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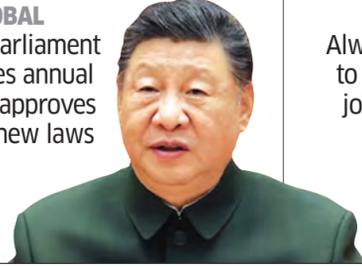


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Always wanted to do a tough job: Bumrah



## PIONEER IN SHORT

### PRESIDENT TURNS DOWN TMC MEET

A request by Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs to meet President Droupadi Murmu was declined by Rashtrapati Bhavan citing "paucity of time," sources said on Thursday, amid an escalating political row in West Bengal. A senior TMC leader had written to the President on March 9 seeking an appointment for a 12-15 member delegation of party MPs and State ministers. The delegation intended to brief the President on welfare initiatives undertaken by the Government led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for "inclusive development." The President's office, however, conveyed that the request could not be accommodated due to time constraints. The party has since written again seeking an appointment next week. The development follows controversy during Murmu's recent visit to Bagdogra for an international Santal tribal conference, where she expressed disappointment over the low turnout and the absence of the Chief Minister or any State minister at the airport. Banerjee accused the President of speaking "on the advice of the BJP," while the BJP strongly criticised the State Government.

# LPG panic hurts country, fuel supplies secure, says PM Modi

RAJESH KUMAR  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday warned those blackmarketing LPG and fuel, saying action will be taken against such elements. Addressing panic around the LPG crisis, he said those creating fear are exposing themselves and hurting the country. Modi highlighted India's energy security measures, noting that strategic petroleum reserves have grown to over 50 lakh tonnes and household LPG connections have risen from 14 crore in 2014 to 33 crore. He also cited doubled LNG terminals and efforts to shield citizens from the Russia-Ukraine crisis, keeping urea prices at ₹300 despite global costs of ₹3,000 per bag.

Earlier in the day, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told the Lok Sabha that India's crude oil supply remains secure despite the conflict in West Asia, even as the disruption



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a private event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Thursday

### PM MODI TALKS TO IRANIAN PRESIDENT

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi on Thursday evening had a conversation with Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian. PM Modi expressed his concern over the escalating tensions, loss of lives and damage to civilian infrastructure. "The safety and security of Indian nationals, along with the need for unhindered transit of goods and energy, remain India's top priorities. I reiterated India's commitment to peace and stability and urged for dialogue and diplomacy," PM Modi posted on social media.

has increased to about 70 per cent. He, however, conceded that the world had "not faced a moment like this in energy history."

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## KEROSENE, COAL BROUGHT BACK AMIDST LPG SHORTAGE

RAJESH KUMAR  
New Delhi

Amid the LPG shortage across India, the Government has temporarily reintroduced kerosene for households and coal for hotels and restaurants due to disruptions in energy supply from Gulf countries. An additional 48,000 kilolitres of kerosene have been allocated to States on top of the regular quarterly quota of one lakh kl for cooking fuel.

Environmental authorities have also approved the temporary use of biomass, RDF pellets, kerosene, and coal as alternate fuel in the hospitality and restaurant sector for one month.

This is the first increase in kerosene allocation in over a decade, temporarily reversing the Government's long-term plan to phase out the subsidised fuel.

Delhi was declared India's first kerosene-free city in 2014, replacing household kerosene with LPG to reduce pollution and fire risks.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## Hormuz must remain closed, says Khamenei



Mojtaba Khamenei attending the Jerusalem Day rally

ASHOKE RAJ  
New Delhi

Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, in his first statement since assuming office, said the Strait of Hormuz must remain closed as leverage against the United States and warned that attacks on Middle East neighbours would continue as the conflict escalates.

The message, read out on Iranian State television on Thursday, came amid ongoing US-Israeli strikes on Tehran and growing tensions across the region.

Khamenei also warned that American military bases operating in the region could face attacks if they remain active.

"I recommend that they close those bases as soon as possible, because they must have realised by now that the claim of establishing security and peace by America was nothing more than a lie," he said.

Khamenei said Iran would seek compensation from its adversaries for the damage caused during the war.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## The Bystander



## After no-trust defeat, Birla reasserts Speaker's role



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla greeting the House before conducting proceedings on Thursday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Om Birla on Thursday resumed his duties as Speaker of the Lok Sabha and asserted that his actions as presiding officer were impartial, a day after an Opposition-backed no-confidence motion against him was defeated in Parliament.

Addressing the House, Birla said members may personally agree or disagree with decisions taken by the Chair, but it remained his duty to enforce the rules, procedures and traditions governing the functioning of the Lok Sabha.

He emphasised that the House operates strictly according to established rules and that no member has the privilege to speak whenever he or she wishes. If any member behaves contrary to the decorum of the House, he said, the Chair would be com-

elled to take strict action to preserve its dignity.

He added that whether it is the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), or any other member, all can speak only by following procedures laid down in the rules of the House.

"Waving placards, shouting slogans, tearing papers or climbing on desks are contrary to our great parliamentary traditions. Such behaviour not only disrupts proceedings but also diminishes the prestige of the House," he said. Referring to objections raised by some members, Birla addressed criticism that the LoP Rahul Gandhi was not allowed to table a magazine article based on the unpublished memoir of former Army chief Manoj Mukund Naravane on the 2020 India-China conflict.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## Iran allows Indian oil tankers through Strait of Hormuz

ASHOKE RAJ  
New Delhi

Iran on Thursday permitted Indian oil tankers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz following discussions between External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. The talks focused on safeguarding India's energy supply as tensions escalate across West Asia.

Addressing the issue, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that senior-



A Liberia-flagged tanker carrying crude oil that arrived clearing the Strait of Hormuz at the Mumbai Port in Mumbai on Thursday

level contacts between the two countries had taken place in recent days.

"EAM and FM of Iran have had three conversations in the last few days. The last one discussed issues pertaining to safety of shipping and India's energy security. Beyond that, it would be premature for me to say anything," Jaiswal said during a weekly media briefing. The objective of the diplomatic outreach was to keep the sea route open for Indian ships so that shipments of crude oil and liquefied natural gas continue without major interruptions. India remains

heavily dependent on energy imports, making stability in Gulf shipping lanes crucial for the country's energy security.

While Iranian authorities have reportedly allowed Indian tankers to continue using the route, vessels linked to the United States, Europe, and Israel are currently facing restrictions in the waterway.

The EAM also held discussions with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot on maintaining stability in the region and ensuring the security of key maritime trade routes.

## God saved me: Farooq Abdullah after attack

MOHIT KANDHARI  
Jammu

Eighty-eight-year-old Farooq Abdullah on Thursday recounted surviving a late-night assassination attempt at a marriage function in Greater Kailash, Jammu, saying, "God saved me," in the presence of party colleagues and well-wishers at his Bhatindi residence.

The attack was carried out by 63-year-old Kamal Singh Jamwal, a resident of Purani Mandi, who allegedly told police he had



"wanted to kill Farooq Abdullah for the past 20 years." Jamwal opened fire at close range but was overpowered by security personnel.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## SC: Income not sole factor in creamy layer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that creamy layer status for reservation of OBCs cannot be decided solely based on parental income and treating similarly placed employees of private entities and PSUs differently from Government employees, for deciding reservation, would amount to hostile discrimination.

A bench of justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan dismissed appeals filed by the Union of India while upholding the decisions of the high



courts of Delhi, Madras and Kerala, which dealt with eligibility of candidates claiming OBC (Non-Creamy Layer) benefit for civil services examinations. The SC said mere determination of the status of a candidate as to whether they falls within the creamy layer or the non-creamy layer

of the OBCs cannot be decided solely on income. The court said that while caste may be an indicator of historical disadvantage, it cannot be treated as the sole determinant of backwardness.

"The exclusion of the creamy layer among the backward classes is not a matter of mere policy preference but a constitutional imperative intended to ensure that the benefits of reservation reach those who are socially and educationally backward in the true sense of the phrase," the bench said.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## MEGHALAYA CM CALLS FOR PEACE

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Thursday met party leaders and workers to discuss restoring peace and trust in the Garo Hills following recent election-related violence. Posting on X, Sangma, who is also National President of the National People's Party, said the meeting began and ended with prayers for peace and unity. The violence erupted in Tura earlier this week during protests linked to the upcoming Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections. Two people were killed in police firing, and incidents of arson, vandalism, and looting affected shops, markets, and a political office. Authorities imposed curfews in West and East Garo Hills districts and deployed additional security forces, with a limited relaxation for essential purchases.

J GOPIKRISHNAN  
New Delhi

The Punjab National Bank, looted by fugitives Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi, ranks third on India's largest defaulters list, with ₹2.59 lakh crore waiting to be recovered from large defaulters nationwide. The bank has filed 7,374 civil cases across the country to recover the amount.

According to TransUnion CIBIL data up to January 2026, Choksi and Nirav Modi's companies — Gitanjali Gems and Nakshatra Brands — have unpaid loans totaling ₹27,544 crore.

After Choksi and Nirav Modi fled India, the

### LARGE DEFAULTERS OF PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK

- Gitanjali Gems
- Nakshatra Brands
- ABG Shipyard
- Aban Off Shore
- Gupta Power Infrastructure
- Gill India
- Aban Holding PTE
- Lanco Group
- Hind Agro Industries
- Zoom Developers
- Krishna Knitwear Technology
- Winsome Diamonds and Jewellery
- Surana Group
- Vishal Exports Overseas
- Abhinav Steel and Power
- Satluj Spintex
- SKUMARS
- Siddhi Vinayak Logistic
- Kamachi Industries

- Visa Resources India
- Shakti Bhog Food
- Divine Alloys & Power
- Pioneer Gas Power
- Forest International
- Shri Lakshmi Cotsyn
- Shrenuj
- JAS Infrastructure and Power
- MOSER BEAR Group
- Actiff Corporation
- Coastal Project
- Kaur Sain Spinners
- Gupta Coal India
- Emmsons International
- PC Jeweller
- Vandana Vidhyut
- Dishnet Wireless
- Forever Precious Jewellery and Diamond

TOTAL DUES - ₹2.59 LAKH CRORE

Government removed PNB's MD Usha Ananthasubramanian. Multiple banks in a consortium provided huge loans to the duo. Top bankers indicate that such large loan disbursements require political backing and coordination among consortium

### The Pioneer

Exclusive

PART-5

banks. The consortium included Allahabad Bank, Andhra Bank, Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Canara Bank, CBI,

## Vendors struggle amid gas supply uncertainty

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA  
New Delhi

Concerns over rising LPG prices and uncertainty about availability are surfacing across several parts of Delhi, with residents and small vendors growing anxious about cooking gas.

While authorities maintain there is no shortage of supply, many people say panic bookings and delayed deliveries have created confusion on the ground, leading to long waits at distribution centres and growing frustration among consumers.

The situation was visible on



Thursday morning outside a gas agency in East Delhi's Geeta Colony, where a long queue of people carrying empty LPG cylinders stretched along the roadside. Some customers leaned against their cylinders while others stood quietly in line, staring at the closed office window of the distribution centre.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## CM Rekha urges girls to attain graduation-level education

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday said that all the girls in Delhi should attain at least a graduation-level education. Speaking at the convocation of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women, she said her government is working tirelessly to provide opportunities for women.

Addressing the students, the Chief Minister said that a convocation is not merely the end of academic life but the beginning of a new journey. She encouraged the students to move forward with curiosity, innovation and a strong sense of responsibility and to use their knowledge and technical skills for the greater good of society and the nation.



She noted that the 1,181 graduating students were not merely receiving degrees but were stepping out as future leaders who would shape the direction of society and the nation through their knowledge, skills and leadership. The chief minister said IGTUW has emerged as a leading institution for technical education for women in the country. The university plays a vital role in empowering women in fields such as engineering, science and technology, architecture and management.

Highlighting the Lakhpati Btiya Yojana introduced by the government, the chief minister said that under the scheme, each eligible girl will receive Rs 1.25 lakh after graduation. "I wish no girl in Delhi to remain without graduation. Girls should not only go to schools but also attend colleges and study their favourite courses and subjects," the chief minister said. She said India is now heading towards women-led development.

The chief minister urged the students of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women to not only fulfil their dreams and have a career but also to contribute towards the growth of society and the country.

Delhi Cabinet Minister Ashish Sood, IGTUW Vice Chancellor Prof. Ranjana Jha, faculty members, parents and a large number of students were present on the occasion.

## Assembly constitutes committee to select recipient of Annual Best Legislator Award

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Delhi Legislative Assembly has constituted a high-level committee to select the recipient of the Annual Best Legislator Award, an initiative aimed at encouraging better legislative performance and strengthening democratic values in the House. The committee was formed by Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta. Officials said the award will recognise Members of the Legislative Assembly who demonstrate outstanding commitment to public service and active participation in parliamentary proceedings.

According to a press release issued by the Delhi Legislative Assembly Secretariat, the initiative is part of a broader effort to improve the functioning of



the legislature and promote higher standards of debate and accountability. The award is also expected to encourage MLAs to participate more actively in discussions and raise public issues effectively.

The newly constituted selection committee will oversee the evaluation process and recommend the award recipient. The committee is chaired by Speaker Vijender Gupta and includes several prominent members

from legislative and public life. Members of the panel include former Lok Sabha MP Rajendra Aggarwal, former Lok Sabha Secretary General P. D. T. Acharya, Principal Secretary of Law, Justice and Legislative Affairs Reetesh Singh, a senior journalist, and Delhi Assembly Secretary Ranjeet Singh.

Officials said the diverse composition of the panel is intended to ensure transparency and fairness in the selection process. The com-

mittee has also established a detailed framework for evaluating the performance of legislators. MLAs will be assessed on several criteria, including their attendance in the House, the quality and relevance of their participation in debates, and the public issues they raise during proceedings.

Another important factor in the evaluation will be adherence to parliamentary decorum and discipline while participating in discussions. Officials said the aim is to recognise those legislators who contribute constructively and help strengthen democratic debate.

Speaker Vijender Gupta said the award is meant to highlight the importance of responsible legislative conduct. "The Best Legislator Award is not merely a trophy. It represents the sanctity of the House," he said.

## Fire breaks out at fish market in Uttam Nagar, 80 shanties gutted

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

A major fire broke out in a cluster of jhuggis at Mansa Ram Park near the fish market in Matiala in south-west Delhi on Wednesday night, gutting around 80 shanties and triggering a large-scale rescue operation. However, according to the police, no casualties were reported in the incident.

According to officials, the blaze erupted in the densely populated slum cluster and spread rapidly through the closely packed huts made of bamboo, plastic sheets, and tarpaulin. A PCR call reporting the fire was received at the Delhi Police station at

Bindapur at around 11.57 pm on Wednesday. Immediately after receiving the alert, a police team rushed to the spot and began evacuating residents from the shanties to safer locations. "All inhabitants of the shanties were safely evacuated, and the fire brigade was called to the spot," Deputy Commissioners of Police (Dwarka) Kushal Pal Singh said.

Officials said police personnel went door to door in the settlement to alert families as the flames spread quickly across the cluster.

The Delhi Fire Service also received information about the blaze at around 11.54 pm. Fire tenders were rushed to the site, and firefighting operations began shortly



Fire personnel at the site of a blaze near a fish market in Matiala village, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi

after. Fire officials said the flames spread across a large section of the cluster within minutes because of the highly flammable materials used in the makeshift houses.

Initially, more than 20 fire tenders were deployed to contain the blaze. As the fire intensified, additional engines were pressed into

service, taking the total number of fire tenders involved in the operation to around 28.

Firefighters battled the flames for several hours before bringing the situation under control at around 3 am on Thursday. Officials said cooling operations continued for several hours afterward to prevent any

fresh flare-ups in the area. Authorities confirmed that around 80 shanties were completely destroyed in the blaze. However, hundreds of residents managed to escape in time due to the swift evacuation carried out by police and firefighters.

During the firefighting and rescue operation, police personnel also prevented a potential explosion that could have worsened the situation. Head Constable Ramratan Saran, who was part of a PCR unit present at the site, noticed a locked car parked very close to the fire.

The officer realised that the vehicle was fitted with a CNG kit and that the intense heat from the flames could trigger an explosion. Acting quickly, he smashed the car window with a stone and ensured the vehicle was moved away from the burning structures.

## Govt to organise grand event on April 8 to mark World Banjara Day

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Delhi Government will organise a grand event on April 8 to mark World Banjara Day. The Art, Culture, and Language Minister Kapil Mishra said on Thursday that the Government will highlight the history, culture, and contributions of the Banjara community.

The announcement came during a meeting between the minister and a delegation of the Banjara Vimukt Ghumantu Kalyan Sangh at the Delhi Secretariat.

The meeting focused on preparations for the upcoming programme and ways to showcase the rich cultural traditions of the Banjara community.

According to officials, the



event will highlight the historical role of the Banjara community in trade and social life across the country. Mishra said the programme will introduce the younger generation to the community's legacy and cultural heritage.

"The Banjara community has played a significant role in the history and trading traditions of India. At a time

when modern transport systems were not developed, Banjaras supplied essential goods to different parts of the country and strengthened trade networks," the minister said. He added that the community's folk traditions, cultural practices, and contributions to nation-building remain an important part of India's heritage.

**AXIS BANK LTD.**  
RETAIL ASSETS CENTRE, AXIS BANK LT, AXIS HOUSE, TOWER T-2, 2ND FLOOR, I-14, SECTOR-12B, NOIDA EXPRESSWAY, JAYTEE GREENS WISHTOWN, NOIDA (U.P.)-201301

Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from Axis Bank Ltd. We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non Performing Asset on the respective dates mentioned hereunder in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(1)(c) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued thereunder. Notices of resale dates mentioned herein below under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002, calling upon the following borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices.

The notices issued to them on their last known addresses and they are also hereby informed by way of public notice about the same.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor	NPA Date	Outstanding Amount (Rs.) As On Date Of Notice
1.	Mr. Bharat Chaudhary S/o Mr. Gulshan Rai R/o Flat No. 1442, Neel Kanth Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi-110085 Also At: Mr. Bharat Chaudhary, M/s Bharat Traders, Gali No-17, Block No-07/23/6, Beasapura Park Building, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005	29-Sep-2025 07-Feb-2026	Rs. 1,10,03,894/- (Rupees One Crore Ten Lakh Three Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Four Only)
2.	Mrs. Sushil Chaudhary Alias Mrs. Sushila Rani W/o Mr. Gulshan Rai R/o Flat No. 1442, Neel Kanth Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, North West Delhi, Delhi-110085	30-Jan-2024 19-Feb-2026	Rs. 23,85,906/- (Rupees Twenty Three Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Six Hundred Six Only)
3.	Mr. Suresh Chand S/o Bhagirath Sharma, House No-79, Pocket-3, Sector-25, Rohini, Delhi-110085 Also At: Flat No. B-17/133 Type-II, Police Line, Pitampura, Delhi-110034	11-May-2021 16-Feb-2026	Rs. 25,31,050/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Thirty One Thousand Fifty Only)
4.	Mr. Sher Singh Rana S/o Mr. Dhonkal Ram Rana, R/o 192, Third Floor, GH-8, Sunder Vihar, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087 Also At: Mr. Sher Singh Rana (Proprietor), M/s S.S. Rana, 192, GH-8, Uday Apartment, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087 (Applicant), 2. Mrs. Mandeep Singh Rana W/o Mr. Sher Singh Rana, R/o 192, Third Floor, GH-8, Sunder Vihar, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110087 (Co-Applicant)	22-Dec-2025 21-Feb-2026	Rs. 18,60,067/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Sixty Thousand Sixty Seven Only)
5.	Mrs. Hem Lata Sethi W/o Mr. Satish Sethi, House No-K-3/11, Model Town-II, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, New Delhi-110009 Also At: D-1/4A, Model Town-III, Ground Floor, Delhi-110009	29-Sep-2024 19-Feb-2026	Rs. 72,01,044/- (Rupees Seventy Two Lakh One Thousand Forty Only)
6.	Mr. Harish Dabas R/o House No. 1251, Sector-17C, Urban Estate, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 (Borrower), 2. Mrs. Birmati Dabas R/o House No. 1251, Sector-17C, Urban Estate, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 (Co-Borrower)	05-Dec-2020 19-Feb-2026	Rs. 81,01,594,17/- (Rupees Eighty One Lakh One Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Four And Paise Seventeen Only)
7.	Mr. Ashwani Kumar Singh House No. C-13/11, EWS, Sector-71, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301 (Borrower), 2. Mrs. Sarita Singh House No. C-13/11, EWS, Sector-71, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301 (Co-Borrower)	09-Sep-2021 19-Feb-2026	Rs. 31,39,291/- (Rupees Thirty One Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Ninety One Only)

**Property Address of Secured Assets:-** DDA Built-up LIG Flat Bearing No. 192 on Third Floor in Pocket-II, Block No. G-17, situated at Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110087. Bounded As Under: North - As Per Site Plan, East - As Per Site Plan, West - As Per Site Plan, South - As Per Site Plan

**Property Address of Secured Assets:-** Entire Ground Floor (Without Roof/Terrace Rights) part of the freehold built-up property bearing No. D-1/4A, Block-D-1, Model Town, Delhi-110009. Bounded As Under: East - As Per Site Plan, West - As Per Site Plan, North - As Per Site Plan, South - As Per Site Plan

**Property Address of Secured Assets:-** Entire Ground Floor (Without Roof/Terrace Rights) part of the freehold built-up property bearing No. D-1/4A, Block-D-1, Model Town, Delhi-110009. Bounded As Under: East - As Per Site Plan, West - As Per Site Plan, North - As Per Site Plan, South - As Per Site Plan

In the circumstances as aforesaid, the notice is hereby given to the above borrowers, co-borrowers and/or their guarantors (wherever applicable) to pay the outstanding dues as mentioned above along with future interest and applicable charges within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice falling which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and the mortgagors under Section 13(4) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and the applicable rules thereunder.

Kind attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act where under you can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Please also note that the entire amount of outstanding dues together with the costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank is not to be tendered before publication of notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty, you may be entitled to redeem the secured asset(s).

Please note that under Section 13 (1) of the said Act, no Borrower shall, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of his secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor.

Date: 13.03.2026, Place: Noida U.P

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**  
**GUWAHATI, ASSAM**  
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**

**ADB Project No. and Title: P56283-002-IND: Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Project in Assam - Additional Financing**

Sl. No.	IFB No.	Contract No. and Title	Lot No.	Bid Security
1.	WRD/ADB-P2/OCB-Works/06 (Re-bid)	W-AF-01-EM-DL: Construction of 21.00 km of Composite Geo-Tube Embankment in Dhemaji and Lakhimpur Subproject (Dhemaji District)	Lot 1 Lot 2	INR 2.70 million (27 lakhs) INR 2.00 million (20 lakhs)

1. The Chief Engineer, Water Resources Department, Government of Assam, India ("the Employer") invites bids from eligible bidders for the above-mentioned Contract Packages.

2. Open competitive bidding (national advertisement) will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single Stage Two Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.

3. Detailed Notice of Invitation for Bids (IFB) and the Bid document for all above package would be available at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) starting from 13 March 2026. Deadline for bid submission is up to 16:00 hours on 4 April 2026. All required information is provided in the bid document.

4. Online & Offline Pre-bid Meeting will be held at 15:00 hours on 19 March 2026. All the prospective bidders are advised to participate in the Pre-bid meeting.

5. Any addendum to the Bidding Documents or clarification of Bidders' queries will only be uploaded on the Employers' e-procurement website: [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

6. Bidders may contact Chief Engineer, Water Resources Department, 5th Floor, Assam Water Centre, Kundil Nagar, Basistha, Guwahati 781029, Assam, India (e-mail: [adbwr1@gmail.com](mailto:adbwr1@gmail.com)), for further details.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer  
Water Resources Department  
Assam Water Centre  
Kundil Nagar, Basistha  
Guwahati 781029, Assam, India

DIPR/C/PIO/977/13-Mar-26

**ARIAS SOCIETY**  
(An Autonomous Body of the Govt. of Assam)  
**Project Management Unit of the Asian Development Bank financed Assam Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation (SWIFT) Project**  
Agriculture Complex, Khanapara, G.S. Road, Guwahati-781022 (Assam, India)

**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**

The Government of Assam through the Government of India has applied for a loan from the Asian Development Bank for the proposed Assam SWIFT project. The ARIAS Society now intends to apply a portion of the loan for the Conservation, Restoration and Rejuvenation works for the following IFB Nos. for beels in Kokrajhar, Morigaon, Goalpara, Bajali, Golaghat, Charaideo, Sivasagar, Dhemaji, Tinsukia and Darrang

Name of Beel	IFB No.	Name of Beel	IFB No.
1. Chamkatz	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-76	9. Sagarbera	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-41
2. Barkhang	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-51	10. Amritpur Sewashram	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-72
3. Inti	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-52	11. Sagunpara	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-68
4. Singimari	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-46	12. Kurekhona	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-79
5. Halowadal	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-70	13. Burisuti Rikseng	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-61
6. Kaplimara	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-56	14. Pera	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-83
7. Bamumkura	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-71	15. Koupati Gaon	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-60
8. Amguri Herheri	ARIAS /ADB-SWIFT/CW10-47		

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Sd/-  
State Project Director,  
ARIAS Society

DIPR/CF/PIO/4526/13-Mar-26

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE**

Sl. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	MOBAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS(EMAIL)
1.	HSDDC	ANNUAL HOUSEKEEPING SERVICE CLEANING OF COMMON AREA OF HSDDC, HOUSE COMPLEX, SECTOR-31, GURUGRAM	16.03.2026 24.03.2026	22.86 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0124328418 ia.gurugram@hoidc.org.in
2.	HSDDC	RE-SURFACING OF ROADS ON THE BOTH SIDE OF NH-48 IN PHASE-I AT DIT BANHAL	16.03.2026 01.04.2026	215.35 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01264-264122 ia.bawal@hoidc.org.in
3.	HSDDC	INTERIOR WORK OF KIDS PLAY AND CAFETERIA IN LIBRARY BUILDING, TOWN PARK, SECTOR-12, FARIDABAD	12.03.2026 17.03.2026	18.78 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9818330496 ia.faridabad@hoidc.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaprocmnt.gov.in](http://www.haryanaprocmnt.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO 43768-1-27-7

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING)**  
**ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**

No. CE/TB-VII/77/2024/25

**PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D, Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam re-invites bids through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode-I of contract for the following work under P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam from eligible Firm/Contractor of repute having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx value of work	Completion Period	Bid Security 2% of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Cost of Bid
1.	Renovation of Auditorium of Pragiyoti- ITA Cultural Complex, Machkhowa, Guwahati	Rs. 9,69,33,721.00	18 (Eighteen) Months	For General category, Rs. 19,38,674.00 and For Reserved category Rs.9,69,337.00	Rs. 20,000.00

N.B.:- 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.  
2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer, P.W.D. Bldg, Assam  
Chandmari, Guwahati-3

DIPR/C/PIO/975/13-Mar-26

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING)**  
**ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**

No. CE/TB-III(B)/34/2025/14

**PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (B), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode-I of contract for the following work under P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam from eligible Firm/Contractor of repute having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx value of work	Completion Period	Bid Security 2% of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Cost of Bid
1.	Proposed Sri Sri Madhavdeva Janmakshetra (Phase-I).	Rs. 20,20,35,450.00	20 (Twenty months)	Rs. 40,40,709.00 for General Category and Rs. 20,20,354.00 for Reserved Category	Rs. 20,000.00

N.B.:- 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.  
2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer, (Bldg.), P.W(B&NH)Deptt.  
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3

DIPR/C/PIO/973/13-Mar-26



## Several eateries halt operations due to LPG shortage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Several restaurants and small eateries across Delhi have temporarily halted operations over the past two days due to a shortage of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), disrupting kitchen operations. Business owners have expressed that this situation is not only affecting their daily earnings but also creating anxiety among workers who rely on these establishments for their livelihoods. From neighbourhood cafes to roadside eateries, operators say the disruption has slowed or halted kitchens in several parts of the city, forcing some establishments to shut temporarily while others are trying to stretch the limited gas supplies they have left. Among eateries that reported temporary closures are Boheme Cafe Bar in Karol Bagh and Kashmir Chur Chur Naan in Paharganj, while several outlets of Tadka Rani have also stopped operations due to a lack of LPG supply, according to restaurant operators.

