing proper pavements, installing adequate bins, and deploying more efficient road-cleaning machinery. The current sanitation systems and resources are not sufficient for the city's needs. Dedicated horticulture bins are also essential for managing green waste," Sarin said. Requesting anonymity, a former consultant, who has closely

worked with the Haryana municipal corporations and is also a waste management expert, said, "RFPs should be long term and cannot be open-ended. While making the RFPs, such conditions cannot be put up that sweeping will be done for a year or the arrangement will be reviewed first because in such cases, the contractors quote higher prices. In such cases where uncertainty over the contract's duration is higher, the loss is ultimately borne by the govt since contractors quote higher charges." He added, "Having said that, there have been studies that show that the frequency of sweeping can be reduced if the doorstep waste collection is perfect. However, it can in no condition be done away with. In cities like Gurgaon and Faridabad, there is so much dust, there are stray cattle roaming, unchecked construction dust etc due to which sweeping is necessary." The ULB department purchased these sweeping machines in 2019. Subsequently, the operations and maintenance of 44 such machines across various state corporations were outsourced to a private company for five years, although the machines remain the property of the ULB. In Gurgaon, the private firm previously operating the machines was awarded the work in Sept 2019 for five years till March

31, 2025, after which the agency was given a one-year extension. After the contract of the private agency responsible for operating and maintaining.

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Editor-in-Chief

Gurcharan Singh Babbar

Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517

Website : www.thesikhimes.in

Email : sikhimesindia@gmail.com

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NEWS BOX

Sri Lanka repatriates over 230 Iranian sailors weeks after US naval attack, engine failure

COLOMBO. (Agency)

Over 230 sailors of two Iranian Naval vessels distressed in Sri Lanka after a US submarine attack and engine failure respectively have been repatriated, defence officials said here Wednesday. A total of 238 sailors were sent back on board a Turkish Airliner late on Tuesday night. On March 4, Iran's naval ship 'Iris Dena' was attacked by the US, killing 84 on board outside Sri Lanka's international waters. As many as 32 others were rescued by Sri



Lanka. Then three days later, Iran's second ship 'Iris Bushehr' was allowed into Sri Lanka waters after it reported an engine failure. Over 200 on board the second ship were accommodated at Welisara, a Naval facility outside Colombo. The 238 repatriated on Tuesday were sailors from both ships, defence officials said. A group of 'Iris Dena' survivors were accommodated at Koggala, a Sri Lankan Airforce facility near the southern port of Galle. They were receiving treatment at the national hospital in Galle. On March 14, the Iranian embassy in Sri Lanka repatriated the remains of 84 sailors killed in the US attack on 'Iris Dena'.

Children killed in Lebanon as Israeli strikes hit homes far from front lines of war with Hezbollah

BEIRUT. (Agency)

Jawad Younes, 11, and his cousins were playing soccer in the lot between their houses, as they often did. His little brother, 4-year-old Mehdi, had joined them but grew tired, so Jawad took him home and handed him off to their mother before returning to the game. Minutes later, an Israeli strike came.

The target was Jawad's uncle's home. The blast shook neighboring buildings and threw Jawad's siblings at home to the ground. As their mother, Malak Meslmani, scrambled to help them up, she could think only of Jawad. "I was pulling my children off the floor in the house, but as I was running to pick them up, I screamed, 'Jawad,'" she said. "My heart told me." Her son was instantly killed in the March 27 Israeli strike in Saksakieh. So was one of his cousins — so close they were more like brothers. Several other children were wounded. Jawad's uncle also was killed. He was an interior design engineer; Jawad wanted to be an engineer like him. Meslmani called him a civilian. But like many Shiite families in southern Lebanon, the family were loyal supporters of the militant group and political party Hezbollah, which formed in the 1980s to fight Israel's occupation of the area. Jawad and his cousin are among 168 children killed — of more than 2,100 people in all — by Israel's strikes in the six weeks of renewed war between the country and Iran-backed Hezbollah. Israel has often struck alleged Hezbollah militants or officials in their homes without warning, frequently in areas far from the front line when they are with their families, in apartment buildings surrounded by uninvolved neighbors. The Israeli military rarely names the targets of its strikes but says it takes measures to minimize civilian casualties — including children — and blames Hezbollah members for mixing with the general population. The families of children killed accuse Israel of committing war crimes because of the large number of civilian casualties.

Candace Owens drops fresh Erika Kirk claims as TPUSA CEO skips event and Charlie Kirk mystery continues to grow

World. (Agency)

Candace Owens has made fresh claims about Turning Point USA and its CEO Erika Kirk, just as she skipped a planned event with US Vice President JD Vance. The group had promoted the event at the University of Georgia, but Erika Kirk did not attend, with JD Vance saying she had received "threats." At the same time, Owens shared new claims about the day Charlie Kirk was killed in 2025. Candace Owens raises new Erika Kirk and Turning Point USA claims after Charlie Kirk death. Candace Owens said on X that "the ATF traced a mysterious gun on the morning of September 10th." She added, "Its manufacturer reached out to me and it turns out, a TPUSA faith Pastor and friend of Erika Kirk tried to buy his company." She did not provide proof for this claim. This is not the first time Owens has questioned Turning Point USA leadership. Earlier, she suggested the group may have had a role in Charlie Kirk's death, but again, she did not show evidence. Separately, Turning Point USA had announced the Georgia event online, writing that JD Vance and Erika Kirk would appear together. This would have been their second public appearance after a University of Arkansas event that drew attention online.

Boat carrying 250, including Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshis, sinks in Andaman Sea

The Rohingya on board this latest boat were likely leaving huge camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where over a million refugees forced to flee Myanmar's western state of Rakhine live in squalid conditions.

DUBAI. (Agency)

About 250 people, including children, were feared missing after a boat carrying Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals capsized in the Andaman Sea, the United Nations said on Tuesday. "The trawler, which departed from Teknaf in southern Bangladesh and was on its way to Malaysia, reportedly sank due to heavy winds, rough seas, and overcrowding," the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement. UNHCR said the disappearance reflected the protracted displacement of Rohingya

people and the absence of durable solutions. Thousands of Rohingya, Myanmar's persecuted Muslim minority, risk their lives every year fleeing repression and civil war in their country. They travel by sea, often aboard makeshift boats. The Rohingya on board this latest boat were likely leaving huge camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where more than a million refugees forced to flee Myanmar's western state of Rakhine live in squalid conditions.

UNHCR said ongoing violence in Rakhine state has made the Rohingyas' safe return to Myanmar uncertain, and limited humanitarian assistance, restricted access to education and employment in refugee camps, continue to push vulnerable Rohingya refugees to choose risky sea journeys, often based on false promises of higher wages and better opportunities abroad. Rakhine state has been the scene of fierce fighting between the military and the Arakan Army, an ethnic minority rebel group, over control of the territory. The exact circumstances surrounding the latest

incident were unclear, but preliminary information indicated that the vessel was carrying some 280 people and left Bangladesh on April 4.

The Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) said



one of its ships, which was on the way to Indonesia, managed to rescue nine people from the sea, including one woman, on April 9. "The Bangladeshi flag carrier M.T. Meghna Pride... spotted several people floating in the sea using drums and logs and rescued them from deep waters near the Andaman Islands," BCG spokesman

Lieutenant Commander Sabbir Alam Sujan told AFP.

'Burned by oil'

Rafiqul Islam, one of the survivors, told AFP that he was lured on to the boat by traffickers who promised him a job in Malaysia. "A number of us were kept in the holding area of the trawler, some died there. I was burned by oil that spilled from the trawler," said Rafiqul, 40, adding that the vessel travelled for four days before it capsized. "We floated for nearly 36 hours before a ship rescued us from deep water."

Relatively affluent Malaysia is home to millions of migrants from poorer parts of Asia, many of them undocumented, working in industries including construction and agriculture.

But sea crossings, facilitated by human trafficking syndicates, are hazardous and often lead to overloaded boats capsizing.

The UNHCR said the latest incident reflected the "dire consequences of protracted displacement and the absence of durable solutions for the Rohingya".

Lavrov says Russia can 'compensate' for China's resource gap from Iran war: Russian state media

Russian foreign minister signals deeper Moscow-Beijing energy cooperation as shipping risks rise in Strait of Hormuz; Putin likely to visit China this year

World. (Agency)

Russia's foreign minister said that his country could make up for China's energy shortages as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz is choked by the US-Israeli war with Iran, Russian state media reported Wednesday. "Russia can, without a doubt, compensate for the shortfall in resources that has arisen" for China and "other countries that are interested in working with us" Sergei Lavrov said at a news conference in Beijing, in response to a question about the Hormuz blockade. He also said that Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit China in the first half of the year, Moscow's TASS



state news agency reported. Russia and China's close economic and political partnership has deepened since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Lavrov, who began a two-day

visit to Beijing on Tuesday and met President Xi Jinping on Wednesday, characterised the bilateral relationship as "unshakable in the face of any storms", Russia's TASS and RIA Novosti news agencies reported. Ties between the countries "play a stabilising role in world affairs" and are "becoming increasingly important... for the global majority that does not want problems or turbulence", he said.

Lavrov's visit comes during the same week as a string of foreign leaders meet with Xi in the Chinese capital, including To Lam of Vietnam and Pedro Sanchez of Spain.

Strait Of Hormuz: Why US And Iran Are Sailing In Very Different Legal Waters

For Iran, the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait as set out under international law predating UNCLOS. For the US, the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait requiring "transit passage," as per UNCLOS.

World. (Agency)

While everyone agrees that, geographically speaking, it is a strait — a narrow sea passage connecting two places that ships want to go — its political and legal status is rather more complicated. The United States and Iran both eye the strait — a choke point through which 20% of the world's oil passes — very differently. Washington sees the Strait of Hormuz as exclusively an international waterway, whereas Tehran sees it as part of its territorial waters. It follows that Iran's toll-charging of ships is seen by the US as illegal. Similarly, US President Donald Trump's blockade of the passage is a "grave violation" of

sovereignty to Iran. As an expert in the law of the sea, I know part of the problem is that the US and Iran are living in two different worlds when it comes to the international laws governing the strait. Further complicating matters, both are in a different legal universe than most of



the rest of the world. **The law of the sea** The "law of the sea" is a network of international laws, customs and agreements that set out the foundation for rights of access and control in the ocean. The framework sits apart from the laws of warfare, which are also

relevant to the Persian Gulf situation.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS, is a major plank of the law of the sea. Completed in 1982 and in force since 1994, it aims to create a stable set of zones and places — like international straits — where everyone agrees on who can do what. It has been ratified by 171 countries and the European Union, but not Iran or the United States. Iran has signed it but has yet to ratify; the US has done neither. This means that the rules which almost every country in the world has consented to can't serve as a basis of agreement over how the US and Iran should govern their actions in the strait during the current war.

The view from Iran

Both Iran and the US agree that under the law of the sea, the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait, but not on what kind of international strait it is. Moreover, they disagree on the relevant laws that exist, and how they apply.

A look at Sudan's brutal civil war by the numbers as it enters a fourth year

CAIRO. (Agency)

Sudan is entering a fourth year of war between the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary forces. Both sides have been accused of committing atrocities like ethnic cleansing, extrajudicial killings and sexual violence against civilians. The fighting has pushed many people into famine, caused a huge displacement crisis and left over 30 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Here's a look at the war by the numbers:

59,000: At least this many people have been killed, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data, or ACLED. Aid groups say the true toll could be much higher as access to areas of fighting across the vast country remains limited. 11,000: The number of missing people over the course of the war, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. 4.5 million: About this many people have fled



the country to places like Egypt, South Sudan, Libya and Chad. 9 million: About this many people remain displaced in Sudan. 19 million: More than this many people face acute hunger, according to the World Food Program.

24%: This is the amount that fuel prices have shot up in Sudan since conflict in the Middle East escalated. 354: This is the number of community kitchens that have closed over the last six months after providing a lifeline for millions of people, according to Islamic Relief.

Over 4,300: About this many children have been killed or maimed in the war, according to UNICEF.

8 million: At least this many children are still out of school, according to UNICEF. 11%: About this many schools are being used by warring sides or are shelters for displaced people, according to UNICEF.

63%: This many of Sudan's health facilities are fully or partially functioning, according to World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

217: This is the number of verified attacks on health facilities since the war began, according to the WHO.

