



# Hindustan Times

FIRST VOICE. LAST WORD.

*Happy Holi*

## LAL QILLA® BASMATI RICE

www.lalqilla-rice.com

# Israel steps up strikes on Tehran, Iran defiant

Trump says he ordered US join Israel's ops because he wanted to pre-empt strikes by Iran, expects 'someone from within' regime to be best fit to take over power after conflict

### Associated Press

letters@hindustantimes.com

**DUBAI:** Israel stepped up airstrikes on Iranian missile launchers and factories Tuesday, and Iran retaliated against Israel and across the Gulf region, disrupting energy supplies and travel. As explosions rang out in Tehran and in Lebanon — where Israel said it struck Hezbollah militants — the US embassy in Saudi Arabia came under drone attack.

Four days into a war that President Donald Trump suggested would last several weeks but perhaps longer, hundreds of people have been killed, the vast majority in Iran. Information coming out of Iran has been limited because of poor communications, round-the-clock airstrikes and tight restrictions on journalists.

Trump said he ordered US forces to join Israel's attack on Iran because he believed Iran was about to strike his country, his latest explanation amid conflicting accounts from the administration of how the war started.

"I might have forced their (Israel's) hand," he said in the Oval Office as he met with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

"We were having negotiations with these lunatics, and it was my opinion that they were going to attack first. If we didn't do it, they were going to attack first. I felt strongly about that." He also expressed concern that their strikes could lead to a new leadership that is equally troubling to the US.

Iran has fired dozens of ballistic missiles at Israel, setting off air raid sirens across the country. The pace of the attacks appeared to be slowing and Israel has intercepted most of the incoming fire, but some missiles have landed, killing 11 people. On Tuesday, explosions were heard across Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, according to reporters and residents.

US-Israeli strikes caused damage at an airport in Bushehr, a port city in southern Iran that also hosts a nuclear power plant, the Mehr news agency reported.

continued on →7

### more stories

Govt sets up supply chain task force →P15

'Most Indian students moved to safer places' →P8

Full coverage on →P3, 8, 15



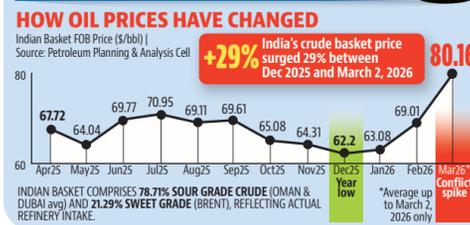
## Critical supplies choked

A large fire at Fujairah oil facility in United Arab Emirates on Tuesday. AP

**OIL RESERVES IN FOCUS**  
 How many days can key economies survive a Hormuz shutdown?

Country	Days of cover	Middle East import dependency
Japan	254 days	~95%
South Korea	208 days	~70%
China	~180 days	~50%
India (govt figure)	25 days*	40% (as of Jan 2026)

\*40-45 days, including strategic reserves, cargo at sea (Kpler data)



### GROWING DISRUPTION

In addition to the disruption of logistics in shipments via Strait of Hormuz, oil production and storage too has been halted

**Iraq slashes output** Iraq has cut 116 million barrels per day — almost a third of its output — due to storage limits and the lack of an export route. They said the country may have to shut 3 million bpd, nearly all of its output, within days if exports do not resume.

**QatarEnergy LNG halted** QatarEnergy halted its LNG facilities on Monday, affecting some of the world's largest plants and a source that supplies about 20% of global LNG. QatarEnergy also suspended parts of downstream output on Tuesday.

**Saudi disruptions** Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, suspended output at its 550,000 bpd Ras Tanura refinery and has begun rerouting crude loadings from eastern ports to Yanbu on the Red Sea.

**Other outages** Israel and Iraq's Kurdistan region also curtailed parts of their oil and gas production. There was also a fire caused by debris at the UAE's Fujairah port, a key global oil storage and bunkering hub.