A representative of Boheme Cafe Bar said the shortage has forced the restaurant section of the outlet to remain closed since yesterday, leaving only the bar operational. "This is not just affecting the business; it equally affects the workers. Some of our staff are from Delhi and live with their families here, but many of them have come from other states and depend entirely on this job," he said. He further added that when the restaurant shuts, it is not only about losing business for a day or two. These workers depend on the daily functioning of the kitchen for their livelihood. "Right now, only our bar is open, and the restaurant has been shut since yesterday because we cannot run the kitchen without gas," he added. Restaurant operators say the disruption has been especially challenging for establishments that function around the clock and rely on continuous kitchen operations. Ravi Singh, a representative of Tadka Rani, mentioned that the restaurant chain has already incurred significant losses, with



LPG supplies not reaching their kitchens for nearly two days. "Our outlets operate 24 hours a day, so the moment the kitchen stops running, the losses begin immediately," he said. Singh shared that the chain had already faced 48 hours of losses, and suppliers are not answering calls. "Each kitchen is losing around Rs 2 lakh, though about Rs 1 lakh worth of supplies are already there. Around 17 to 18 people work in each kitchen, and there is a lot of mental stress among staff because everyone

is worried about how long this situation will continue," he added. Many smaller eateries across the city are facing similar difficulties, as their businesses rely heavily on daily operations. An owner from Shahdara, who wished to remain unnamed, stated that he had to close his small outlet for a few days after running out of LPG stock. "We run a small restaurant with limited staff, and our entire business depends on the kitchen functioning every

single day," he said. He noted that while they had already stocked ingredients and paid staff salaries for the month, once the gas cylinders ran out, there was no way to continue cooking food. "After waiting for deliveries that did not arrive, we had no option but to close the restaurant for a few days. We run tandoors and also have a fast food section that gives maximum profits; this requires the iron base to keep burning, but now we are not able to run it," he added.

### NO SHORTAGE OF LPG, PETROL, DIESEL: GOVERNMENT

New Delhi: The Delhi Government on Thursday assured residents that there is no shortage of LPG, petrol, diesel, or piped natural gas (PNG) in the national capital and urged citizens not to indulge in panic buying or hoarding. Officials said adequate stocks of all major fuels are available, and the supply chain across the city continues to function normally. The Government also warned that strict action will be taken against black marketing or illegal diversion of domestic LPG cylinders. According to the government, concerns about possible supply disruptions have led to panic bookings and confusion among consumers in some areas. Authorities, however, said the situation remains stable, and there is no reason for residents to worry. Officials from Indraprastha Gas Limited informed the government that the supply of domestic PNG in the capital is stable.

Natural gas allocation continues to prioritise domestic consumers as well as the transport sector that depends on CNG. Representatives of major oil companies also confirmed that the supply of petrol, diesel, and domestic LPG cylinders in Delhi remains adequate. The companies said the fuel distribution system is operating smoothly and there has been no disruption in the supply chain. To manage demand and ensure orderly distribution of cylinders, the government has revised the minimum interval for LPG refill bookings. Officials said the booking interval has been increased from 21 days to 25 days. Despite this change, consumers are still receiving their LPG cylinders within an average of two to three days after placing a booking. Authorities explained that the revision is intended to streamline distribution and discourage unnecessary bookings during periods of

high demand. For example, if a consumer received a cylinder on February 1, the next booking can be made on or after February 26 under the revised system. The government has also encouraged consumers to use digital platforms to book LPG cylinders instead of visiting distribution centres physically. Consumers can place bookings through several channels, including company websites, SMS services, IVRS calls, missed-call facilities, and WhatsApp. Officials said these digital options are designed to make the booking process faster and more convenient for residents. The Department of Food, Supplies, and Consumer Affairs has also deployed field officers to monitor the situation and assist consumers if any difficulties arise. Enforcement teams have been instructed to conduct inspections to prevent hoarding and black-marketing of LPG cylinders.

## LPG crisis: Wedding planners warn catering costs may rise 10-20%



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Delhi-NCR's renowned wedding feasts, characterised by giant cauldrons of biryani and endless live cooking stations, depend heavily on a consistent supply of LPG cylinders. However, supply disruptions have raised concerns among wedding planners and caterers. Planners and caterers warn that ongoing supply disruptions and rising prices of commercial LPG cylinders might lead to an increase in wedding catering costs by approximately 10 to 20 per cent if the situation persists. This warning comes as restaurants and commercial kitchens in various parts of the city report irregular LPG supplies,

prompting vendors who organise large wedding events to monitor the situation closely ahead of upcoming ceremonies. Mohsin Khan, a planner with Vivah Luxury Weddings, stated that large wedding events heavily rely on commercial LPG cylinders, and the current supply situation is already causing anxiety among vendors. "Caterers for weddings and large events need substantial commercial cylinders for bulk cooking and live stations. Many vendors report that their stock lasts only two to four days, so we are already witnessing discussions about simpler menus, fewer live cooking options, and price hikes of around 10 to 15 per cent being passed on to clients," he explained.

## Govt prepares plan to ensure water supply during peak summer demand



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

With temperatures soaring, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday reviewed the preparations to ensure the capital does not face a water shortage. She said water demand in the city rises significantly during the summer months, while overall production remains almost the same. Keeping this in mind, the Government has prepared the 'Summer Action Plan-2026' to ensure adequate water supply across Delhi, provide quick relief to areas facing shortages, and address public complaints promptly. Officials informed the meeting that Delhi, with a population of around 2.5 crore, requires about 1,250 million gallons of water per day (MGD) as per standard norms. At present, the city receives roughly 1,000 MGD, and the summer action plan

has been designed to manage this gap more effectively during peak demand. Following the meeting, the Chief Minister said under the plan, maximum water production will be ensured from all water treatment plants in the city. She added that preventive measures such as cleaning underground and surface reservoirs, repairing pumping stations, maintaining equipment, and monitoring and repairing pipeline leakages have already been carried out to avoid any disruption in water supply during the summer. To provide relief to areas facing water shortages, the government has further strengthened the water tanker system. The Delhi Jal Board has deployed 168 departmental tankers and 819 hired tankers, and around 200 additional tankers may be hired during peak summer demand if required.

### PM – KISAN : Government of India's Commitment to Farmer's Prosperity

**Transfer of more than ₹18 thousand 640 crore directly into the Bank Accounts of above 9 crore 32 lakh farmers under 22<sup>nd</sup> instalment of PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi**

by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**

13 March 2026 | 5:00 PM | Jyoti-Bishnu International Cultural Centre, Khanapara, Guwahati, Assam

#### Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme

Samman Nidhi of over ₹4 lakh 9 thousand crore transferred to farmers so far

One of the world's largest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes

₹6000 annual assistance to farmers

Over 85% beneficiaries of PM-Kisan are small and marginal farmers

One woman beneficiary in every 4 beneficiaries of PM-Kisan

#### Unprecedented Achievements in Agriculture in last 12 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> With 150+ million tonnes, India became the world's largest rice producer country.</li> <li> Foodgrain production increased from 252 million tonnes to over 357 million tonnes.</li> <li> Horticulture production increased from 277 million tonnes to 369 million tonnes. Also, India became world's largest producer of mango, guava, mangosteen, banana and papaya in the world.</li> <li> Procurement of tur, urad and masoor ensured at MSP from registered farmers under the Mission on Aatmanirbharta in Pulses.</li> <li> Announcement of AI-based National Digital Platform 'Bharat VISTAAR' in Union Budget 2026-27, providing farmers access to agricultural information, services and advisory in simple language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Procurement of wheat, paddy, cotton, pulses and oilseeds at MSP worth over ₹26 lakh crore.</li> <li> Released fertilizer subsidy of ₹15 lakh 50 thousand crore, ensuring timely availability of fertilizers to the farmers at affordable prices.</li> <li> Agricultural credit flow increased from ₹8 lakh 45 thousand crore to ₹28 lakh 69 thousand crore, providing impetus to the rural economy.</li> <li> About ₹2 lakh crore compensation to farmers under PM Fasal Bima Yojana for losses caused by natural disasters.</li> <li> Unprecedented rise in Agriculture Budget from ₹27 thousand crore to over ₹1 lakh 40 thousand crore.</li> </ul>
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#### From seed to market, the Government of India supports the farmers at every step

Watch Live Telecast of the Programme on DD News or DD Kisan Channel

Kisan Call Centre 1800-180-1551 (6 AM - 10 PM)

The programme can be watched live on [pmindiawebcast.nic.in](http://pmindiawebcast.nic.in)

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'Bharti' - the New AI Chatbot for Farmers. For More Information, Contact: 155261

CBC 0110213/0012/2526



## IN FOCUS



Tourists arriving at the North Portal of the Atal Tunnel amid snowfall, in Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh PTI

# LoP Rahul raising baseless issues in LS: Piyush Goyal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Union minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday termed Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's remarks on reported LPG shortage "pretence", and accused him of pursuing "foreign agenda" by raising "baseless" issues in Lok Sabha to lower the stature of the country.

Goyal also slammed Gandhi and Congress members for holding a protest at the Makar Dwar of Parliament in violation of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's ruling, and demanded that action be taken against them.

Asserting that the foundation of every single nation is its energy security, Gandhi on Thursday alleged that the



government has "bartered" to the US India's right to determine its relations with different oil suppliers due to a "compromise". Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi also said the war between the US-Israel and Iran is going to have far-reaching consequences. "An important debate on the Union Budget was underway, but it was interrupted to

allow the Leader of the Opposition to speak. But he showed no concern for the consumers or the seriousness of the issue. "I believe this is merely a pretence that Rahul Gandhi is trying to display - that he is worried about the consumers or about LPG cylinders. He only wants to bring baseless issues into the House and raise matters to lower the stature of the country. His agenda is not in the national interest," Goyal alleged.

"I demand action against Rahul Gandhi, his party members and against all those sitting at the Makar Dwar and breaking the rules of Parliament. The speaker has clearly ordered that no demonstrations are allowed there. Yet, they are not only

staging a demonstration - they are having a party, eating toast, biscuits and drinking tea.

"They have turned what we consider the sanctum sanctorum, the temple of democracy, into a place for such behaviour," the minister told reporters inside the Parliament House complex.

Goyal also accused Gandhi of once again violating parliamentary rules and deviating from the subject under discussion. "Once again, we have found the Leader of the Opposition violating all the rules and procedures of Parliament. The speaker, with complete impartiality, repeatedly stated that everyone would be given an opportunity and time to speak on pressing issues.

# 94 Crore people get social security cover: Mandaviya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

As many as 31 crore unorganised workers have enrolled in different sectors and have been brought under various social security schemes, the government informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Replying to supplementary queries during Question Hour, Minister of Labour and Employment Mansukh Mandaviya said the International Labour Organisation has said that social security cover in India is 64 per cent.

"31 crore unorganised sector workers have got self enrolment in different sectors. They are also being added to various social security schemes," the minister said. "Last year, ILO after analysing Indian government data said that social security



coverage has increased to 64 per cent in the last decade. This means the Modi government has been successful in providing social security cover to 94 crore people. This is the commitment of Modi government towards providing social security," Mandaviya said during Question Hour.

He said in contrast to this, the ILO in 2019 had said that social security was 19 per cent of the population.

In response to another question, the minister said India is the only country which has recognised gig workers after defining them.

# Cong MP slams Govt over MGNREGA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi on Thursday said villages across the country were facing distress and accused the Union government of putting labourers in a "bad situation" by ending the rural employment guarantee scheme MGNREGA.

Participating in a discussion on the working of the Ministry of Rural Development in Rajya Sabha, Pratapgarhi said villages once symbolised harmony but the situation has deteriorated.

"Villages were about love earlier. Today, the environment of villages has been vitiated and people cannot even sit together..." he said.

"Workers are in a bad situation. Instead of promoting MGNREGA, you are ending it by putting the burden on states... You think you can hide behind a name change," he said. The Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission Act (VB-GRAM G) is set to replace the two decade old UPA-era rural employment scheme - the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee



Imran Pratapgarhi

Act (MGNREGA).

Pratapgarhi said road conditions in villages were so poor that "if a pregnant woman has to be taken to a hospital, perhaps she may not even reach the hospital".

He also alleged that houses built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) were being demolished by state authorities in some places and questioned the government's vision for villages. "We dreamt of ending migration, but villages are even deprived of basic facilities, so people are running to cities," he said.

# BJP MPs meet L-G, assure to work together for a Viksit Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

BJP MPs from Delhi on Thursday called on the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu at Lok Niwas, and discussed issues related to the development of the national Capital.

Sandhu was sworn in as the 23rd L-G of Delhi in a ceremony on Wednesday. MPs Manoj Tiwari, Ramvir Bidhuri, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Yogender Chandolia, Praveen Khandelwal and Bansuri Swaraj met Sandhu. The former diplomat said in a



Lt Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu during a meeting with Lok Sabha MPs Manoj Tiwari, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Yogender Chandolia, Praveen Khandelwal, Bansuri Swaraj and others in New Delhi

post on X that he had a constructive discussion with the MPs regarding the development of the nation-

al capital. South Delhi MP Bidhuri said the parliamentarians from Delhi congratulated the new L-G and

expressed confidence that his "administrative experience will be a great help in making it a world-class city".

During the meeting, the BJP MPs also shared Delhi's issues with him, Bidhuri said. The South Delhi MP said he stressed that Delhi's Master Plan should be notified soon, and the Land Pooling Policy and GDA Policy also need to be implemented soon.

MP Tiwari also asserted that Sandhu's experience will help in realising the dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' and a strong Delhi, and assured that all the public

representatives will work together to achieve the goal. Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal said that the parliamentarians assured the L-G that all the public representatives will work together to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a 'Viksit Bharat' as well as developing Delhi into a modern managed city.

Under the rich diplomatic and administrative experience and guidance, Delhi will certainly establish new dimensions in good governance, public welfare, and development, New Delhi MP Bansuri said in a post on X.

# Rajasthan CM pushes for scheme benefits delivery



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Jaipur

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the implementation of Centre-funded schemes. He directed officials to ensure continuous monitoring of these programmes to ensure that financial progress remains on track and benefits reach intended recipients without delay.

The chief minister said funds allocated under these schemes should be fully utilised within the stipulated timeframe. He noted that such discipline is essential to ensure the uninterrupted release of central assistance to the State.

# Yogi reviews preparations ahead of President Murmu's Ayodhya visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Ayodhya

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday reviewed the preparations for the proposed visit of President Droupadi Murmu to Ayodhya on March 19 and the upcoming Ram Navami celebrations. During his

inspection of arrangements at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, Adityanath met with officials from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, public representatives, and police and administrative officers.

He issued necessary directives to ensure that all preparations for the pres-

ident's visit are completed on time.

During the review meeting, officials briefed the chief minister regarding preparations for the President's visit, including arrangements for reception at the airport, cultural programs along the travel route and facilities for guests.

# AAP-Cong collusion hurts Punjab Assembly: BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Chandigarh

Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar on Thursday said the ruling AAP and opposition Congress were working in tandem in the assembly to divert attention from key public issues.

Talking to reporters here, he said the two parties have a tacit understanding under which the oppo-

sition avoided raising people's issues and instead staged walkouts while the government continued to pass resolutions contrary to public welfare.

Jakhar said a special assembly session was convened in July 2025 to bring a law on sacrilege, but even after seven months, the government has not approved a draft of the proposed legislation.

## FROM PAGE - 1

# LPG panic hurts country, fuel supplies secure...

Responding to Opposition concerns over an alleged LPG shortage, the minister reiterated there was "no shortage" and that supply chains for petroleum products were functioning normally. Puri said imports earlier sourced largely from Gulf nations including Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were now being diversified to suppliers such as the United States, Norway, Canada, Algeria and Russia. LPG production has been increased by 28 per cent in the past five days through refinery directives, he added.

He said diplomatic outreach by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had helped secure crude volumes exceeding what the disrupted route could have delivered. India now sources crude from 40 countries, compared with 27 in 2006-07, while refineries are operating at high capacity utilisation, in some cases exceeding 100 per cent, he added.

The minister said the government's priority was ensuring uninterrupted supply to India's 33-crore households, particularly poorer families. The average LPG delivery time remains 2.5 days, while hospitals and educational institutions have been placed on priority supply.

To curb hoarding, Delivery Authentication Code coverage will be expanded from 50 per cent to 90 per cent of consumers. A minimum booking gap of 25 days in urban areas and 45 days in rural and remote regions has also been introduced.

Commercial LPG has been temporarily regulated to prevent black-marketing, Puri said, adding that leaving the deregulated market unrestricted during supply constraints could enable hoarding and diversion.

In a separate briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said a committee of executive directors from Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited had approved the release of a limited quantity of commercial cylinders. India has about 25,000 LPG distributors and delivers around 50 lakh cylinders daily. She added that an additional 40,000 kilo-litres of kerosene had been allocated to States and that there had been no dry-out at any of the country's one lakh petrol pumps.

# Kerosene, coal brought back amidst LPG...

Addressing a press briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said alternate fuel options and

higher allocations of energy sources are being activated to ease pressure on LPG. Coal India Limited and Singareni have been directed to supply higher quantities of coal to States for small and medium consumers. Domestic LPG production has been raised by 28%, and a limited commercial LPG supply has been allowed to meet one-fifth of demand.

Sharma emphasised that household kitchens, hospitals, and educational institutions are being prioritised, while commercial users face temporary restrictions. Despite panic booking, she said no petrol pump or LPG dealer has run dry, with around 25,000 distributors delivering 50 lakh cylinders daily.

"Twenty percent of average monthly commercial LPG will be allocated by OMCs in coordination with State Governments to prevent hoarding or black marketing," Sharma added, noting discussions with Delhi authorities for commercial cylinder delivery.

# Hormuz must remain closed, says Khamenei

"We will seek compensation from the enemy, and if they refuse, we will take as much of their property as we determine, and if that is not possible, we will destroy the same amount of his property," he added.

The new leader also vowed that Iran would not retreat and would continue resisting with "full force," promising revenge for those killed in the conflict, including his father and former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Speaking about his father, Mojtaba Khamenei said he had seen his body after the attack and described him as a "mountain of steadfastness". He added that Iran would continue following the path set by the late leader. He also thanked Iran-aligned armed groups across the region, often referred to by Tehran as the "Resistance Front," including Lebanon's Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthis movement and allied militias in Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian outlined three conditions for ending the war with the United States and Israel. In a post on the social media platform X, he said any resolution must recognise Iran's legitimate rights, ensure payment of reparations and provide guarantees against future attacks.

# After no-trust defeat, Birla reasserts Speaker's...

The Speaker said past rulings by previous presiding officers had also prevented members from tabling documents that did not meet the rules of the House. Some members, he noted, believe that the LoP can rise at any time and speak on

any subject of their choosing, considering it a special privilege. He also cited earlier instances when the Chair did not permit members to lay photographs, Government documents or quote letters in the House.

Birla said he had always maintained cordial personal relations with members across party lines and never wished for disciplinary action to be taken against any member.

# Vendors struggle amid gas supply uncertainty

Many had arrived early hoping to get a refill, but as hours passed with little movement, expectation slowly gave way to impatience and worry.

At an Indian Oil Corporation Indane LPG distribution centre in Pandav Nagar near Akshardham Metro Station, a similar scene played out. Customers stood in long lines with booking slips in hand. Some discussed the latest price hike while others complained about delayed deliveries. Many said they had come personally to the agency because they were unsure when their booked cylinder would arrive.

Small roadside food vendors say the situation is particularly worrying because their livelihoods depend entirely on LPG cylinders. Manoj Kumar, a chowmein seller in Laxmi Nagar, stirred noodles over a burning stove as customers waited nearby. The 32-year-old migrant from Bihar said LPG costs directly affect his daily earnings. "Everything in my business depends on gas," Manoj said. "If the cylinder price goes up or if supply gets delayed, we cannot cook food. Electricity cannot replace the gas stove." He said he usually keeps only one spare cylinder because buying more is expensive. If the refill does not arrive on time, he has no option but to close the cart for the day. "For us, it is daily income. One day without cooking means one day without earning," he added.

A few kilometres away near D Park in Pandav Nagar, the popular Mishra Tea Stall was busy with workers and local residents. Owner Rakesh Mishra said rising LPG prices are slowly affecting small food stalls. Mishra has run the tea stall for more than a decade, with his small stove operating constantly as he prepares tea and snacks. "Gas cylinder prices are increasing again and again," he said while pouring tea into small glasses. "Milk, sugar and everything else are already costly. If this continues, we may have to increase the price of tea."

In Mayur Vihar Phase 1, Sitaram from Gorakhpur runs a momo stall in a busy market lane. Steam rises from a metal steamer placed over an LPG burner. He said he finishes one domestic cylinder every few days and has already begun paying higher rates for refills.

"Gas is the biggest cost for us," he said. "If the price keeps rising, it becomes very difficult to save anything from the business." Vendors cannot store multiple cylinders like restaurants, he added. "If supply gets delayed even for two or three days, we may have to stop working."

The anxiety is visible among ordinary residents as well. On the way to the Pandav Nagar distribution centre, a local pan shop owner shrugged when asked about the agency. "There is no use going there today," he said. "No one is giving gas." Outside the centre, customers stood beside their cylinders looking tired and disappointed, some saying they had waited for hours without clear information about distribution.

# Choksi, Nirav Modi orchestrated a billion...

Mumbai-based jeweler Gili India received ₹7,234 crore, PC Jewellers ₹1,896 crore (also facing a ₹6,773 crore case with Union Bank), and Winsome Diamonds ₹5,262 crore. Bankers connivance is clearly visible in splitting these huge loans into small amounts.

Additional large defaulters include Zoom Developers (₹2,303 crore), Shakti Bhog Foods (₹2,358 crore), Congress leader Kamal Nath's family-owned Moser Baer Group (₹2,050 crore), Surana Group (₹5,762 crore), S KUMARS (₹1,458 crore), Siddhi Vinayak Logistics (₹2,480 crore), Simbhaoli Sugars (₹906 crore), Gupta Power Infrastructure (₹890 crore), Frost International (₹4,736 crore), and Forever Precious Jewellery and Diamonds (₹4,361 crore).

Fugitive C Shivankaran's Dishnet Wireless received ₹1,869 crore, Vandana Viduyt ₹4,748 crore, VISA Resources India ₹1,360 crore, Divine Alloys and Power ₹1,374 crore, Pioneer Gas Power ₹1,342 crore, Krishna Knitwear ₹1,371 crore, Abhinav Steel and Power ₹1,098 crore, Satluj Spintex ₹1,205 crore, Kamachi Industries ₹904 crore, Shri Lakshmi Cotsyn ₹1,272 crore, Shrenuj and Co ₹1,690 crore, Jas Infrastructure and Power ₹2,726 crore, Actiff Corporation ₹1,035 crore, Sunil Hitech Engineers ₹2,042 crore, Coastal Project ₹1,890 crore, Gupta Coal India ₹950 crore, Emmson International ₹2,038 crore, and Jubilant Offshore Drilling ₹600 crore.

# SC: Income not sole factor in creamy layer

The bench added, "The principle seeks to prevent relatively advanced segments within the backward classes from siphoning off the advantages of affirmative action, so that the objective and purpose of the constitutional scheme of affirmative action, of which reservation is a reflection, are adhered to."

Several civil services examination candidates who claimed reservation under the OBC Non-Creamy Layer category had moved the Central Administrative Tribunal. The tribunal had directed the Centre to reallocate the service of the applicants on the basis of their OBC status.

The Centre had issued Office Memorandum on September 8, 1993, specifying who shall be creamy layer among OBCs and the clarificatory letter issued in this regard on October 14, 2004.

The SC noted that while the Office Memorandum excluded income from salary and agricultural income from the Income/wealth test for determination of creamy layer status, the letter dated October 14, 2004 directed inclusion of salary income of PSU and private sector employees. "It is evident from a comprehensive reading of the 1993 OM along with the clarificatory letter dated October 14, 2004 that income from salaries alone cannot be the sole criterion to decide whether a candidate falls within the creamy layer. "The status as well as the category of post to which a candidate's parent or parents belong is essential. Mere determination of the status of a candidate as to whether he/she falls within the creamy or the non-creamy layer of the OBCs cannot be decided solely on the basis of the income," the bench said.

# God saved me: Farooq Abdullah after attack

In a video circulated online, he admitted, "Today I got a chance, but he escaped," and cited personal motives without further explanation.

Dr Abdullah described the attack, saying he initially mistook gunshots for firecrackers. A second shot was prevented when security intervened, destabilising the attacker and causing his pistol to misfire. "They quickly put me into my car and told me, 'Sir, it was actually a pistol.' They said the person had fired two shots at me," he said. Abdullah said he did not know the attacker and questioned the absence of police at the event, noting the presence of several prominent figures.

Abdullah also warned that societal hatred is deepening, shrinking space for those advocating communal harmony. "Yes, there is law and order disorder. The biggest tragedy is that hatred in the country has taken deep roots. There is very little space left for those who talk about friendship and love between religions," he said, adding that no religion teaches hatred.

Responding to claims of a possible conspiracy in the attack, Abdullah said such matters should be investigated. He requested that authorities assess whether the environment is truly safe enough for citizens to move freely with dignity.

## PM to inaugurate projects worth ₹18,680 cr in Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit West Bengal on Saturday, during which he will inaugurate and lay foundation stones of multiple development projects worth around ₹18,680 crore in Kolkata. An official statement said that these initiatives "reflect the Central Government's continued commitment to strengthening infrastructure, enhancing connectivity and accelerating economic growth in West Bengal and eastern India".

According to the statement, the prime minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for multiple development projects worth around ₹18,680 crore in Kolkata around 2 pm on March 14.



He will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several national highway projects with a combined length of more than 420 km, worth around ₹16,990 crore, which would give a major boost to road infrastructure in the region.

The projects being inaugurated include sections of

NH-19 in West Bengal and Jharkhand and of NH-114 in West Bengal.

These projects are expected to enhance road safety, reduce travel time, ease congestion and pollution, improve regional connectivity, and promote tourism and boost economic growth in the region, the

statement said. Modi will lay the foundation stone for several new national highway projects.

The project forms part of the economic corridor between Kharappur and Silihuri and will pass through Paschim Medinipur, Birbhum, Bankura, Purba Bardhaman, Hooghly, and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal.

Direct Kharappur-Morgram connectivity will reduce travel distance by around 120 km and save nearly seven to eight hours of travel time. The corridor will also integrate with key national highways, including NH-16, NH-19, NH-14 and NH-12, thereby strengthening multi-corridor connectivity.

During the visit, the prime minister will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several shipping and port-related projects.

## Give women greater role in agri-policy: President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said women engaged in agriculture and agri-food sectors should get a greater role in policy formation, decision-making and leadership positions, and called for collective action to close gender gaps across the value chain.

Addressing the three-day Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems, the President said success case studies on women in agriculture should be published widely to ensure more people are aware of their contributions.

Emphasising India's strategic choice of women-led development, she said women in the agriculture sector must be given a greater role in policy formulation, decision-making, and leadership positions.



"Larger participation of women at all levels in the sector will promote gender-inclusive agricultural growth," she said.

She called for targeted support for women farmers on issues of land titles, access to technical knowledge, and institutional finance.

On the role of technology, Murmu highlighted 'Sarlaben' — an AI-powered initiative inspired by the Government's livestock care vision — as an example of how artificial intelligence is opening new possibilities for women farmers.

## Nation Focus



### CENTRE, RAILWAYS JOIN FORCES TO STOP WILDLIFE-TRAIN DEATHS

The Environment Ministry and Railways have identified 110 sensitive stretches across elephant ranges and 17 additional stretches in two tiger-range States, to prevent wildlife-train collisions, officials said on Thursday. Several technology-based solutions are also being tested to prevent such collisions, they said. Comprehensive joint field surveys, conducted by teams from Project Elephant, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), State forest departments and Indian Railways, evaluated site-specific ecological conditions and proposed targeted mitigation measures tailored to each location.



### PM PRAISES SHAH'S SPEECH ON MOTION TO REMOVE SPEAKER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his speech delivered in the Lok Sabha at the end of the debate on the resolution seeking the removal of Om Birla as Speaker. Modi noted that Shah's address was rich in facts and outlined the importance of Parliamentary traditions as well as the importance of working collectively for national progress. Amit Shah hit out at the Opposition for bringing the no-confidence motion against Birla as Speaker and asserted that the House will be run by its rules and not by the rules of a party.

## Attack on Abdullah matter of great concern: Nadda in Rajya Sabha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Union Government on Thursday termed the murderous attack on veteran leader Farooq Abdullah a matter of "great concern" and assured the Rajya Sabha that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure his security.

The Government is taking the assassination bid with utmost seriousness, Leader

of the House and Union Minister JP Nadda said a day after the 88-year-old National Conference leader escaped a bid on his life when a gunman fired a shot at point blank range while he was coming out a wedding event in Jammu.