1,032: This was the number of civilians killed by air and drone strikes in 2025, according to ACLED, as a surge in drone strikes took a growing toll.

Diplomats try to arrange a second round of US-Iran talks during first full day of American blockade

The fighting has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, more than 2,100 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Thirteen U.S. service members have also been killed.

ISLAMABAD. (Agency)

Diplomats worked through back channels on Tuesday to arrange a new round of talks between the United States and Iran after Washington enacted its blockade of Iranian ports, while Tehran threatened to retaliate by striking targets across the war-weary region. U.S. President Donald Trump said a second round of talks could happen "over the next two days," telling the New York Post the negotiations could be held again in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres concurred, saying it's "highly probable" that talks will restart. He cited a meeting he had with Pakistan's deputy prime minister, Ishaq Dar. Meanwhile in Washington, the first direct talks in decades between the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors to the U.S. concluded on a productive note, according to the U.S. State Department. Israeli Ambassador Yechiel Leiter said the two countries are "on the

same side of the equation" in "liberating Lebanon" from the militant Hezbollah group. Lebanese Ambassador Nada Hamadeh Moawad called the meeting "constructive" but urged an end to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. Since March, that war has displaced more than 1 million people in Lebanon.

Israel and Lebanon have technically been at war since Israel was established in 1948, and Lebanon remains deeply divided over diplomatic engagement with Israel. First round of talks failed to end conflict

Last weekend in Pakistan, an initial round of talks aimed at permanently ending the U.S.-Iran conflict failed to produce an agreement. The White House said Iran's nuclear ambitions were a central sticking point. A U.S. official said Tuesday that



fresh talks with Iran were still under discussion and that nothing has been scheduled. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss sensitive negotiations. Muhammad Aurangzeb, Pakistan's finance minister, told The Associated Press that "our leadership is not giving up" on efforts to help the U.S. and

Iran end the conflict.

"We'll keep at it," Aurangzeb said Tuesday.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, who led the American delegation in the weekend talks, said during a speech in Georgia that Trump wants a "grand deal" in which Iran trades its nuclear program for "economic prosperity." Sefire appeared to hold, the showdown over the strategic Strait of Hormuz risked reigniting hostilities and deepening the regional war's economic fallout. The war, now in its seventh week, has jolted

markets and rattled the global economy as shipping has been cut off and airstrikes have torn through military and civilian infrastructure across the region.

The fighting has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, more than 2,100 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states.

Short news

Youth shot dead following minor dispute with relative in Shahjahanpur

Shahjahanpur.(Agency)

A 25-year-old man, Shyam Sundar, was shot dead on Tuesday night in Bari Khas village under the Madanapur police station area after a minor dispute with a relative turned violent. The incident also left his brother injured, police said on Wednesday. According to police, Shyam Sundar had been living at his maternal grandparents' home since childhood. On the night of the incident, he got into an argument with a relative from the same village. The disagreement escalated into a physical altercation, during which the accused allegedly opened fire, fatally shooting him. The accused fled the scene after the incident. Shyam Sundar was immediately taken to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead. His brother, who was injured in the clash, is currently undergoing treatment. Upon receiving information, Circle Officer Sadar Priyank Jain arrived at the scene along with a police team. SP City Devendra Kumar stated that the shooting occurred following a minor dispute between relatives, and one accused has been arrested. The victim's wife, Moni Devi, informed police that Shyam Sundar and the accused previously shared a close and friendly relationship. Police have launched an investigation into the case. Additional forces have been deployed in the village to maintain peace as tensions remain high.

Woman dies, husband severely injured after high-tension wire sparks fire in Banda village

Banda. (Agency)

A tragic fire incident in Girwan village, about 40 km from the district headquarters, claimed the life of a 52-year-old woman and left her husband critically injured, police said on Wednesday. According to reports, the fire broke out around 1:00 AM on Wednesday after an 11,000-volt high-tension power line snapped and fell onto a puncture repair shop. Sparks from the live wire quickly ignited the shop, where the couple had been sleeping. The presence of rubber tyres accelerated the blaze, causing it to spread rapidly and triggering small explosions. The deceased, identified as Anita (52), was unable to escape and was burnt alive in the fire. Her husband, Ganesh (58), sustained severe burn injuries—reportedly around 50 percent—and was found unconscious at the scene. He was initially taken to a nearby hospital and later referred to a medical college due to his critical condition. Local residents rushed to the spot after noticing the flames and attempted to control the fire, but it had already intensified. The fire brigade arrived shortly after being alerted and managed to bring the blaze under control. By then, however, the shop and all belongings inside had been completely destroyed. Police officials reached the scene and began an investigation. The woman's body has been sent for post-mortem examination, and further legal procedures are underway. The couple's two children, who live outside the village for studies, have been informed of the incident. Deputy Superintendent of Police Krishna Kant Tripathi stated that authorities responded promptly upon receiving information about a fire caused by an electrical short circuit.

UP govt warns contractors over adherence to minimum wages

Gautam Buddha Nagar.(Agency)

Days after violent protests by workers erupted in Noida, the Uttar Pradesh government has warned contractors and outsourcing agencies of strict action. In a meeting held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Medha Rupam, outsourcing agencies and contractors from various industrial units were told to ensure full compliance with government guidelines. The District Magistrate said outsourcing agencies play a vital role in industry operations and employment generation, and therefore, they are equally responsible for the behaviour and functioning of their employees and workers. She directed that if any agency or its employees engage in unruly activities, the agency concerned would be blacklisted and its licence revoked. The District Magistrate instructed all contractors to strictly adhere to the government guidelines. On the other hand, the chief labour commissioner under the Ministry of Labour has sought a detailed report on the situation. According to officials, the sudden outbreak of strikes and violent incidents has taken the administration by surprise. Referring to the minimum wages, the DM stated that the monthly salary is fixed at Rs 13,690 for unskilled workers, Rs 15,059 for semi-skilled workers, and Rs 16,868 for skilled workers. The DM said the fixed salary should be transferred directly to the bank accounts of all workers, and that exploitation of any kind would not be tolerated.

3 bodies in 20 days, 4th on way: Another Haryana man dies fighting Russia's war

Families across Haryana continue to wait for news of their sons.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

For Rakesh Kumar, a bus driver with Chandigarh Transport Undertaking, the wait is never ending. It has already been 10 days since he was told that his son Anshu is dead. The 25-year-old, hailing from Kathowas village in Rewari, went to Russia in April 2025 on a study visa, but was allegedly inducted into the Russian Army and sent to the front. "On April 4, a former soldier who had served in the Russian army informed us that Anshu is dead. He told us the body would first be brought from Ukraine to Moscow and then to India within 10-15 days. Since then, we have been waiting," said a distraught father.

On March 26, the body of 22-year-old Anuj Sharma from Cjhora village in Karnal was brought to India. He had travelled to Russia in May 2025 on study visa, but was persuaded to join the army. His brother, Arjun Sharma, said, "He couldn't

land a job there. Later, a few Russian soldiers persuaded him to get enlisted, assuring that he would only be required to dig bunkers. He enlisted on August 28, 2025... On October 20



he suffered bullet injuries. His body remained buried under snow for months before finally being brought back to India on March 26 this year." Two more cases came to fore early

April. On April 2, Ankit, 30, from Kurar Ibrahimpur village in Sonapat district, returned in a coffin. He had initially been working at a hotel in Moscow before being recruited into the Army. His last contact with his family was on October 12, 2025.

On April 4, Ankit Jangra, 23, from Kumbharia village in Fatehabad was cremated after his body arrived from Russia. He had gone to Moscow on a study visa in February 2025 and was allegedly lured into getting enlisted. His friend Vijay Poonia, who had travelled with him, remains missing.

Families across Haryana continue to wait for news of their sons. Aman, 24, from Madanheri village in Hisar, has been missing since September 2025. "Someone in Russia lured him with the promise of a Rs 2.5 lakh monthly salary and an advance of Rs 10 lakh," said his brother Aashish.

Sheru, Shaitan out; Aarav, Atharva in: Rajasthan's push to change odd student names

Jaipur. (Agency)

In a first-of-its-kind move, the Rajasthan government has launched a campaign to replace "awkward", "derogatory" or socially outdated names of school students with more meaningful alternatives, seeking to address concerns that such names often become a source of ridicule and dent confidence.

Under the Saarthak Naam Abhiyan, names such as Sheru, Shaitan, Kalu and Tinku could be replaced, in consultation with parents, by options like Aarav, Atharva, Balmukund, and Badrinath. Girls' parents will have the option to choose from Aradhya, Annapurna and Vaishnavi, each chosen for its meaning and cultural significance.

CAMPAIGN TARGETS RIDICULE, SELF-ESTEEM School Education Minister Madan Dilawar said names that may appear normal in childhood can later cause embarrassment and affect

personality development. "Sometimes parents choose names without considering their meanings or long-term impact. As children grow older, such names can affect their



confidence," he said. Officials said ridicule over names can impact participation in classrooms and, in some cases, discourage children from attending school. **NEARLY 3,000 ALTERNATIVES PREPARED**

The education department has drawn up a list of nearly 3,000 alternative names, including 1,409 for boys and 1,541 for girls. Each name is accompanied by its meaning, and in many cases, its astrological context.

The list will be shared with parents to help them choose names that carry positive connotations and cultural relevance. **CONSENT-BASED PROCESS THROUGH SCHOOLS**

The initiative will cover students from Classes 1 to 9 in government schools. Officials said no name would be changed without written parental consent.

Schools have been asked to identify such cases sensitively and engage with families through parent-teacher meetings and School Management Committees. Once approved, the revised name will be updated in official records.

Parents of newly admitted students will also be offered the option to choose from the suggested list at the time of enrolment.

Maharashtra shocker: Teen sexually abused 180 minors, filmed 350 obscene videos

Police claim that the accused, 19-year-old Ayan Ahmed Tanveer, sexually exploited the victims and filmed the acts without their consent, later using the videos to threaten and blackmail them.

Amravati, Maharashtra.(Agency)

A 19-year-old man has been arrested in Amravati district of Maharashtra for allegedly recording and circulating obscene videos involving minor girls, in a case that has sparked public outrage and intensified political reactions. Some local political outfits claim the accused, Ayan Ahmed Tanveer, targeted around 180 girls, filming over 350 such videos, though police have contacted only eight confirmed victims to date. The accused had previously been associated with Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM. Ayan was detained by the Amravati Rural Police after a tip-off led investigators to his activities in the Paratwada area of Amravati.

A case has been registered against him under Section 294 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, relevant sections of the POCSO Act, and the IT

Act, 2000. He has been remanded to police custody until April 21, 2026. Authorities have seized his mobile phone and recovered several objectionable videos, while



forensic teams are working to retrieve additional deleted data. Police investigations indicate that Ayan allegedly befriended multiple girls, gained their trust, and lured them into relationships. He is suspected of sexually exploiting victims and recording videos without

their consent, which were later used for intimidation and blackmail.

While initial claims circulating locally suggested a much larger number of victims, officials have so far identified eight victims. However, the number may rise as the investigation progresses and more individuals come forward.

Amravati Rural Superintendent of Police Vishal Anand Singuri confirmed that efforts are ongoing to identify all victims appearing in the videos and to determine how many such clips were created beyond those that went viral.

Authorities are also probing whether a broader organised network exists behind the filming or distribution of these videos. To support survivors and encourage reporting, the police have set up special contact arrangements facilitated by female officers.

Badshah releases modified version of Tatiri song following controversy

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Bollywood rapper and singer Badshah has officially released a revised version of his Haryanvi track, now titled 'Tatiri Phir Se,' after the original version faced significant backlash. The updated music video and lyrics have been scrubbed of the controversial segments that previously led to legal complications.

In the new rap sequence, Badshah has replaced the disputed lyrics with the line, "Aaya Badshah rang dikhane, phir jalwa dikhane," effectively distancing the song from its former version.

The visual presentation of the song has also undergone a major overhaul to address public and administrative concerns. The previous scenes involving a Haryana Roadways bus have been removed.

The new video features female dancers performing in traditional Haryanvi attire, Daman and Kurti, within an underpass setting. To maintain a cultural touchpoint, the video also includes shots of local elders with a traditional hookah. The modified track has already garnered over one million views on YouTube since its re-release.