## War clouds energy supply, Centre says no shortages

### Rajeev Jayaswal

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The West Asia conflict does not pose any immediate threat to India's energy security, according to people aware of the matter who cited what they said were crude oil and fuel stocks of 25 days each, as the government sought to allay concerns from observers following repeated escalation in hostilities in the Gulf — a region from where close to half of India's crude oil imports come.

Petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India has sufficient energy reserves to deal with the

ongoing situation and that consumers of petrol, diesel and cooking gas will not immediately face any shortage.

India imports just over five million barrels of crude per day, of which roughly 2.5 million bpd transit the Strait of Hormuz, the 33-kilometre passage between Iran and Oman through which shipping has ground to a near-halt after Iranian retaliatory strikes on the Gulf. Qatar, which is one of the main suppliers of LNG, paused production on Monday.

The ministry said it has set up a 24x7 control room to monitor supply and stock positions. →P8

### Fertiliser market upturned by war

#### Zia Haq

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The war in West Asia is roiling the fertiliser business in India, with imports being hit by an increase in shipping costs and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and domestic manufacturing being cramped by shortage of gas, analysts said. →P8

### MARKETS TUMBLE AMID UNCERTAINTY

Stock indexes around the world tumbled and government bonds rose with the dollar on Tuesday. Wall Street indexes were down nearly 2%, following European stocks' more than 3% loss after MSCI's Asia Pacific index closed down 3.5%. South Korea led the decline in Asian markets, with a weaker won helping push the KOSPI down 7.2%. →P18

### EVAC PLAN: 58 FLIGHTS TO WEST ASIA TODAY

India announced on Tuesday that airlines will operate 58 flights to West Asia on March 4 and are deploying additional capacity to evacuate tens of thousands of passengers stranded by widespread conflict. The intervention comes as the scope of the war expands during its fourth day, triggering massive aviation disruptions. →P8

### DONALD TRUMP AIRS FURY AT SPAIN, UK

US President Donald Trump lashed out at UK and Spain for not fully backing his attack on Iran. "I'm not happy with the UK," Trump said. He said of British PM Keir Starmer: "This is not Winston Churchill we're dealing with." He threatened to end "all trade" with Spain, which has not allowed the US to attack Iran through bases used by US forces. →P18

## IAF gets defence board nod to buy 5 S-400s from Russia

### Shishir Gupta

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Defence Procurement Board (DPB) on Monday cleared the Indian Air Force (IAF) proposal to buy five more S-400 air defence systems from Russia according to people familiar with the matter — a move that comes even as West Asia is seeing a conflict dominated by ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones.

The board, headed by defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, accepted the IAF proposal which will now go to the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by defence minister Raj-

nath Singh for acceptance of necessity (AoN). Only after the DAC grants AoN will the cost negotiation committee be constituted to fix the price of the new acquisition before the matter is given the final green signal by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) via the finance ministry.

India currently has three S-400 systems with another two expected to be inducted into the Indian armed forces this year. The S-400 system performed admirably during Operation Sindoor and ensured that Pakistani fighters, airborne warning aircraft and electronic intelligence

continued on →7



India has three S-400 systems, with another two expected to be inducted into the armed forces this year.

## 2ND SUSPECT IN GZB YOUTUBER ATTACK ALSO SHOT DEAD

### Peeyush Khandelwal

letters@hindustantimes.com

**GHAZIABAD:** The second person suspected in the stabbing of YouTuber Saleem Wastik in Ghaziabad last week was killed, allegedly in an exchange of fire with police, officers said on Tuesday. This comes two days after his younger brother, the first suspect identified in the case, was also killed in an exchange of fire with police.