The 63-year-old gunman, identified as Kamal Singh Jamwal, was quickly overpowered and taken into custody.

Nadda's statement came



in response to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's allegation that there seemed to be

a conspiracy to eliminate Abdullah — who has Z+ category security — and blaming

revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood for the incident.

"A murderous attack on Abdullah is a matter of great concern and a very serious matter...", Nadda said.

He said a thorough investigation is being conducted to ascertain the motive of the arrested assassin and to prevent any such security lapse in the future.

The security of the National Conference party

president is a matter of great importance and the investigation will not be limited to the arrest, the minister added.

He assured the members that "appropriate action will be taken".

Accepting the severity of the attack on Abdullah, Nadda strongly rebutted the Opposition's attempt to use the security breach to comment on the political status of J&K.

## 193 Oppn MPs sign notice seeking motion to remove CEC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

As many as 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs have signed a notice seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Thursday. According to a source, the notice is likely to be submitted in at least one of the two Houses on Friday, though it was not clear in which House it would be brought first.



An Opposition leader said that MPs showed great enthusiasm in signing the notice, with several lawmakers coming forward to sign the notice on Thursday, even as the requisite numbers had already been achieved. According to rules, at least 100 MPs need to sign a notice seeking the removal of the CEC in the Lok Sabha, while the required strength in the Rajya Sabha is 50.

The notice has been signed by members from all the INDIA bloc parties, the source said, including the AAP, even though it is no longer officially part of the opposition alliance.

## NSG to undertake security audit of Z-plus category dignitaries



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The National Security Guard (NSG) will undertake a comprehensive security audit of all its Z-plus category high-risk VIPs following the assassination attempt on former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, officials said on Thursday.

The 'Black Cats' commando force currently provides elite protection to nine VIPs, including Abdullah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu.

Under standard operating procedures, the force provides mobile security during transit and deploys a specialised Close Protection Team (CPT) of four commandos when a dignitary is inside an indoor venue, such as a banquet hall or convention centre.

The officials told PTI that it is standard procedure to review or audit security measures whenever an "extraordinary incident"

involves an NSG protectee. "The security audit process will be initiated. While the NSG is tasked with the immediate safety of the protectee, it remains the responsibility of local police and other agencies to sanitise the venue and ensure no armed individuals gain entry," an official said.

Once the audit is finalised, the NSG will communicate its findings and highlight potential lapses to the relevant local police authorities.

Abdullah had a miraculous escape on Wednesday night when a gunman opened fire at him after coming from behind while the National Conference president was leaving a wedding function in Jammu.

CCTV footage from the wedding event showed a police official and an NSG commando successfully intercepting the attacker, while a second commando and other security personnel pinned him to the ground.

The team immediately evacuated Abdullah from the venue in a high-speed convoy.

## Government bartered India's oil rights to US: Rahul Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Asserting that the foundation of every single nation is its energy security, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that the Government has "bartered" to the US India's right to determine its relationships with different oil suppliers due to a "compromise".

Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, Gandhi said the war between the US-Israel and Iran is going to have far-reaching consequences.

"The central artery from where 20 per cent of global oil flows, Strait of Hormuz, has been closed and this is going to have tremendous repercussions, particularly



for us because a very large portion of our oil and natural gas comes through the Strait of Hormuz," Gandhi said. "The pain has just started — restaurants are closing, there

is widespread panic about LPG, street vendors are affected and as I said, this is only the beginning," the former Congress president said. The foundation of every

## ED attaches fresh ₹581 cr assets in case against Anil Reliance Group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said it has attached fresh assets worth more than ₹581 crore of RHFL and RCFL, companies of Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani.

An order was issued on March 11 to attach land parcels in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said in a statement. The properties



worth ₹581.65 crore belong to Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL), the agency said.

"The attachment follows search operations conducted on March 6 in the case against Reliance Power Limited under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)," it said. The ED had

attached assets of Anil Ambani's Reliance Group earlier as well.

"The cumulative Reliance Anil Ambani Group attachment has reached Rs 16,310 crore," the ED said. The probe stems from a CBI FIR filed against RCFL and RHFL based on complaints lodged by Yes Bank, Union Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra.

It found that the two companies raised public funds from multiple banks and financial institutions, and more than ₹11,000 crore of these funds turned into non-performing assets, the ED said.

single nation is its energy security, Gandhi asserted.

"I do not say this lightly, but allowing the US to decide who we buy oil, gas from... whether we buy oil from Russia or not, whether our relationship with different oil suppliers can be decided by us, this is what has been bartered," the Congress leader said.

"This is a very puzzling fact for me, this is a very puzzling fact as to why a nation the size of India would allow the president of any other nation to give us permission to buy Russian oil, to decide who our relationships are with," Gandhi said in an apparent reference to the US giving a 30-day waiver to buy oil from Russia.

"This has been a puzzle and I have been trying to figure this puzzle out. I have figured the puzzle out. The puzzle is about compromise," he said and referred to Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri.

Gandhi then sought to link the issue of India's energy security with US Department of Justice disclosures. This evoked an uproar from the treasury benches.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asked Gandhi to speak on the notice he has given and not deviate to other topics.

With Gandhi repeatedly asserting that what he was saying was connected with energy security, Birla asked Puri to make his statement.

## Congress Aiyar, Tharoor face-off in open letter war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

In an 'open letter war', Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar declared that he was parting ways with party colleague Shashi Tharoor while the latter hit back at the veteran politician for his "many gratuitous" comments.

It all started with Aiyar penning an open letter to Tharoor that was published in Frontline magazine earlier this week. Aiyar said he was shocked to the core by Tharoor's answers to questions on a TV channel on March 6, on the ongoing "illegal and sinful war" on Iran by Israel in cahoots with the US and the West in general.

"I have been so disturbed that I could not sleep and have woken at 3 in the morning to write you this open letter," Aiyar wrote. Aiyar claimed that he had put his political career on the line by not only voting for Tharoor in the election to the post of the Congress president, even when he knew Tharoor would be badly defeated, but

also by writing in *The Indian Express* next day that the victor, Mallikarjun Kharge, should magnanimously respect his democratic right to stand against him despite his being backed to the hilt by both the Gandhi family and the scattered remnants of the G-23.

"I argued fiercely that he (Kharge) should grant you (Tharoor) an honourable place in the Congress hierarchy, as befits a mature political party, to fully use your many talents. In consequence, the Gandhis and Kharge have refused to meet me ever since. Nevertheless, I felt vindicated on moral grounds," Aiyar said in his "open letter to Shashi Tharoor on moral amnesia, and more".

"I now find I should have championed a worthier cause. Your shameful espousal last night of 'might is right' has horrified me. You say you fully understand the reason why Foreign Minister S Jaishankar is extremely wary of taking on the Americans: fear of the 'consequences' that may result for India, particularly its economy.



## Probe panel report on Justice Varma likely in Monsoon session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The three-member committee set up by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to probe the grounds on which the removal of High Court Judge, Justice Yashwant Varma, was sought following the recovery of burnt currency notes from his residence, is expected to submit its report in the Monsoon session.

On August 12, 2025, the Speaker constituted the three-member committee to probe charges against Justice Yashwant Varma after admitting a multi-party notice for his removal, setting in motion the process of impeachment of the Allahabad High Court judge.

The committee was reconstituted on February 25. While two members — Justice Aravind Kumar of the Supreme Court and Senior Advocate, Karnataka High Court, BV Acharya continued to be members of the panel — a new member, Justice Chandrashekhar, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, has been appointed in place of Madras High Court Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava.

"The committee is likely to submit its report in the next session," a senior functionary said.

Birla set up the committee after he received a proposal from 146 Lok Sabha members, including BJP member Ravi Shankar Prasad and Leader of



Justice Yashwant Varma

Opposition Rahul Gandhi, seeking the removal of Justice Varma on July 21, 2025.

Justice Varma was repatriated from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court after burnt wads of currency notes were found at his official residence in New Delhi on March 14, 2025.

After referring to relevant

laws and judgments of the Supreme Court, the Delhi High Court chief justice found that the charges against Justice Varma were of a serious nature and followed it up with the "in-House procedure".

Birla had said unblemished character and financial and intellectual integrity

were the foundation of the trust a common person has in the judiciary.

"The facts connected in the present case point towards corruption and are eligible for action as per Article 124, Article 217 and Article 218 of the Constitution of India. Parliament needs to speak in one voice on this issue, and every citizen of this country should send a clear message about its commitment to zero tolerance to corruption," Birla had said.

The Lok Sabha Speaker said he has accepted the proposal and constituted a three-member committee for the removal of Justice Varma from his post in accordance with Section 3(2) of the

Judges (Inquiry) Act 1968.

Earlier, then CJ Sanjiv Khanna had initiated an in-house probe into the allegations and set up a three-member committee in March 2025 to conduct the inquiry.

The committee, comprising Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice GS Sandhawalia and Karnataka HC Justice Anu Sivaraman, submitted its report on May 4.

After receiving the report, the CJ asked Justice Varma to resign or face impeachment proceedings. However, since Justice Varma declined to quit, CJ Khanna forwarded the report and the judge's response on it to the president and PM for his removal.



## States Focus

# Nitish launches projects worth ₹895 cr in Bihar



## FRESH SNOW IN LAHAUL-SPITI; HEAT WAVE ALERTS FOR PLAINS

Isolated areas in the higher reaches of the Lahaul and Spiti district in Himachal Pradesh experienced a fresh spell of snow, while the lower hills saw intermittent rain on Thursday morning. Snowfall was reported in Jispa, Darcha, and Shinkula, with Hansa recording 2.5 cm of snow. Videos of the snowfall have also gone viral on the internet. Meanwhile, Bharmour received 12 mm of rain, followed by Gondla (6.2 mm), Keylong (4 mm), Kukumseri (1.3 mm), Jot (1 mm), and Kangra (0.3 mm), according to the Shimla MeT station.



## IAF CHIEF CHECK PREPAREDNESS OF WESTERN AIR COMMAND

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Thursday flew a sortie in an upgraded MiG-29 fighter jet from a frontline airbase under the IAF's Western Air Command. The Indian Air Force chief also reviewed the overall operational preparedness of the command, including infrastructure, crew readiness and aircraft maintenance standards at the key base, according to officials. The IAF maintains three squadrons of upgraded MiG-29s - MiG-29 UPGs - primarily deployed in the western and northern sectors.

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Purnea/Katihar

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday launched development projects worth around ₹895 crore in Purnea and Katihar districts during his 'Samridhi Yatra'. Kumar also reviewed ongoing schemes and development projects in both the districts.

"The CM launched more than 92 schemes/projects, worth ₹485 crore in Purnea. These included the inauguration of 84 schemes costing Rs 164 crore and laying the foundation stone for around 10 schemes, worth ₹321 crore," an official release said.

Kumar inaugurated the newly constructed two-lane road of the state highway-60 to Purn Devi Temple, and the strengthening work of the road from Line Bazar Chowk to Polytechnic Chowk via Rajni Chowk, Chief Minister said.

Under the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali campaign, the CM inspected the ongoing renovation and beautification work of the pond located in the Maa Purn Devi Temple premises. Local folk artists welcomed Kumar with a 'Jhijhiya' dance performance.

He also directed officials to ensure all necessary facilities for visiting devotees at

the temple. Kumar then inspected the newly constructed district-level offices of the Dairy, Fisheries and Animal Resources Department in Purnea, the release said.

Later, the Chief Minister launched different schemes and projects, worth ₹410 crore, in Katihar district.

He inaugurated 257 schemes costing ₹229 crore and laid the foundation stone for 186 schemes/projects worth ₹181 crore, it said.

Kumar also laid the foundation stone for the renovation and construction work of the Agricultural Production Market Yard, Katihar (Phase-2).



## Political leaders condemn attack on ex-J&K CM

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jammu

Political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday condemned the attack on National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah in Jammu and demanded a thorough probe into the incident. Veteran parliamentarian and former Union Minister Dr Karan Singh met Dr Abdullah at his residence along with his family members.

Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, in a post on X, said, "Shocked to hear about the grave attack on Dr Farooq Abdullah sahab. Relieved to know that he's safe and doing well." "Hope the police get to the bottom



Mehbooba Mufti

of this very perturbing security lapse," she added. The BJP also strongly condemned the attack on National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, saying "targeting political leaders through violence is unacceptable" and demanded a thorough probe into the incident. During a

meeting of the BJP spokespersons in Jammu and Kashmir, the leaders discussed the incident and expressed serious concern over the attack, said Advocate Sunil Sethi, a party spokesperson.

Addressing the meeting, Sethi said violence has no place in a democratic society and political differences must be addressed through dialogue and constitutional means. "The BJP firmly opposes such acts and reiterates that the party does not support any activity that threatens peace and democratic functioning," he said.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the chief cleric of Kashmir, condemned the attack, saying the incident needs to be probed thoroughly.

"News about the (murder-

ous) attempt on Dr Farooq Abdullah Sahib's life at a function in Jammu is concerning and condemnable," Mirwaiz posted on his X handle. The religious leader called for a probe into how the assailant got so close to Abdullah with a loaded weapon. "Relieved to know that he escaped unhurt. That someone with a loaded weapon got so close and fired at him needs to be thoroughly probed," he added. National Conference MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi condemned the attack on Abdullah.

Mehdi, the Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar, said such acts of violence are deeply concerning and emphasised that those responsible must be dealt with strictly in accordance with the law.

## Maharashtra Govt sets up control rooms to monitor LPG situation

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Mumbai

The Maharashtra Government on Thursday said it has set up control rooms and district-level committees to ensure uninterrupted supply of domestic and commercial LPG cylinders amid the West Asia crisis.

An official release issued late evening said Anil Diggikar, Additional Chief Secretary of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, has directed authorities to take necessary steps to maintain smooth supply and closely monitor LPG distribution across the state.

The department said there is no shortage of domestic LPG in Maharashtra and citizens need not panic, adding that availability of domestic cylinders in March is higher than the supply recorded during the last six months.

"To avoid disruption in supply and ensure coordination in case of any shortage, district-level committees will be formed under district collectors. These panels will include the superintendent of police, district supply officer and officials from government oil companies. Their responsibilities will include monitoring the LPG supply chain, maintaining law and order and submitting daily reports on the situation," the release said.

In the Mumbai-Thane rationing area, a separate committee will function under the Controller of Rationing, it said, with members including the



deputy commissioner of police and deputy controller (rationing).

The Government said essential services such as hospitals, Government hostels, Government school and college mess facilities, the mid-day meal scheme and ashram schools will be given priority supply of LPG cylinders. Authorities have also been asked to explore the use of alternative fuels such as coal or kerosene, while following norms of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.

The state has directed officials to spread daily information through radio, FM channels, television and print media to prevent rumours regarding gas supply, adding that action will be taken over fake or misleading information circulated on social media.

Oil companies have also been instructed to resolve technical issues related to gas booking apps and missed-call services. Control rooms will operate at the state, divisional, district and taluka levels, and a WhatsApp facility will be provided for grievance redressal.

## Curfew relaxed in Garo Hills; GHADC elections postponed

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Tura (Meghalaya)

The total curfew imposed in Meghalaya's East and West Garo Hills districts was relaxed on Thursday to allow people to procure essential items, officials said. The curfew in East Garo Hills was relaxed for five hours from 8 am to 1 pm, while in West Garo Hills, it was relaxed for two hours from 2 pm to 4 pm. The district administrations said the relaxation was allowed to enable residents to procure essential commodities.

The curfew was imposed in the two districts under Section 163 of the BNSS after violence erupted in West Garo Hills during protests

linked to the elections to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), with demonstrators opposing the participation of non-Garo communities in the filing of nominations for the polls. Two people were killed and several others injured when police opened fire to disperse a mob during clashes in the Chibinang area on Tuesday, officials said.

The unrest has led to incidents of arson and damage to property in parts of the Garo Hills region, prompting authorities to deploy additional security forces, including five columns of the Army - three in Tura town and two in Chibinang - to restore order.

The chief minister visited Tura on Thursday, during



which he reviewed the security situation and held meetings with the West Garo Hills deputy commissioner, as well as senior officers of the Army and the Rapid Action Force (RAF).

Sangma also interacted with local residents and visited several sites damaged during the violence, including burnt shops, destroyed roadside market sheds, and the office of the National People's Party (NPP), which was partially damaged due to arson.

In a video statement, the chief minister described the vandalism and arson targeting the party office as unfortunate and assured people that those responsible would face strict action

under the law. He said the party would rebuild the damaged office and would continue to strengthen its organisation, asserting that the NPP "lives in the hearts of the people" and cannot be weakened by such attacks.

In the wake of the violence, Sangma on Wednesday announced the postponement of the GHADC elections that were scheduled to be held on April 10.

The State Government has also suspended mobile internet services across five districts of the Garo Hills region as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of rumours and maintain law and order, officials added.

## Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan gets bomb threat



Police dog squad inspecting the Vidhan Bhavan premises in Mumbai

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Mumbai

An email threatening "missile and bomb attacks" on Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan and other key locations in Mumbai triggered a security alert on Thursday, prompting authorities to conduct extensive searches in the legislature complex during the ongoing Budget session, officials said.

The email, received on an official email account of the legislature at 6:57 am, mentioned possible attacks on the Vidhan Bhavan complex, Bombay Stock Exchange, Bombay High Court, Mumbai Metro and a bank, legislative council chairman Ram Shinde said.

The threatening email may be linked to the pro-Khalistani movement, but it is too early to say anything concrete on it, Shinde told reporters in the Vidhan Bhavan premises.

Following the hoax email, the premises was locked down for about 40 minutes and a

fresh BDDS team was deployed to scan and sanitise the entire complex again, Vidhan Sabha sources said. The premises is usually checked and sanitised between 6 am and 8 am as part of a standard security procedure, while the bomb detection squad as well as the dog squad conduct daily scans of the entire premises as a precautionary measure, they added. However, the email was noticed later in the morning and therefore the complex was locked down briefly to recheck the entire area.

After the search, the police said nothing suspicious was found in the legislature complex and a preliminary probe suggested the threat was a hoax. The Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) subsequently declared the premises safe, officials said.

As per the standard procedure, Vidhan Bhavan officials lodged a complaint at Marine Drive police station against an unidentified person.

## Arunachal Assembly passes ₹36,607 cr Budget for 2026-27

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Itanagar

The Arunachal Pradesh Assembly on Thursday passed the ₹36,607 crore State Budget for 2026-27 by voice vote after a two-day discussion in the House.

The Budget, presented by Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on March 10, focuses on six key sectors aimed at strengthening infrastructure, people-centric development, economic growth and governance reforms. The total budget estimate projects a deficit of ₹701.43 crore.

The Budget size for 2026-27 stands at ₹36,607 crore, about 8.1 per cent lower than the previous



fiscal's Budget of ₹39,842 crore. During the discussion in the House, Mein, who also holds the Finance, Planning and Investment portfolios, thanked members for participating in the deliberations,

and described the Budget as one that fulfils people's aspirations.

He said the reduction in the budget size was mainly due to a shortfall in allocation from the Centre following the recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission based on horizontal devolution.

The deputy chief minister, however, highlighted several measures the state Government would take to address the shortfall in the current year's Budget allocation. He added that the state Budget has been designed to benefit every section of society. "Through its focus on health, education, livelihoods, connectivity, safety, culture and governance, it ensures that all 16 lakh plus people of Arunachal Pradesh benefit from one or more of the measures announced," Mein said.

He informed the House that after the budget's

passage, allocations would be made to all departments to carry forward ongoing schemes and implement new initiatives. He urged departments to immediately prepare guidelines and annual operating plans to ensure the timely implementation of projects.

Mein also said centrally sponsored schemes and other flagship programmes of the Centre and the State Government are being reviewed every two months by a committee headed by the chief secretary. Stressing the need for the timely completion of centrally sponsored schemes and flagship programmes, he said delays often lead to cost escalation.

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## RN Ravi takes oath as Governor of Bengal

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Jammu

Former IPS officer RN Ravi on Thursday took oath as the 22nd governor of West Bengal at a ceremony in the Lok Bhavan.

He was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, Sujoy Paul, in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee, senior minister and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim and Left Front chairman Biman Bose. Several bureaucrats, including Chief Secretary Nandini Chakravorty and senior



RN Ravi

police officers, also attended the event.

The ceremony began with the singing of the national song and anthem. Ravi was presented the Guard of Honour at Lok Bhavan, before he was sworn in at the Sardar Patel Unity Hall.

## Andhra milk contamination: Death toll rises to 13, seven undergoing treatment

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Rajamahendravaram (Andhra Pradesh)

The death toll in the suspected milk adulteration incident in East Godavari district has risen to 13, while seven persons continue to receive treatment at hospitals in Rajamahendravaram, an official said on Thursday.

Health department officials said the cluster of cases was first noticed on February 22 after several elderly residents were admitted to hospitals with symptoms such as anuria, vomiting, abdominal pain and acute renal dys-



function requiring dialysis. Residents from Sowdeswaranagar and Swardoopanagar areas of Lalacheruvu reportedly fell ill after consuming milk suspected to be adulterated and supplied in the locality. "The death toll in the suspect-

ed milk adulteration case in East Godavari district has reached 13, while seven persons are undergoing treatment at hospitals in Rajamahendravaram," the official said.

Authorities noted that strong epidemiological indicators point towards milk adulteration as the probable cause and multiple departments have initiated coordinated action.

Medical examinations revealed elevated levels of blood urea and serum creatinine among the affected persons, suggesting possible toxic exposure, they said.

## BJP to hold Badlav Rally in Punjab's Moga on March 14



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Chandigarh

The BJP will hold a 'Badlav Rally' at Killi Chahal in Punjab's Moga on March 14, party leaders said on Thursday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address the rally. Punjab BJP Scheduled Caste Morcha vice-president Paramjit Singh Kainth said the rally will send a message of positive change and development in Punjab.

He said Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhra, working president Ashwani Sharma and organisation secretary Manthri Srinivasulu have been visiting different districts to mobilise party workers ahead of the rally.

Kainth said the rally will reflect the party's commitment to good governance, transparency and development in the state. He added that thousands of party workers, farmers, youth and people from different sections of society from across Punjab are expected to participate in the event. Kainth also appealed to party workers and supporters to attend the rally in large numbers and make it a success.

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**Order Order**

**Kerala High Court pulls up Railways over Aadhaar for tatkal booking**



The Kerala High Court on Thursday pulled up the Railway Board for not responding till date, despite being granted several months' time, on whether Aadhaar authentication was mandatory for tatkal booking of tickets. A bench of Chief Justice Soumen Sen and Justice Syam Kumar VM expressed its displeasure after the counsel for the Board sought three weeks more time to respond on the issue.

"For such a simple issue you are taking so much time. You have not responded after time of several months altogether (that) has been given. If you are unable to respond, then we can decide the issue," the bench said.

The court adjourned the matter for three weeks and made it clear that the Board's response has to be filed within that period.

The observations and direction by the bench came on a public interest litigation challenging a central Government circular mandating Aadhaar based authentication for tatkal bookings.

**SC grants bail to separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah**



The Supreme Court on Thursday granted bail to Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah in a terror funding case, in which he was arrested by the National Investigation Agency on June 4, 2019.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said a detailed order will follow with some stringent bail conditions on Shah. The bench passed the order after hearing rejoinder arguments on behalf of Shah, represented by senior advocate Colin Gonsalves.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra appeared on behalf of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

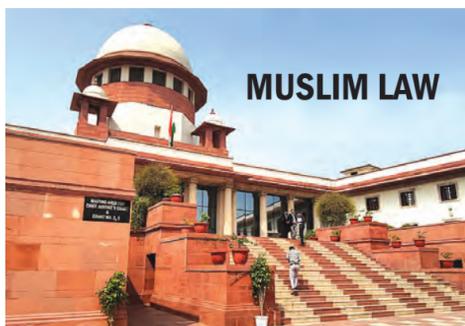
**Plea on gifts under Muslim law: SC asks petitioners to approach Law Commission**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked two petitioners, who had challenged a provision of a 1882 law which exempts gifts executed under the Muslim law from registration, to approach the Law Commission of India.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant said the appropriate recourse for the petitioners would be to approach an expert body like the Law Commission of India which has been entrusted with the responsibility of recommending suitable amendments in existing laws or for enactment of new laws.

The counsel appearing for the petitioners said the plea has challenged the constitu-



**MUSLIM LAW**

tional validity of Section 129 of the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, as well as Section 2 of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, so far as the word "gift" was concerned.

He said the gifts made under the Muslim personal law were exempt from the

requirements of paying stamp duty while the same exemption is not granted to non-Muslims.

The bench, also comprising justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, observed that if there was any loss to the public exchequer, the parliament would

be the competent forum. "The Parliament can always amend the law and can bring a new law," the bench said. The CJ asked why the petitioners have not represented before any parliamentarian pointing out that there was some element of alleged discrimination in the law. The counsel said there was an interplay between the Transfer of Property Act and the Registration Act.

"The clash between personal law and fundamental rights so far as the concept of gift is concerned has to be determined by this court," he said. The bench said the law is of 1882.

"Suddenly in 2026, you remember that it violates Article 14 and when you remember it, you did not deem it appropriate even to

inform those persons who are the best one to rectify it," the bench said. The CJ observed that the "best forum" would be the Law Commission.

"In our considered opinion, the appropriate recourse for the petitioners would be to approach the expert body like Law Commission of India which has been entrusted with the responsibility of recommending suitable amendments/changes in the existing laws and for enactment of new laws, as may be required from time to time," the bench said.

It said such an expert body being functional as of now, it see no reason to entertain the writ petition at this stage.

The bench disposed of the plea with liberty to the petitioners to approach the Law Commission.

**Jharkhand HC pulls up Dhanbad administration for pollution**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Ranchi

The Jharkhand High Court on Thursday took serious note of the increase in air pollution in Dhanbad and directed senior officials, including the district deputy commissioner and the senior superintendent of police, to appear in person before it on April 2.

A division bench of Chief Justice M S Sonak and Justice Rajesh Shankar also directed the chairman-cum-managing director of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) to appear

before the court and inform what steps could be taken to check illegal mining in the district. The bench was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a non-profit organisation, Gramin Ekta Manch, seeking inter-alia the district deputy commissioner to check rising pollution in the coal city.

The petitioner organisation submitted that rampant illegal mining in Dhanbad had led to an increase in air pollution in the district.

It alleged that the authorities had failed to control illegal mining and, as a result, pollution remained



unchecked. The court also directed the Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) chairman-cum-managing director to appear in person in this connection.

In the course of arguments, the court was informed by the BCCL counsel that the coal company has taken steps to convert mines into parks for public use.

The BCCL has registered several FIRs for illegal mining, but no action has been taken by police and the district administration, the counsel informed the court.



**Follow law to appoint DGP, or abide by norms laid down by court, says SC**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday said states that have enacted a separate Act for the appointment of the director general of police (DGP) will have to follow the law but in its absence they will have to follow the guidelines laid down by the apex court.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi closed the contempt proceedings initiated against Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana after having sent a proposal to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for suggesting names of officers to be appointed as State DGPs.

"We are very clear that states having valid Act in place will have to follow the law in appointment of DGPs and those who are not having it will have to follow the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in Prakash Singh case," the bench clarified after it was pointed out that Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have enacted a separate law for the appointment of state police chief.

In the Prakash Singh case, which relates to police reforms, the apex court had laid down guidelines that mandate the selection of DGPs from among three senior-most IPS officers empanelled by the UPSC and set a fixed two-year tenure for them.

Senior advocate Arunabh



Chowdhury, appearing for Jharkhand, said that the state has enacted a law for DGP appointment which says that the selection of the IPS officer would be done by a committee headed by a retired High Court judge.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the West Bengal Government, submitted that the state has sent a proposal to the UPSC for suggesting names for the appointment of the police chief. CJ Surya Kant remarked in a lighter vein and said, "West Bengal is more interested in transporting DGPs to the Rajya Sabha. Hopefully, now it will get a stable DGP as there are no vacancies in the Rajya Sabha."

Recently, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Government in West Bengal nominated former DGP Rajeev Kumar as a candidate for Rajya Sabha along with senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, who represents the state in the apex court.

Senior advocate Raju Ramachandran, who has been appointed as amicus curiae in the case, said that the apex court had earlier in the Prakash Singh case stated that they will have to send the names of eligible police officers to the UPSC, which in turn will suggest three names of IPS officers for appointment as DGP.