The original 'Tatiri' song, which debuted on March 1, sparked a massive controversy over its lyrical content and certain visual depictions, resulting in three police cases being registered against the rapper in Panchkula and Jind. Following the uproar, the Haryana State Commission for Women summoned Badshah, leading to a formal apology tendered by the artist before the National Commission for Women on March 7. Consequently, the original video was pulled down from digital platforms to make way for this corrected version.

April 26 local body polls | 'Police intimidation of party candidates at BJP's behest': Congress files complaint with EC

Karad. (Agency)

Congress candidates from Vasna and Sarkhej wards may not contest the April 26 election to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Congress candidate Bharat Bharwad, who received the party's mandate for Sarkhej ward, withdrew his form on Monday. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is April 15. On the other hand, Congress candidate Falguniben Rawal did not reach the election office to submit her nomination despite the party's mandate to her for Vasna ward, an OBC reserved seat.

On Tuesday, Congress leaders led by Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee president Amit Chavda submitted a memorandum to the State Election Commissioner S Murali Krishna alleging police intimidation of its candidates and supporters at the behest of the ruling BJP. "The withdrawal of the Congress candidate from Sarkhej ward of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation is a serious issue. Two other candidates of the Congress have also been taken away by

policemen. Such information is being received and they have been kept in unknown places. The Congress candidates should be released immediately. The husband of Kinjalben Shambhubhai Jadav, a candidate from Ward No. 4 of Tarapur



Municipality in Anand district, is being taken to the police station and threatened by police to withdraw her nomination papers," Congress complaint alleged. The Congress

has demanded that an impartial inquiry committee be appointed to probe the allegation of police intimidating Congress candidates across the state.

"All those police officers who are working under political pressure should be immediately transferred and relieved from election duty, an FIR should be immediately filed under election offenses and the CDR of their mobile phones should be collected so that the illegal activities done by them can be known," the party said in its memorandum to the SEC. The Congress also accused BJP leaders of threatening Congress candidates to withdraw their forms and alleged that they are even using the government machinery for this illegal action. "A senior BJP leader is using social pressure along with other pressure tactics to disqualify Ramilaben's nomination. Till late last evening, she was being pressurised," Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi told.

Land acquisition for Aerotropolis project: Farmers end hunger strike after assurances from govt on key demands

Mohali.(Agency)

The hunger strike by farmers and landowners to protest the land acquisition for the Aerotropolis project in Mohali ended on Tuesday after the Punjab government accepted their key demands and offered assurances.

The protest, which had been ongoing for several days outside the GMADA office, was formally called off after farmer leaders were offered juice, marking its conclusion. The state Housing and Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian, along with Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh, led the negotiations, while GMADA Chief Administrator Sakshi Sawhny and Land Acquisition Officer Rohit Jindal were also present.

"The Punjab government is fully committed to safeguarding the interests of farmers and landowners. No decision regarding farmers will be taken without their consent," Mundian said while addressing the gathering.

He clarified that land acquisition for Aerotropolis blocks E, F, G, H, I and J would be undertaken only with farmers' approval.

The minister acknowledged the role of MLA Kulwant Singh in bringing the concerns of affected farmers to the Chief Minister's attention, which led to swift intervention and resolution. Before concluding the protest, Mundian read out and handed over a written document outlining the accepted demands.

Faithline | The day that gives

An upcoming Hindu and Jain festival that springs to mind is Akshaya Tritiya on April 19, called Akha Teej in the North. It's traditionally believed to symbolise 'never-diminishing' (akshaya) prosperity, and is considered a highly auspicious day for new beginnings, investments and purchasing gold. So much so that it's also jokingly called Indian Gold Rush Day. Rituals include prayers to Lord Vishnu, Goddess Lakshmi and Kubera, as well as acts of charity such as annadaanam or feeding people.

For Jains, it commemorates Lord Rishabhnantha ending his long fast. Rishabhnantha, also known as Adinath (First Lord), is revered by Jains as the pioneer of civilisation. He is credited in Jainism with having invented and taught fire, cooking and all the skills needed for human beings to live, including seventy-two accomplishments taught to men and sixty-four crafts taught to women, including farming and writing. The legend goes that he was born in Ayodhya to King Nabhi and Queen Marudevi, and was the first Tirthankara of the current era. One day, Nilanjana, a dancer who was performing for Rishabhnantha and his court, suddenly collapsed and died. Nilanjana's sudden death is said to have reminded Rishabhnantha of life's transitory nature, jolting him to renounce his kingdom, family and material wealth. He practiced austerities for many years, traveled across the land and attained kevala jnana (omniscience) at the holy town of Prayagraj, called Purimtal in Jain texts. He is believed to have attained moksha on Mount Kailash. He established the foundational principles of the Jain faith in the remote past, according to Jain belief. During his austerities, Rishabhnantha travelled without food for 400 days. The day on which he took his first ahara or food is celebrated by Jains as Akshaya Tritiya. In devotion to Rishabhnantha, Shvetambara Jains perform a 400-day fast, during which they eat frugally only on alternating days. This religious practice is known as Varshitap. The fast is broken on Akshaya Tritiya. Sanatan associates Akshaya Tritiya with the birth of Lord Parashurama and the start of Treta Yuga. Also, Ganga, the great mother river, is believed to have descended to Earth on this day. Further, it is not only the day that Sri Krishna gifted the Akshaya Patra, or inexhaustible vessel of food, to the Pandavas when they were in exile in the forest but also the day that Sudama met Krishna in Dwaraka and was blessed by the Lord with great prosperity, redeeming him and his family from dire poverty. In fact, Krishna was so generous to his old schoolmate that he was about to eat a third handful of the poha that Sudama had brought for him. But Mahalakshmi, in the form of Rukmini, held Krishna's wrist and stopped him from eating it, because just two handfuls had already bestowed unimaginable wealth on Sudama. So, Akshaya Tritiya has a formidable theological backup in the Indian belief system, with each incident being a life-affirming and faith-bolstering tale. The deeper message in Sudama's tale is that feeding others is like feeding god—we invite blessings and good luck upon ourselves. Hence, the importance of annadaanam on Akshaya Tritiya day. Not everyone can afford to feed strangers every day, so these special days are built into our calendar when we, too, can feel we are part of god's plan by contributing our mite as members of an interdependent race. As you know, annadaanam is considered the greatest act of merit, which any one of us can perform according to our means, be it buying a bunch of bananas for the cobbler or street children or treating office workers like the liftman, guards, peons and clerks to fruit or sweets, maybe both. As always, our Indian beliefs are based on our ancestors' observation of nature and its many moods and cycles. Akshaya Tritiya is thus revered as a day when the sun and moon are at their peak brightness, making it a powerful day for spiritual growth and prosperity in popular belief.

Silence as complicity in war

To confront war is to challenge the structures — political, economic and linguistic — that sustain it. Democracies cannot evade this responsibility.

We inhabit a moment that Hannah Arendt would have recognised with chilling clarity, a dark conjuncture in which violence stands routinised, language is debased and war normalised as policy. Yet what is perhaps more troubling than the wars themselves is the strange quiet that surrounds them. There is protest, yes, but it is scattered, intermittent, and lacking the moral urgency that once shook governments, particularly the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in the sixties. Political leadership, meanwhile, appears suspended in a state of realpolitik or calculated silence, while the world sleepwalks toward unimaginable catastrophe.

This silence is complicit, reflecting what Arendt famously described as the "banality of evil" or that which is not the monstrous act of a single tyrant, but the everyday normalisation of violence by bureaucrats, soldiers and citizens who continue to perform their roles without moral interrogation. War persists not merely because it is willed by leaders, but because it is absorbed, rationalised, and even rendered invisible by societies that believe they can endure its consequences without reckoning with its causes. For instance, Adolf Eichmann, a senior official under Hitler who helped organise the deportation of Jews to Auschwitz, claimed that he had committed no crime, insisting till the end that he was merely fulfilling his duty. In this moment, the figure of Donald Trump assumes symbolic importance beyond his own political career. Under such leadership, the US appears to have drifted towards an unsettling posture of a 'rogue state', one that unsettles global norms more brazenly than even those states it once sought to discipline. The idea of America itself has fractured. Though it once signified a stable democratic promise, it now oscillates between competing identities of a patron of liberty, an agent of intervention, and, increasingly, a source of disruption. To rethink war today is, therefore, also to rethink what America signifies in the contemporary world order.

War, as ever, arrives clothed in the language of necessity, of defence, liberation, stability and order. Yet history offers little evidence that it delivers on these promises. From the imperial conquests chronicled in Eduard Galeiano's *Open Veins of Latin America* to contemporary interventions in West Asia, the pattern

remains unchanged, as apparent in the fact that war transforms and destroys, but rarely resolves. It produces a surplus of violence with new conflicts, new grievances, new instabilities. Nowhere is this more evident than in the contemporary West Asia. From Gaza to Lebanon to Iran, the rhetoric of security and restoration masks a deeper political bankruptcy. Promises are made of democracy, of protection, of liberation, but they remain unfulfilled. The legacy of the 1953 Iranian coup d'état

decay. By the time we reach Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the transformation is complete. The soldier discovers that his true enemy is not the man in the opposing trench, but the machinery of nationalism, authority, and propaganda that has placed them both there. Trapped beside the man he has shot, Paul, a German, is overwhelmed with guilt. He speaks to him, apologises, imagines his life.

Even in popular culture, this moral intuition persists. Songs like Bob Dylan's 'Blowin' in the Wind' and John Lennon's 'Imagine' articulate a longing for a world beyond violence, not as naïve idealism, but as ethical critique. Poetry and art, in this sense sustain the imagination in a world where political language has been emptied of meaning. When language is degraded, politics follows. To write well, as literature teaches us, is also to think ethically and uphold the potential for imagination as survival in the face of nightmares.

History, meanwhile, continues to expose the illusion that war can be controlled. The assassination of Julius Caesar, instead precipitates the rise of empire under Augustus. The killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand triggers a global conflict that none of its

participants anticipated. Violence deployed as a corrective, becomes the instrument of irreversible transformation. The silence of our time is therefore deeply alarming. Where are the mass mobilisations that once challenged war? The student uprisings of May 1968 protests in France brought down Charles de Gaulle. Today, demonstrations exist, but they lack the scale and transformative force of that moment. This is not merely a failure of protest; it is a failure of imagination. Thinkers across history have warned us of this moral erosion. Desiderius Erasmus, the eminent Renaissance scholar, rejected war outright, seeing it as irrational and inhumane. Thomas More, though more pragmatic in his classic *Utopia*, insisted on the primacy of conscience over power, but agreed that war is a necessary evil. In our own time, Václav Havel spoke of a crisis of responsibility, a civilisation that has lost its moral bearings.



and the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1978 continues to reverberate, shaping a region marked by mistrust and perpetual tension. Wars here do not end; they metastasise. If history reveals the political failure of war, literature reveals its moral failure. In Homer's *The Iliad*, the climactic encounter, when Priam goes to Achilles to beg for the body of Hector, interrupts the logic of enmity. Achilles, the embodiment of martial rage, weeps with the father of the man he has killed, a recognition of shared humanity. War's narrative of animosity is briefly undone by recognition. This ethical possibility is there in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, but here heroism collapses into cynicism. Figures like Achilles and Agamemnon are no longer noble warriors but hollow rhetoricians, their grand language masking instability and moral emptiness. Wars and heroes are stripped of honour and become more of spectacles of deception and

US-Iran impasse: Talks fail as both sides stick to their guns

Despite the Islamabad fiasco, Pakistan's role as a mediator has highlighted the growing importance of regional powers in bringing warring sides to the negotiating table

THE collapse of the US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad had an air of inevitability about it. After 21 hours of marathon negotiations, delegations led by US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf left Islamabad without an agreement, casting a long shadow over an already fragile ceasefire. Iran has rightly observed that a deal should not have been expected after just one round of talks. This indicates that the window for further deliberations remains open. However, mutual mistrust continues to outweigh the urgency of ending the war which has destabilised global energy markets and aggravated regional tensions. The impasse is rooted in a deeply entrenched divide. The US, under President Donald Trump, wants Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions. For Washington, any deal must include verifiable guarantees that Tehran will not develop nuclear weapons. Iran, however, views such demands as excessive and politically coercive,



especially amid a devastating conflict and crippling

sanctions. The Iranian leadership's insistence on sovereignty, waiver of curbs and control over strategic assets like the Strait of Hormuz reflects geopolitical assertiveness. And then there is an intransigent Israel, which continues to bombard Lebanon and ride roughshod over the truce.