Police said the man, Gulfam, was tracked down below the Hindon elevated road. He was on a bike with a pillion and they were asked to stop. However, they fired at the police, who retaliated. He died in hospital. →P4

## FLORIDA VARSITIES HALT H-1B HIRING AMID IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

**NEW YORK:** Florida's public university system, one of US's largest, froze hiring via H-1B visas, emulating a move by Texas to restrict a programme that's become a focal point for President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. Governor Ron DeSantis had ordered the board that oversees Florida's public universities to end the practice last October, claiming varsities were using them to replace US citizens. The board members who voted against the measure cited concerns that it would hurt Florida's ability to attract the best talent. →P14

## PAHALGAM: NIA SEEKS CHINA'S HELP TO TRACE CAMERA

### Neeraj Chauhan

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A GoPro Hero 12 camera suspected to have been used in the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir has been traced to a distributor in China, according to a probe by the National Investigation Agency which is approaching the Chinese government seeking information on the device. A letter rogatory is being issued seeking assistance regarding the camera, according to a court filing by NIA. →P10

## BJP names 9 for RS polls, Bihar ticket for party prez

### Sanjeev K Jha

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday announced nine candidates for the 2026 biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha across six states, setting the stage for the high-stakes polls later this month. At least three states — Maharashtra, Bihar and Odisha — are likely to see a contest. From Bihar, where five seats are falling vacant, the BJP nominated party chief Nitin

Nabin, and Shivesh Kumar.

In Assam, where three seats go to the polls, the BJP has fielded only two candidates. In Chhattisgarh, where two seats are falling vacant, member of the party's state women commission, Laxmi Verma, has been fielded. In Haryana, Sanjay Bhatia was named as the candidate. In Odisha, where four seats go to polls, the party nominated state unit president Manmohan Samal and outgoing RSM P Sujeet Kumar. →P10

→CONGESTION FOR ASSAM POLLS OUT, P7

### INSIDE

#### HOLI NOT A DRY DAY IN DELHI THIS YEAR, OPPN SLAMS GOVT

Liquor vendors in Delhi will be open on Wednesday, with Holi dropped from the list of dry days this year, officials said. According to an order issued this January for the first three months of the year, Republic Day, Maha Shivratri, Eid-ul-Fitr, Ram Navami and March 31 were on the list of dry days. AAP leaders criticised the Rekha Gupta-led government. Senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on X: "The real liquor scam in Delhi has now begun." →P3

#### MAJOR REJIG IN CITY POLICE: 70 OFFICERS MOVED AROUND

The Delhi Police was shuffled on Tuesday as the government ordered the transfer and posting of at least 70 officers. The order made changes at the special commissioners, joint commissioners, additional commissioners, deputy commissioners of police and additional DCPs levels. The move included transferring senior IPS officers Virender Singh to DG (Home Guards), Anand Mohan to DG (Prisons) and Surendra Singh Yadav to DG (Civil Defence). →P3

#### INDIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT AMONG 4 KILLED IN TEXAS

A 21-year-old Indian-American student is among four killed in a shooting outside a bar in Austin that is being investigated as a possible act of terrorism, PTI reported. Heightened security concerns have emerged across the country after attacks on Iran this weekend by the US and Israel, and retaliation by Iran. Savitha Shan, an Austin native and a dual-degree senior at the University of Texas at Austin, was fatally shot when a gunman opened fire in an entertainment district on Sunday. →P13

**HT wishes its readers a HAPPY HOLI**

**HOLIDAY NOTICE**  
 The offices of Hindustan Times will remain closed on Wednesday, March 4, on account of Holi. There will be no edition of this paper on Thursday, March 5.

**Sabse Pehle Life Insurance**

**New Labour Codes have redefined Employer obligations on Gratuity and Leave Encashment. Our expertise will ensure the compliance becomes Simple, Reliable, and Future-ready.**

**Presenting LIC's GROUP SCHEMES**

- New Group Gratuity Cash Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N281V04
- New Group Leave Encashment Plan - UIN: 512N282V04
- New Group Superannuation Cash Accumulation Plan - UIN: 512N274V03
- Group Post Retirement Medical Benefit Scheme - UIN: 512N352V01

**Salient Features:**

- Scientific funding
- Attractive Returns
- Benefit of insurance protection
- Income Tax Benefits as per Rules
- Multiple options for annuity payments

For more details, email to [groupbusiness@licindia.com](mailto:groupbusiness@licindia.com) or contact your Agent/nearest LIC P&GS unit

Call Centre Services (022) 6827 6827 | Visit: [www.licindia.in](http://www.licindia.in)

Follow us: LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No.: 512

**Beware of Spurious Phone Calls and Fictitious/Fraudulent Offers.** IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.