He said that there was a separate plea which seeks to appoint the DGP by the panel of the chief minister, the leader of opposition in the state assembly and the chief justice of the High Court but he was not supporting it.

"I am of the view that the post of DGP, chief secretary and home secretary should be selected by the Government in power and not by a panel as it is a matter of confidence. The Government of the day must have confidence in these top officers of the state as it helps in governance," Ramachandran said.

The bench agreed with the

view of the amicus and observed that the appointment of DGP should not be broadened to be done by a panel. The top court sought a response from the Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand Governments on the appointment of DGPs in two weeks.

On February 5, taking serious note of the inordinate delay by several states in sending proposals for the appointment of DGPs, the apex court had authorised the UPSC to bring such instances to its notice.

The apex court had granted four weeks to the UPSC to convene a meeting and make a recommendation for the appointment of a DGP for Telangana, where the last regular DGP retired in 2017.

It had endorsed the concern expressed by the UPSC regarding the inordinate delay on the part of several states in sending proposals for the appointment of DGPs in terms of the top court's directions in the Prakash Singh case.

The bench that the delay on the part of the states deprives meritorious and senior officers from being considered for appointment as DGP.

The Commission had said several states keep on delaying sending the proposal for the appointment of DGP in total disregard of the apex court's directions and an ad-hoc arrangement by appointing the acting DGP was being preferred instead of a regular appointment.

**Court issues non-bailable warrant to Farooq**



Farooq Abdullah

**MOHIT KANDHARI**  
Jammu

A day after the National Conference President and former Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah, survived an assassination bid at a marriage function in Jammu, a non-bailable warrant (NBW) was issued against him by a Srinagar court in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) financial irregularities case.

The warrant was issued by the designated court after rejecting an exemption application filed on his behalf in the said case investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The order was passed by the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM), Srinagar, during the hearing scheduled for framing of charges in the case on March 12.

According to court records, the CBI has already filed a chargesheet against several accused, including Abdullah, under Sections 120-B, 406 and 409 of J&K's erstwhile Ranbir Penal Code (RPC).

Dr Farooq Abdullah, who was still camping in Jammu and meeting different party leaders and the National Conference workers, could not appear before the court on Thursday.

On his behalf, his counsel sought an exemption from personal appearance, but the CJM rejected the plea. The court noted that, even after being offered the option to join the hearing virtually, counsel declined, stating that Abdullah could neither appear in person nor via videoconference. The court then directed the issuance of the NBW and listed the matter for further proceedings on March 30. The court had fixed March 12 for framing of charges and then recording of statements of approvers.

**Uttarakhand HC declares State PSC rule on answer sheet verification unconstitutional**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Nainital

The Uttarakhand High Court on Wednesday declared as unconstitutional a provision in the state public service commission's recruitment examination that did not allow candidates to verify their answer sheets before the final results of all stages of the test are announced.

A division bench of Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta and Justice Subhash Upadhyay gave the order while hearing petitions that sought answer sheets of the shorthand examination conducted for recruitment to the post of Additional Private Secretary (APS).

As per existing rules, the answer sheet of the shorthand test, which is part of the first stage of the recruitment process, would be released when the final results are



announced after the second stage.

The court on Wednesday granted candidates who failed to clear the shorthand test the right to verify their answer sheets after the test results of this specific test

are declared. The division bench stated in its order that transparency and fairness in the recruitment process are constitutionally mandated and candidates cannot be denied information related to evaluation.

Rajveer Singh, Ranveer Singh Tomar, Ruchi Rana, and other candidates had approached the High Court challenging the results of the shorthand examination declared on February 3, 2026.

The petitioners stated that

the Commission did not allow them to inspect their shorthand notebooks and typed answer sheets, making it impossible to verify the accuracy of the evaluation.

An advertisement was issued on July 18, 2024, for recruitment to 99 posts of Additional Private Secretary at the Dehradun Secretariat and the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission in Haridwar.

The first stage of the selection process included skill tests such as Hindi and English typing, computer knowledge, and shorthand.

Only candidates who passed this stage were eligible to appear for the second stage, the written examination.

The petitioners argued in court that they had successfully passed other examinations in the first stage of the selection process and per-

formed well in the shorthand test, yet they were not selected in the results.

Suspicious of possible errors in evaluation, they requested permission to verify their answer sheets.

As per existing rules, inspection of answer sheets could only be permitted after the final results (both stages) were declared.

The court declared this provision unconstitutional with respect to unsuccessful candidates, stating that if there is an inordinate delay in inspection, it will be nearly impossible to correct any errors later, and this could cause irreparable harm to the candidates.

The bench also stated that evaluated answer sheets fall within the category of information under the Right to Information Act, and candidates have the right to inspect and obtain copies of them.

**IAS OFFICER DENIED BAIL IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE**



Rajendrakumar Patel

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Ahmedabad

A special PMLA court here on Thursday rejected the regular bail plea of IAS officer and former Surendranagar collector Rajendrakumar Patel arrested in January by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a bribery-linked money laundering case.

The court of special PMLA judge KM Sojitra said it was not inclined to allow the application for regular bail moved by Patel, a 2015-batch Indian Administrative Service officer.

Having considered the nature of evidence as revealing from the complaint and case papers, it "cannot form prima facie opinion that the applicant is not guilty of having committed / indulged in offence of money laundering", the court said.

**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**  
F.NO E-768817/1484316/2026 Date: 09-03-2026

Expression of Interest (EOI) invited through e-tendering process for Students Learning and Strengthening of the Command and Control Centre for Schools in Assam : Vidya Shamiksha Kendra (VSK) 2.0 under the World Bank supported Project 'Assam: School Education and Adolescent Wellbeing Project (ASAP)'. To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The bidder who have downloaded the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000.00 (Rupees five thousand) only. The tender should be submitted online as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

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**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**  
F.NO E-768818/1484304/2026 Date: 09-03-2026

Expression of Interest (EOI) invited through e-tendering process for Strengthening Digital Governance for School Education in Assam : Shiksha Setu 2.0 under the World Bank supported Project 'Assam: School Education and Adolescent Wellbeing Project (ASAP)'. To participate in this tender process through e-procurement, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The bidder who have downloaded the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000.00 (Rupees five thousand) only. The tender should be submitted online as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

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DIPRCF/PIO/4529/13-Mar-26



## Editor's TAKE

### A motion against the chair

The no-confidence motion against the Chair was defeated by a voice vote, but not before the Opposition used the debate to air its grievances

A no-confidence motion is rarely brought against the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. In fact, it has happened only thrice – in 1954, 1966 and 1987 – and all these times the motion was defeated. This time was no different. The no-confidence motion against the Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla, was defeated by a voice vote. No one had an iota of doubt that it would be defeated. The Opposition simply did not have the numbers, as their strength adds up to only 238, falling short of the NDA's 293 in the Lower House. Perhaps removing Om Birla from the Chair was not the intention of the Opposition. All they wanted was to have a debate on the issue to castigate his tenure as Speaker. In this goal, they were pretty successful. Not only did they register a protest against his conduct in the House, but they also seized the opportunity to attack the Government. They effectively conveyed to the nation that the Opposition is being denied a fair chance to present its concerns in Parliament.

Indeed, there were heated exchanges as tempers ran high on both sides. After the Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks about the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, referring to his wink and hug in the House, there was uproar in the House. The Opposition members accused Shah of using unparliamentary language. Amid disorder in the House, the motion was eventually put to a voice vote and defeated.

Though the motion was defeated fair and square, one point stands out: why has the post of Deputy Speaker been vacant for the last seven years? Article 93 of the Constitution clearly states that the Lok Sabha shall choose both a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker "as soon as may be". Conventionally, it goes to the Opposition parties. Moreover, in a situation like this, only the Deputy Speaker presides over the House. Since there was no Deputy Speaker, the Chair was occupied by Jagdambika Pal, a BJP MP who happens to be on the panel of Speakers.

Another point the episode highlighted is about order in the House. For a long time, the nation has been witnessing disruptions in the House and unruly behaviour, largely from the Opposition benches. No one can condone such behaviour, but the fact also remains that the smooth functioning of Parliament is also the responsibility of the Government, which must own it, and the Speaker plays a vital role in running the House and maintaining decorum. If the Opposition is denied the chance to speak or is cut short, their frustration erupts in the form of slogan shouting and walkouts. In the last few years, several MPs have been suspended for their conduct. This is not good for a parliamentary democracy, and both sides should own the blame. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha occupies one of the most important constitutional offices in India's parliamentary system. Once elected, the Speaker is expected to rise above party affiliations, ensure fair debate, and protect the rights of all members of the House. The episode also highlights the growing politicisation of parliamentary procedures. For Parliament to retain public trust, both Government and Opposition must adhere to the spirit of parliamentary democracy and debate in a healthy manner rather than make it a shouting match.

## Passing through the troubled waters

The ongoing war in the Middle East has led to Iran choking the Strait of Hormuz, severely disrupting global oil shipments. With energy supplies stalled and commercial vessels exposed to growing risks, the lives of seafarers navigating these waters are increasingly in danger



NAVNEET SINGH

The date on my calendar reads March 10, 2026, but for the nearly 20,000 seafarers currently trapped in the volatile waters of the Middle East, time has shifted into a different, more dangerous dimension. As the military confrontation between Iran, Israel, and the United States reaches a fever pitch, the blue corridors of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea have been transformed from conduits of global prosperity into a "no-man's land" of drifting steel and heightened anxiety.

As a former officer who has stood watch in these very waters, I know that behind every news headline about a "targeted strike" is a human story – a merchant sailor scanning the horizon not for weather, but for the silhouette of an incoming drone. Today, that nightmare is a reality.

### A chokehold on global trade

The geopolitical "chess match" has moved to the world's most sensitive maritime chokepoints. Since the escalation began on February 28, 2026, the global economy has felt a seismic shock that dwarfs the energy crises of the 1970s.

The Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries 20 per cent of the world's oil and 30 per cent of its liquefied natural gas (LNG), is effectively impassable. Reports indicate that tanker traffic has collapsed by nearly 80 per cent.

The impact of the war is clear on oil and gas. Crude oil prices have surged past \$110 per barrel. For nations like India, which receives the lion's share of its crude through these waters, the disruption is not just an economic statistic – it is a threat to national energy security.

Currently, over 200 oil and LNG vessels are anchored or "drifting" outside the Strait, unable to proceed due to a lack of war-risk insurance or the direct threat of kinetic strikes. Major shipping lines have rerouted via the Cape of Good Hope, adding 4,000 miles and three weeks to transits, sending freight rates skyrocketing.

While the world watches the price of gasoline, the families of mariners watch the clock. The psychological toll on the "silent service" is immense.

International maritime bodies, including the IMO, have reported that seafarers are being treated as collateral. On March 6, 2026, the world mourned the loss of four crew members on the vessel *Mussafah 2*, struck in the Strait. Earlier this month, on 1 March, fatal-



THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) HAS WARNED THAT MILLIONS IN HUMANITARIAN HEALTH SUPPLIES ARE CURRENTLY BLOCKED DUE TO THE CLOSURE OF THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

The writer is an Ex-Merchant Navy Officer

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ities were reported on the *Skylight* and *MKD Vyom*.

At home, families in Mumbai, Manila, and Colombo wait for a WhatsApp message that may never come. Many vessels have entered "electronic blackout" zones to avoid detection, but this leaves families in a state of agonising silence. As an ex-officer, I know that "crew fatigue" is now "combat fatigue". Sailors are forced to remain on board for months past their relief dates because crew changes in regional ports like Jebel Ali or Khalifa have become too high-risk.

We are witnessing a profound erosion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The fundamental principle of freedom of navigation is being treated as a secondary concern to military objectives.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez recently stated: "Seafarers must not be targets. Around 20,000 seafarers remain stranded in the Persian Gulf under heightened risk and considerable mental strain. This is unacceptable and unsustainable."

The UN guidelines are clear. Under international humanitarian law, civilian mariners and merchant vessels are non-combatants. Yet, the reality on the water is one of GPS jamming, AIS spoofing, and "grey zone" warfare where a merchant ship is misidentified as a hostile asset. The rule of law is being replaced by the rule of force.

The crisis extends beyond missiles. Health services for mariners have reached a breaking point. Restricted access to ports means that injured or sick mariners cannot receive urgent medical evacuations. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that millions in humanitarian health supplies are currently blocked due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The lack of routine medical care and the constant threat of drone strikes are creating a secondary crisis of mental health and chronic illness among crews who cannot be relieved.

### The silent lifeline

The current conflict is a grim reminder that our global lifestyle is built on the backs of people we rarely see. The "key makers" of global trade—the mariners – are being used as

pawns. From Sri Lanka to India, the spillover of the US-Iran-Israel conflict into the Indian Ocean (including the sinking of the frigate *IRIS Dena* on 4 March) shows that no corner of the sea is safe. As we look towards the coming weeks, the international community must move beyond "condemnation".

We need protected corridors and a return to the sanctity of maritime law. If the global lifeline of the merchant navy is severed, the world will find that no amount of military might can fill the empty shelves and dark power grids that follow. We carry the cargo, we carry the risk, and today, we carry the scars of a war we did not choose.

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

## India's women rewriting workplace narratives



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

### 2ND OPINION

For decades, the Indian workplace had a predictable face. It was overwhelmingly male. Offices, factories, construction sites, and technical trades were spaces where men were expected to lead, earn, and dominate. Women, even when highly capable, were often encouraged to channel their energy within the walls of the home. Society had quietly written a script: men would build the economy, and women would build the family.

But somewhere along the journey of modern India, that script began to change. Today, if you walk through offices, research labs, airports, or even construction sites in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, or Bengaluru, the landscape tells a different story. Women are not merely present; they are leading teams, managing operations, driving cabs, repairing electrical systems, and running businesses.

Domains that were once described as "a man's world" are slowly transforming into spaces defined by competence rather than gender.

This shift is not sudden. It is the result of years of quiet cultural evolution. Education played a crucial role. As more families began investing equally in the education of daughters, women started entering professional fields once considered unconventional for them. Disciplines like Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, which once had very few female students, are gradually seeing greater participation. But the real transformation has been psychological. For generations, financial independence for women was often viewed as optional, sometimes even unnecessary. Today, it is increasingly seen as essential – not only for economic stability but also for personal identity. A salary cheque for many women is no longer just income; it represents dignity, agency, and the freedom to make choices about one's own life. Economic realities have also played their part. Rising living costs in urban India have made dual-income households less of a luxury and more of a necessity. Yet what began as economic practicality has evolved into something far deeper – a recognition that women's aspirations deserve equal space in the public sphere. Policy support and social awareness have further strengthened this shift. Legislative measures such as the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 have reinforced the idea that work-

places must adapt to support women rather than expect women to withdraw from their careers.

Equally powerful has been the influence of visible role models. Leaders like Indra Nooyi, Nirmala Sitharaman, and Falguni Nayar have demonstrated that leadership is not defined by gender but by vision and resilience. Their journeys have quietly expanded the horizon of what young women believe is possible.

Perhaps the most beautiful aspect of this transformation is that it is not about replacing men. It is about redefining partnership. The emerging narrative is not of competition but of collaboration – where both men and women contribute to building families, businesses, and the nation's economy.

Cultural shifts rarely happen overnight. They unfold slowly through changing attitudes in homes, classrooms, and workplaces. What we are witnessing today is not merely an increase in the number of working women; it is a deeper reimagining of gender roles in modern India.

And in that reimagining lies a simple but powerful truth: empowerment does not arrive through declarations. It grows quietly when society begins to believe that a woman's place is not confined to one space – but wherever her ambition chooses to take her.

The writer is a freelancer who writes on social and gender issues

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

## PICTALK



An artisan dries 'Kalawa', a sacred orange-yellow thread used in Hindu rituals, in Lalgopalgarj village, near Prayagraj.

PHOTO: PTI

## DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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## LPG SHORTAGE RAISES SERIOUS CONCERNS FOR INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS

India is currently experiencing a shortage of LPG and LNG supplies. After tensions escalated in the Middle East region, the critical supply of LPG to India has been placed under restriction, which is now beginning to affect the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Since LPG is one of the most essential requirements for every household to cook food, any disruption in its supply directly affects the right to a dignified life for people across the country.

It is well known that India imports a large portion of its LPG from West Asian countries, particularly the UAE and Qatar. Following the Iran-US tensions, not only India but much of the world is experiencing supply chain bottlenecks from their

respective importing nations.

As a result, many booked LPG cylinders are not being delivered on time, and citizens are facing considerable inconvenience.

In such circumstances, it is important for the Government of India to urgently explore alternative arrangements that can meet the basic needs of the population. Any prolonged delay may create dissatisfaction and unrest among the public.

It is somewhat ironic that the government, which encouraged households to shift from traditional cooking methods to LPG, is now struggling to ensure adequate supply during difficult times. Ensuring uninterrupted access to cooking fuel must remain a national priority.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Governor transfer sparks controversy

The appointment of RN Ravi as the Governor of West Bengal has sparked considerable controversy. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has criticised the decision, alleging that Union Home Minister Amit Shah did not consult her before transferring Ravi from Tamil Nadu to West Bengal. Such concerns highlight the recurring debate over constitutional conventions and the role of governors in India's federal structure.

Ravi's tenure in Tamil Nadu was marked by frequent disagreements with the DMK government, and his arrival in West Bengal is being viewed through a similar political lens. With the state Assembly elections approaching, many believe that the move may carry strategic implications for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Mamata Banerjee has already warned the new governor against interfering in state politics, remarking that "Bengal is a tough turf".

The coming months may therefore witness renewed friction between the Raj Bhavan and the state administration. While Ravi may prove to be a firm constitutional head, the intense political climate in West Bengal suggests that the relationship between the governor and the government could remain contentious.

CK SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

### Sovereignty must be respected

The political temperature rose sharply after the Indian National Congress criticised remarks made by the White House regarding India's acceptance of Russian oil shipments. According to the statement, the United States had "temporarily permitted" India to receive oil that was already at sea during the ongoing West Asia crisis. Such language has understandably raised concerns. India is a sovereign nation with an independent foreign policy. Decisions regarding energy security and international trade must be taken solely in accordance with India's national interest, not framed as permissions granted by any other country.

The Congress party has described the remarks as a "capitulation certificate" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It has also questioned why the government has not formally objected to the wording used by the White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, who referred to India being "permitted" and described Indians as "good actors".

Diplomatic language carries significant symbolic weight in international relations. Any statement that appears to undermine India's sovereignty or dignity must be addressed firmly and promptly.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

### Reform corporate lending practices

Apropos the report "SBI's large defaulter list shows split loans, guarantor complexities", the disclosure by the State Bank of India raises troubling questions about the structure of large corporate lending in India. The cases highlighted in the report show how massive loans are often distributed across multiple banks and supported by complicated guarantor arrangements. While such structures are sometimes designed to share risk among lenders, they can also blur accountability and make oversight more difficult. When loans are fragmented across consortium banks and layered with cross-guarantees, monitoring becomes challenging. If projects fail or corporate borrowers default, banks frequently find themselves trapped in prolonged legal disputes, delayed recoveries and rising non-performing assets.

Public sector banks hold millions in savings. Lending must follow strict due diligence and transparency. Complex financial structures must not obscure risk or weaken accountability. The episode is a reminder that stronger safeguards in corporate lending are urgently required. Without meaningful credit governance reforms, such cases will continue to erode public trust in the banking system.

N SADHASIVA REDDY | BENGALURU

Please send your letter to the info@dailyopinion.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.



## Punjab's industrial renaissance: Powering competitiveness

Together with the country's lowest industrial power tariff, the Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 is more than just another policy announcement; it is a strategic effort to restore Punjab's confidence as a manufacturing powerhouse

**FIRST Column**



**AS MITTAL**

By recalibrating distribution criteria, tightening fiscal expectations, and linking devolution more closely to performance, the Commission signals a gradual movement away from a purely redistributive framework towards one that rewards growth, discipline and governance capacity.

Industrial competitiveness depends not only on incentives but also on operating costs, especially power tariffs, which often determine manufacturing viability. Recognising this, Punjab has reduced industrial electricity tariffs to ₹5.81 per unit, the lowest in the country. This gives Punjab a competitive edge over major industrial states such as Tamil Nadu (₹9.04/unit), Gujarat (₹8.98), Maharashtra (₹8.32), Karnataka (₹7.75), Haryana (₹6.95), Uttar Pradesh (₹6.75) and Rajasthan (₹6.50/unit).

This tariff reduction and related reforms show how administrative intent and efficient execution can transform public-sector institutions. In less than a year, the turnaround of Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSPCL) from a loss-making utility to a profit-making entity with ₹2,634 crore profit and an A+ rating is an example of how governance reforms can directly support inclusive growth.

Alongside this competitive power tariff regime, Punjab's new Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 reflects a reform-oriented vision and a proactive process that aligns with the needs of modern manufacturing, signalling a shift in Punjab's approach to industrial development.

### Reviving Punjab's manufacturing legacy

Punjab's industrial strength has historically rested on its vibrant MSME-driven manufacturing ecosystem of over two lakh units. Cities such as Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Batala, Mandi Gobindgarh and Mohali have evolved into major industrial hubs, producing bicycles, textiles and hosiery, sports goods, machine tools, auto components and agricultural equipment.

For decades, these clusters served domestic markets and exported globally, generat-



**REDUCING THE ELIGIBILITY THRESHOLD FOR THE EMPLOYMENT GENERATION SUBSIDY TO AN INVESTMENT OF ₹25 CRORE AND 50 WORKERS-FROM THE EARLIER THRESHOLD OF ₹250 CRORE AND 1,000 EMPLOYEES-BROADENS THE INCENTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MSMEs**

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ing employment and prosperity across the state. However, over the past two decades, Punjab lost part of its industrial edge as industries shifted to states with lower land costs, stronger incentives, simpler compliance systems and better infrastructure.

The new industrial policy aims to reverse this trend by creating a more competitive and investor-friendly ecosystem that encourages new investment and reinvestment by existing industries.

The policy identifies nine priority sectors-food processing, sports goods, textiles and allied industries, agro-waste processing, auto and auto components, electronics and semiconductors, IT, electric vehicles, and defence and aerospace. These sectors will receive an additional 25 per cent incentive, as will industries located in border districts such as Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka, as well as the Kandli region.

### A flexible incentive framework

A key innovation of the industrial policy is its investor-driven incentive architecture. For the first time, investors can select from 20 incentive options and customise packages based on their sector, scale and operational cost structure.

This approach acknowledges a key reality of modern industry: different sectors require different types of support.

A pharmaceutical plant, an electric vehicle manufacturer, a textile unit, or a data centre operates under very different cost structures and investment cycles.

The policy also introduces capital subsidy for the first time in Punjab, allowing the government to share part of the upfront investment burden and reduce financial risk for investors.

Combined with incentives that can reach up to 100 per cent of Fixed Capital Investment, this framework improves the financial viability of large projects.

### Long-Term policy stability

Another important reform is the continuation of exemptions on SGST, stamp duty, electricity duty and the employment generation subsidy, which were earlier available to investors.

The eligibility period for investors has been extended from 7-10 years to 10-15 years, much longer than the typical five-to-ten-year support period offered by most states.

Such long-term policy assurance is crucial for capital-intensive sectors such as semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and data centres, where investments take years to mature and returns are realised gradually. By aligning incentives with the lifecycle of these projects, Punjab offers

the policy stability and financial predictability that global investors value when choosing investment destinations.

### Strengthening existing industry

While many industrial policies focus primarily on attracting new investors, Punjab's policy recognises the critical role of existing industries that have sustained the state's manufacturing base for decades.

Modernisation, machinery upgrades, capacity expansion and new production lines by existing manufacturers will now qualify for incentives, placing them on equal footing with new investors. This reform is significant for traditional industrial clusters such as Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Mandi Gobindgarh, where thousands of small and medium manufacturers are striving to upgrade technology and improve productivity.

Reducing the eligibility threshold for the Employment Generation Subsidy to an investment of ₹25 crore and 50 workers from the earlier threshold of ₹250 crore and 1,000 employees-broadens the incentive framework for MSMEs.

Eligible firms will receive wage support of ₹3,000 per month per male employee and ₹4,000 per month for women, SC, ST and differently-abled employees. In industrial towns where firms typically employ

25-50 workers, this reform could lead to increased reinvestment and job creation.

Incentivising Sustainability and Compliance

Another progressive reform is the expanded definition of Fixed Capital Investment, which now includes investments in land, labour, housing, research and development facilities, effluent treatment plants, sewage treatment plants and Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) systems.

The policy also introduces capital subsidies of up to ₹10 crore for ZLD systems and ₹7.5 crore for switching to paddy-straw-based boilers. By recognising these investments within the incentive base, the policy rewards companies for building environmentally compliant and sustainable industrial infrastructure.

This provision will benefit sectors such as textile dyeing units in Ludhiana and leather tanneries in Jalandhar, which must invest heavily in pollution-control and effluent-treatment systems. By supporting compliance-driven investments, the policy promotes responsible industrial growth and strengthens environmental sustainability.

Complementing these initiatives are reforms in labour regulations, such as permitting night shifts for women, along with streamlined building approvals and ease-of-doing-business measures, all aimed at reducing procedural delays and improving investor confidence.

### The road ahead

Punjab's entrepreneurial culture has always been one of its greatest strengths. Together with the country's lowest industrial power tariff, the Industrial & Business Development Policy 2026 is more than just another policy announcement; it is a strategic effort to restore Punjab's confidence as a manufacturing powerhouse.

However, the success of this policy will depend on effective implementation and continued governance reforms. Investors judge states not only by policy announcements but also by the efficiency of approvals, the transparency of compliance systems and the reliability of infrastructure.

Backed by strong governance, digital single-window approvals within 45 days and self-certification frameworks, the policy could transform Punjab into an engine of industrial growth, exports and large-scale employment generation, securing a more prosperous economic future for the next generation.



## Nepal's youthquake: Dawn or dust?



**MAHENDRA KUMAR SINGH**

For decades, the story of Nepali politics was written in the same tired ink: the same familiar faces, the same broken promises, and a debilitating chum of coalition governments. Power has circulated within a limited political elite, creating a growing disconnect between political leadership and public expectations.

But on 5 March 2026, the voters of the Himalayan nation didn't just cast their ballots; they began to write a completely new chapter. The general elections have delivered a decisive verdict, and its echoes will be felt far beyond the valleys of Kathmandu.

The sweeping victory of the political newbie Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and the meteoric rise of its leader, Balen Shah, signal nothing less than a generational coup d'état. At just 35, Shah, a former rapper and social media phenomenon, has done the unthinkable: he defeated the indomitable K. P. Sharma Oli, a titan of the old guard, in his own constituency.

The tremors were felt long before March. The election was the inevitable climax of the September 2025 Generation-Z protests, a digital-age uprising that quickly engulfed the nation in a wildfire of rage against nepotism, corruption, and systemic decay. They forced then PM Oli out and paved the way for an interim government, proving that the streets could dictate the agenda for the halls of power.

The RSP's success is a direct pipeline from those protests to Parliament. They captured the very aspiration of a Nepal that is young, connected, and fiercely impatient. Their campaign was a masterpiece in modern political contest, fought not with the rusty weapons of dynastic patronage, but with the sharp tools of social media, digital outreach, and a promise of radical transparency. The party received strong support in urban areas, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, and among young voters. It is clear that the expectations of a rapidly changing urban society are increasingly different from those represented by traditional political structures.

This verdict delivers a stinging rebuke to the traditional parties like the Nepali Congress, NCP, and the UML that have treated the nation as their personal fiefdom for far too long. It also signals a challenge to the identity-based politics that has long shaped Nepal's political landscape, particularly in the Madhesh-Tarai region. For years, regional parties mobilised voters around ethnic grievances. But this election suggests a shift: a growing section of voters, especially the youth,



are prioritising governance, transparency, employment, and development over narrow identity politics. But when the euphoria fades, the hard reality of governing sets in. Can a party of novices, born from protest, transform into a vehicle of progress? The challenges are staggering: a remittance-dependent economy, chronic unemployment, a failed party system, and a bureaucracy built to resist reform.

In Nepal, remittance inflows have surged to record levels, reaching Rs 201.22 billion in a single month and growing 39.1 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal year, yet this windfall masks deeper structural failures. The economy remains heavily dependent on money sent home by migrant workers, now accounting for more than 25 per cent of GDP, while domestic job creation stagnates. Nearly five lakh youth enter the labour market annually, but only about 10 per cent find formal employment. Unemployment among young people exceeds 20 per cent, forcing thousands to seek work abroad-over 200,000 left in just the first quarter of this fiscal year. Meanwhile, industry contributes barely 12.8 per cent to GDP, reflecting limited industrial development and a narrow economic base. If the new government fails to take concrete steps to address these problems, public enthusiasm could quickly turn into disappointment. Political stability remains elusive. In the last eighteen years, Nepal has seen nearly fourteen governments. Coalition infighting, ideological clashes, and leadership rivalries have long crippled governance.