Despite the Islamabad fiasco, Pakistan's role as a mediator has highlighted the growing importance of regional powers in bringing warring sides to the negotiating table. Countries like India need to take a cue from these developments. It's apparent that alternative diplomatic channels remain viable — if not yet effective. The path forward demands not just new proposals but also a recalibration of expectations, prioritising gradual rebuilding of trust over maximalist positions. With thousands of lives lost and the global economy at stake, the US, Israel and Iran must give diplomacy a chance in order to find middle ground.

Faith thrives on openness, not control

➔ The move to frame more stringent laws against sacrilege seems less theological than political

At the heart of a growing and deeply contentious debate among Sikh scholars, jurists and community leaders lies a question that cuts to the core of theology, authority and modernity: what does it mean to honour the Guru Granth Sahib? While efforts to protect the sacred text are understandable, there is an unmistakable risk that codifying reverence through law and regulation may inadvertently reduce it to a static object policed by institutional mechanisms rather than animated through intellectual engagement and spiritual inquiry. Such an approach privileges ritual compliance over lived understanding, and in doing so, risks eroding the very vitality it seeks to preserve. The current move to frame more stringent laws on blasphemy and sacrilege risks appearing less as a substantive religious or legislative intervention and more as a calculated display of political optics masquerading as moral urgency. The anxiety surrounding desecration raises a troubling paradox. Can a scripture that embodies universal wisdom and egalitarian ethics be subjected to forms of control that restrict its unfettered access? Historically, the vitality of religious traditions has lain not in their containment, but in their capacity to spread and be shared. The Bible travelled across continents; the Quran has been translated and disseminated across translingual and intercultural domains; the Bhagavad Gita exists today in innumerable editions and interpretations. Why, then, should the Guru Granth Sahib be approached through a framework that appears to constrain rather than extend its reach? Indeed, the Guru Granth Sahib has already been translated into English and several other languages, a testament to its universal message and openness to interpretation. Far from diminishing the sacred, translation extends its resonance. It allows the word to travel, to illuminate, to

speaking across cultures and generations. Seeking to regulate or restrict access in the name of protection risks contradicting this very impulse toward dissemination. The vitality of a living scripture lies in the depth of engagement it invites, not in the limits placed on it. Such questions arise from the desire to take the theological claims of the text seriously, while fully preserving its



sanctity. The doctrine of Guru Nanak, which recognises the Granth as the eternal Guru, places it at the centre of Sikh spiritual life. Yet to treat the text as Guru does not mean we reduce it to an artefact of ritual veneration, but instead, endeavour to engage with it as a source of knowledge, ethical instruction and existential reflection. Sikhism, as articulated by Guru Nanak, was a radical departure from ritualism and hierarchy, thereby rejecting intermediaries and insisting upon a direct, unmediated relationship between the seeker and the divine word. From this perspective, the Guru Granth

Sahib is not an object to be guarded, but a voice to be heard.

It is precisely here that the present moment becomes disquieting. The increasing tendency to invite the State into the realm of the sacred through laws criminalising sacrilege, prescribing severe punishment and enabling bureaucratic oversight signals a dangerous convergence between faith and coercive power. When matters of devotion are handed over to committees, adjudicated by administrators or subsumed within the framework of the penal code, the sacred risks being placed in the witness box, subjected to procedural scrutiny rather than spiritual engagement. Such developments reflect what may be described, more precisely, as a process of theocratic hardening, a drift toward religious despotism, doctrinal rigidity and a regime of coercive orthodoxy. Sikhism, rooted in a tradition of openness and inquiry, cannot be reduced to such forms of penal religiosity. To impose rigid, punitive frameworks in the name of protecting the sacred is to risk transforming a living faith into an instrument of control. Such tendencies indeed privilege fear over understanding, and through repressive secular regulation and fiat of conformity threaten to erode the very conditions for reflection and conviction. History reminds us that belief sustained by punishment becomes little more than outward conformity, a mere performance that is starkly external, anxious and hollow. Faith cannot be legislated into existence, nor can reverence be produced through incarceration or threat. It is telling that across the history of such legal frameworks, there has been little evidence of systematic prosecution within the Sikh community itself for blasphemy in any defining sense. What, then, justifies the current intensification of punitive measures? The

impulse appears less theological than political, less spiritual than symbolic.

Part of the explanation lies in the institutionalisation of religion. Bodies such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the Akal Takht have historically played significant roles in preserving Sikh traditions. Yet institutional authority, when it hardens into orthodoxy, risks producing precisely the formalism Sikhism once resisted. Reverence ends up becoming merely procedural rather than philosophical. There is also a profound ethical contradiction at work. Can a tradition that reveres the Guru Granth Sahib as a living spiritual guide endorse systems that punish dissent or perceived irreverence through imprisonment or dispossession? Would the Gurus, who spoke against tyranny and injustice, sanction frameworks that instil fear among their followers? The Sikh tradition has consistently emphasised moral courage, dialogue and introspection, not the intimidating imposition of belief or any exacting penalty.

Equally significant is the question of ownership. Can any institution claim proprietary authority over the Guru Granth Sahib? While printed editions may fall under copyright law, the text itself belongs to a shared spiritual heritage. To reduce it to property is to conflate the sacred with the commercial, the eternal with the transactional. More fundamentally, the attempt to regulate access undermines the very principle of learning that lies at the heart of Sikhism. A Sikh, after all, is a learner. A tradition rooted in spiritual awakening cannot simultaneously restrict the means through which knowledge is accessed. To insist on rigid conditions governing the presence, reading or interpretation of the text introduces a form of gatekeeping that sits uneasily with the egalitarian ethos of the faith.

Surveillance at nakas, rising traffic hassles: Multiple barricades bring Chandigarh traffic to a near crawl

The stepped-up checking follows recent incidents, including the daylight murder of Chamanpreet Singh, alias Chini, in Sector 9 and the grenade attack at the BJP office in Sector 37.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Chandigarh's heightened security crackdown marked by solar-powered cameras at naka points streaming live feeds to the Police Control and Command Centre—is tightening surveillance across the city, but the accompanying barricading within internal sectors is increasingly drawing criticism from residents over traffic congestion and daily inconvenience.

The stepped-up checking follows recent incidents, including the daylight murder of Chamanpreet Singh, alias Chini, in Sector 9 and the grenade attack at the BJP office in Sector 37. Police have since expanded their naka network, setting up around 40 checkpoints in the morning and another 40 in the evening, with nearly 5,000 vehicles being checked on regular



intervals. Police officials said the naka locations and personnel deployment are being rotated regularly based on intelligence inputs to prevent predictable escape routes. The addition of solar-based cameras at these points has enabled real-time monitoring of

vehicle checks and movement across the city. However, on the ground, the experience for commuters has been far from smooth.

"I was crossing towards Mullanpur via the PGI-Khuda Lahora road when a major traffic snarl took place due to these

nakas," Saurabh Sharma, a resident of Sector 39, said. "There was heavy congestion, and it didn't seem like traffic was being regulated alongside the checks," he added.

Rajbir Kaur, another commuter, said the situation has become a daily ordeal. "The checking is intense, but there is no planning for traffic flow. During peak hours, vehicles pile up quickly, and people are left waiting for long stretches," she said.

Concerns have been echoed by resident welfare bodies as well. Federation of Sector Welfare Associations Chandigarh (FOSWAC) president Baljinder Singh Bittu said the arrangement is leading to widespread inconvenience. "This barricading in the internal sectors of the city is leading to complete traffic chaos.

After the recent crimes, while police have set up nakas in internal areas as well, vehicles have started piling up, especially during late evening hours when offices close and in the morning rush," Bittu said.

"After four to five cycles of the traffic light turning green, a commuter is able to move just one light point, and that is because of multiple barricading on the roads," he added. Bittu said he has personally witnessed long queues at several key junctions. "At Sector 21, the Sector 18-19 intersection, Sector 9, and many other places, people have been complaining. Even when children are heading to school, traffic in nearby areas gets piled up due to abrupt barricading. Is this the way crime prevention should be done? Commuters across the city are getting harassed," he said.

Short news

Mumbai To Get India's First Closed-Door Non-AC Local Train



Mumbai. (Agency)

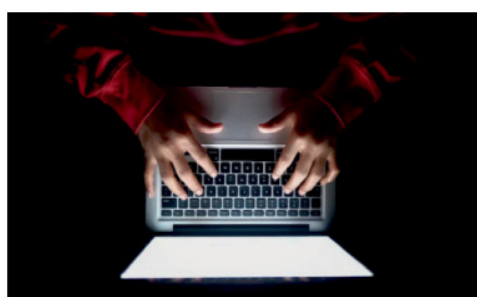
Mumbai is set to introduce India's first closed-door, non-AC local train to provide relief to commuters during extreme heat and improve safety. The train is designed with an automatic door-closing mechanism, which is a feature previously exclusive to the more expensive air-conditioned local trains. To ensure proper ventilation in the absence of air conditioning, the train is equipped with a forced ventilation system that pumps fresh air into the coaches.

The forced ventilation units are designed to provide a higher air-change rate than standard local trains, keeping the interior cool even when the doors are closed.

This initiative aims to prevent accidents caused by passengers falling from overcrowded, open-door trains, which is a major concern on the Mumbai suburban network. The project was conceptualised to offer the safety benefits of a closed-door system to "General Class" commuters without the high fare hike associated with AC travel. The rake has been manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai and is expected to undergo trials on the Mumbai suburban tracks soon.

The train features a "talk-back" system that allows passengers to communicate with the guard or motorman in case of emergencies.

Thane Woman Lured With IIT Admission Offer For Son, Duped Of Rs 12.5 Lakh



Thane. (Agency)

A man has allegedly cheated a Thane-based woman of Rs 12.5 lakh by posing as a senior government official and promising her son's admission to IIT Bombay, police said on Wednesday. The accused, who resided in the same housing complex as the woman in the Diva area, posed as an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer and claimed to have a strong influence in various government departments.

He assured the 45-year-old woman that he could secure admission for her son in the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay. "On this pretext, he collected Rs 12,50,000 from the victim over a period of time in 2023," an official from Mumbai police station said.

However, when the promise did not materialise and the woman questioned him, the accused gave evasive replies. The woman approached the police with a complaint earlier this week.

An FIR was registered on Monday against the accused under relevant provisions for cheating, forgery and impersonation, the official said.

400-tonne crane topples in Bandra Kurla Complex, snarls early morning commute

Metro Line 2B work mishap shuts key stretch near Asian Heart Institute from 4:30 am; no injuries

Mumbai. (Agency)

The early morning rush in the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) was thrown off track on Tuesday after a 400-tonne crane involved in Metro Line 2B construction toppled, forcing authorities to shut a key arterial stretch near the Asian Heart Institute from 4:30 am.

Office-goers heading into the city's prime business district faced delays as traffic was diverted and bottlenecks built up in surrounding areas.

According to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), the incident occurred during overnight work to place a precast beam along the Mandale-DN Nagar Metro Line 2B corridor. A mechanical failure in one of the crane's lifting booms caused the load—estimated to be extremely heavy—to shift abruptly.

Basavraj M Bhadragnon, director (projects)

for metros at MMRDA, said the beam was suspended midair when the primary boom failed, transferring the entire load onto a secondary boom. "Unable to withstand the



sudden pressure, the crane lost balance and toppled," he said.

Officials attributed the mishap partly to space constraints at the site, which is flanked by

ongoing work on the BKC bullet train station on one side and existing buildings on the other. The viaduct segment under construction pertains to the IL&FS station, with J Kumar as the contractor.

In a statement, MMRDA confirmed that no injuries or casualties were reported. "During ongoing construction work of Metro Line 2B at BKC, a mechanical failure caused a 400-tonne mobile crane, which was lifting a precast beam, to topple near the Asian Heart Hospital junction," the authority said.

To remove the wreckage and restore traffic, a 600-tonne crane has been mobilised to lift the fallen equipment. Authorities said efforts were underway on a war footing to reopen the stretch and ease congestion in the business district. The situation on ground indicated it would take till at least till evening to clear the block.

Jakhar pays tribute to Baba Saheb, targets govt over 'beadbi Bill', finances

The BJP chief criticised the state government for "planning to challenge court orders related to DA payments", and called it an "anti-people" approach.

Jalandhar. (Agency)

After paying tribute to Baba Saheb Dr B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary in Jalandhar, Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar attacked the AAP government over the 'beadbi Bill', alleging it was an attempt to divert public attention from core issues of the "deteriorating" law and order and the state's "worsening" financial condition.