**LIC**  
 भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम  
 LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

*Har Pal Aapke Saath*

LICPGSIP/2025-26/31/Eng

## Gaffaney, Palekar to officiate in 2nd semis

**DUBAI:** New Zealand's Chris Gaffaney and Allahuddin Palekar of South Africa will be the on-field umpires for the T20 World Cup semifinal between India and England in Mumbai on Thursday with Zimbabwean Andy Pycroft as match referee. The ICC on Tuesday announced the match officials of semifinals of the T20 World Cup ahead of the knockout fixtures in Kolkata and Mumbai. Gaffaney also oversaw the proceedings when India and England met at the same stage in the 2024 edition of the tournament. Palekar, on the other hand, stood in two of England's matches in the ongoing tournament as well as India's victory over the Netherlands. Accompanying the trio in Mumbai will be Adrian Holdstock (third umpire), and Paul Reiffel (fourth umpire). The English duo of Richard Illingworth and Alex Wharf will be assuming the role of on-field umpires in the first semifinal between South Africa and New Zealand at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday. The pair will be joined in Kolkata by Nitin Menon as third umpire, while Rod Tucker will take his place as the fourth umpire. Javagal Srinath has been named the match referee for this game.

AFP



## Eyes on the ball

Jasprit Bumrah throws during fielding practice at India's training session at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Tuesday. India play England in the second semi-final of the T20 World Cup on Thursday. RAJU SHINDE/HT

## Pak selector Dar quits after poor show: Report

**LAHORE:** Senior selection committee member Aleem Dar has tendered his resignation to the PCB in the wake of the national team's poor show in the T20 World Cup, according to sources. "Former ICC elite panel umpire Dar has sent his resignation which is yet to be accepted," a well-informed source close to the PCB said on Tuesday. Dar and former Test players Asad Shafiq and Aaqib Javed are the members of the selection committee. Dar said that he resigned because he was not happy with the undue authority given to the team's head coach Mike Hesson in selection matters. He said Dar was surprised to see that neither captain Salman Agha nor the other selectors resisted Hesson's authority. Pakistan failed to qualify for the semifinals and lost to big teams like arch-foes India and England while their Super Eight game against New Zealand was washed out. They beat Sri Lanka in their final Super Eight game but couldn't qualify for the semifinals. The performance of the players, according to the sources, has not only upset the PCB but also influential figures in the government.

PTI



New Zealand's captain Mitchell Santner (R) and Kyle Jamieson attend a training session at the Eden Gardens on Tuesday. AFP

## New Zealand, the game's pragmatic problem solvers

Ashish Magotra  
ashish.magotra@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** We find ourselves at the semi-final stage of a cricket World Cup. The final four. Just two matches away from being champions. And once again, among those teams is a familiar name in New Zealand, a country with a population of approximately 5.34 million people where rugby, not cricket, is a national religion.

But think back to any recent ICC World Cup and the Kiwis have played their hand, and played it well. New Zealand now hold the record for the most semi-final appearances in ICC Men's World Cup history, reaching 14 in all (9 in ODIs and 4 in T20Is). India and Australia have the second-best record with 13 semi-finals each.

This tournament has been a bit of a mixed bag though. Rain, some middling performance and the manic nature of T20s have not seen them at their clinical best. But they are here, in with a chance... looking to reset; looking to make an impact as they go up against an unbeaten South Africa in Kolkata on Wednesday.

It's a bit like Germany in the football World Cup. Regardless of form, come the big tournament, they just know how to make themselves tough to beat. As Gary Lineker once said, "Football is a simple game; 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans win."

The wins, despite making it to so many semi-finals, hasn't come along for New Zealand. But while the Germans are renowned for their resilience, the Kiwis, across generations, adopt a pragmatic approach. And always fightback when it appears all is lost.

On most days, New Zealand are about balance. As long as they play their game, the result almost feels secondary. They want to solve the problem in front of them but if they can't, it's fine.