Even though the RSP has gained strong public support, the new leadership will face tough resistance from traditional power elites who have deep roots in the army and civil administration. Managing the complexities of governance will be a serious test. The party must now prove itself as a responsible governing force.

Nepal's new leadership must navigate treacherous geopolitical rapids, balancing deep ties with India against China's gravitational pull, while a growing American presence adds complexity.

India remains Nepal's most consequential neighbour, accounting for nearly two-thirds of trade and the sole fuel supply. But New Delhi has adopted "managed pragmatism", focusing on hydropower and connectivity rather than demanding exclusive dominance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulations were more than diplomatic courtesy; they were recognition of a new, unpredictable variable in a critical neighbour. For India, a stable Kathmandu is non-negotiable, but stability is no longer guaranteed by cosy ties with a familiar few.

India-Nepal cooperation has deepened across multiple fronts. In connectivity, projects like the Jayanagar-Kurtha Railway and the proposed Rakaul-Kathmandu line, alongside Integrated Check Posts, have improved cross-border trade. Energy partnership has emerged as a cornerstone with Indian firms developing major hydropower projects (Arun III, Upper Karnali) and cross-border transmission lines, while recent long-term power trade agreements signal deepening integration. The Motihari-Amlekhganj Petroleum Pipeline now facilitates efficient fuel supply. Digitally, UPI's integration with Nepal's payment systems reflects broadening economic ties.

China's engagement under the Belt and Road Initiative includes ambitious proposals like a rail link from Tibet to Kathmandu. For Beijing, cross-border connectivity is a strategic imperative tied to stability in Tibet. The US has emerged as a significant player with over \$1 billion in development assistance. Japan and multilateral institutions are also active, reflecting Nepal's transformation from a "buffer state" into a zone of "strategic density", where multiple powers compete and cooperate simultaneously. For the new government in Kathmandu, the challenge is maintaining a hedging strategy, extracting benefits from all sides while preserving non-alignment. This will be the first major test of its diplomatic skills and ability to balance competing interests.

Balen Shah and the RSP have inherited a nation's hope, but also its simmering rage. If they fail to deliver, if their promises of transparency and anti-corruption get tangled in the red tape they vowed to cut, the very youth who carried them to power will be the first to turn against them. The cycle of disillusionment could spin faster than ever before.

Nepal once again stands at an important turning point in its democratic history. The 2026 elections have not just opened a new chapter; they have thrown the old book out of the window. Whether this leads to a renaissance of accountable governance or descends into the chaos of unmet expectations is the question that now hangs in the balance. Every political newcomer arrives promising to bend the arc of history. The test is whether history bends them first.

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## A cultural bridge in need of protection



**RAMESH DAVESAR**

Urdu, aka Spoken Hindustani — the common man's language, has been the prominent vernacular bridge connecting various regions of Greater India since its inception over seven millennia ago. Also known as "Khadi Boli", initially confined to Delhi and the adjoining areas of the erstwhile Central Province, it subsequently spread to other parts, extending up to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), which brought the socio-political renaissance in the region. Despite its widespread contributions, and amongst the 22 constitutionally recognised languages, Urdu is standing at an existential crossroads, struggling for its revival. Urdu's advent goes back to the 13th century CE; there were primarily two contrasting morphemes in use: Sanskrit, predominantly Hindi written in Devanagari, and Persian, written in the Perso-Arabic script. Incidentally, Sufism had also made its mark in India around this period. Bereft of any common means of communication, and with the absence of a simple connect with the masses, it was found wanting in spreading their godly paeans among the public. It was the Sufi saint Amir Khusro who, by combining the old Hindi language (Braj Bhasha) and Persian, came out with a new lexicon - the "Rekhta" (hybrid), later named "Zuban-e-Ordu" - Urdu. Coupled with its colloquial vernacular, symbiotic grammar, and the poetic content of Persian already in use in North Indian languages, e.g. Punjabi, it crossed all religious barriers and became the "lingua franca" of the regions. During British rule, it further attained wider status by becoming the official language of the courts.

All through, Urdu's contributions in integrating the "religio-social-political fibre" of our country were monumental. During the freedom struggle, Urdu journalism played an important role in generating the spirit of freedom among the masses. Of these, the first Urdu daily of North India and the third in India - "The Daily Urdu Akhbar", launched in 1837 from Delhi - had not only played a crucial role in 1857 but also continued its aggressive participation throughout the independence movement. Its editor, Maulvi Muhammad Baqir, was publicly executed in September 1857 for his untiring crusade against British rule. In Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai, in order to inveigle pro-independence sentiments and mobilise the masses, also launched an Urdu daily, "The Bande (Vande) Mataram", from Lahore.

Similarly, we can ill afford to ignore the scholarly contributions of the Urdu literati in forging interfaith bonhomie among the masses. A number of religious scriptures were cross-translated into and from Urdu. For instance, Prof. Dil Mohd of Lahore, in 1940, was felicitated for translating the Holy Gita, the Gayatri Mantra, the Japji Sahib, and the Sukhmani Sahib into Urdu. Urdu's flourishing stride continued after independence primarily because of its widespread vernacular base and the voluntary support of various literary bodies.

Everything appeared hunky-dory till some "socio-political" overtures started aligning Urdu with a particular community and region. It resulted in shrinking its vernacular base. Somewhere around this period, robust movements to promote Hindi were launched by the government and other agencies; their cumulative manifestation resulted in substantial attrition of various regional languages, including Urdu, which perhaps suffered the most. The atrophic trend prompted Khushwant Singh who, in 1975, while addressing a seminar, had prophesied that "Urdu would become a dying language". We must remember that Urdu is our "Scheduled Language", and further buttressed by the Supreme Court Ruling of Apr 2025 affirmed that "the Urdu born and flourished in India is an integral part of our shared culture", it thus becomes incumbent on us to safeguard its solemn heritage.

Foremost, the Urdu clerisy, acting as the "vanguard", should harness all academic and institutional resources, bring in awareness, and promote Urdu by sharing their literary and poetic repertoire among the youth. Urdu cultural centres affiliated with selected universities and educational institutes should be set up.

Interestingly, Maharashtra, in order to promote Urdu among the youth, launched a state-level annual Urdu carnival in January 2025 at Kolhapur. We need more such emulative initiatives from other states and NGOs as well.

As of now, just seven out of the 28 states and eight Union Territories (UTs) have Urdu as the second language in academic curricula. The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) was set up under the Ministry of Education in 1996 to develop and propagate the Urdu language, including Arabic and Persian, in the country. The National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), with 887 centres nationwide, should include Urdu in its curricula. The recommendations of the Gujral Committee of 1979 to promote Urdu in education and social and cultural fields should be re-examined in the present context. Our electronic media needs to be exceptionally linear in promoting "Spoken Hindustani".

Col Ramesh Davesar is a Veteran who fought 1971 Indo-Pak War; had two years stint in the IPKF & commanded Battalion in the Valley

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Although there is extreme madness and mayhem, oil prices, like in the case of other assets, generally gyrate during crises due to macro factors, and sentiments. But as oil zoomed by 40-50 per cent in a matter of days, slumped by a quarter in 24 hours, and jumped back again by 17-18 per cent in another 24 hours, neither of the two factors fully explain the yo-yos. The volatile ups and downs, for no reason whatsoever, without any warnings, and not due to renewed attacks, have amazed experts and analysts. But, as one media report indicates, the movements are not because of economic reasons, or emotions, but due to the war of words. Each syllable, sentence, phrase, or even a hint that may be wrong assumed seems to impact the oil prices violently. "Prices are rising and falling... on words and threats, and their credibility..."

First, the high decibel levels and war cries crazed the oil markets. Then came the calming words from the US President Donald Trump, who said that the war would end soon. It soothed the markets. Later, the Iranian missiles made a lot of noise, and randomly attacked the US and other civilian targets across the Middle East. Oil went mad. This is partly because no one seems to be speaking the truth. The investors know it but hopefully and optimistically take the world leaders at face value, only to be distracted and distraught by another voice. "The result is a volatile market that seems increasingly guided by claims to influence the flow of oil; the more credible a claim appears to be, the more attentive oil prices are to it," stated the report. Words, and phrases seem to have a way with the fluctuating oil prices.

Of course, the sentences and claims seemed to carry more weight for obvious reasons. For example, when Iran confidently announced that it had effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, and any oil tanker that passes through it does so dangerously, the world listened. The Strait accounts for a third of the crude oil supplies, especially to large consumers such as India, China, Japan, and South Korea in Asia. The insurers and captains of the tankers backed off, and refused to either provide a safety cover, and undertake the transport perils. Coming after Qatar declared force majeure, and shut down its LNG production, it was imperative for global oil prices to crash through the roof. They did, as they zoomed from \$80-plus per barrel to nearly \$120. In the past few days, Iran showed that it had no qualms to attack military, civilian, and part-military targets in the Middle East. Now, it claims that the offices of the tech giants, who help militaries and defence contractors are fair game for its missiles and drone-related attacks. Nothing is safe.

When Trump confidently pronounced that the war was almost over since the US had accomplished its motives, and there was nothing left in Iran to attack, the world listened. "Any time I want it to end, it will end." Which is true because it started when he wanted it to begin. When the G-7 met, and stated that it would release oil from the emergency and strategic reserves, the traders were up on their feet. This was despite Trump's counter that he would not touch the American reserves as there was no need to do so. He maintained that there was enough oil that was sloshing around. By now, the Russian oil came back into the equation, and there were speculations that even Europe may buy from it, after India readily agreed to do so. Indeed, ironically, the Russian oil was priced at \$4-5 higher than the global prices.

But Iran did not relent. Its attacks continued. More energy assets in the Middle East and adjoining areas were destroyed, and came under threat. Even as some nations like India contended that a few ships sailed through the Strait of Hormuz, several fuel tankers were struck by boats loaded with explosives in the Iraq waters. Iran, which finessed its smuggling routes during years of western sanctions to earn illegal revenues, knew the routes better than the others. It knew where to attack, and when, and when this became apparent, the oil traders lost their nerves, yet again. So, when Iran claimed that the US and the world need to be ready for an oil price of \$200 a barrel, the "words carried weight because they were accompanied by action. Tankers, oil wells, and storages and ports were attacked... and shipping slowed through the Hormuz. Suddenly, the earlier narrative of a nearly-finished war looked less convincing." Oil was back at \$100.

According to media commentaries, despite its initial spike in the first few days, which were due to logical reasons, oil began to listen to Trump, G-7, and the powerful International Energy Agency. They promised assistance in the form of extra insurance, extra oil, and extra assurances of a short war. But as the day went on, oil began to listen to the adversaries, whose counters were louder, as loud as their missiles.

**"PRICES ARE RISING AND FALLING... ON WORDS AND THREATS, AND THEIR CREDIBILITY...."**

# War-linked paradox of incentives

*Those who can end the tensions may be the biggest gainers*

One of the worst truths, which is both intuitive, and sometimes counterintuitive, is that there are invariably some corporate victors, which earn super profits, and many failures, which end up in extreme pain, even if only for a few months or years. A new research study, which dubs this phenomenon a "paradox of incentives," looks at the firms that get the "windfalls," and others that lie in shambles. As most asset classes disintegrate in the ongoing Iran war, apart from perhaps the dollar, a few other currencies, and treasury bonds and, of course, oil and gas, it is crucial to understand how its spoils will be divided.

It is easy to identify some of the winners, which include defence firms, especially in the US and Europe, and the owners of the global oil and gas reserves, if these giants are unable to sell enough quantities. But there are some that remain invisible, or partly-hidden. These include the tech firms, especially those related to artificial intelligence (AI), and especially in the modern war context. Apart from the business gainers, there are the political beneficiaries across the globe. War, disruptions, tensions, violence, and chaos help some leaders who are under pressure for various reasons, and wish to distract attention.

According to the research, "On Wall Street, defence stocks including Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and RTX rose between four per cent and six per cent on the first day of the (US-Israel) missile strikes (on Iran). The three firms' combined shareholder gain on that one day was \$25-30 billion. In Israel, Elbit Systems briefly became the country's most valuable listed company, with its shares up 45 per cent since January (2026). In Europe and the UK, defence stocks surged against a falling FTSE 100 (the UK

stock exchange index)." The London-based BAE Systems surged six per cent on the first day.

In India, the situation is slightly different from what the "paradox of incentives" hints at. According to AI-generated search, "Indian defence stocks experienced high volatility, initially surging by up to 13.5 per cent in early March 2026 due to the escalating Iran-Israel tensions, before experiencing a correction due to profit-taking." This is because unlike the defence firms in the US and Israel (and even Europe), Indians are not directly involved in the war, and may not gain immediate tangible benefits. It was logical for the savvy institutional and high net-worth persons to sell at the new highs.

However, when the war effects were more direct, as during Operation Sindoor and last year's India-Pakistan conflict for a few days, the scenario was different. "Indian defence stocks experienced a massive, rapid surge during and after Operation Sindoor (initiated May 7, 2025), with the sector outperforming broader markets by 9x, and some stocks rising 72 per cent within weeks. Driven by the success of indigenous systems and expectations of new orders, key stocks such as HAL, BEL, and Cochin Shipyard saw significant gains, adding Rs 1.18 lakh crore to investor wealth," stated another AI-linked search.

In both the wars, Iran-Israel-US and India-Pakistan, tech played a crucial part, and cyber-war constituted a critical component. In the case of India, drones, intelligent missiles, and defence platforms were important. Both the US and Israel, as well as Iran, rely on AI-driven weapons to launch long-distance strikes on key assets. This explains tech stocks, especially in the US, did not

suffer much despite the decimation across the global stock markets. The Nasdaq did not tumble, and the wealth of the tech billionaires seemed intact despite the falls. In contrast, Indian tech seems destroyed because it is largely unprepared for the AI onslaught in the future.

Oil nations will gain, as the global crude prices cross the \$100 mark for the second time, and some pessimists predict oil @ \$200 per barrel. The US may benefit as Europe buys more of its output, as it did after the Russia-Ukraine war, and a large consumer like India, which relied on Russian crude earlier, spins towards America. "For the Gulf petrostates, the picture is nuanced," states the new research. Saudi Arabia and the UAE face real costs but their exposure to the Strait of Hormuz is lower than Kuwait, Qatar, and Iraq. Russia, whose oil now sells at a premium to the global prices, will find legitimate buyers in India and China.

A counterintuitive trend to the oil beneficiaries is that the high global prices suddenly make drilling in difficult areas more lucrative. Shale gas, with its large reserves in the US, may get a huge boost. At the same time, the oil crisis propels nations to seek greater refuge in renewables. In practice, things may be different. As was evident after the Russia-Ukraine war, Europe turned more towards not just fossil fuels, but even worse, coal. Old coal-based plants that were shut down were suddenly revived. As the new research states, the transition to renewables may slow down due to more attention on oil and gas.

"Wars may also be good for incumbent politicians in the short term. Before the (Iran) strikes, the fallout from the release of the Epstein files was reverberating globally.... Within hours of the first strikes, web searches for the Epstein files collapsed," explains the new research. In Iran, the earlier western sanctions, and ongoing war, which aims to destroy the existing power structures, may bolster it. Due to sanctions, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the elite military faction, ended up with control over oil assets, engineering, telecom, and construction. Now, in the aftermath of war, it may expand its dominance.

There can be social consequences. In Iran, several sections of the population showed elation after the initial strikes, and death of the supreme religious leader. But after the son took over, and the Shias and Sunnis across the world came together, possibly for the first time since their estrangement 1,500 years ago, the dynamics have changed. The Muslim or Islamic world, which was ridden by factions on both sides, may informally unite, even if for a brief period. This may decimate most of the war-related plans hatched by the western leaders.

Hence, if one looks at the emerging overall picture, the "paradox of incentives" runs deeper than what is visible. "What makes this (Middle East) crisis particularly hard to resolve is the paradox (of incentives) at its heart: The actors best placed to end it are those with the most to gain from its continuation," concludes the new research.

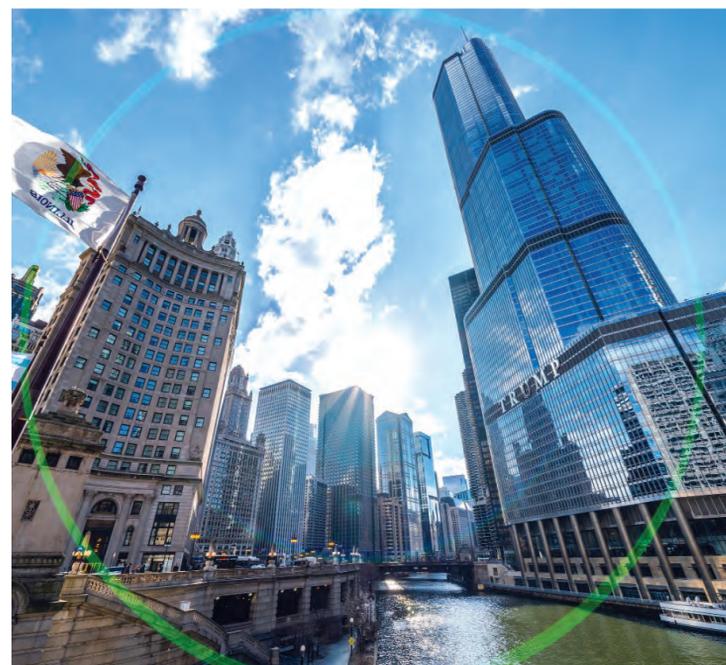
**OUR TAKE**



## A Left-Handed Economist

# Trump's new trade tariff thrusts

*He is in no mood to heed the Supreme Court, or seek Congress' help*



There were many who felt, and some seemed convinced, that Donald Trump would back down after the Supreme Court culled his so-called 'emergency' trade powers. But even then, there were a few sceptics, even as his loyalists maintained that the US president would never give up on trade tariffs. The latter proved right. Immediately after the Court order, the US imposed a 10 per cent tariff under a clause in the trade Act, and threatened to hike it to 15 per cent. Now, the US has launched an umbrella investigation against 16 nations, including India, related to Section 301 of a law that deals with unfair trade practices.

By this Summer, says Jameison Greer, US Trade Representative, several nations such as India, China, Japan, and the European Union (EU) may face new tariffs under the section's investigations. Later, more nations will come into the fold, which may include Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Norway. Hence, the list includes friends and foes, and part-friends like India. There are many like Japan and the EU, which wish to renegotiate bilateral trade deals after the Court order, and India, which wants to go beyond the agreed trade framework. Tariffs under this law may be beyond legal scrutiny.

"So, these investigations will focus on economies that we have evidence, (and) appear to exhibit structural excess capacity and production in various manufacturing sectors, such as through larger persistent trade surpluses or underutilised and unused capacity," Greer explains. Hence, the probe will examine the larger economic issues such as trade surpluses, government subsidies, lower wages, inadequate standards, and lending and currency practices. In effect, the US will determine if these nations use policy and financial measures to help their firms to export goods to America unfairly, and cheaply. As per the Section 301, the US can follow due procedure, and impose new tariffs.

The timing is crucial. After the Supreme Court order, Trump imposed the 10 per cent tariff under a trade Act, which is applicable for 150 days, after which he needs it to be ratified by the Congress. The deadline expires in July this year. However, ever since the beginning of his second tenure, the president does not wish to do this, and wants to unilaterally and personally determine the trade and tariff policies. He will use Section 301 to fast-track the investigations to complete them by July, at least against some nations, and impose new tariffs to replace the 10 per cent ones. He will thus maintain a continuity.

According to Greer, and other US officials,

the current investigations will move at break-neck speed. The public comments and feedback will be accepted by April 15, and hearings will be scheduled in the first week of May. In another two months or so, the results will be out. Although one is not sure, the outcome may lead to new tariffs, although the resistance against Trump, within the government, and among the Republicans, is on the rise. One is not sure how the courts will interpret it. They may insist on specific sector-specific investigations, rather than omnibus ones on nations, and national policies.

Section 301 was used before, even during the first term. According to a media report, it justified the imposition of a tariff of 25 per cent on several Chinese imports since this legal tool is "widely seen as more resilient to court challenges" in the country. Even some of the Indian products faced higher tariffs under these investigations. Several months ago, the US officials threatened India with 301 investigations against pharma exports, which comprise a large portion of Indian exports. At that time, the feeling was that the tariff could be as high as 100-200 per cent. Possibly then ongoing trade negotiations dented the move.

Greer wants the 301 investigations to be extended to include other macro factors. He feels a ban on foreign goods that are made with forced labour. According to a media report, this measure was used before. "The US has already tightened restrictions on solar panels and other products from China's Xinjiang province under the Uyghur Forced Labour

Protection Act signed by the former president, Joe Biden. The new investigation could expand similar actions to other countries," the report explained. Washington accuses Beijing of using labour camps for ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities to make goods. Beijing denies it.

The extension of the 301-related probe to labour-related issues is interesting. In the Supreme Court order, which squashed the president's emergency powers to impose tariffs or taxes, one of the major contentions was that the law was never used by any president in the 50 years of its existence. In the case of the labour-related tariffs, if imposed, there is a clear precedent. The former president used it a few years ago. No one opposed it. In general Section 301 was used quite extensively, although primarily on specific sectors, and not nations. Thus, Trump will wriggle out of a major legal challenge.

Including India in the first batch of 16 nations for the Section 301 probe seems to be tactical. New Delhi gladly signed a bilateral trade framework with Washington, which was to be finalised this month. However, after the Supreme Court order, and the ongoing Iran war, the situation has changed. India hopes to renegotiate some of the clauses in the framework, especially after the political criticism at home. The US has warned that any nation that wishes to do so will face another tariff backlash. The threat under Section 301 is one of them. Indian pharma and Indian agriculture may face the brunt of the new taxes.

According to a media report, "India's inclusion reflects longstanding concerns in Washington about certain trade policies that are seen as limiting American access to its markets. Issues often cited include relatively high tariffs on some goods, rules on local sourcing and data storage, regulations affecting technology and digital services, and price controls in sectors like pharmaceuticals. While India has been negotiating trade matters with the US for years, these policies are viewed by American officials as potential barriers to US businesses, making it a candidate for a Section 301 review.... While inclusion in the probe does not mean immediate penalties, it does place India under the microscope, and creates a legal pathway for potential trade actions in the future." It opens a way to increase diplomatic pressure.



## China silent on India's move to ease FDI norms

KUM VARMA ■ Beijing

China has refrained from responding to India's decision to ease foreign direct investment norms for countries sharing land borders with it, while the Chinese business called the move "partial" opening up, with restrictions still in place on large-scale investments.

New Delhi on Tuesday eased foreign direct investment (FDI) norms for China and other nations sharing land borders with it, by allowing overseas firms having up to 10 per cent shareholding from these nations to invest in India without mandatory approval.

Earlier, overseas firms with shareholders from these nations owning even a single share had to seek mandatory approval to invest in India in any sector. However, other conditions of FDI norms, including sectoral caps and entry routes, will apply to these investments.

agency said India's announcement was seen as a major shift in its FDI policy after a gap of nearly six years.

However, the Foreign Ministry here has declined to comment on it. Asked for his reaction to India's decision at a media briefing on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign spokesperson Guo Jiakun said the question should be referred to competent authorities.

China at present is grappling with over-capacity of the number of its manufactured goods, especially the new productive forces like E-Vehicles and batteries, which reached the saturation point in the domestic market and relied mostly on overseas markets. Considering the size of the Indian market, there are wider expectations here of a broader opening for EVs, batteries and related industries.

On Wednesday, Joint Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Jai



Prakash Shivahare told reporters in New Delhi, "All the restrictions for investors from land bordering countries (LBCs) are still applicable. There is no relaxation so far as entities or investors in LBCs are concerned. This relaxation is only for entities in non-LBCs and having beneficial owners from LBCs below 10 per cent and non-con-

trolling stake... so there are no relaxations as far as investments from LBCs are concerned."

Reacting to India's announcement, Chinese experts and businesses told state-run Global Times that China's investment in sectors such as solar energy and electronics could potentially grow, benefiting related sectors in India.

They called on the Indian Government to further relax investment curbs to cover more sectors. Such moves, they noted, would inject greater vitality into China-India economic and trade cooperation, which has seen a recovery in growth momentum since 2024.

The Chamber of Chinese Enterprises in India said the adjustment in India's investment policy toward China is a "partial optimisation" rather than a "comprehensive liberalisation," noting that large-scale investments and those involving actual control by Chinese entities remain unchanged and will continue to follow the previous approval process.

However, the 60-day fast-track approval is limited to specific sectors, primarily targeting areas such as electronic components and polysilicon, rather than representing a broad relaxation across all industries, the Chamber

said in a statement to Global Times. Chinese investments in most other sectors will still face rigorous scrutiny, it said, adding that, furthermore, the actual implementation and execution of this policy adjustment remain to be seen.

India is striving to develop its mobile phone industry and other key sectors, including semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI) and new-energy vehicles. All these industries rely heavily on Chinese technical talent. Yet India's opening-up is by no means comprehensive, it said.

India only opens areas it urgently needs, while keeping others blocked. The Indian Government is taking a pragmatic stance, a representative of a Chinese enterprise operating in India told the daily.

"This reflects a deeper dilemma: On one hand, India remains wary of Chinese capital and continues to impose restrictions on it, fearing it could gain too much

influence. On the other hand, India urgently needs Chinese technologies, driving its partial opening-up.

"Such a contradictory approach is reflected in its visa policy, which has gradually shifted from strict restrictions to targeted relaxation," the executive said.

Qian Feng, director of the Research Department at Tsinghua University's National Strategy Institute, said China-India relations have been on an improving trajectory since the two national leaders held a meeting in Kazan, Russia, in 2024, and retaining such an outdated policy runs counter to the current progress in bilateral political ties.

Qian told the daily that the previous policy targeting Chinese investment severely hampered the 'Make in India' initiative, and claimed that the crackdowns on Chinese capital ultimately undermined India's own economic interests. (PTI)

## FSSAI asks milk producers, vendors to compulsorily register with it for running their businesses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Food regulator FSSAI has made it mandatory for all milk producers, except members of dairy cooperative societies, and milk vendors to obtain registration certificates from it amid reports of adulteration in some parts of the country.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued an advisory to state food commissioners of all states and Union Territories regarding mandatory registration/license by milk producers (other than members of dairy cooperative societies) and milk vendors.

The regulator pointed out that certain milk producers



(who are not members of dairy cooperative societies) and milk vendors are operating without registering themselves or obtaining a license for carrying out food business activities.

"All milk producers (other than those who are registered members of a dairy cooperative society under the

Cooperative Societies Act and supply or sell the entire milk to the Society) and milk vendors are hereby advised to mandatorily register themselves with FSSAI, before commencing or continuing their operations," the regulator said.

"In view of recent incidents involving suspected adulter-

ation of milk in all states/UTs, strict compliance with registration/licensing requirements shall be ensured," FSSAI told state food commissioners.

FSSAI also asked enforcement authorities of the central Government and all states/UTs to direct the concerned Designated Officers/Central Licensing Authorities and Food Safety Officers to verify that all such milk producers and milk vendors possess a valid registration certificate or license, as applicable.

The central regulator also directed them to inspect milk chillers (used by the milk producer/milk vendors) periodically to ensure proper storage temperature for preventing spoilage and safeguarding public health.

## Exporters seek priority allocation of LPG, natural gas for export-oriented manufacturing units

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Exporters' body FIEO on Thursday urged the Government to allocate LPG and natural gas to export-oriented manufacturing units on a priority basis, as any disruptions in the fuel availability will create problems in maintaining production schedules.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Ralhan said that he has written a letter in this regard to the commerce and industry ministry.

"Manufacturing exporters are facing issues. There is an urgent need for priority allocation of LPG/natural gas as fuel for export-oriented units (EOUs) and export-oriented



SMEs," Ralhan said. The West Asia crisis, triggered by the launch of a joint attack by the US and Israel on Iran, has disrupted energy supplies in several countries. The Government has revised the priority order for allocating domestically produced natural gas, placing LPG

production alongside CNG and piped cooking gas at the top. He said that export-oriented manufacturing units are operating in a highly competitive global environment and are constantly competing with suppliers from countries such as China and

other East Asian economies. Large global buyers follow highly structured global sourcing models and require uninterrupted production and timely deliveries from their suppliers.