"Whenever the situation deteriorates, such sensitive issues are brought forward to hide failures," he said.

Raising concerns over Punjab's fiscal health, Jakhar claimed that rising debt and poor financial management pushed the state to a difficult position. "State government employees are facing delays in salaries. Nearly Rs 15,000 crore

in Dearness Allowance dues remain unpaid," he said. The BJP chief criticised the state government for "planning to



challenge court orders related to DA payments", and called it an "anti-people" approach.

Jakhar also flagged the issue of 1,780 vacant posts under Punjab's quota in the Bhakra

Beas Management Board (BBMB), alleging, "While the state raises disputes over BBMB matters, it has failed to fill its own positions."

Highlighting Baba Saheb's contribution as the architect of the Constitution of India and a champion of social justice, Jakhar said, "Ambedkar's principles of unity, awareness and struggle remain relevant today and continue to inspire generations."

"The Centre's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' vision under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is rooted in Baba Saheb's ideals of inclusive growth," Jakhar said, criticising the state government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for "failing" to uphold principles of Baba Saheb.

ED conducts raids at AAP MP Ashok Mittal's house, Lovely Professional University

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann termed the raids a "typical Modi-style" political vendetta ahead of Punjab elections.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted raids at the Jalandhar house of Ashok Kumar Mittal, AAP Rajya Sabha MP and Lovely Professional University (LPU) founder-chancellor, along with premises linked to the university.

According to sources, the action is linked to a suspected money laundering probe involving Mittal, a prominent educationist-turned-politician who recently replaced Raghav Chadha as AAP's Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha, and his son. Searches were also conducted at properties associated with his family members, including his brothers. Details of the case have not been officially disclosed



yet, and further updates are awaited as the raids continue.

ED teams reached Mittal's residence in Jalandhar early in the morning and simultaneously carried out searches at nine locations, including premises linked to the

Lovely Group, sources said. These included the Lovely Professional University (LPU), as well as businesses such as Lovely Autos, Lovely Sweets, and a distance education centre in Jalandhar and Phagwara. Police personnel were deployed outside key locations as the searches continued through the day.

The development has triggered a major political row in Punjab, with AAP alleging misuse of Central agencies against opposition leaders.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann strongly condemned the raids, calling them a "typical Modi-style" political vendetta ahead of the Punjab elections. "BJP has started preparations for Punjab elections... ED raids at AAP Rajya Sabha MP Ashok

Mittal's house and university...typical Modi style..." he posted on X as he wrote a couplet by a poet, saying the AAP would not get cowed down. "We are not the leaves that will fall off easily," he said.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal also criticised the action, accusing the Centre of misusing agencies for political purposes. He said the people of Punjab would give a "befitting reply" to such actions.

Mittal, who entered Parliament in 2022, comes from a business family in Punjab and represents a blend of industry, education, and now politics. Over the past few years, he has gradually expanded his public and political role, emerging as a more vocal figure on national issues and gaining prominence within the party.

Andhra Man Poses As CISF Officer For Marriage, Arrested At Hyderabad Airport

Hyderabad. (Agency)

Police at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport of Hyderabad have arrested an Andhra Pradesh man allegedly posing as a CISF officer to cheat women in the name of marriage.

The accused, Balakrishna Samman from Srikakulam, was caught by personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force after he was seen roaming inside the airport in full uniform and taking photographs. His behaviour raised suspicion, prompting officials to stop and question him.

According to ACP RGIA V. Sreekanth Goud, the accused could not provide valid identification. "CISF personnel noticed a man in uniform taking photos, which is unusual. When questioned, he failed to give proper details, and on verification, it was clear he was impersonating an officer," the



ACP said. During investigation, police uncovered a larger marriage fraud angle. Balakrishna, who is already married and has a child, was reportedly in a relationship with a divorcee. To convince her family for marriage, he falsely claimed that he was working as CISF personnel in the Central Government.

"He told the woman that he was undergoing training and needed to send proof to her family. For that, he purchased a CISF uniform and came to the airport to click photos and share them via WhatsApp," ACP Sreekanth Goud explained.

Police also found that he had created fake profiles on Facebook, Instagram, and matrimonial platforms, presenting himself as a government employee to gain trust. His mobile phone reportedly contains hundreds of chats with women, indicating a pattern of hoax and possible cheating.

Investigators believe he deliberately chose Hyderabad as his base of operation to avoid being easily identified in his hometown.

"He thought verification would take longer here compared to Andhra, making it easier for him to mislead victims," the ACP added. A case has been registered, and Balakrishna has been taken into custody.

Death toll in Chhattisgarh Vedanta power plant blast rises to 14, 20 hospitalised

A powerful blast at the Vedanta power plant in Chhattisgarh's Singhitari has killed at least 14 people, while several others remain critical and are undergoing treatment.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The death toll from the boiler explosion at a Vedanta power plant in Chhattisgarh's Sakti has risen to 14, while around 20 injured workers remain under treatment with several of them in critical condition, in what is being described as one of the most serious industrial tragedies in recent history. The incident occurred around 2.30 pm on Tuesday at the company's thermal power facility in Singhitari, when a tube carrying high-pressure steam from the boiler to the turbine exploded with immense force. The blast caused severe burn injuries to workers present at the site, many of whom were engaged in maintenance and painting work. Four workers died on the spot, while others succumbed to their injuries during treatment at various hospitals. In total, around 30 workers were injured in the incident. "So far, 14 people have died, and 20 are still under treatment across various hospitals.

Five individuals have been sent for advanced treatment. Initial assessments suggest no more people are trapped, though thorough checks have been conducted," Sakti Superintendent of Police, Pratul Thakur, said after an hours-long rescue operation.

Preliminary findings suggest that the explosion was triggered by a leak in the high-pressure steam tube connected to the boiler unit. The force of the blast caused extensive damage and triggered panic among workers.

Eyewitnesses described the explosion as catastrophic. Ajit Das Kar, a worker from West Bengal, said it felt "like a missile had landed." "We had just finished lunch when there was a massive blast and thick smoke spread everywhere. I was working at a height and managed to save myself by hiding. Those below were badly burnt," he said. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai



termed the incident "extremely tragic" and announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured. He has ordered a high-level probe by the Bilaspur divisional commissioner and assured strict action against those found responsible.

The district administration has also ordered a separate magisterial inquiry, while Vedanta has initiated an internal investigation in

coordination with its sub-contractor, NGLS (NTPC GE Power Services Ltd), whose personnel were involved in the incident. Sakti Collector Amrit Vikas Topno said, "The focus now is on supporting the affected families". "The compensation for those who have died is Rs 35 lakhs and a job for the kin and Rs 15 lakhs for those who are injured. The medical expenses will be covered by the plant management," he added.

In a statement, Vedanta said 24 workers employed by its sub-contractor were affected, adding that its immediate priority is to provide the best possible medical care and support to the victims and their families.

The 1,200 MW coal-based thermal power project, originally developed by Athena Chhattisgarh Power Ltd, was acquired by Vedanta in 2022. While one 600 MW unit became operational last year, the second unit is still under construction.

Delhi Woman Throws Acid On Boyfriend's Prospective Bride, Arrested



New Delhi.(Agency)

A 26-year-old woman has been apprehended for allegedly attacking her boyfriend's prospective bride with acid in northeast Delhi's Gokalpuri area, police said on Wednesday.

After receiving information, a team from Gokalpuri police station rushed to the spot in the Indira Vihar area, where it was found that the victim had already been shifted to Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital by her family members, the police officer said.

Investigations revealed that the victim's marriage had been fixed with a man and the wedding was scheduled in the near future. However, the accused woman, who was reportedly in a relationship with the same man, was opposed to the marriage, the police said.

"Driven by jealousy and anger, the accused allegedly attacked the victim by throwing acid on her," the officer said. The accused has been identified and apprehended, the police added.

The victim is undergoing treatment at GTB Hospital, and her condition is being closely monitored, they said, adding that a case has been registered and further investigation is underway to ascertain additional details leading to the attack.

TCS Nashik case blows up: All about sex harassment, conversion claims and Malaysia link

New Delhi.(Agency)

A complaint was registered with the Nashik City Police in February by a worker of a political party, who alleged that a Hindu woman working at the BPO unit of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Nashik was observing Ramzan fast. This was the first tip-off, which made the police carry out a covert operation at the TCS office. The operation revealed that several team leaders of the company were involved in sexual harassment, rape, and attempts to forcibly convert the religion of co-workers at the facility. Investigators say the probe, backed by WhatsApp chats, revealed that a Malaysia-linked preacher, Irman, was introduced to the victims through video calls. The police crackdown that followed, and resulted in the arrest of seven individuals employed at the company, has now snowballed into a massive controversy. At least nine FIRs against sexual harassment and religious conversion have been lodged by the police.

While BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar called it a case of "Corporate Jihad", N Chandrasekaran, the Chairman of Tata Sons has called the case "gravely concerning and anguishing" and said that a thorough investigation is underway.

TCS issued a statement saying that it maintained a "zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form" and that the employees under probe have been suspended.

Those arrested in the case include Asif Ansari, Danish, Shafi Shaikh, Shahrukh Qureshi, Raza Memon, and Tausif Attar. Another employee, Ashwin Chainani, has been arrested.

Meanwhile, HR manager Nida Khan, remains on the run as investigators scrutinise her hiring practices and role within the organisation, reported Divyesh Singh for on April 14. Most of the victims are women and are said to be in the age group of 18 to 25, earning between Rs 18,000 and Rs 25,000, reported The Indian Express newspaper, citing the police.

Renaming of Shahjahanabad corporation okayed for heritage push

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government is planning to rename the Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation (SDRC), the agency dedicated to restoring and revitalising the Walled City areas, as "Indraprastha Virasat Redevelopment Corporation", sources said on Tuesday. The name change was proposed, finalised, and approved at the last SDRC Board meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on March 13 this year, they said.

"The Board, after due consultations and deliberations, approved the proposal to change the name of the company from Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation to Indraprastha Virasat Redevelopment Corporation," an official document

said. With the Board's approval, the only formality remaining is the registration of the new name with the Registrar of Companies. Several delegations had earlier met the chief minister and requested that the



government rename the SDRC, officials said.

Gupta said the time has come for a comprehensive restructuring and revival of the company. The

government will not only change the Board's name but also use it to accelerate the "real redevelopment" of Old Delhi and the Shahjahanabad area, she said.

Indraprastha is the Mahabharata-era name for the present-day national capital, while the SDRC is named after Shahjahanabad, built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, who also oversaw the construction of the iconic Jama Masjid and Red Fort in Old Delhi.

The Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation is a special purpose vehicle set up under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. It is tasked with protecting and conserving heritage sites, including ancient city walls, gates, bridges, vistas, public spaces, edicts, and rock-cut formations, while also improving civic services such as water supply, sewerage, electricity, and public transport.

Delhi Clears 4.7-km Flood Protection Wall Along Yamuna River

Delhi government has cleared a 4.72-km flood protection wall along the Yamuna River, targeting one of the city's most flood-prone stretches.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi government has cleared a 4.72-km flood protection wall along the Yamuna River, targeting one of the city's most flood-prone stretches. The wall will come up from Majnu Ka Tila to the Old Railway Bridge along the Ring Road.

"Repeated Flooding Behind Decision"

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the move follows years of flooding. "The decision is rooted in the city's repeated experience with severe flooding," she said, adding that the project aims to move beyond temporary measures.

Why This Stretch Matters

Low lying areas such as Civil Lines, Kashmere Gate, Yamuna Bazaar and Majnu Ka Tila are among the worst

affected when water levels rise. Floodwaters have often spilled onto the Ring Road here, disrupting traffic and daily life.



2023 Floods Put Spotlight On Risk

The urgency comes after the 2023 floods, when the Yamuna touched a record 208.66 metres, surpassing the 1978 peak and inundating large parts of the city. In 2025, the river again crossed the danger mark, reaching 207.48 metres, pointing to a recurring pattern.

Expert Study Flags Vulnerability

The plan follows recommendations from a Joint Flood Committee, based on studies by the Central Water and Power Research Station, which identified this stretch as highly exposed to flooding.