"I think if you look historically at the Black Caps, you would probably say that they're a team that have been great problem solvers, they are street smart, they find a way to solve the conditions quickly," said NZ coach Rob Walter earlier in the tournament.

He added: "It's certainly something we pride ourselves on. And when you are in the subcontinent and there's different soil types on the same block, you are faced with

different conditions all the time. And that's the beauty of the game of cricket, isn't it? It's like nothing's ever the same. And so, we want to keep being a side that responds quickly. We can adapt to conditions quickly and find a method. And that won't change. That won't change throughout."

The core of the NZ philosophy, though, is how they rise above the individual. Cricket is a team sport and they play it like one. As Daryl Mitchell recently told ESPNcricinfo, "That's the cool thing about this New Zealand group: We all are

in it together, constantly having conversations about "how do you do this?" And we keep trying to add little facets to our game. That's one of the main reasons why we've had some success."

The understanding that they don't quite have the same resources as some of the other teams around

means that they have to make the most of what they have. "Individual performance is only a contribution to something greater than yourself and that is the team," former skipper Kane Williamson said in his press conference just after the 2019 ODI World Cup final, which they lost by the thinnest of margins. "The idea is that you are helping your team get across the line and the only thing you can perhaps think of... is what more I could have done."

This is the first and foremost lesson that is passed down to any new member. Everybody is allowed to be themselves and when they all move together, they present a different problem each time. Just as they look for a solution, the opposition must too.

For instance, NZ's highest wicket-taker in this tournament is Rachin Ravindra. His 9 wickets at a strike-rate of 8.6 have offset skipper Mitch Santner taking just 2 wickets at an SR of 60.

When asked about how Ravindra managed this, he said: "I'm not sure if it's anything special, I think most of it is backing what we do and trusting our method... the communication between the spin group helps too."

The greatness of New Zealand is that their collective often finds a way to beat genius, and even when it doesn't, they're content in the idea that they and everyone else watching had some fun.

As Williamson once said: "Laugh or cry, it's your choice, isn't it?"

Semi-final: 1  
**MARCH 4**  
**NZ vs SA**  
Kolkata 7.00pm

### CAPTAINS' CORNER



#### Mitchell Santner (NZ)

While South Africa topped their Super Eight table, beating India and West Indies en route, Mitchell Santner's New Zealand lost to England and had to rely on Net Run Rate to squeeze ahead of Pakistan and seal their final four spot. A drubbing at the hands of South Africa in the group stage will also weigh on their minds. But the Eden Gardens will provide very different conditions and dew could make bowling second tough.



#### Aiden Markram (SA)

Markram has led from the front, scoring 86\* in a seven-wicket romp over New Zealand in the group phase, easily chasing 176 with 17 balls to spare. But South Africa will have a tough time in adapting to the conditions, especially dew, in Kolkata as they will play outside Delhi and Ahmedabad for the first time in this tournament. The Proteas have been unbeaten so far and will look to make it to the second straight T20 WC final with a win over the cool Kiwis.

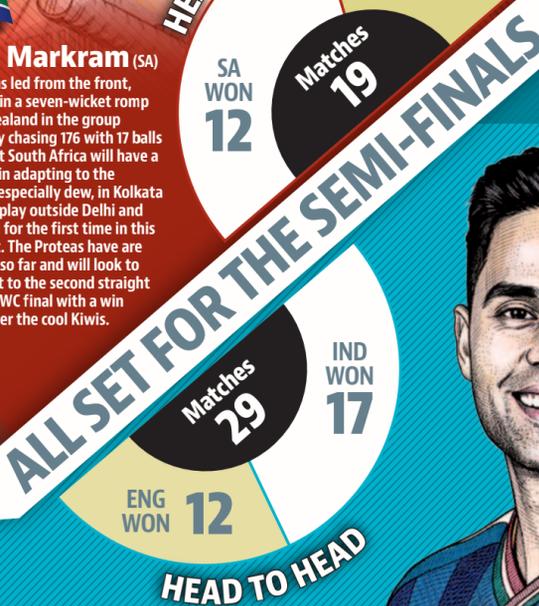
### KEY MATCHUPS

#### NZ spinners vs SA batters

The Proteas, with a power-hitting line-up comprising Markram, Quinton de Kock, Dewald Brevis, Ryan Rickleton, Tristan Stubbs, David Miller and Marco Jansen, can give any team a run for their money. So far in this tournament they have looked the team to beat, hardly showing any vulnerability except in the match against Afghanistan. But Santner has quite a few part-time spin options in Rachin Ravindra, Glenn Phillips and Cole McConchie, who have all performed vital roles during the tournament.