"In the event of disruption in fuel availability, Indian exporters are unable to maintain production schedules. Consequently, international buyers are compelled to shift their orders to competing countries, particularly China," FIEO said in a communication to the commerce ministry.

In this context, the availability of LPG/natural gas as an industrial fuel is critical, particularly for export-oriented SMEs and EOUs that rely on it for their manufacturing processes, it added.

## India begins probe on circumvention of countervailing duty on imports of saccharin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India has started a probe on alleged circumvention of countervailing duty imposed on saccharin — used in a range of industries such as food, beverage and pharma — imported from China, according to a notification.

The investigation was started by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), under the Commerce Ministry, following a request for the same by Swati Petro

Products and Blue Jet Healthcare.

The applicants have alleged that the existing countervailing duties imposed on the Chinese imports are being circumvented through the rerouting of such shipments from Thailand.

"They have alleged that saccharin exported from Thailand is not produced in Thailand but is of Chinese origin and merely routed through Thailand to avoid payment of countervailing duty," according to the noti-



fication. The applicants have contended that there are no genuine manufacturing facilities for saccharin in Thailand.

The Ministry of Finance, on February 25 last year, imposed countervailing duties on the product import-

ed from China. These duties are still in force on imports from China.

"On the basis of the application filed by the applicants... the authority hereby initiates an anti-circumvention investigation," the DGTR said in a notification.

If DGTR finds that the duty is being circumvented by Thailand, it would recommend the extension of countervailing duty on Bangkok. The finance ministry takes the final decision to extend the duty. Saccharin is used in a variety of industries such as

food and beverage, personal care products, table top sweeteners, electroplating brighteners, and pharmaceuticals.

The applicants have requested to extend the existing countervailing duty on imports from Thailand.

"The applicants have alleged that the countervailing duty imposed on imports of Saccharin originating in or exported from China PR is being circumvented through imports consigned from Thailand," according to the notification.

## Rupee settles 16 paise down at 92.17 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

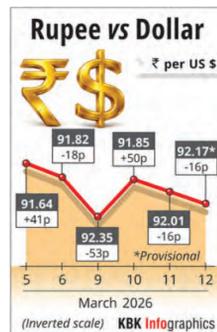
The rupee recovered from record low levels and settled with a loss of 16 paise at 92.17 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as global crude oil prices stayed on an upward trajectory amid the raging war in West Asia.

A stronger greenback and volatility in the domestic equity markets further weighed on the rupee, which was already on a weak footing in early trade due to heavy foreign fund outflows, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 92.25 but kept slipping to touch its record intra-day low against the greenback at 92.36.

However, it recovered some of its lost ground and eventually settled at 92.17 (provisional), down 16 paise from its previous close. The rupee previously recorded its lowest intra-day low of 92.35 against the greenback on March 9.

"The rupee declined, hitting a record low of 92.36 on weak domestic markets and rising crude oil prices. A positive US dollar index and FIIL outflows, too, weighed on the rupee. However, the rupee recov-



## Retail inflation rises to 3.21% in February from 2.74%: Govt data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Retail inflation in the country moved up to 3.21 per cent in February compared to 2.74 per cent in the preceding month, according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) released on Thursday.

The inflation data is based on the new CPI series with base year 2024. Food inflation in February rose sequentially to 3.47 per cent from 2.13 per cent in January, showed the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The major items that witnessed a high pace of price



hike were 'silver, gold, diamond, platinum jewellery', coconut-copra, tomato, and cauliflower.

On the other hand, there was disinflation in garlic, onion, potato, arhar, and litchi.

Inflation rates for rural and urban areas were at 3.37 per cent and 3.02 per cent, respectively.

## Markets extend losses for 2nd day on soaring crude prices, West Asia turmoil; Sensex tanks 800 pts

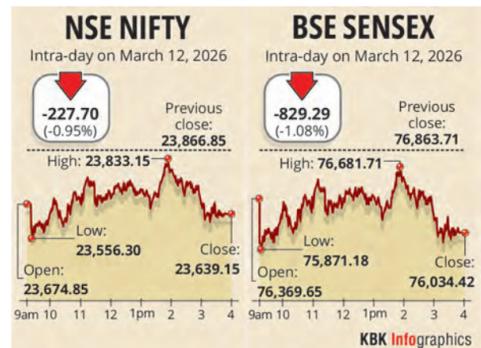
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices ended with deep cuts on Thursday, with the Sensex tumbling over 800 points amid a sharp rise in crude oil prices due to the heightening crisis in West Asia.

Besides, sluggish global market trends, weakness in the rupee and persistent foreign capital outflows also rattled investors' sentiment, analysts said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 829.29 points, or 1.08 per cent, to settle at 76,034.42. During the day, it plunged 992.53 points or 1.29 per cent to 75,871.18.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE



Nifty fell 227.70 points, or 0.95 per cent, to close at 23,639.15. Mahindra & Mahindra was the biggest loser among the Sensex con-

stituents, dropping 4.23 per cent, followed by Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement and Trent.

In contrast, NTPC, Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech and Reliance Industries were the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 4.78 per cent to \$96.47 per barrel.

"Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East continue to dampen global risk appetite, as fresh attacks on oil-shipping vessels have pushed crude prices closer to USD 100 per barrel, intensifying concerns over inflation and gas supply constraints," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended lower.

## Parliamentary panel asks power ministry to expedite installation of smart meters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

A parliamentary panel has urged the power ministry to undertake urgent measures to accelerate installation of smart metres in a structured and time-bound manner.

The Eleventh Report of the Committee on 'Demands for Grants (2026-27) of Ministry of Power' was tabled in Parliament on Thursday.

The report said since the pace of installation of smart meters across the country has been far below the envisaged targets, the ministry should undertake urgent

measures to significantly accelerate the rollout of smart meters in a structured and time-bound manner, with clearly defined state-wise and utility-wise milestones.

It noted that the Government had set a target of installation of 25 crore smart meters in the country by March 2025, against which only 5.83 crore smart metres have been installed till February 15, 2026.

The committee observed that although the rate of installation of smart meters in the country has increased to about 1,35,000 per day, it



may still be insufficient to bridge the large gap between the specified target and corresponding achievements within the revised timeline i.e. up to March 2028.

Further, it noted that frequent complaints are being reported by consumers across states regarding billing inaccuracies, errors during data migration, concerns

over data privacy, frequent replacements of consumer meters, etc. These issues have the potential to erode consumer confidence and undermine the very objectives of smart metering as a tool for reform, it pointed out.

The panel suggested that robust mechanisms should be put in place to address the concerns of consumers and stringent testing, certification and quality assurance of smart meters before installation should be ensured.

Moreover, it suggested that a Quality Monitoring Mechanism should be devised to ensure account-

ability of Advanced Metering Infrastructure Service Providers and discoms in this regard.

It also suggested that discoms be directed to establish transparent and responsive consumer grievance mechanisms, including time-bound resolution of billing disputes and mandatory installation of check meters, in case of complaints.

It also recommended comprehensive and adequate safeguards should be instituted to ensure consumer data privacy and cyber security of the smart metering infrastructure, including clear

guidelines on data ownership, access, storage and grievance redressal.

The panel noted that Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) aims to reduce the AT&C losses to 12-15 per cent and eliminate the gap between Average Cost of Supply and Average Revenue Realized (ACS-ARR).

It observed that although AT&C losses and gap between ACS-ARR have shown promising trends, AT&C losses have increased for Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab and Telangana from financial year 2020-21 to 2024-25. Discoms in 16 States/UTs

have failed to achieve their AT&C loss targets for financial year 2024-25 and the gap between ACS-ARR has widened for 11 discoms in 8 states during the same period, it pointed out.

It noted that there have been perceptible improvements in AT&C losses and gap between ACS-ARR at national level, but this improvement is uneven across states and utilities, which indicates that structural inefficiencies and inadequate implementation of reforms persist in several states despite availability of financial support under the RDSS.

## FROM THE WORLD

### PAKISTAN

#### Court rejects Imran plea

A high court in Pakistan on Thursday rejected a petition to shift jailed former premier Imran Khan to a private medical hospital and ordered the constitution of a team of doctors to medically examine him. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf on March 2 filed the petition in Islamabad High Court (IHC) through lawyer Latif Khosa to transfer Khan from Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi, to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad for treatment of his eyes. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro heard the case. Khosa presented his arguments while Islamabad Advocate General Ayaz Shaukat and Additional Attorney General Rashid Hafeez appeared on behalf of the Government.

### CHINA

#### Indian envoy meets officials

India's Consulate General in Shanghai Pratik Mathur Thursday met Carrie Suen, Vice President and Head of Global Affairs and Strategic Development of AntGroup, and discussed new opportunities for collaboration in various sectors. AntGroup is one of China's leading innovative technology providers in healthcare. The discussion held in the backdrop of India's approval of easing foreign direct investment norms for China on Tuesday.

# India backs UNSC resolution condemning Iran attacks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
United Nations

India co-sponsored a resolution in the UN Security Council that condemned the "egregious" attacks by Iran against Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan and demanded immediate cessation of all attacks by Tehran while denouncing its threats of closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The 15-nation Security Council, currently under the presidency of the United States, adopted the resolution on Wednesday with 13 votes in favour, none against and abstentions by veto-wielding permanent members China and Russia. India co-sponsored the Bahrain-led resolution along



People inspect homes damaged by a projectile launched from Lebanon in Haniel central Israel

with over 130 nations, including Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine,

United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen and Zambia.

The resolution, which had a total of 135 co-sponsors, reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Bahrain, Kuwait,

Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

It condemned in the "strongest terms the egregious attacks" by Iran against the territories of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab

Emirates and Jordan and determined that such acts constitute a breach of international law and are a serious threat to international peace and security.

The resolution demanded immediate cessation of all attacks by Iran against the GCC countries and Jordan and that Tehran "immediately and unconditionally" cease from any provocation or threats to neighbouring states, including the use of proxies.

It reaffirmed that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected, particularly around critical maritime routes, and takes note of the right of Member States, in accordance with

international law, to "defend their vessels from attacks and provocations, including those that undermine navigational rights and freedoms".

The resolution condemned any actions or threats by Iran aimed at closing, obstructing, or otherwise interfering with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, or threatening maritime security in the Bab Al Mandab.

The resolution further condemned that residential areas were attacked, civilian objects have been targeted and that the attacks resulted in civilian casualties and damage of civilian buildings; and expressed solidarity with these countries and their people.

It called upon Iran to refrain immediately from

any actions or threats in accordance with international law. It called upon Iran to comply fully with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the protection of civilians and civilian objects in armed conflict.

US Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mike Waltz said the adoption of the resolution "is a direct and unequivocal statement from the Gulf countries condemning the brutality of the Iranian regime, whose practice of targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is reprehensible, and the entire world is calling it out for what it is".

# Bangladesh parliament mourns ex-PM Manmohan Singh and Khaleda Zia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dhaka

Bangladesh parliament on Thursday condoled the deaths of several national and international leaders, including former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh, Bangladesh's Khaleda Zia and slain Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei. The maiden session of the 13th parliament adopted a motion to condole the deaths initially included 31 names, including late Pope Francis and Matia Chowdhury, a former parliamentarian and leader of deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. However, after the main opposition Jamaat-e-Islami insist-

ed, names of executed 1971 war criminals, tried as hardened collaborators of Pakistani troops during the country's Liberation War, were also included in it.

The motion also included names of those killed during the July-August mass protests that toppled the Sheikh Hasina Government in August 2024. The newly elected

speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, a veteran 1971 freedom fighter, agreed to incorporate the names of the executed war criminals as Jamaat claimed the initial list of names were "one sided." The motion with proposed expanded list included Jamaat's hanged former chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, its senior leaders Ali Ahsan

Mohammad Mujahid, Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, Maulana Abdus Subhan, Abdul Quader Mollah, Mir Quasem Ali, and Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

Sayeedi, however, died in prison while serving a prison term until his death while Subhan died a natural death.

A separate condolence propos-

al was raised for hanged Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury, who too was tried for 1971 war crimes siding with Pakistani troops to prevent Bangladesh's 1971 independence. BNP lawmaker and parliamentary Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni endorsed the names.

# Pakistan's PM in Saudi for security talks

SAJJAD HUSSAIN  
Islamabad

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday left for a brief official visit to Saudi Arabia with Pakistan's role coming under scanner due to its defence agreement with the kingdom.

The two countries signed a mutual defence pact in September last year with the commitment to come to the defence of each other in case of attack by a third country. The agreement was signed when Israel had attacked Hamas



leaders in Qatar. However, the situation changed after US and Israel launched coordinated attacks on Iran and it hit back by pounding targets in the Gulf. There is a growing unease if Pakistan would fulfil

its obligation towards Saudi Arabia given its good ties and geographical proximity with Iran. Just a day ago, PM's Spokesperson for Foreign Media Mosharraf Zaidi said that Pakistan would be there for Saudi Arabia "before it is needed".

The prime minister is undertaking the visit at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a statement released by the Prime

Minister's Office (PMO) said. It added that the prime minister will hold a meeting with the Saudi crown prince, during which they will "exchange views on the ongoing tensions in the region, the regional security situation and bilateral relations between the two countries."

"This visit is highlighting Pakistan's positive role in the diplomatic arena, and Pakistan will continue to play this role," the PMO said.

Separately, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi confirmed the visit during the weekly briefing, saying the prime minister had left for a one-day trip to Saudi Arabia. (PTI)

# Israel widens evacuation warning to large area of southern Lebanon

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Dubai

Israel's military has warned residents of a large area of southern Lebanon to leave their homes, saying it would act "forcefully" against Hezbollah.

The Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson, Avichay Adraee, said on X that Lebanese residents should move north of the Zahrani River, which at its midpoint is about 56 kilometres away from the border with Israel. Over 800,000 people in Lebanon have been displaced over the past 10 days in the latest conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, part of the wider Iran war. Meanwhile he



People fire live rounds into the air as a warning following Israeli airstrikes in Dahiyeh, Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon

Israeli military says it is dropping charges against five soldiers who were accused of sexually abusing a Palestinian detainee in an encounter partially caught on camera.

The army announced the decision in the high-profile case at a time when much of the country's attention is focused on the war with Iran.

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D (ROADS)**  
**ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03**

No. CE/CW/37/2025-26/02

**PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites Bid from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for 1 (One) no. of project for construction of Guwahati city roads/ drain etc. in Guwahati city under SOPD(G) for the year 2025-26 pertaining to PWD, Dispur & Dimoria Territorial Road Division in Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam.

Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Details along with Schemes for the works may be seen at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also at the office of the undersigned in the "City Works Cell". Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor / bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Note: NIT Value is inclusive of GST, Labour Cess etc.

Sd/-  
**Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari Guwahati-3**

**DIPR/C/PIO/983/13-March-26**

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**DIRECTORATE OF SERICULTURE ASSAM**  
**RESHOM NAGAR, KHANAPARA GUWAHATI-22**

NO.SDT.4/2022/130/4401

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Directorate of Sericulture, Assam, Khanapara, Guwahati-22 invites e-tender in 2-bid system from the intending manufacturers/authorized dealers/govt. registered firms/suppliers for supply of farm implements & rearing equipment to Eri Rearing of the project- "Development of Eri Silk Industry in Majuli (River Island) District of Assam under Silk Samagra for the year 2024-25". The articles are to be supplied to Supdt. of Sericulture, Majuli under Directorate of Sericulture, Assam. The interested manufacturers/authorized dealers/govt. registered firms/govt. registered suppliers have to quote their rates in package.

The bidders shall have to be submitted in 2-bid system through Govt. e-tender portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Detailed tender documents are available in the Govt. e-tender portal- [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also available in Directorate of Sericulture, Assam website- [www.sericulture.assam.gov.in](http://www.sericulture.assam.gov.in).

**Important dates:**

1. Date of availability of bidding documents on e-portal	12th March, 2026 from 3.00 PM
2. Bidding documents download from e-portal	12th March, 2026 from 5.00 PM
3. Pre-bid meeting	17th March, 2026 at 3.00 PM
4. Bid submission start date	24th March, 2026 from 2.00 PM
5. Last Date & time for online bid submission	4th April 2026 upto 1.00 PM
6. Last Date & time for hard copy submission	4th April, 2026 up to 3.00 PM
7. Time & date of opening of bids	4th April, 2026 at 3.30 PM
8. Financial bid opening date	Online (to be announced)

Sd/-  
**Director, Sericulture, Assam, Guwahati-22.**

**DIPR/C/PIO/984/13-Mar-26**

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE**

SR NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R, HANSI	CONSTRUCTION OF ITI AT VILLAGE BADOOPATTI IN HISAR DISTRICT. (WITHOUT GST)	11.03.2026 01.04.2026	1646.38 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01663259688 pwd-eeepd-hansi@hry.nic.in
2	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING, SIRSA	ELLENABAD TOWN-SUPPLY FIXING AND INSTALLATION OF DI SPECIAL, SLUICE VALVE, NRV, ARMOURD CABLE, CABLE TRAY AT RAW WATER PUMPING STATION IN BUDHIMERI FOR CANAL BASED WATER WORKS ELLENABAD AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENTS THERE TO. CH.HEAD-AUG. WATER SUPPLY SCHEME ELLENABAD TOWN. CONSTRUCTION OF S/S TANKS, REPAIR OF EXISTING WATER WORKS STRUCTURES AND LAYING OF NEW WATER CARRIER (800MM I/D D.I. RISING MAIN) FROM SOUTHERN GHAGGAR CANAL TO EXISTING WATER WORKS.	10.03.2026 17.03.2026	23.37 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9467070175 eepsirsa@gmail.com
3	DIRECTOR GENERAL SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS PANCHKULA, HARYANA	TENDER FOR ARRANGING ANNUAL RATE CONTRACT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF DUAL DESKS FOR CLASSES I-XII.	12.03.2026 10.04.2026	EMD 50000	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a> dsndharyana.gov.in	0172-2570122 Supplies@hry.nic.in
4	CIVIL SURGEON KATHAL	PURCHASE OF ORTHO IMPLANTS FOR DISTRICT KATHAL.	12.03.2026 23.03.2026	EMD 50000	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	7988672699 drugstorekt@gmail.com
5	CIVIL SURGEON KATHAL	JSSK DIET TO DELIVERY CASES IN DISTRICT CIVIL HOSPITAL KATHAL.	12.03.2026 23.03.2026	EMD 50000	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	7988672699 drugstorekt@gmail.com
6	PANCHAYATI RAJ, CHARKHI DADR.	CONSTRUCTION OF GRAM SACHIVALAYA AT VILLAGE MAKRANI	05.03.2026 16.03.2026	56.71 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9582622008 xenrcharkhidadr@gmail.com

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)**

RO 43767-I-27-7

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the public that the undersigned proposes to purchase the residential property bearing No. A-2/166, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 58 from Mr. Shailendra Kumar Aggarwal & Virendra Kumar Aggarwal, both sons and legal heirs of Late Shri. Amarnath Aggarwal.

Late Shri Amarnath Aggarwal expired on 10.03.2023 and had executed a Will dated 06.02.2020 bequeathing the said property to the aforesaid persons.

Any person having any claim, right, title, interest, lien, charge or objection in respect of the said property is required to notify the undersigned in writing along with supporting documents within 15 days from the publication of this notice, failing which the proposed transaction shall be completed without reference to such claims.

Neena Budhrajia R/o M-133, 1st Floor, Vikas Puri, New Delhi, M. 9810662175  
Mayank Manuja (Advocate)  
Enrol: D/301/2019; M: 9582271311

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that Mrs. Aarti Sharma, daughter of Mr. Sanjay Sharma and widow of Late Sunny Parashar, residing at 2108, Towers-I, Charms Castle, Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad (U.P.) 201003, intends to give her minor son, Master Djas Sharma (Date of Birth: 27 July 2011) in legal adoption to Mr. Kaushal Kumar, son of Late Mr. Ram Kumar and his wife Mrs. Babita Rani, daughter of Late Surender Kumar, residents of Flat No.-20134, Chestnut, Mahagun Mywoods, GBN, Greater Noida West (U. P.) 201318. If any person has any objection or claim regarding the proposed adoption, the same may be submitted in writing within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Contact: Aarti Sharma : +91 9354490371  
Umakant Sharma (Advocate)  
Mob.: 9810996932

**FORM NO. URC-2**  
**[Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for registration of LLP as Company]**  
**[Pursuant to Rule 4(1) of the Companies (Authorized to Register) Rules, 2014]**

Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of the provisions of Section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Authorized to Register) Rules, 2014, an application is proposed to be made to the Registrar of Companies, Uttar Pradesh, for registration of **VORTEXIFY SOLUTIONS LLP, having LLPIN: ACK-0189, as a Private Limited Company under the Companies Act, 2013.**

The registered office of the LLP is situated at: 18 B, GK IV, Indrapuram, Shipra Sun City, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201014.

The principal objects of the proposed Company are: To carry on the business of software development, technology platforms, cloud based platforms, data storage, web designing, database, IT tools and information products, web and mobile application development, lead generation, user interface solutions and aggregator platform for software and engage in IT consulting and advisory services.

Any person objecting to the proposed registration of the LLP as a Company may deliver or cause to be delivered to the Registrar of Companies, Uttar Pradesh, his objection, together with the grounds thereof, within twenty-one (21) days from the date of publication of this notice.

For and on behalf of **VORTEXIFY SOLUTIONS LLP** Address: 18 B, GK IV, Indrapuram, Shipra Sun City, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201014  
LLPIN: ACK-0189  
Date: 13.03.2026 Place: Ghaziabad

Authorized Partner  
**Umakant Sharma (Advocate)**

**BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi**

**TENDER NOTICE** Date: 13.03.2026

Tender under two parts (Un-priced & priced) are invited for the supply of following materials from all bidders:-

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/26-27/FK/PR/RJ/1345	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF VARIOUS RATINGS OF DRY TYPE DISTRIBUTION TRANSFORMER IN BRPL	11.40 Crores	11,40,000/-	03.04.2026 15:00 HRS	03.04.2026 15:30 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-  
For any query call on 011-49107235 or e-mail on [Brpl.Eauction@reliancegroupindia.com](mailto:Brpl.Eauction@reliancegroupindia.com)  
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submit of tender documents etc. please visit our website [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com) Head (Contracts & Materials)

Regd. Of: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC11527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4910 7235 | Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D (BORDER ROADS & NEC WORKS), ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03.**  
**Email- [ibrccibr2021@gmail.com](mailto:ibrccibr2021@gmail.com)**

No. CE/BR/4/2026/7

**SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer P.W.R.D. (Border Roads & NEC Works), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Bids on behalf of Governor of Assam for **2 (Two) nos.** of Packages for Construction of CRIF (Setu Bandhan) under CRIF (Setu Bandhan) Scheme for the year 2025-26 in **Sonitpur & Biswanath Districts** of Assam from APWD (Roads) registered & eligible Contractors for a total amounting to **Rs. 914.80 Lakh** (approx) including GST(18%) and Labour Cess (1%) etc.

Details of the bid may be seen shortly at e-procurement portal website i.e. [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from **11:00 AM to 5:00 PM**. Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). Schemes are being approved by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the Schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Sd/-  
**Chief Engineer PWD (Border Roads & NEC Works)**

**DIPR/C/PIO/976/13-Mar-26**  
**Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.**

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**

No. CE/TB-III(B)/44/2025/14

**PRESS NOTICE Re-INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D, Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam re-invites bids through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode-1 of contract for the following works under P.W.D. (Bldg.), Assam from eligible Firm/Contractor of repute having requisite experience in similar nature of work. Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx value of work	Completion Period	Bid Security 2% of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Cost of Bid
1.	Construction of 500 Seater Capacity Auditorium with Conference Hall at Moran	Rs. 11,17,89,127.00	20 (Twenty) Months	For General category, Rs. 22,35,783.00 and For Reserved category Rs.11,17,891.00	Rs. 20,000.00

**N.B.:-** 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.  
2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Sd/-  
**Chief Engineer, Bldg, P.W.(B&NH) Deptt. Chandmari, Guwahati-3**

**DIPR/C/PIO/979/13-Mar-26**



## The fallout of the "autopilot" war on India



**BHASKAR JYOTI MAHANTA**

The activation of Operation Epic Fury and the subsequent death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have redefined the global geopolitical landscape. As the Middle East descends into high-intensity conflict, two critical narratives have emerged, the terrifying mechanical resilience of Iran's decentralised military doctrine and the profound, destabilizing impact this automated warfare is exerting on the Indian geopolitics and economy.

The resilience of the Islamic Republic is currently a matter of military architecture rather than political will. Following the 2003 fall of Baghdad, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari redesigned Iran's defense to be "indecapitable." In 2007, he restructured the nation into 31 autonomous provincial commands, each equipped with precise standard operating procedures. This system was specifically designed for the scenario

that unfolded on February 28, 2026. Under Article 110 of Iran's Constitution, only the Supreme Leader holds the authority to command or rescind military orders.

With Khamenei dead and his successor, Mojtaba Khamenei, yet to fully assert himself, there is no legal or practicable off switch, yet. Each of the 31 provinces possesses independent missile and drone arsenals and pre-delegated launch authority.

By utilizing a war of attrition strategy, it remains significantly cheaper for Iran to launch low-cost drones than for the US or Gulf partners to intercept them with million-dollar defense munitions.

For global actors, this creates a diplomatic vacuum. There is no single headquarters to destroy to end the campaign, and no central negotiator who can guarantee that all 31 commands will honor a ceasefire. This unpredictability has paralysed the shipping industry with seven Protection and Indemnity clubs have concluded that the probability of all Iranian commands honoring any safety agreement is near zero. For Indian shipping

firms, this means astronomical insurance premiums and a no-go designation for traditional trade routes, effectively severing vital maritime arteries. While the kinetic warfare is contained to the Middle East and surrounding waters, the economic fallout is hitting India like many other countries in the Gulf and its neighborhood. India's proximity to the conflict, its energy dependencies, and its strategic maritime interests have placed it in a precarious position.

The Strait of Hormuz remains the world's most critical choke point for energy. With Qatar suspending liquid-natural-gas (LNG) production, which accounts for one-fifth of the global supply, and crude oil exports threatened, India faces a dual shock of price spikes and supply shortages.

The disruption of the Persian Gulf corridors does more than inflate fuel prices; it threatens the fundamental architecture of India's fiscal deficit.

With crude oil prices hovering at record highs, the

Indian Rupee faces intense depreciation pressure, complicating the Reserve Bank of India's efforts to curb domestic inflation. Furthermore, the agricultural sector is particularly vulnerable. Fertilizer precursors like ammonia and urea, largely sourced from the Gulf, are now subject to "war risk" surcharges that could exceed the cost of the commodities themselves. This creates a terrifying prospect for food security, as the cost of cultivation skyrockets just as the monsoon season approaches, potentially triggering a rural credit crisis.

India's traditional policy of Strategic Autonomy is being stress-tested. As New Delhi is forced to provide security escorts for its merchant vessels in the Arabian Sea, it is no longer a neutral observer but an active participant in maritime policing.

This shift necessitates an accelerated defense spend, diverting funds from critical infrastructure to naval expansion, a long-term structural cost of a war that has no clear diplomatic exit. The naval theater has moved dangerously close to Indian interests

following a US submarine strike that torpedoed an Iranian frigate off the Sri Lankan coast.

The sunken vessel was in the region for exercises hosted by India, to which the US was also invited. This legally dubious sinking forces New Delhi to navigate a razor-thin line between its Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership with the US and its historical ties with Tehran.

Consequently, the war is forcing a permanent realignment; the UAE has recently signed a new defense pact with New Delhi as Gulf monarchies look toward India as a stabilizing regional power and a provider of security hardware.

Iran's resilience is rooted in a machine that refuses to stop because it was never told how. By decentralizing command, Jafari ensured that even a decapitated state could continue to inflict pain. For the Indian economy, the cost is measured in the destabilization of the Indian Ocean, the complication of neutral diplomacy, and a long-term inflationary cycle.

As external bombardments potentially trigger a rally

round the flag effect among the Iranian populace, India finds itself at the mercy of an automated doctrine with no one left to call off the strike.

With Iran now threatening further sharing of pain points of the conflict with the American financial institutions in different countries, Trump is bound to come under domestic and international pressure to end the campaign. The US and Israel already have retracted from their avowed objective of regime change. Now is the wait for some further introspection for a rule based international order.