Marathi mandatory for auto, taxi drivers in Maharashtra from May 1; licences at risk

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Maharashtra government has made it mandatory for licensed autorickshaw and taxi drivers in the state to demonstrate basic knowledge of Marathi from May 1. The transport department will soon launch a verification drive across 59 regional and sub-regional transport offices across the state.

State transport minister Pratap Sarnaik, in a statement, has said auto drivers should be able to read and write Marathi or their licenses will be cancelled.

"From May 1, coinciding with Maharashtra Day, it will be mandatory for all licensed rickshaw and taxi drivers to know Marathi. A state-wide inspection campaign will be conducted through 59 regional and sub-regional offices of the Motor Transport Department to verify if drivers can read and write the language, the statement read.



Rule already in place, minister says

Sarnaik added that the rule is already in place for the drivers to have the knowledge of the local language but many choose to ignore. He added that the transport department has received complaints from various parts of the state including Mumbai, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and Nagpur about drivers being either unwilling or unable to communicate with passengers in Marathi.

"It is everyone's duty to learn the language of the region where they conduct business. While it is important to be proud of one's mother tongue, it is equally vital to respect the state's language while working there," Sarnaik added.

What the minister said about misuse

Speaking about the implementation and possible misuse of the directive, Sarnaik warned of strict action against transport officials found guilty of issuing licenses without following the rules.

Meanwhile, drivers' unions have said that they will challenge the order in high court saying the order will have a bearing on their livelihood. A report mentioned that there could be random checks of drivers knowledge of Marathi language by flying squads of RTOs. Moreover, camps will be set up at RTOs and drivers will be called to demonstrate their knowledge of Marathi.

Bride-to-be critical after acid attack in Delhi days before wedding

Police allege that the attack was carried out by a 26-year-old woman who was reportedly in a relationship with the groom-to-be.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 21-year-old woman is battling for her life after an acid attack in the Indira Vihar area of New Delhi, police reported. The victim was immediately taken to Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital, where doctors have stated that her condition remains critical.

An FIR has been registered under Section 124(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Gokalpuri Police Station, and an investigation is currently underway. A forensic team has also inspected the scene and collected evidence.

Preliminary findings suggest that the victim was set to be married on April 19. Police allege that the attack was carried out by a 26-year-old woman who was reportedly in a relationship with the groom-to-be. The accused is said to have thrown acid on the victim while she was preparing for her mehendi ceremony at home.

According to a neighbour, the victim belongs to a large family with five sisters and one brother and is known to be a bright student. The accused was also described as academically accomplished and had reportedly cleared a teacher's examination.

The incident has deeply shocked the local community, particularly as it occurred just days before the wedding. Residents and family members are calling for swift and strict action against the accused, who has since been arrested. Further investigation is ongoing.

In a separate incident on March 9 in Gurugram, another acid attack was reported in Sector 10. In that case, the assault was reportedly due to mistaken identity.

The victim, who lived with her boyfriend, was allegedly subjected to ongoing physical abuse. While receiving treatment at a hospital, she became the target of the attack. Police later arrested a woman named Shakshi, who admitted during questioning that she had attacked the wrong person without properly identifying the victim.

NEWS BOX

Viktor Axelsen retires at 32 in shock call, explains decision in emotional Insta post

New Delhi. (Agency)

Danish shuttler Viktor Axelsen announced his retirement from professional badminton on Wednesday, April 15. The reigning Olympic champion's decision came as a shocker to the badminton fraternity, but he explained that following recurring back issues, his body was not ready for the rigours of professional badminton. Axelsen, who became only the second man after the legendary Lin Dan to defend his Olympic gold medal in 2024, last competed on the tour in French Open in October 25. His last major title came at the India Open last year after which he was



constantly troubled by back injury concerns. "Today is not an easy day for me..." Axelsen said in an emotional statement on Instagram. Due to my recurrent back issues, I am no longer able to compete and train at the highest level. After undergoing endoscopic surgery, multiple injections, new training methods, treatments, and basically trying everything to become pain-free for a long time now, I have been advised to focus on my long-term health. Accepting this situation has been incredibly difficult. But I have now reached a point where my body won't allow me to continue," he said.

The year 2025 marked a harrowing turning point in Axelsen's career, as the physical toll of a decade at the summit finally caught up with him. In April 2025, he underwent endoscopic surgery to repair a disc herniation, a procedure that sidelined him for over five months and forced him to miss the World Championships in Paris. His recovery was far from linear; upon his return in September, he suffered a sobering first-round exit at the Hong Kong Open, admitting that performing at a relatively low level was a psychological hurdle as much as a physical one. Despite a brief flash of brilliance with a bronze at the Denmark Open, a severe setback involving chronic nerve pain in late 2025 effectively ended his season. This persistent agony, which made even basic training impossible, ultimately led to his retirement.

IPL 2026: RCB sweat on Virat Kohli's fitness, seek table-topping win vs LSG

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The Royal Challengers Bengaluru have made a strong start to their IPL 2026 campaign, winning three of their first four matches. However, they face a concern ahead of their clash against the Lucknow Super Giants on Wednesday, April 15 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.



Virat Kohli picked up an ankle injury during RCB's 18-run win over the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. With Kohli and Salt forming a settled opening pair, his absence could disrupt RCB's balance. The Rishabh Pant-led Super Giants, meanwhile, have had a mixed campaign, winning two of their four matches and lingering in the bottom half of the table. Led by Rishabh Pant, they will need to step up if they are to break into the top four.

WILL KOHLI PLAY AGAINST LSG?

Virat Kohli picked up an injury, and while there's no confirmation that he will miss the game, he hasn't been officially cleared either. However, RCB fans can take some comfort from the fact that he returned to the nets, facing bowlers and throwdown specialists, and showed no visible discomfort while batting.

Fast bowler Rasikh Salam Dar, though, chose not to comment on Kohli's fitness in the pre-match press conference. Earlier, there was speculation on social media that Kohli might stay back in Mumbai and skip the trip to Bengaluru. But with him having travelled to Bengaluru, it certainly boosts RCB's hopes. If Kohli is unavailable, RCB could look at Venkatesh Iyer as an opening option. Iyer has batted only once in the tournament after coming in as an Impact Sub against Rajasthan Royals, making 29 off 15 balls.

CAN LSG BREAK THE BENGALURU JINX?

Lucknow Super Giants haven't quite been at their best, and heading into their next game, history isn't on their side either.

FC Barcelona come undone as Atletico Madrid return to Champions League semifinals

FC Barcelona's early dominance wasn't enough as Atletico Madrid advanced to the UEFA Champions League semifinals, continuing Barca's struggles in Europe after another knockout exit.

Madrid. (Agency)

The final whistle at the Metropolitan was followed by a release of noise that had been building all night. For Atletico Madrid, it meant survival and progression. For FC Barcelona, it marked another European opportunity that slipped away despite a commanding start. Barcelona won 2-1 in Madrid, but Atletico Madrid advanced 3-2 on aggregate to reach the UEFA Champions League semifinals for the first time since 2016/17. Long after the match ended, Diego Simeone stayed on the pitch, taking in the celebrations with his players and the home



crowd. It was a familiar sight, one that reflected both continuity and belief.

LAMINE LEADS FAST START

Barcelona began with purpose and quickly imposed themselves on the game. Lamine Yamal opened the scoring inside four minutes after finding space in the box, continuing his rapid rise on the European stage. The goal also saw him become the youngest player to reach 11 goals in the

competition, moving past Kylian Mbappé's previous mark. The early breakthrough set the tone. Barcelona pressed high, forced errors and moved the ball with confidence. Atletico struggled to settle as the visitors dictated the tempo. The second goal arrived in the 24th minute. Ferran Torres finished from close range after a well-timed pass from Dani Olmo, bringing the aggregate score level and shifting momentum firmly in

Barcelona's favour. At that stage, Barcelona had control of both the game and the tie. They continued to create chances and looked capable of going further ahead. Ferran Torres came close with a header that was saved, a moment that would later prove costly. Atletico, however, remained patient. Their response came before halftime when Ademola Lookman scored from close range after a low cross by Marcos Llorente. That goal restored Atletico's aggregate lead and altered the direction of the contest. Barcelona continued to push after the break and thought they had found a way back when Torres scored again, but the goal was ruled out for offside. The margins began to tighten.

Their task became more difficult in the closing stages when Eric Garcia was sent off. Even then, there was one final opportunity, but Ronald Araujo headed over in stoppage time.

'IT NEVER HAPPENED'

For a brief period, even FC Barcelona believed the comeback was on. During their early dominance, the club's official account posted "IT'S HAPPENING!!!!!!", capturing the mood as Barcelona took control of the game.

Barcelona vs Atletico Madrid: Fermin Lopez suffers horror injury in quarter-finals

Fermin Lopez suffered a nasty facial injury after being struck by Juan Musso's boot during Barcelona's Champions League quarter-final clash against Atletico Madrid. The incident led to a lengthy stoppage as the midfielder received treatment on the pitch.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Barcelona's Fermin Lopez suffered a horror injury in the first half of Barcelona vs Atletico Madrid's second-leg clash in the Champions League quarter-final. Fermin, diving to score what could have been Barcelona's third goal of the match, was struck by Atleti goalkeeper Juan Musso's boot. Fermin, who attempted a diving header inside the box, made contact with the ball and headed it wide, before being caught by the outstretched left leg of the goalkeeper. Musso's studs struck the Barcelona No. 16 on the face. Fermin went to ground immediately, with blood falling onto the pitch. Cameras showed the scene briefly but cut away soon, as Fermin struggled to get back to his feet after the collision. The injury came during

Barcelona's exceptional start to the second leg of the tie. Lamine Yamal, Dani Olmo and Ferran Torres' brilliance handed Barcelona a



2-0 lead within the first 24 minutes of the game. Lamine Yamal began the game in sensational fashion, capitalising on a defensive mistake. He intercepted the ball

outside the box and then slipped the ball between the keeper's legs to open the scoring in the 4th minute. Ferran Torres doubled the lead for the visitors with a sublime left-footed finish 20 minutes later. As Barcelona pushed for their third goal in the minutes following the second, Fermin unfortunately ended up clattering into the keeper's boot.

Notably, the referee did not show any card to Musso for the challenge.

Fermin's injury handed Atletico the perfect break to counter Barcelona, and they hit back with a goal through Ademola Lookman in the 31st minute. For context, Barcelona came into this game with a 0-2 deficit. They will need to overturn that if they are to go through to the semi-finals of the UEFA Champions League.

Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury in negotiations over November bout: promoter

LONDON. (Agency)

British heavyweight rivals Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury are on course to meet in a long-awaited bout in November, according to promoter Eddie Hearn. Hearn on Tuesday said he was "pretty sure" the pair will finally meet later this year. Fury made his latest comeback following 16 months in retirement when he defeated Arslanbek Makhmudov on points on Saturday.

Following that bout, Netflix announced on social media that the richest fight in British boxing history had been agreed between Fury and Joshua. Hearn said the streaming service jumped the gun but he is confident the fight will happen. Joshua first needs to get back in the ring for a warm-up fight after his victory over YouTube star Jake Paul in December in his only appearance in 19 months. "We received the

contracts at the end of last week for their proposal of the two fights and we've been going back and forward and we continue to do that," Hearn said. "My instructions from

to go back with a lot of stuff.

It's nothing major, a little bit about who he fights in July, when he fights, where the fight's going to be." Fury was trying to palm

it off that we've had our warm-up fight against Jake Paul, which I thought was a bit cheeky, but I expect us to fight someone of the same kind of level as Makhmudov and then fight Fury. "The deal that we've been offered is not to fight Tyson Fury straight away, and that's our preferred option. We're happy with that and we expect to be out in July and then fight Fury in November."

Joshua was involved in a car crash in Nigeria in December that killed two of his close friends. In the next fortnight he is expected to be given the all-clear by medics to resume full training after sustaining injuries in the accident. The 36-year-old has been spending time working on his conditioning in Ukraine with WBC, WBA and IBF champion Oleksandr Usyk.



AJ are to make the fight and that's what we'll be trying to do. I wouldn't really say there are sticking points, but obviously when you receive a contract it's very natural

CSK vs KKR: How MS Dhoni's words sparked Noor Ahmad's turnaround at Chepauk

CSK vs KKR: Noor Ahmad starred with 3/21 as CSK beat KKR, with bowling coach Sriram revealing how MS Dhoni's advice and Akeal Hosen's inputs helped the spinner find his rhythm at Chepauk.