The author is a former DGP Assam and the General Secretary of the Think tank-SHARE

## South Korean lawmakers approve \$350 billion US deal



**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
Seoul

South Korean lawmakers on Thursday passed a law to implement a pledge of \$350 billion in US investments Seoul made last year to avoid the Trump administration's highest tariffs. Government officials had urged lawmakers to quickly pass the contested bill, submitted in November, as uncertainty mounts for the country's trade-dependent

economy, already rattled by President Donald Trump's protectionist swing and now fearing the fallout from his war on Iran. The bill's passage came hours after the Trump administration increased pressure on trade partners by opening a new investigation into manufacturing in foreign countries, including China and US allies South Korea and Japan, which could result in new import taxes if US officials see their practices as unfair.

## 5 of family killed in mortar shell explosion in Pakistan



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
Peshawar

At least five members of a family were killed after a mortar shell exploded in a residential area in Pakistan's restive northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province late Wednesday night, police said.

The tragic incident occurred in Serri Kandao area of Tirah Valley, Khyber district bordering Afghanistan. The five members of the family died on the spot after the mortar shell fired from an unknown direction hit the residential area.

The deceased were identified as Niaz Badshah, his two sons, a nephew, and a grandson.

## China's Parliament concludes annual session, approves several new laws

**KJM VARMA**  
Beijing

China's Parliament on Thursday ended its much-publicised annual session, approving a host of laws, including the new five-year plan to halt the slow-down of the country's economy, an enhanced defence budget and the controversial ethnic law making Mandarin compulsory for all ethnic minorities.

The National People's Congress (NPC), often termed the rubber-stamp Parliament for its routine endorsement of laws approved by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), ended its annual session in less than two weeks.

The NPC, along with the top advisory body - the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) - together with over 5,000 deputies, began their annual sessions in the first

week of March. The two sessions evoked international attention as they were held in the midst of turmoil over the US-Iran war and massive military purges carried out by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Xi, 72, attended the session of both Houses.

Earlier, in his speech to over 240 deputies attending the two sessions, Xi, who also heads the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the PLA and the CPC, made an open call to military officials to increase political loyalty, meaning following the Party's leadership.

This is Xi's first meeting after the removal of two senior military officials, including the highest-ranking PLA General Zhang Youxia, in January which was regarded as a major purge of the PLA in recent history, sending shock waves among the rank.



Chinese President Xi Jinping applauds during the closing session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall in Beijing

### The Pioneer Classified

**CHANGE OF D.O.B**

I, Davinder Kumar Dhingra S/o- Tilak Raj, R/o- 26 LIG Flats, DDA, Opp. Khanpur Bus Depot, New Delhi- 110062, have changed my name from Davinder Kumar Dhingra to Davinder Kumar for all purposes. PD(457)C

I, Mohini Pal D/o Sh. Ashok Kumar R/o B-1/149 Nand Nagri Delhi-93 declare that my DOB wrongly written in my School Records 16.06.2004 instead of 15.06.2004 my actual DOB is 15.06.2004. PD(441)C

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, hitherto known as Afreen Jahan W/o-Prem, R/o W-167/1A, Harijan Colony, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ruhi after marriage. PD(450)C

I, Neela Devi W/o Lt Sh. Shiv Harakh R/o 621/2-B-Block, Aman Vihar, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi-86, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I Neela Devi and Leela Devi refers to the same person from now onwards. Henceforth, I shall be known and addressed as Leela Devi for all purposes. PD(451)C

I, Gopi Nath Behera, Father of - JC-857950P Sub Raghabananda Behera, R/o-VIII- Indrapada, PO- Nimapada, Thana- Singla, Teh- Balipal, Dist- Balasore, Odisha- 756080, have changed my name from Gopi Nath Behera to Gopinath Behera, vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(452)C

I, Parmar Nanabhai Danlabhai, F/o- JC-472644K Sub Parmar Mohansinh Nansinh, R/o- Vill & PO- Jodhpur, Teh- Virpur, Dist- Kheda, Gujarat- 388265, in my son's service record, my name is wrongly recorded as Nansinh, whereas my correct name is Parmar Nanabhai Danlabhai, vide Affidavit No. 1N-GJ68448134442177X, dated: 18.12.2025 PD(453)C

I, Subhadra Mani Behera, Mother of- JC-857950P Sub Raghabananda Behera, R/o-VIII- Indrapada, PO- Nimapada, Thana- Singla, Teh- Balipal, Dist- Balasore, Odisha- 756080, have changed my name from Subhadra Mani Behera to Subhadra Behera, vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(462)C

I, Santha C, Mother of No.14655401H Hav Arunkrishnan, R/o- Vrindavanam Pathiyoor West, Kareelakulangra, PO- Alappuzha, Kerala- 690572, have changed my name from Santha C to Santhakumari C, vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(463)C

I, Jai Kumar Chugh S/o- Ravinder Nath, R/o- Eldeco Accolade, P-1-1105, Sector-2, Gurgaon Road, Sohna, PO- Sohna, Dist- Gurgaon, Haryana- 122103, have changed my name from Jai Kumar Chugh to Jai Chugh for all purposes. PD(471)C

I, No.14871856M NK/MT Balkar Dnyandeo Namdeo, R/o- At Post- Shirda Andhare, Teh- PS- Patur, Dist- Akola, Maharashtra - 444051, have changed my name from Namdeo Ranu Balkar to Namdeo Ranuji Balkar, vide affidavit dated 12/03/2026 before Notary Public Delhi PD(456)C

I, V Salamma, Mother of- No.15225622H Nk(OPR) V Naresh, R/o- Thumbakuppam (V)&(P), Bangarupalyam (Mandal), Chittoor (D), Andhra Pradesh- 517416, declare that in my son's service record my D.O.B is wrongly mentioned as 22/07/1972 whereas my correct DOB is 01/01/1968 which may be amended accordingly. PD(466)C

I, Indrawati, W/o No.2892942F Ex - Nk Ram Niwas, R/o- VIII- Sardarpura, PO- Hamirwas, Teh- Rajgarh, Dist- Churu, Rajasthan- 331305, have changed my name from Indrawati to Indravati, vide dated 12/03/2026 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(467)C

I, Rajneet Yadav, S/o Dayaram Yadav R/o H.No. 3358/8F, Ekta Market, Near St. Aloysius College, Gouriya Ghat, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh-482001, hereby informed that correct D.O.B. of my father Dayaram Yadav is 30/09/1962 & my mother Sukhiya Yadav is 08/04/1964 instead of 01/07/1960 & 01/07/1962 as entered in my Service Record. PD(468)C

I, hitherto known as Mumtaj W/o Vijay Kumar, and D/o Om Parkesh, R/o PO- Salarpur, Tehsil- Tijara, Salarpur, Dist.: Alwar, Rajasthan-301018, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Mamta Devi. I have changed my name only, not my religion. PD(469)C

I, Arvind Singh S/o Gajender Singh Rawat R/o RZ-24/BA Gali No. 36, Indra Park Palam Colony New Delhi-110045 have changed my name to Arvind Singh Rawat. PD(471)C

I, Gajendra Singh and Gajender Singh S/o G.S. Rawat R/o RZ-24/BA Gali No. 36, Indra Park Palam Colony New Delhi-110045 have changed my name to Gajender Singh Rawat. PD(772)C

**नाम परिवर्तन**

सर्वसाधारण हेतु सूचना मेरा वास्तविक, सही नाम वृद्धयति प्रताप सिंह सुपुत्र शिवकृष्ण सिंह है नकि वृद्धयति सिंह जोकि मेरी नावालिग पुत्री अशिका सिंह उम-17-साल के 10th एवं 12th क्लास एन्केशन डॉक्यूमेंट्स में मलपूर्वक वर्णित हैं, मुझे वृद्धयति प्रताप सिंह नाम से जाना जाए PD(473)C

## 50 people killed as landslides sweep Ethiopia



**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
Addis Ababa

At least 50 people have died and 125 others are missing after landslides hit three districts in southern Ethiopia following a week of heavy rains, a local official said on Thursday.

The landslides happened in Gamo Zone and affected the Gacho Baba District, Kamba District and Bonke District, according to Gamo Zone director of disaster response Mesfin Manuqa.

Manuqa said that one person was pulled out of the mud alive during the rescue operation.

The Gacho Baba District communication chief, Abebe Agena, said most of those who died were found buried in the mud. It is not yet clear how many households were affected.

Tilahun Kebede, president of the South Ethiopia Regional State, expressed his sorrow over the disaster and urged residents to move to

higher ground as rains continue.

"Given that it is the rainy season and these types of disasters could happen again, I am calling on communities living in the highlands and flood-prone areas to take the necessary precautions," he said.

Mudslides and floods caused by heavy rainfall are common in Ethiopia, especially during the rainy season.

In July 2024, a deadly mudslide caused by heavy rain claimed the lives of 229 people in southern Ethiopia.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, प्रथम वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, अल्मोड़ा ई-मेल: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com

पत्रांक : 876 / निविदा-01 / 2025-26 दिनांक : 10 / 03 / 2026

**राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक ई-निविदा (E-Tendering) सूचना**

मा० राज्यपाल महोदय, उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, प्रथम वृत्त, लो०नि०वि०, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा राज्य योजना के अन्तर्गत जनपद अल्मोड़ा के विधानसभा क्षेत्र रानीखेत में खग्रयार से कोटिया मोटर मार्ग में डामरीकरण एवं सुधारीकरण का कार्य (लम्बाई 2.50 कि०मी०) की निविदा पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों/फर्मों जो उत्तराखण्ड के स्थाई निवासी हों, से टूट बिड सिस्टम (Two Bid System) के अन्तर्गत ई-टैण्डरिंग के माध्यम से ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा के विस्तृत विवरणों को ई-प्रोक्चोरमेन्ट पोर्टल <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> पर दिनांक 13/03/2026 से देखा जा सकता है। ई-निविदा को निरस्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सक्षम अधिकारी का होगा जिसे किसी भी न्यायालय में चुनौती नहीं दी जा सकती है। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Ghanashyam Mishra is the Owner of the Property Kharsa No. 253, area measuring 400x225 = 90,000 Sq. Yds. Situated in the area of Village Nithari G/ri Suthari, Fargana & Tehsil Dadri Gautam Budh Nagar, UP through 2 Gift Deed dated 07.12.2024 doc. no. 9917 executed by Mr. Sunder Lal Mishra in favour of Mr. Ghanashyam Mishra in respect of the area measuring 225 Sq. yds. and Gift Deed dated 03.03.2025 doc. no. 143 executed by Mr. Sunder Lal Mishra in favour of Mr. Ghanashyam Mishra in respect of the area measuring 400 Sq. yds.

Mr. Ghanashyam Mishra is in the process of mortgaging the said Property with Hero Fincorp Limited. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7-days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201302. Landline: +91932 0449971, e-mail: accounts@lvnorth.in

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is to inform to the public at large Mr. Yoginder Dawar had acquired Flat No. 19 and 20, each measuring 503 sq. ft. at Central Market, Lajpat Nagar-II, New Delhi-110024 vide 2 Relinquishment Deeds both dated 24.11.2025 executed by the other Lys of Late Mr. Charan Dass Dawar and his wife Late Mrs. Shanti Dawar i.e. Mr. Manoj Dawar, Mrs. Kiran Syal, Mrs. Jyoti Uppal, Mrs. Rama Dhillon. Now Mr. Yoginder Dawar is the undisputed owner of said properties and willing to mortgage the said property with IndusInd Bank Ltd.

OR

Any person / firm / institution / company having any claim or right in respect of the said Property by way of inheritance, share, sale, agreement, lease, license, gift, possession, legal heirs, partners or encumbrance whatsoever or otherwise is hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice of his/her share or claim, if any, with all supporting documents at below mentioned address. After expiration of notice period, the claims, if any, of such person shall be treated null and void and also treated as waived and not binding on our client.

Ajay Kumar Giri (Advocate) H.No. 25/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024

**SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED**  
CIN: L74899DL1994PLC061995

Regd. Off: NS- 92, Khasra No-33/21, Ranaji Enclave, Najafgarh, Near Arjun Park Bus Stand, New Delhi -110043; Email : superiorfinlease@gmail.com; Website: <http://www.superiorfinlease.com> Phone No: +91-9953798335

**Corrigendum**

**CORRIGENDUM TO THE NOTICE OF THE 01/2025-26 EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING:-**

This Corrigendum is being issued in continuation of the Notice dated 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 for the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") of SUPERIOR FINLEASE LIMITED ("the Company") scheduled to be held on, Wednesday, the 18th Day March, 2026, at 03:30 P.M. (IST) through Video Conferencing (VC)/Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM). The Notice of the EGM has been dispatched to the shareholders of the Company in due compliance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the relevant rules made thereunder. Except for the changes as under, all contents of the Notice of the EGM to the Shareholders remain the same.

1. The existing Point No. 07 in the Explanatory Statement of the Notice shall stand replaced with the table mentioned below.

Shareholding pattern of the company before and after the issue:

Sr. No	Sub Category	Pre-Issue Shares	Pre-Issue %	Post-Issue Shares	Post-Issue %
<b>A Promoters' holding:</b>					
1.	Indian - Individual	919000	2.12%	919000	2.05%
	Indian - Bodies Corporate	-	-	-	-
	Sub Total Indian	919000	2.12%	919000	2.05%
2.	Foreign Promoters	-	-	-	-
	Sub Total (A)	919000	2.12%	919000	3.06%
<b>B Non-Promoters' holding:</b>					
1.	Institutional Investors	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Non-Institution:</b>					
	Private Corporate Bodies	5192246	12%	5192246	11.58%
	Directors and Relatives	17317389	40.03%	17630774	39.33%
	Indian Public	19309692	44.63%	20560486	45.86%
	Others	521673	1.20%	521673	1.16%
	Sub Total (B)	42341000	97.87%	43905159	97.94%
	Grand Total	43260000	100%	44,82,41,59	100%

2. The percentage (%) of Post Preferential Issue Capital that may be held by the Proposed allottee consequent to the Preferential Issue:

The percentage (%) of Post Preferential Issue Capital that may be held by the proposed allottee as mentioned in table below pursuant to the aforesaid issue.

Particular	Pre-Issue Shareholding	Allotment	Post-Issue Shareholding		
Name	No of Shares	%	No of Shares	%	
Ravi Kant Sharma	NIL	NA	3,13,385	3,13,385	0.70
Puspaa Kumari	NIL	NA	1,00,000	1,00,000	0.22
Manju Sharma	9,900	0.02	2,11,174	2,21,074	0.49
Surender Kumar	49,550	0.11	2,00,000	2,49,550	0.56
Ram Bhagat Sharma	9,900	0.02	6,39,600	6,49,500	1.44
Ajay Kumar Singh	1,88,660	0.43	1,00,000	2,88,660	0.64

3. The change in control, if any, in the Company that would occur consequent to the preferential offer:

The preferential issue will not result into change in the control of the Company.

4. Undertakings:

- The promoter is familiarized with the SEBI Takeover Regulations and undertake to comply with all the applicable provisions of the said regulations if Equity shares triggers an obligation to make an open offer.
- None of the Company, its Directors or Promoters are categorized as willful defaulter(s) or a fraudulent borrower by any bank or financial institution or consortium thereof, in accordance with the guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India. Consequently, the undertaking required under Regulation 163(1)(i) is not applicable.
- The Company is eligible to make the Preferential Issue under Chapter V of SEBI ICDR Regulations.
- Since the Equity Shares of the Company have been listed on the Stock Exchanges for a period of more than 90 trading days prior to the Relevant Date, it is not required to re-compute the price per equity share to be issued and therefore, the Company is not required to submit the undertakings specified under Regulations 163(1)(g) and (h) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations.
- None of the proposed allottee have sold or transferred any Equity Shares during the 90 trading days preceding the relevant date.
- Disclosures specified in Schedule VI of SEBI ICDR Regulations, if the issuer or any of its promoters or directors is a willful defaulter or fraudulent borrower: **Not Applicable**

For Superior Finlease Limited  
Sd/ Rajneesh Kumar (Director)  
DIN: 02463693

Date : 12.03.2026  
Place : New Delhi



## PROSPECT

### Indian Army conducts medical camps in Bishnupur to mark World Glaucoma Day



On the occasion of World Glaucoma Day, the Indian Army conducted a series of medical camps in the Bishnupur District of Manipur on 11 & 12 March 2026 providing essential healthcare services to the residents of remote areas. Medical camps were organised at Wangusabal and Hautak on 11 March, followed by Siden on 12 Mar 2026. During the camps, the Army doctors provided medical consultations, basic treatment and distributed essential medicines to the residents.

The initiative witnessed an encouraging response, with more than 500 villagers including women, children and senior citizens from surrounding areas receiving the healthcare services. During the camp special emphasis was laid on spreading awareness about Glaucoma and Eye Health, highlighting the importance of early detection and timely care.

The camps also encourage the locals to participate in an upcoming "Integrated Multi-Speciality Medical Camp" scheduled to be organised at Ningthoukhong, Molpei Tampak, Sendra, Leisang, Sawongbung and YKPI which will offer expanded healthcare services to a larger section of the community.

### Nagaland assembly pushes for Dimapur station upgrade

The 14th Nagaland Legislative Assembly (NLA) on Monday deliberated on the pressing need to modernise the Dimapur Railway Station, with Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio calling for an "amicable settlement" to the long-standing land disputes that threaten the ₹283-crore project.



During the eighth session of the House, the Chief Minister underscored the historical significance of the station, which was inaugurated in 1903. Rio noted that the station predates the very formation of Nagaland in 1963, pointing out that railway authorities had occupied and measured the land decades before modern State-specific constitutional land provisions were enacted.

Initiating the discussion, MLA Nuklutoshi criticised the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) for its prolonged silence. He questioned why the railway authorities failed to lodge complaints as illegal constructions sprouted on railway land over the years. Nuklutoshi suggested that the state now faces three difficult paths: payment of compensation for resettlement of the settlers, forcible eviction, or shifting the railway station to an entirely new location.

Replying to the discussion, Minister for Health & Family Welfare P Pawang Konyak informed the House that the Centre has already earmarked ₹283 crore for the upgrade.

He reminded the members that Dimapur remains the second highest revenue-earning station in the Northeast, highlighting its strategic importance.

Konyak confirmed that both the State department and landowners have formally approached the Ministry of Railways regarding compensation and are currently awaiting a response. Chief Minister Rio cautioned that while a constructive dialogue with Indian Railways is essential, compensation demands must remain reasonable. He observed that the situation was further complicated by past administrative decisions that regularised certain encroachments.

## IRFC conducts ECB roadshow in Taiwan and Hong Kong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

In continuation to the ECB Roadshows, a team of senior delegation from Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) led by Executive Director (HR) Mr Manish Chandra, Chief General Manager (Admin) Mr Shwet Ketu Mishra and General Manager (Finance) Mr Nav Goel successfully concluded a two-day ECB (External Commercial Borrowing) roadshow in Taipei, Taiwan on 10th March 2026 and Hong Kong on 11th March 2026.

The visit was aimed at enhancing the access to diversified pools of global capital required for funding the infrastructure growth story of the country through IRFC, which under its 2.0 version has diversified into funding the infrastructure



projects having forward and backward linkages with the Railways. The visit comprised one-on-one meetings with potential investors in Asia Pacific region having presence in Taipei and Hong Kong. These roadshows are also part of the Company's strategy to broaden the lender base and mobilising long-term funds at competitive rates and favourable terms, while strategically diversifying IRFC's currency profile. During

the most competitive manner. Investors shown keen interest into the IRFC's recent diversification initiatives into high-quality PSU and infrastructure exposures beyond the Ministry of Railways. Investors expressed their satisfaction in IRFC's plan for expansion of its customer base through the current diversification strategy which includes funding for dedicated freight corridors, Metro Rails, Ports etc while balancing the same with strong MoR linkages.

The roadshow was conducted with the support of Mandated Lead Arrangers (MLAs), Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) and Mitsubishi UFJ Trust and Banking Corporation (MUFG), who facilitated structured investor engagements across the Taipei and Hong Kong market.



## Army flag off joint mountain cycling expedition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Arunachal Pradesh

A Joint Mountain Cycling Expedition of the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was flagged off from Aalo in Arunachal Pradesh on 12 March 2026. The initiative aims to promote inter-force camaraderie, endurance and the spirit of adventure while operating in the challenging terrain of the Eastern Himalayas.

The 11-day expedition will cover a total distance of approximately 578 kilometres across some of the most demanding mountain routes of Arunachal Pradesh. Designed as a test of physical endurance, mental resilience and teamwork, the expedition seeks to strengthen professional synergy and opera-



tional cooperation between the Indian Army and ITBP while traversing remote and high-altitude regions.

The expedition is being conducted in two phases. Phase I, commencing on 12 March 2026, includes the sectors Aalo - Kaying, Kaying - Tato, Tato - Menchuka and Menchuka - Yorlung and back, followed by an administrative halt at

Menchuka, covering a distance of approximately 250 kilometres. Phase II will commence on 19 March 2026 and includes the sectors Manigong, Manigong - Tato followed by an administrative halt at Tato and thereafter Tato - Kaying and Kaying - Aalo, covering approximately 328 kilometres. Traversing narrow hill roads, steep

gradients, winding bends and gravel tracks, the expedition presents a demanding test of stamina, discipline and determination.

Besides its adventure and endurance aspects, the initiative serves as an important exercise in coordination and confidence-building between the Indian Army and ITBP operating in frontier areas.

The expedition reflects the shared commitment of the Indian Army and ITBP towards strengthening operational partnership, fostering esprit de corps and encouraging adventure-based activities in remote border regions.

It also highlights the importance of resilience, preparedness and teamwork while operating in challenging terrain.

## National Stock Exchange celebrates 30 years of Nifty 50

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Mumbai

The National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE) celebrated 30 years of the Nifty 50 Index, India's flagship equity benchmark and one of the most widely tracked indices globally. The milestone event was held at NSE's Exchange Plaza in Mumbai and brought together market leaders, representatives of Nifty 50 companies, regulators and participants from across India's capital markets ecosystem.

SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey attended the event as the Chief Guest, while writer and strategic thinker S Gurumurthy, who is also an Independent Director at the Reserve Bank of India, was the Distinguished Guest of Honour. They were joined by NSE Chairman



Srinivas Injeti and MD & CEO Ashishkumar Chauhan.

Addressing the gathering, Pandey said that celebrating three decades of the Nifty 50 was not merely marking the history of an index but recognis-

ing the broader journey of India's capital markets and the institutions that support them. He noted that over the years the Nifty has become a mirror of corporate India, a barometer of investor sentiment and a guide

to the direction of the markets. Gurumurthy highlighted the unique evolution of India's financial system, stating that the country's markets have developed through strong institutions, effective regulatory oversight and a culture of prudence.

This combination, he said, has helped create a framework where growth and stability coexist while strengthening transparency, accountability and investor protection.

Speaking on the occasion, NSE Chairman Srinivas Injeti said the Nifty 50 has evolved from a scientific index introduced in the mid-1990s into a powerful symbol of India's economic momentum and investor confidence. Chauhan added that the index has played a transformative role in the development of

India's derivatives market and passive investment ecosystem, including index funds and ETFs.

Launched on April 22, 1996, with a base date of November 3, 1995, the Nifty 50 tracks the performance of 50 large and liquid companies across key sectors of the Indian economy. From November 1995 to February 27, 2026, the Nifty 50 Total Return Index delivered a CAGR of 12.74 per cent, while the Price Return Index recorded 11.23 per cent.

As part of the celebrations, NSE released a white paper titled "Nifty 50: Thirty Years of India's Market Evolution" and launched the book Nifty Panorama by Urvis Kantharia. Representatives of Nifty 50 companies and asset management companies were felicitated during the event, which concluded with the ceremonial ringing of the NSE bell.

## ICRA installs solar power system at Deepalaya School

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

ICRA inaugurated a 12 kW Solar Panel System at Deepalaya Senior Secondary School, Gusbethi, on March 10, 2026, as part of its ongoing commitment to fostering education and environmental sustainability through its CSR initiative.



Krishnan, Managing Director & Group CEO, ICRA. Also in attendance were Shri Amit Gupta,

General Counsel, ICRA; S Shakeb Rahman, Company Secretary & Compliance Officer, ICRA; and Shreya Bhattacharya, CSR & Sustainability, ICRA.

ICRA's leadership was received by Adv Dr KC George, CEO, Deepalaya, alongside John Varughese,

Kuriyan Behanan, Dr Martin Rao, Principal, Sudha Rajamohan, Manager, as well as the faculty and staff of Deepalaya School, Gusbethi. During the visit, Mr Krishnan formally unveiled the solar panel system and engaged with students benefiting from ICRA's education sponsorship programme. Mr Krishnan commended Deepalaya's efforts in delivering quality education to children from marginalised communities in Nuh district, Haryana, and conveyed satisfaction upon observing the tangible impact of ICRA's support.

## IRCTC to launch Shri Ramayana Yatra train

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

In a major boost to pilgrimage tourism, the Indian Railways is set to commence the iconic "Shri Ramayana Yatra" tour via the Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train on 30 March, 2026.

The 17-day journey, departing from Delhi Sadarjung Railway Station, is designed to offer devotees a comprehensive trail of prominent destinations associated with the life of Lord Ram.

The initiative aligns with the Union Government's



"Dekho Apna Desh" and "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" visions. The curated itinerary spans approximately 7,560 km, covering key sites including Ayodhya, Nandigram,

Sitamari, Buxar, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Shringverpur, and Chitrakoot. Notably, the tour extends to Janakpur in Nepal to visit the Ram Janki Temple, followed by southward

halts at Nashik, Hampi, and Rameshwaram. The State-of-the-art train features modern amenities such as two themed restaurants, a contemporary kitchen, shower cubicles, sensor-based washrooms, and foot massagers. To ensure passenger safety, each coach is equipped with CCTV cameras and dedicated security guards.

The train offers three classes of travel - AC I, AC II, and AC III - accommodating a total of 150 tourists.

**E-Tender Notice**  
**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR**  
**SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE**

Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of Supercritical CO2 Dyeing Machine, Bench Top Powder X-Ray Diffractometer, Gas Chromatography Unit (GCMS) System, Stackable Shaker, High Capacity Refrigerated Centrifuge, Biosafety Cabinet (BSL 2), Refrigerators and Tractors be submitted online latest by 19/03/2026 upto 4:00 p.m. Detailed information can be obtained from website [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in). Any corrigendum/Addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, if required, on a Punjab Govt. website [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in)

Director of Research

2426/12/2025-26/9356 Dated CHD - 12/03/2026

**I.K. GUJRAL PUNJAB TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY JALANDHAR**  
(Punjab State Govt. University)  
Jalandhar - Kapurthala Highway, Kapurthala -144603

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Applications are invited for appointment of Chairman, Board of Governors of I.K. Gujral Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala in accordance with Section 14(2)(b) of I.K. Gujral Punjab Technical University Act, 1996 (available at [www.ptu.ac.in](http://www.ptu.ac.in)), which reads as: "The Chairman shall be appointed by the Chancellor out of a panel of persons of national eminence in the field of Industry, Technology or Technical Education, prepared through a transparent screening process on the advice of the State Government. Government or Private Universities / Government Departments / Boards and Corporations may also send nominations of eminent persons in the above said fields. The term of appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Governors shall be for a period of three years and he/she shall be eligible for re-appointment for another term of the same period. Applications / nominations along with biodata should reach in the Office of Registrar of the University by 27th March, 2026 or on email id: [registrar@ptu.ac.in](mailto:registrar@ptu.ac.in)

Registrar

Advt No. 2026/03/03

**MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH PUNJAB TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**  
Dabwali Road, Bathinda.  
(Established by Govt. of Punjab vide Punjab Act No. 5 of 1915)

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Applications are invited for appointment of Chairman, Board of Governors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda in accordance with Section 13(2)(a) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University Act, 2015 (available at [www.mrsptu.ac.in](http://www.mrsptu.ac.in)), which reads as: "The Chairman shall be appointed by the Chancellor out of a panel of persons of national eminence in the field of Industry, Technology or Technical Education, prepared through a transparent screening process on the advice of the State Government. Government or Private Universities / Government Departments / Boards and Corporations may also send nominations of eminent persons in the above said fields. The term of appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Governors shall be for a period of three years and he/she shall be eligible for re-appointment for another term of the same period. Applications/nominations along with biodata should reach in the Office of Registrar of the University by 27th March, 2026 or on email id: [reg@mrsptu.ac.in](mailto:reg@mrsptu.ac.in)

Registrar

1049/12/2025-26/9384 Dated CHD - 12/03/2026

**Invitation For Bids (IFB)**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Assam Skill University Project (ASUP) under Assam Skill University (ASU) ("the Purchaser) invites online bids from eligible bidders for the below mentioned packages at Assam Skill University:

#	Package No.	Package Name	Date of Publication		Deadline for Submission	
			Date	Time	Date	Time
1	GS02/ASU/MTC/037/Lot-3	Equipment for Industrial Automation & Control	13th March 2026	10:00 Hours [IST]	13th April 2026	14:00 Hours [IST]
2	GS02/ASU/MOL/055	Equipment for Mechatronics and Autotronics Lab	13th March 2026	10:00 Hours [IST]	13th April 2026	14:00 Hours [IST]

Interested bidders may download and submit their bids electronically using the e-Procurement portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in/>.

**DIPR/CF/PIO/4516/13-March-26** CEO, ASUP cum Registrar, ASU

**उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रांसमिशन कार्पोरेशन लिमिटेड**  
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

**विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, पनकी, कानपुर**  
जेम निविदा सूचना दिनांक-12/03/2026  
जेम निविदा संख्या एवं कार्य का संक्षिप्त विवरण

1. जेम निविदा संख्या-GEM/2026/B/7350470 विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल- प्रथम कानपुर के अंतर्गत 400 केवी0 220 केवी0 एवं 132 केवी0 पारेषण लाइनों के 24 माह हेतु वार्षिक अनुसंधान एवं रखरखाव संबंधी समस्त कार्य निविदा शुल्क रु० 2,950,000 एवं घोषित धनराशि रु० 3000000.00 मात्र।

**जेम निविदा संख्या-GEM/2026/B/7350470** की अंतिम तिथि- 01.04.2026 समय 12:00 बजे तक।

विस्तृत जानकारी एवं प्रयत्न जेम पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध है अंग्रेज़ समस्त सूचनाये इसी वेबसाइट पर ही प्रदर्शित की जायेगी।

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता  
विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल-प्रथम,  
पनकी, कानपुर  
"राष्ट्र हित में विजयी बनावे"

पत्रांक: 416/विप्रेमनप्र० पनकी (का०)/टी०-1 दिनांक: 12/3/2026

BRIEFLY

Tharun Manneppalli enters second round of Swiss Open



Indian shuttler Tharun Manneppalli advanced to the men's singles second round after his opponent, Kenta Nishimoto of Japan, retired in the decider at the Swiss Open.

Bodø/Glimt shines again by beating Sporting Lisbon 3-0



The Champions League's Cinderella club Bodø/Glimt wrote another chapter in its fairytale run through the competition. The homely Norwegian club won 3-0 against Sporting Lisbon in the first leg of a round-of-16 clash at its tiny Aspmyra Stadium packed with 7,971 fans.

NCSSR to standardise athlete medical tests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

In a bid to standardise the medical assessment of athletes representing India, the Sports Ministry has directed the National Centre for Sports Science and Research (NCSSR) to develop discipline-specific protocols for periodic fitness reviews, which will have to be mandatorily uploaded on the National Sports Repository System.

Niti 2025, which emphasises the integration of sports science and technology, it has been decided that a standardised, dynamic, and robust mechanism will be introduced for athletes representing India in international competitions," the letter stated.

"Sports Authority of India (SAI) and National Centre for Sports Science and Research (NCSSR), in coordination with the concerned NSFs, will develop sport-specific fitness protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SAI shall advise the NSFs for implementation of the same after finalisation," it added.

Currently, the fitness assessment of elite athletes, who are part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, is



overseen by the Mission Olympic Cell, while the national federations also carry out such assessments during camps. But once the NCSSR comes up with the Standard Operating Procedure for it, the body would also become the sole regulator of the process.

validation and periodic review of the fitness protocols and SOPs. NSFs shall ensure that fitness assessment of athletes is conducted strictly in accordance with the prescribed sports-specific test protocols, including informed consent and medical safety of athletes, at facilities of the NCSSR," the letter stated, but

did not give a clear timeline for implementation.

"All such assessment data shall mandatorily be uploaded on the National Sports Repository System (NSRS)." The NSFs have also been told to publish an Annual Fitness Testing Calendar on their respective websites in consultation with SAI. Athletes are tested quarterly for medical condition, fitness level, and biomechanics, among other aspects, especially before proceeding to major events.

The ministry has also directed the NSFs to ensure the food supplements taken by athletes are tested at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) and/or the National Institute of Pharmaceutical

Education and Research (NIPER) before being procured for consumption. This, the ministry said, is being done to "mitigate the risk of athletes consuming prohibited substances from contaminated, spiked, or mislabelled nutritional supplements." The NSFs have also been told to maintain records of testing reports and batch details for traceability, besides continuing to create awareness among athletes, coaches, and support staff regarding the risks associated with unverified supplements. India has a massive doping problem, and the country has been topping the World Anti-Doping Agency's Annual Testing Figures' positivity rate for the past three years.

Draper beats Djokovic in BNP Paribas Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS Indian Wells (US)

Defending champion Jack Draper beat five-time champ Novak Djokovic 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (5) in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open. The 24-year-old Draper, who is coming back after missing eight months due to an arm injury, advanced to the quarterfinal round and will face Daniil Medvedev, who beat Alex Michelsen 6-2, 6-4 in the round of 16 to advance.

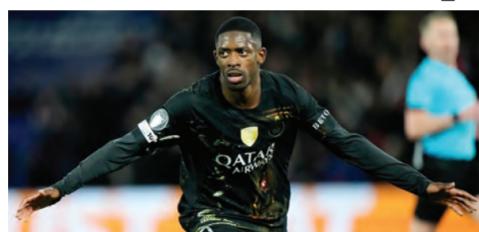


like I'm playing anywhere near the way I want to play," Draper said. "I came out here and I won that match through determination." In addition to his win at Indian Wells last year, Draper won the Stuttgart Open and the Vienna Open, both in 2024.

PSG routs Chelsea 5-2 in Champions League

ASSOCIATED PRESS Paris

Joao Neves and Ousmane Dembele returned from injury to help Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) rout Chelsea 5-2 in the last 16 of the Champions League. They combined to set up the first goal after 10 minutes, and Dembele scored with a brilliant solo effort late in the first half.



and he neatly lobbed Jorgensen. Kvaratskhelia added two late goals, allowing PSG to take a healthy lead into next Tuesday's second leg at Stamford Bridge in London.

"We showed we are capable of anything. We have to carry on like this,"

to his best in an injury-hit season. He latched onto a pass near the halfway line and then accelerated clear before cutting inside and then outside to beat defender Marc Cucurella and then Wesley Fofana before firing a low shot across Jorgensen and into the bottom left corner.

"He played very well, he played like Ousmane Dembele knows how to and it's very good news for us," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. "We look forward to him doing it again in London next week."

Bayern Munich faces tough Leverkusen test in Bundesliga



JAMES ELLINGWORTHAP Duesseldorf (Germany)

Bayern Munich is heading to Bayern Leverkusen in the Bundesliga after contrasting Champions League games in midweek for the two clubs.

Bayern was on rampant form in a 6-1 win at Atlanta overshadowed by injuries in the first leg of their round of 16 match-up, while Leverkusen had to settle for a 1-1 draw against Premier League leader Arsenal which kept its hopes alive.

Bayern leads the Bundesliga by 11 points with nine games remaining.

There aren't many tricky away trips for Bayern in the Bundesliga these days, but Leverkusen is one of them. Bayern hasn't won there in the league since October 2021, though Vincent Kompany's team did get a victory in a Champions League playoff last year.

Nagelsmann coached the team in 2017-18.

Saturday's opponent Wolfsburg, is having a night-marish campaign in the relegation zone as Dieter Hecking becomes the team's third coach of the season.

In a tight Champions League qualification fight, fourth-place Stuttgart is unbeaten in four Bundesliga games as it takes on fifth-place Leipzig, which is unbeaten in five, on Sunday.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mrs. Usha Saini is the owner of Property No.40, ad-measuring 175 sq. mtrs., in Block-D, situated at Sector-4, Dwarka, Delhi, vide sale deed dated 29.11.2023, registered No. 14212, executed by Mr. Lokesh Bhardwaj, Mr. Tarun Bhardwaj and Mr. Sachin Bhardwaj. All Persons are hereby informed that above owner want to sale Entire Third floor to Mr. Hillang Taju or his nominee who is taking a loan facility from our client for purchase the said floor.

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Approx Value of Work (Bid Value), Completion Period, Bid Security, Cost of Bid (in Rs).

N.B.: -1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT. 2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL, SRINAGAR BB, CANTT., BATWARA (J&K)- 190004 Website: www.apssrinagar.co.in

INVITING QUOTATIONS

- 1. On behalf of the Chairman Army Public School BB, Cantt Srinagar invites quotations for the Printing & Supplying of 1625 Students School Diaries/Almanac for the Academic Session 2026-27. 2. The description of school Diary is to print approx 70-80 pages / leaves in black ink printing with four colour title cover pages including cool lamination of the cover pages duly printed logo with name of school. The vendor may visit the school to see the previous year's sample before quoting the final rates during the office hours. 3. The vendor should quote basic cost inclusive of transportation for delivery with all valid taxes at the destination should also be included in the price quoted. The school reserves the right to cancel the call for quotation without assigning any reason. 4. Interested parties may submit the quotations in the school by or before 21 Mar 2026. For any query contact during all working days between 10.00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. on telephone No. 0194-2468224. Sd/- Principal

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NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM Ref: i) Tender Notice No.79/2025-26 dated 15.01.2026 (S.No.1) ii) Tender No.08245719A due on 13.03.2026 In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 13.03.2026 to 02.04.2026. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The corrigendum has been published on website www.ireps.gov.in. SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 839/2026

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Tender No., Brief Description, Qty., Closing Date. Includes details for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning and Maintenance.

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that one Mrs. Suchitra Kumbhath & Mr. Vivek Jain (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagees / Purchasers) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of the Property more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder written in favour of the client PNB Housing Finance Ltd., 1st Floor, H-1A/10, Sector-63, Noida - 201307. The Seller Mrs. Prabhia Rastogi W/o Late Mr. R.D. Rastogi has lost/misplaced the Original Conveyance Deed executed by Delhi Development Authority Delhi on behalf of the President of India in favour of Mr. R.D. Rastogi S/o Late Mr. A.K. Rastogi & Mrs. Prabhia Rastogi W/o Mr. R.D. Rastogi, registered on 06/09/1999 in the O/S Sub-Registrar-VII, New Delhi as per Book No.1 Zild No. 88 Page No. 119/121 & Document No. 1648, in respect of the said Plot No. 6 ad-measuring area 500 sq. yds. in Block-C in The Times of India Officers' Cooperative Housing Society Ltd. situated at Gulmohar Park New Delhi.

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03 No. CE/CW/37/2025-26/02 PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites Bid from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for 1 (One) no. of project for construction of Guwahati city roads/ drain etc. In Guwahati city under SOPD(G) for the year 2025-26 pertaining to PWD, Dispur & Dimoria Territorial Road Division in Kamrup(Metropolitan) district of Assam. Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non- sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders Details along with Schemes for the works may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also at the office of the undersigned in the "City Works Cell". Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor / bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in.. Note: NIT Value is inclusive of GST, Labour Cess etc. Sd/- Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 DIPR/C/PIO/981/13-Mar-26

GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR EDUCATION ENGINEERING WING, EDUCATION (S) DEPARTMENT, MANIPUR Babupara, Near D.C. Office (Old), Imphal West NOTICE INVITING OPEN TENDERS Imphal, the 12th March, 2026 No. EE-I/EEW/T-13/OpenT/2025-26/01: Sealed Open Item Rate Tenders, in single envelope two-bid system (Technical & Financial Bids), are invited from approved and eligible contractors holding Civil registration (appropriate class) and Electrical registration (valid licence) under any Government. Engineering Department of Manipur State for construction of dilapidated school buildings, additional classrooms and residential staff quarters approved under Samagra Shiksha (Secondary)/Higher Secondary Education, 2024-25, for schools located in Thangmetlang A/C and Wangoo A/C, Imphal West, Manipur. Tender details and documents shall be available from 13-03-2026 to 20-03-2026 at the office of the undersigned. Important Dates Bid submission start date: 13-03-2026 Bid submission end date & time: 20-03-2026 up to 3:00 PM Date and time of bid opening: 20-03-2026 at 2:00 PM Sd/- Executive Engineer, Division-I, Education Engineering Wing, Education (S) Department, Manipur

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE to Appear/Attend Proceedings of DLM&SFC-LDH Through this Publication this is for Constructive Notice for respondent M/S KPL TRENDS having registered office 9/866/JANTA GALI, GANDHI NAGAR, DELHI-110031 to appear in person or through authorized representative before the District Level Micro & Small facilitation Council, Luthiana, District Industries Centre, Ludhiana on Dated 13-03-2026 regarding claim reference petition submitted by claimant M/S RAJ NIRMAL KNITWEAR U.S. 18(1) of MSMED Act 2008 bearing reference: MSEFC/DCL/DH/10/20/895. If respondent fails to appear or fails to appear as above then arbitration proceedings shall be conducted as per section 23 & 25 of Arbitration and Conciliation Act and award shall also be passed on the basis of evidence before it. Member Secretary cum General Manager District Industries Centre Industrial Estate, Ludhiana Ph. No. -0161-2540695 Email id:- dclidludhiana5@gmail.com, Ludhiana.msefc@gmail.com

HSIIDC NOTICE INVITING PROPOSALS Appointment of Safety Consultant for FY 2026-27 Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (HSIIDC) invites proposals for the appointment of a Safety Consultant for the Khanak Mine Project for the financial year 2026-27. The Safety Consultant shall be responsible for conducting periodic safety audits of mines, mining equipment, and related infrastructure, and for ensuring compliance with applicable safety standards, statutory provisions, and best industry practices. The appointment of the Safety Consultant shall be made in accordance with Article 18 of the Concession Agreement dated 28.08.2019 executed for the Khanak Mine Project. Proposals are invited from Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and other reputed Government Agencies/Institutions having relevant experience in mine safety audits and safety management systems, for engagement as Safety Consultant for a period of one year (FY 2026-27). Interested and eligible agencies/institutions may submit their sealed proposals along with complete credentials, relevant experience, methodology, and financial quotation in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed by HSIIDC. HSIIDC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever. Last Date of Submission: 26.03.2026 Mode of Submission: Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Senior Manager (Engg.), HSIIDC, Mine Site, Village Khanak, Tehsil Tosham, District Bhiwani (Haryana)-127004. For detailed information regarding the scope of work and other terms, please visit the HSIIDC website: https://hsiidc.org.in. Contact: Senior Manager (Engg.), HSIIDC, Mine Site, Khanak, Mobile: 9416245101 Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. Regd. Office: C-13 & 14, Sector-6, Panchkula, Ph. 0172-2590481-83, E-mail: contact@hsiidc.org.in, Website: hsiidc.org.in, CIN : U29199HR19675GC034545 RO 43789-C-27-7

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03 No. CE/CW/37/2025-26/02 PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites Bid from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for 1 (One) no. of project for construction of Guwahati city roads/ drain etc. In Guwahati city under SOPD(G) for the year 2025-26 pertaining to PWD, Dispur & Dimoria Territorial Road Division in Kamrup(Metropolitan) district of Assam. Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non- sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders Details along with Schemes for the works may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also at the office of the undersigned in the "City Works Cell". Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor / bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in.. Note: NIT Value is inclusive of GST, Labour Cess etc. Sd/- Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 DIPR/C/PIO/981/13-Mar-26

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## Gill set to be named Cricketer of the Year at BCCI awards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill is set to be named Cricketer of the Year at the BCCI's annual awards to be held here on March 15. The 26-year-old, who was not picked in the T20 side that defended the World Cup crown last month, enjoyed a stellar run in the other two formats. He amassed 983 runs in Tests, including a whopping 754 in the drawn away series against England in 2025, at an average of over 70. His ODI runs tally stood at



490, including 188 runs during India's title-winning Champions Trophy campaign. Overall, Gill accumulated

1,764 runs across formats at an average of 49, dotted with seven centuries and three fifties. Although his T20

International form was not particularly impressive, he was in tremendous form during the IPL, scoring 650 runs for Gujarat Titans at an average of 50. Former India head coach Rahul Dravid is set to be honoured with the Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award for his monumental contribution to Indian cricket, including guiding the team to the 2024 T20 World Cup title. The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) is set to be named the Best Association in domestic cricket.

## Always wanted to do a tough job: Bumrah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Ahmedabad

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah said he relishes taking responsibility in pressure situations and described the T20 World Cup defence as one of the most fulfilling of his career. Bumrah played a stellar role claiming four wickets as India handed New Zealand a crushing 96-run defeat in the final to become the only team to win the T20 World Cup three times. "I don't want to hide behind, I want to be in the thick of things. I always wanted to do a tough job," Bumrah, who was adjudged the Player of the Match, said in a video shared by BCCI after



the victory. "I've played cricket for that. I started to make a difference, that gives me so much joy. No

better feeling than that." For the Gujarat-born pacer, the triumph carried added emotional significance as it came at the venue where his cricket

journey began. "I started my cricket here and came up the ranks through playing for Gujarat over here and winning the World Cup here, winning and being Man of the Match. The last time we fell just short, this time we went over it, really happy." Bumrah also spoke about the presence of his family during the title triumph, calling the moment deeply personal. "My son came. He was there last time as well; this time, he was there. My mum came, really special. "I don't know about full circles, but really, really happy, back-to-back World Cups never really happen. Really grateful God is really kind, and I couldn't be more thankful."

## Final batch of SA, WI players leave India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dubai

The last batch of South African and West Indian players stranded in India after the T20 World Cup have departed, the ICC announced on Thursday, ending a crisis caused by the closure of Gulf airspace in the wake of the raging West Asia conflict. The ongoing war threw travel plans into disarray, leaving the South African and West Indies teams stranded in Kolkata due to closure of airspace and airports at major transit points like Dubai. The West Indies and South Africa played their final T20 World Cup matches in Kolkata on March 1 and March 4, respectively. While nine West Indies players had left earlier this week, the remaining 16 were booked on commercial flights. A 29-member Proteas contingent has also departed. "Within the past 24 hours, South Africa's remaining 29 members and the West Indies' final 16 members have departed on flights to their respective homelands, bringing to a close a complex operation that has taken place under exceptionally challenging global travel conditions,"

the ICC said. The ICC added that ensuring the "safe onwards travel for all players and staff was the sole aim", which required constant adjustments as conditions evolved. "Throughout this period, the ICC's operations and logistics teams have worked continuously with governments, airlines, charter providers, airport authorities and our member boards to navigate a number of operational disruptions caused by the evolving environment." The ICC had earlier drawn criticism from former England captain Michael Vaughan and South African stars Quinton de Kock and David Miller, who insinuated that England players were given better travel arrangements as they were able to leave within a day of their semifinal exit. Earlier, West Indies head coach Daren Sammy had also expressed frustration at the lack of updates from the governing body after a charter flight scheduled to depart from Kolkata was cancelled due to logistical issues. The ICC's airline partner Emirates has been unable to operate flights following the shutdown of airspace over Dubai.

## Bim10: ICC suspends player, two top officials on corruption charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Bridgetown

The ICC has provisionally suspended fast-bowling all-rounder Javon Searles and two people linked to a franchise for multiple breaches of the apex body's anti-corruption codes during the 2023-24 Bim10 tournament in Barbados. Besides Searles, the ICC has suspended Titans team owner Chitranjan Rathod and team official Trevon Griffith from all cricket. Bim10 was a fast-paced 10-over-per-innings tournament that featured six teams -- Voyagers, Guardians, Titans, Settlers, Warriors, and Pelicans. The tournament, which was last held in 2023-24, falls under the jurisdiction

of the Cricket West Indies (CWI) anti-corruption code, and the charges were brought by the ICC and CWI under their respective anti-corruption codes. The trio have 14 days from March 11, 2026, to respond to the charges, the ICC said. The charges involve match-fixing, soliciting players, and failing to report corrupt approaches to the anti-corruption officials. Searles, who has represented West Indies Under-19s, played for Trinbago Knight Riders in the CPL, and also featured in the IPL for Kolkata Knight Riders in 2018, faces four charges under the CWI anti-corruption code. Rathod has been charged with facilitating corruption



within his franchise, and Griffith also faces four charges under the CWI code and one under the ICC code, including allegedly obstructing the investigation by tampering with information. These charges are part of a larger, ongoing investigation into the 2023-24 edition of the

tournament, which also previously involved suspended USA batter Aaron Jones being charged with five breaches. All three have been charged with the following offences, as per ICC: Breach of Article 2.1.1 of the CWI Code - Fixing, contriving to fix or otherwise influencing

improperly, or being a party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive in any way or otherwise influence improperly, the result, progress, conduct or other aspect of matches in the Bim10 tournament in 2023/24 (or attempting to do so). Breach of Article 2.1.4 of the CWI Code - Soliciting, instructing, encouraging or facilitating Players and/or Player Support Personnel to commit offences under the CWI Code. Breach of Article 2.4.4 of the CWI Code - Failing or refusing to cooperate with a reasonable investigation carried out by the Designated Anti-Corruption Official (or his/her designee) in relation to possible offences under the CWI

Code. Additionally, Searles and Griffith have also been charged with: Breach of Article 2.4.2 of the CWI Code - Failing to disclose to Cricket West Indies details of any approaches or invitations to engage in conduct that would amount to a breach of the CWI Code. According to the ICC, Griffith has also been charged with: Breach of Article 2.4.7 of the CWI Code - Obstructing the ACU's investigation into possible corrupt conduct by concealing and/or tampering with information that may have been relevant to the investigation, or which may have constituted evidence or led to the discovery of evidence of corrupt conduct.

## Lisa disappointed at lack of female coaches in women's Hundred

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
London

Former Australian cricketer Lisa Keightley is "disappointed" at the lack of female head coaches in the women's Hundred and hopes more will join her in the future. Keightley, who is at the helm of MI London, was the only woman head coach among the eight teams at Wednesday's historic player auction. There has been a significant increase in player salaries, with a total of 178 cricketers going under the hammer at the auction. "It's really changing fast, isn't it? And I suppose the three powerhouses - India, England, and Australia - having very competitive T20



competitions is really driving the women's space and the pay equity," she told "ESPNCricinfo". "We're not there, but it's moving and it's moving pretty fast, so that's really good. "The only thing I'm disappointed in is I look around the room, and I'm the only female head coach.

So for me, waving the flag, and hopefully as we move into cricket, we get a few more female head coaches here," she added. The League will start on July 21 and conclude on August 16. "In saying that, we've got a few coaches internationally, and I'm

really hoping that a lot of the staff have female coaches within their coaching set-up, so from that point of view, it's moving quick, but looking around being the only female coach, that's a bit disappointing to be totally honest," she continued. Keightley has established a highly successful international coaching career spanning over two decades, leading top national teams, state sides, and premier T20 franchise leagues across Australia, England, and India. "As females, you always think you're not ready, and you're happy to be an assistant, but I think the only way you get in there and do it is if you get the opportunity, take it, get in there, and do

it," said Keightley, who was the head coach of MI for the Women's Premier League in 2025. "If someone says they want you to be a head coach, don't think you're not ready. You've got to jump at the chance, be brave and back yourself and put good people around you, and you'll be fine." Keightley said it would take time for things to change. "It's a tough one. It will change over time, and it's just players getting back into the system, having opportunity and finding their way through their journey and hopefully moving forward," she said. "This will be a different space we're in, but you're competing in an open playing field, so you just shouldn't get the position.

## BHAMBRI ENTERS MAIDEN ATP MASTERS 1000 SEMIFINAL



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Indian Wells (USA)

India's Yuki Bhambri entered his maiden ATP Masters 1000 semifinal as he and his Swedish partner Andre Goransson defeated Alexander Erlar and Andrea Vavassori in straight sets in Indian Wells here. The 33-year-old Indian had previously reached the doubles quarter-finals at the Masters 1000 level twice, including at Indian Wells last year. Bhambri and Goransson defeated the Austrian-Italian pair 6-3 7-6 in the quarterfinals that lasted over one hour 30 minutes. The Indo-Swedish duo dominated on their first serve, winning 83 per cent of the points (29/35), which proved crucial in taking the second-set tie-break and closing out the match. They will take on France's Arthur Rinderknech and Monaco's Valentin Vacherot in the semifinals on Friday. Rinderknech and Vacherot defeated the Russian duo of Andrey Rublev and Karen Khachanov 6-3 6-4 in their quarterfinal.

## Fake wrestlers caught seeking visas for Hungary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

A suspected human trafficking attempt has come to light after individuals posing as Indian wrestlers sought visas from the Hungarian Embassy in New Delhi for a purported competition in Budapest, prompting the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to clarify that the documents submitted by them were fake. The embassy sought verification from WFI on Thursday after receiving visa applications supported by a recommendation letter allegedly issued by the national federation on March 4 for participation in an "international wrestling training and competition programme" scheduled in Budapest from March 15 to 22. The WFI swiftly responded and said that the letter was forged and had not been issued by the federation. "This has reference to your e-



mail dated March 12 seeking clarification regarding the authenticity of the document... the attached letter is fake and has not been issued by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)," WFI president

Sanjay Kumar Singh said in a reply to the embassy. The federation also pointed out discrepancies in the document, including the use of the name of a former office-bearer in an incorrect capacity. "It is also clarified that Mr V.N. Prasad is no longer holding the position of Secretary General of WFI and is currently serving as Vice President, WFI. The matter has been verified with Mr Prasad, who has categorically denied issuing any such letter," Singh said. According to the forged letter submitted to the embassy, 11 wrestlers and a manager were recommended for visas to travel to Budapest, citing a training and competition programme

at a local venue. The document also carried a reference number and purportedly requested the embassy to grant visas to the athletes. Officials in the federation said the letterhead used in the document carried incorrect details, including an outdated address and there were other inconsistencies too. In its reply, the federation urged the embassy not to process any visa applications based on the forged document and called for action against those involved. "In view of the above, it is requested that no visa process may be initiated on the basis of the said letter, and appropriate legal action may be taken against the individuals involved," the WFI said.

## Aston Villa to face Lille in Europa League

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Lille (France)

Aston Villa travelled to Lille to kick off the Europa League round of 16 on Thursday boosted by the return from injury of captain John McGinn. McGinn was absent for seven weeks since a knee injury in a Premier League loss to Everton in January. "It's massive to have him back," teammate Morgan Rogers said. "He puts a smile on people's faces, he plays with that smile, wears the badge on his sleeve and he brings a lot to our team." Villa and Lille also met in



the Conference League quarterfinals two years ago, when Unai Emery's men advanced on penalties. Another English side, Nottingham Forest, needs to put relegation worries aside when it hosts Danish club Midtjylland. In an all-Italia derby, Bologna hosts Roma.

## Lens has transformed from surprise package to genuine title threat to PSG in Ligue 1

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Paris

With nine rounds remaining in Ligue 1, Paris Saint-Germain still has not managed to shake off Lens in the title race. Lens has gone from surprise frontrunner to genuine challenger, and, with PSG not playing this weekend, coach Pierre Sage's side can move two points ahead at the top with a win at mid-table Lorient on Saturday. PSG is off duty because

Nantes agreed to postpone their scheduled game on Sunday in order to give PSG better preparation for the Champions League second leg against Chelsea next week. It seems PSG hardly needs it, leading 5-2 from the last-16 first leg on Wednesday. The decision hardly pleased Nantes fans, who are facing yet another relegation scrap with a third coach this season. Ahmed Kantari was sacked this week and replaced by



Vahid Halilhodzic. Kantari was in charge for just three months. He was hired in mid-December after Nantes fired Luis Castro, who lasted 15 games. Key matchups: After scraping a narrow win at Toulouse last weekend, Marseille moved back into third place on goal difference from Lyon. But Marseille's fans are still angry at facing another trophyless season, and coach Habib Beye's players need a strong performance at home

against Auxerre on Friday to appease them. Monaco is at home to Brest on Saturday and the players are on a roll under attack-minded Belgian coach Sebastien Pocognoli. Monaco has won its past four league games, including impressive away wins against PSG and Lens. Lyon looks to snap a four-game winless streak when it travels to lowly Le Havre, and fifth-placed Rennes seeks a fifth straight win when it hosts Lille, with

both of those games on Sunday. Players to watch: Monaco's turnaround in fortunes has coincided with American forward Folarin Balogun finding form. He looked at his best last Friday against PSG, where his movement and hold-up play stood out, and he has 13 goals overall this season. Lens winger Florian Thauvin is in fine form after scoring in Ligue 1 and the French Cup last week.