Chennai. (Agency)

On a surface that rewarded patience and precision, Noor Ahmad delivered a decisive spell to help Chennai Super Kings secure a 32-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Tuesday. Defending 192 on a two-paced Chepauk track, Noor returned figures of 3 for 21, removing Ajinkya Rahane, Rinku Singh and Cameron Green as KKR collapsed from 79 for 2 to 90 for 6. It was good. The wicket helped today. There was a little bit of turn for

him. The other wickets are quite flat, but today it was a little slower through the air. There was more side spin on the ball and more drop," CSK bowling coach Sridharan Sriram said after the match. While conditions played a part, Sriram pointed to preparation as a key factor behind Noor's turnaround. "That is something he has been working on. Even MS had a long chat with him in one of the practice sessions, especially about getting his leg-break going. I think it was very helpful today, and the results were there to see."

EXECUTION KEY

Noor's impact was built on finding the right length on a surface that offered grip. "Being able to get some deviation off the surface is very important, and that is what he has been working on. Everyone accepts that there will be days when wickets

are flat, but still looking to be aggressive, putting revs on the ball and getting it to spin will help. That is how you induce mistakes,"



Sriram explained. There was also key input during the innings from fellow spinner Akeal Hosen. "In his first over, he was either a bit

short or slightly too full. Once he found that in-between length, he became very difficult to play. Credit to Akeal as well because he pointed that out during the strategic timeout."

DHONI INFLUENCE

Sriram also highlighted the role of MS Dhoni, whose interaction with Noor during training helped sharpen his approach.

"One of his strengths is that he gets late movement. His release is very good and the ball moves late. When he gets it right consistently, it becomes difficult for batters."

Beyond skill, Sriram emphasised Noor's preparation and awareness.

"He is a very good student of the game. He analyses batters, studies where to place his fielders and understands what speeds to bowl. He comes prepared."



Rinku Singh overhyped? Ex-captain says KKR star not good enough for No. 5 role

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Former India captain Kris Srikkanth has raised concerns over Kolkata Knight Riders' continued support for Rinku Singh, suggesting that the batter has not lived up to expectations and is still riding the wave of his five consecutive sixes that brought him fame in the Indian Premier League. Srikkanth's remarks followed KKR's 32-run defeat to Chennai Super Kings in Chennai on Tuesday, where they struggled to chase a target of 192 on a competitive Chepauk wicket. Srikkanth expressed doubts about Rinku Singh's suitability for the No. 5 position, questioning his ability to construct lengthy innings. The former selection committee chairman described KKR's batting line-up as the weakest in the league. Rinku Singh is not an explosive



player. He hit five sixes in five balls ages ago, and we keep talking about that. He is adept at rotating the strike, but he can struggle when the required run rate exceeds 10 or 12. He can't do it," Srikkanth stated on his YouTube show on Tuesday. "He is more suited for the No. 7 position as a finisher. He can perform when 50 runs are needed off 5 overs. Rinku shouldn't be tasked with batting at No. 5 to build an innings. It won't work," he added, noting that Rinku has been playing the finisher's role for the senior national team as well.

During Tuesday's match, Rinku Singh came to bat when KKR were at 79 for 3 in the 10th over. After losing Angkrish Raghuvanshi for 27, captain Ajinkya Rahane, who was also struggling, needed an accelerating partner. However, Rinku struggled and was dismissed by Noor Ahmed after scoring just 6 off 12 balls, marking another disappointing performance. KKR's innings faltered further to 90 for 6 before Rovman Powell (31) and Ramandeep Singh (35) attempted a recovery.

AI specialist, content creator among fastest-growing roles for fresh graduates in India: Report

New Delhi, (Agency)

Fresh graduates entering India's job market are seeing rising demand for new-age roles such as AI specialists, generative AI engineers, and digital content creators, a report said on Wednesday. The data compiled by LinkedIn highlighted how the evolving employment landscape is opening up opportunities beyond traditional career paths, driven by rapid technological adoption and changing business needs. The data showed that opportunities are no longer confined to core technology roles, with business and people-centric functions also witnessing strong growth. Entry-level hiring is expanding across human resources, consulting, information technology, marketing, program and project management, and business development, as per the report.

Industries such as utilities, education, government administration, transportation and logistics, and energy technology are emerging as key growth areas for early-career professionals.

This indicates that sectors traditionally not seen as prime destinations for freshers are now playing a significant role in job creation. Nirajita Banerjee, Career Expert and India Senior Managing Editor at LinkedIn News, said that young professionals should remain open to unconventional career paths in a rapidly changing job market. "It could be in a different industry, a new city, or a role you hadn't considered. In today's dynamic jobs market where skills can travel across sectors, it is critical that professionals build a versatile skill set," Banerjee said. Early careers are increasingly shaped by experiences across roles and industries. While the path to a first job isn't always linear, being open to diverse experiences can help you build momentum and find the right fit," Banerjee added. The report also points to the rising importance of smaller companies as entry points into the workforce.

Sensex jumps 1,300 points as Trump signals Iran war near end

New Delhi, (Agency)

Indian equity markets opened on a strong note on Wednesday, with both benchmark indices rallying sharply amid easing geopolitical concerns after signals of a possible de-escalation in tensions between the United States and Iran. Investor sentiment improved after US President Donald Trump indicated that the conflict with Iran could be nearing its end, raising hopes of stability in global markets. During early trade, the Nifty surged 1.61 per cent, or 392.75 points, to trade at 24,237.70. The Sensex also climbed 1.70 per cent, or 1,303 points, to 78,150.54. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, market experts said that the immediate support is seen at 23,900-24,000, while resistance is placed at 24,250-24,300. Market volatility cooled significantly, with the Nifty India Volatility Index dropping 15.4 per cent to 17.34 soon after the opening bell. The sharp decline in the volatility gauge suggests that traders expect reduced uncertainty in the near term.

Broader markets outperformed the frontline indices, with the Nifty MidCap and Nifty SmallCap indices rising 2.09 per cent and 2.10 per cent, respectively. On the sectoral front, PSU banks and IT stocks led the gains, while the pharma sector lagged behind and emerged as the worst performer in early trade. Meanwhile, crude oil prices also eased in the Asian session, adding to the positive sentiment. Brent crude futures for the April contract slipped 0.36 per cent to \$94.45 per barrel, as hopes grew that any potential disruption at the Strait of Hormuz could be avoided with progress in US-Iran talks.

India's wholesale inflation climbs to 3.88% in March: Govt data

New Delhi, (Agency)

India's wholesale inflation, measured by the All India Wholesale Price Index (WPI), rose to 3.88% in March 2026, according to provisional data released by the government. The year-on-year increase, compared with March 2025, reflects a broad-based rise in prices across key sectors. The Ministry of Commerce & Industry attributed the uptick mainly to higher prices of crude petroleum and natural gas, manufactured goods, non-food articles, basic metals, and food items. On a monthly basis, wholesale prices gained momentum, with WPI rising 1.64% over February 2026. The primary articles segment, which holds a 22.62% weight in the index, increased by 2.28%, with its index climbing from 192.9 to 197.3. Within this category, crude petroleum and natural gas prices surged sharply by 36.16%, while mineral prices saw a marginal rise of 0.12%. In contrast, food articles and non-food articles declined by 0.85% and 0.22%, respectively. The fuel and power index rose 4.13% to 153.7, driven largely by an 8.77% increase in mineral oil prices. However, this was partially offset by a 5.07% drop in electricity prices.

Manufacturing, which carries the largest weight in WPI at 64.23%, recorded a 0.88% increase. Sixteen out of 22 industry groups saw price gains, particularly in food products, chemicals, basic metals, and textiles. Meanwhile, prices declined in sectors such as machinery and equipment, beverages, and computer and electronic products.

The WPI Food Index, which combines food articles and manufactured food products, edged down slightly from 192.9 in February to 192.8 in March. Despite this marginal monthly dip, its annual inflation rate remained unchanged at 1.85%. The Ministry also released final data for January 2026, showing overall wholesale inflation at 1.68% for that month.

Gold loans register sharp growth

New Delhi, (Agency)

Gold loans witnessed massive rise to become India's second-largest retail credit product by balance share after housing loans, according to TransUnion CIBIL's Gold Loan Landscape Report. Gold loans share in retail credit portfolio has risen 3.8 times from 5.9% in March 2022 to 11.1% by December 2025. Housing loans with 27.8% share by balance as of December 2025 forms the largest retail credit product. Gold loans have cornered 39% of all incremental credit disbursements in December quarter, vastly outpacing housing loans that otherwise is the largest retail credit segment netting only 11% of the fresh loans. For the period between March 2022 and December 2025, home loans remain the largest retail credit portfolio, with a total outstanding of ₹44 trillion or 27.8% of the total, while gold loans come second with ₹16 trillion outstanding, cornering 11.1% of the total retail credit, the report stated. "Driven by the record rally in gold prices in 2025, when looked at from an incremental loan disbursement, gold loans

have overtaken housing loan, which otherwise is the largest retail credit segment to become the largest with a share of 39% in the December 2025 quarter, as against the meagre 11% for home loans," Bhavesh Jain, chief executive, TransUnion Cibil told TNE on Tuesday. Gold loan origination value has risen 5.1x since Q1 of 2022 and the average ticket size has more than doubled from ₹90,000 to ₹1.96 lakh, Jain said.

Prime and above prime borrowers now account for nearly 52% of originations, highlighting a broader and stronger borrower base in the gold loan market, he said citing the data from their latest report. Gold loan balances have grown 3.8x since March 2022, with their share in the retail credit portfolio rising from 5.9% to 11.1% by December 2025.

The growth reflects rising borrower adoption, higher ticket sizes, broader lender participation, and a borrower profile that increasingly includes consumers and women borrowers with

more extensive credit histories.

This massive growth has been especially strong among pure-play gold loan companies like the Muthoots, the Manappurams and IIFLs, which



increased their share from 7% in March 2022 to 11% in December, while public sector banks continue to dominate the market and increased their share from 57% to 62% during this period and the rest of the pie is with private sector banks. Supply trends point to a sharp expansion in market activity as prices have been on a roll, but Jain said there has been no

increase in delinquencies since the price crash in late January 30 when the prices plunged almost 13% on a single day after CME prices crossed \$5600 an ounce on January 29, a record 40% rally in January

alone on the back of an 80% in 2025 and 24% in 2024 and 23% in 2023. As of end February there is no asset quality issue, he said. Borrower profiles are also changing, the report said. The share of prime and above prime borrowers rose from 43% in 2022 to around 52% in 2025, while new-to-credit participation declined from 12% to 6%, suggesting that gold loans are becoming more broad-based and diverse in the borrower profiles. Women accounted for 39% of gold loan originations by volume in 2025, up from 36% in 2022, with strong growth visible not only in the South but also across Western and Northern states with more and more demand coming in from Telangana, UP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and MP.

Zero tax to pay? 3 big reasons why you should still file your ITR

New Delhi, (Agency)

Many people believe that if there is no tax to pay, filing an Income Tax Return (ITR) is not needed. But that is not quite true. Even in FY 2025-26, a nil tax return can be useful in more ways than one. With the filing season for AY 2026-27 approaching, it is worth understanding why skipping ITR filing may not be a good idea, even when your tax liability is zero.

HELPS YOU GET TAX REFUNDS WITHOUT TROUBLE

Even if your total tax comes to zero, tax may still have been deducted at source (TDS). This can happen on fixed deposits, freelance income or dividends. The only way to claim this money back is by filing your ITR. Without it, the refund simply stays unclaimed. So, a nil return can actually help you recover money that is rightfully yours.

IMPORTANT PROOF FOR LOANS AND CREDIT ACCESS

Most banks and financial institutions ask for Income Tax Return (ITR) documents while processing loan or

credit card applications. This is because ITRs serve as reliable proof of your income and financial behaviour over time. Even if your tax liability is zero, a properly filed nil return still carries value. In many cases, especially for freelancers, part-time earners or those



with irregular income, a nil ITR helps show that you are financially active and transparent about your earnings. It builds a record that lenders can trust.

While factors like your credit score, repayment history, age and overall financial profile also matter, having a consistent ITR filing record can improve your chances of approval. It

signals discipline and credibility, which can make a real difference when you apply for personal loans, home loans or even a simple credit card.

IMPORTANT FOR VISA AND IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS

Many countries such as the US, the UK and Canada often ask for Income Tax Return (ITR) records from the past three to five years while processing visa applications. These documents help authorities understand your financial position, stability and consistency of income over time.

Even if your tax liability is zero, regularly filing your ITR shows that you are financially organised and transparent. It adds to your credibility and can support your application by demonstrating that you have a steady financial background. Whether you are planning higher education, work opportunities or even short-term travel abroad, having a proper ITR history in place can make the process smoother and reduce the chances of delays or additional queries during visa checks.

Don't let these 5 mistakes weaken your term insurance cover

SYDNEY, (Agency)

Buying term insurance often feels like ticking an important box in your financial plan. It promises peace of mind that your family will be financially secure even if something happens to you. But while the idea is simple, the execution is not always perfect. Many people rush through the process or focus only on premiums, ignoring key details that matter later. These errors may not look serious at the time of purchase, but they can create big problems later when your family actually needs to make a claim. Here are five common mistakes to avoid. **CHOOSING A COVER THAT IS TOO LOW**

One of the most common mistakes is buying insufficient coverage. Many people try to keep premiums low and

end up selecting a sum assured that may not be enough for their family's needs. A well-chosen cover should protect your family's lifestyle and daily needs and help them manage existing financial obligations without difficulty.

IGNORING THE CLAIM SETTLEMENT RATIO

Price and brand often influence decisions, but many buyers overlook a very important factor — the claim settlement ratio. This ratio shows how many claims an insurer has successfully paid compared to those rejected. A higher ratio, ideally above 95%, indicates better reliability. Checking this detail can help ensure your family does not face difficulties during claim settlement.

DELAYING THE PURCHASE

Another frequent mistake is waiting too

long to buy term insurance. Many assume they are young and healthy, so they can buy it later. But this delay can be expensive. Premiums increase with age, and health issues can make policies costlier or even harder to get. Buying early, especially in your 20s or early 30s, helps lock in lower premiums and ensures long-term protection at a reasonable cost. **NOT DISCLOSING HEALTH DETAILS PROPERLY**

Skipping or hiding health information is a risky move. Some people do it to get lower premiums or quicker approvals, but it can backfire later. If the insurer finds missing or incorrect details, the claim can be rejected. It is always better to be honest about your medical history and existing policies to avoid complications for your family in the future.

22 years old startup employee quits job for delivery gigs, says he can earn Rs 40,000 per month

The post shared by a startup founder has drawn widespread discussion on social media with many users criticising Jain for not paying his employee a liveable wage to the point where he quit in favour of delivery work.

New Delhi, (Agency)

A startup founder has sparked widespread debate online after revealing that a young employee working with him quit to pursue delivery work. Akshat Jain, founder of Seeco Wealth, revealed that a 22-year-old employee working in his wealth management firm in Chennai quit his stable office job to work as a delivery driver. The employee saw higher earning potential in delivery work and claimed he could earn Rs 40,000 per month through delivery gigs. Jain said in an X post that the employee had great potential. Jain said that the office was grooming him, provided him with books and taught him



AI. The founder said that employee was seemingly satisfied and was capable of leading a department in five years. Jain explained that the employee started doing delivery work on the weekends to make extra income and later realised that he could earn more that way. The employee later resigned saying he could earn 35-40k by doing delivery work. The founder

said that he tried to explain to the employee that his health would not allow him to continue working for more than five years. The founder also told the employee that there is no career growth in delivery work and that he would not develop any corporate skills. Netizens React The post drew widespread discussion on social media with many

users criticising Jain for not paying his employee a liveable wage to the point where he quit in favour of delivery work. One user said, "Nice way to say that you were paying him by grooming him rather than paying him enough to survive. If he left you for 35k delivery job then it's easy to understand how much you were paying him. Food on plate is more important to most people rather than AI books and grooming for corporate skills."

Another user said, "R u paying him 15-20k even after u know he is talented, that's called exploitation is simple words, Although it's his mistake as well, that instead of switching at better pay he indulge himself in delivery work which offer no skills and no growth." A user commented, "Imagine paying skilled people peanuts that they realize gig work can earn better. Total exploitation."

One user said, "This story reflects more on your low pay and lousy work environment than the hard work he's putting in for himself. Reflect and change. People always leave a bad boss and money talks bullshit walks."

Taapsee Pannu

To Shoot A Blindfolded Action Sequence In Gandhari: Report

Actor Taapsee Pannu is working hard on her next film, Gandhari, and for that, the actress is gearing up to perform a unique sequence. As per the promotional material released, the story of the movie will revolve around a mother fighting to protect her child. A source close to HT has shared, "Taapsee Pannu is set to push boundaries like never before, performing intense action sequences while blindfolded, adding a whole new layer of challenge to her character." The source further continued, "This isn't just stunt work; rather, it's a new way of thinking about action heroes. In the blindfolded fight scenes, she cannot use her sight and must depend on instinct, muscle memory, and inner strength, turning her vulnerability into power."

The name of the film and the sequences draw an interesting



coincidence. For the unversed in the mythological legend Mahabharata, Gandhari, the Queen of Hastinapur, chose to wear a blindfold all her life to share the same fate as her blind husband, King Dhritrashtra. Some see this as a sign of devotion, while others view it as her way of protesting the fact that she was not told about his blindness before marriage. The blindfold is also often seen as a symbol of her blind love and pride for her sons, the Kauravas, who fought against the Pandavas and eventually died.

About the film

Gandhari, a revenge drama, is directed by Devashish Makhija. It is the film's setting that makes it different from others in its genre. Apart from Taapsee Pannu, Gandhari will also star Ishwak Singh in a key role. The film will be released on Netflix later this year. The team wrapped the filming schedule in March, as the actress shared via intriguing photos on Instagram.

For the unversed, Taapsee was last seen in the comedy entertainer Khel Khel Mein, which was released in August last year. Helmed by Mudassar Aziz, the film also featured an ensemble cast including Akshay Kumar, Vaani Kapoor, Ammy Virk, Fardeen Khan, Aditya Seal, and Pragya Jaiswal.



Neetu Kapoor, Soni Razdan Wish Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor On 4th Wedding Anniversary: 'Blessings And Love'



Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor, one of Bollywood's most popular celebrity couples, are celebrating four years of marital bliss. On the occasion, their mothers, Soni Razdan and Neetu Kapoor, shared heartfelt posts extending their warm wishes. Soni Razdan posted a photograph of Alia and Ranbir from their Christmas celebrations, wishing them love and blessings. Neetu Kapoor also shared a picture of the couple, affectionately calling them her "heartbeats" while showering them with love on their wedding anniversary.

Neetu Kapoor And Soni Razdan Wish Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor

Neetu Kapoor took to her Instagram stories to share a lovely, unseen photo of Alia and Ranbir. The 'Jigra' actress looks radiant in a red dress, and is all smiles for the picture. Meanwhile, Ranbir is seen in a navy-blue t-shirt. "Blessings to my heartbeats," wrote Neetu Kapoor, along with several heart emojis.

Soni Razdan, meanwhile, shared a lovely photo of Alia and Ranbir from Christmas celebrations. In her caption, she showered love on the couple, and wrote, "Love you both. Blessings and love always."

Alia Bhatt And Ranbir Kapoor's Love Story

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor's love story began on the sets of Brahmastra Part One: Shiva, directed by Ayan Mukerji. The couple largely kept their relationship away from the media spotlight for a long time. After dating for several years, they got married on April 14, 2022, in an intimate ceremony at their Mumbai home, attended only by close friends and family.

A few months later, in June 2022, they announced their first pregnancy and welcomed their daughter Raha Kapoor on November 6, 2022.

'There Is No Day Off For Him': Chitrangda Singh Hails Salman Khan's Work Ethic



Chitrangda Singh is currently awaiting the release of her upcoming film with Salman Khan, Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace. The actress will be seen acing the role of Salman's wife in the movie, and ahead of its release, she has recalled shooting with the Bollywood superstar and shared how she is in awe of his work ethic. "I realized there is no day off for Salman. I mean, he's constantly thinking about work and the film; how he can better it, what else he can add to the VFX or any other part of the frame. That level of dedication requires something else. What I learned from him was how passionate he is about work. He is very interested in what is going on, even with other people's scenes," Chitrangda Singh shared while speaking to Variety India.

Sharing how Salman went to the sets even on the days when he didn't have to shoot, Chitrangda recalled, "There was this one day when we were shooting a pretty emotional scene for me that he was not part of. But he made sure he was there, and quite early in the day, to see that I was able to deliver the scene. He didn't have to be there, but he came because I was reacting to him on the phone, so he wanted to give me his lines. That is sheer dedication to the craft."

Salman Khan's Maatrubhumi to avoid mentioning China?

According to Bollywood Hungama, the film was initially inspired by a real-life event. However, following a request from the Ministry of Defence, Salman Khan and director Apoorva Lakhia reportedly reworked the project by adding a fictional spin to the narrative. A source shared with the portal, "One of the requests to Salman Khan was that China shouldn't be mentioned in the film. This was communicated to the makers in advance. The cut of Maatrubhumi, which was submitted earlier this month, has no mention of China."

More about Maatrubhumi

Earlier, the film was slated to release in April 2026. However, due to several changes, the makers decided to cancel the April release. It was later rumoured that the film might arrive in theatres in May 2026, but with the latest revisions, that now seems unlikely. The team is yet to announce a new release date.

Karan Johar's

Epic Response To Meryl Streep Saying 'We Have The Same Phone'

Bollywood multi-hyphenate Karan Johar had a witty reaction to Hollywood legend Meryl Streep when she told him that they have the same phone. KJo recently met Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway during 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' Tokyo tour. KJo, who is one of the most stylish filmmakers in Hindi cinema and a Meryl Streep fan, had his moment when he accidentally dropped his phone, and Meryl Streep, who leaned forward to help him pick his phone, said, "We have the same phone, Karan".

'The Devil Wears Prada 2' is an upcoming sequel to the 2006 film, with an official trailer released ahead of its planned May 1, 2026 theatrical debut. The film is directed by David Frankel and written by Aline Brosh McKenna, and brings back original cast members including Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, and Emily Blunt. Earlier, Meryl Streep appeared on the chat show 'The Late Show with Stephen Colbert', and told the host, "20 years ago, it was categorized as a chick flick, and that designation has kind of not worn well, you know, after 'Barbie' and 'Mamma Mia', and other films that completely catch the studios by surprise that people want to see them, because they have girls in the center of the story, women in the center of the story".

She further mentioned, "So they were not, we had to scramble for our budget. And that was true. I think I've talked to Greta Gerwig about it. That was true with Barbie a little bit, in comparison to what they spend on other films. This one, honey, they spent the money".

'The Devil Wears Prada 2' also stars Kenneth Branagh, Simone Ashley, Justin Theroux, Lucy Liu, Patrick Brammall, Caleb Hearon, Helen J. Shen, Pauline Chalamet, B. J. Novak, and Conrad Ricamora, Tracie Thoms and Tibor Feldman. The film is set to release in cinemas on May 1, 2026.



Try these Quirky summer concoctions to beat the heat

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

Magical mango-kokum mocktail

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

Wonderful watermelon mojito

Come summers and watermelons make their way to everyone's kitchens. An engineer Satyajit Mitra loves to experiment with this seasonal fruit every summer and this season he has perfected the watermelon mojito. "I tried some fruit beverages when I was in the US. Now, whenever there is a get together at our home I don a chef's cap and come out with some amazing mocktail for them. This year, it is my watermelon mojito recipe that has garnered me a good feedback.

This is one drink which kids also enjoy. I garnish it with pudina as for me the presentation is of utmost importance."

Mint Sharbat

Family members of homemaker Nikita Malu are smitten with the soothing Mint Sharbat that she prepares these days. "Add a lot of mint, sugar syrup, soda and the refreshing sharbat is ready. It is a great coolant and a must have. It is more of an indianised form of mojito and is a quick preparation. I make it every alternate day."

Soothing Solkadhi

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

Beneficial sattu sharbat

Another fantastic summer cooler that

many we are enjoying is sattu sharbat. Chartered accountant Anjali Divecha says, "My husband is a foodie and this inspires me to experiment with innovative summer drinks. While I do



Recipe: Paneer Veg Rolls

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

Paneer Veg Rolls

Image via YouTube video

Ingredients:

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

Method:

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



Are you drinking the Right water?

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

water we drink on various occasions.

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

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

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

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

Flavoured water:

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

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

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

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

Recipe: Apple Halwa

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

Ingredients:

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



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

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