#### NZ batters vs SA pace battery

The batting-friendly pitch at Eden Gardens will allow Finn Allen, Tim Seifert, Glenn Phillips and Daryl Mitchell to think of a 200-plus total that would give them a chance versus the Proteas. Batting second will be far easier though, with dew likely to play a major role this time of the year. SA will be better off in this aspect as their pace battery of Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi and Corbin Bosch are seasoned to deal with the dew. It will be interesting to see how effective Ngidi's slower deliveries will be on this track.



Semi-final: 2  
**MARCH 5**  
**IND vs ENG**  
Mumbai 7.00pm

### KEY MATCHUPS

#### England openers vs India bowlers

Jos Buttler is averaging just 8.85 in the competition after five successive single-figure scores while Phil Salt's only knock of note was a 62 in the Super 8s against Sri Lanka. Brook though is confident his opening pair can fire versus India, a side England are meeting for the third straight T20 World Cup semi-final, having hammered them in Adelaide in 2022 before being thrashed by them in Guyana in 2024. India's new-ball bowlers Arshdeep Singh and Hardik Pandya have not been exceptional, unlike Jasprit Bumrah, but they haven't been all over the place either.

#### Jofra Archer and Will Jacks vs India openers

Sanju Samson getting runs in the semi win over Windies will somewhat ally fears over off-spinner Will Jacks' threat, but Jofra Archer has dismissed the opener thrice in five T20Is. Abhishek Sharma has remained vulnerable against off-spin. Jacks has been instrumental for England, contributing 191 runs at No 7, including in the nerve-jangling wins over Nepal, Italy, Sri Lanka and New Zealand, and taking 7 wickets with his off-spin.

#### Suryakumar Yadav (IND)

India have shown vulnerability on many fronts but someone or the other has stood up and delivered when it mattered. Opener Abhishek Sharma though remains the biggest concern in the batting line-up as he searches for form while mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy being walloped for runs in three matches on the trot will add to the concerns of the India skipper on a usually good Wankhede track.

#### Harry Brooks (ENG)

Brook's side stuttered to wins over Associate nations Nepal, Scotland and Italy in the first round around and lost meekly to West Indies. They improved in the Super 8s beating Sri Lanka, Pakistan — the skipper hit a stunning 50-ball century — and then finally New Zealand, having looked up against it needing 43 from the final 18 deliveries. That is what India will be wary of, letting England chase a target.



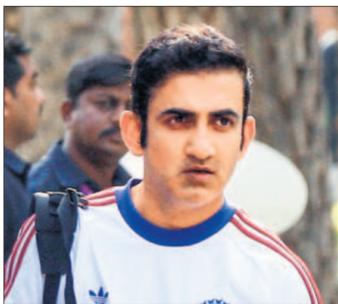
# It's a Gambhir-McCullum face-off too

N Ananthanarayanan  
anantha.narayanan@htlive.com

**NEW DELHI:** It is in the Twenty20 format that a cricket coach comes closest to their touchline-prowling counterpart in football. Cricket's stop-start nature, though, allows for instructions to be passed on without constant shouting and gesturing. When things get nifty, TV cameras pan on the cricket coach as much as they do in football.

Come Thursday, when defending champions India go up against England, two of the most high-profile coaches in this T20 World Cup will match wits at the Wankhede Stadium. While home fans will hope the roles are reversed — recalling another semi-final at the venue 39 years ago when England won that 1987 ODI World Cup clash — Gautam Gambhir and Brendon McCullum will be doubly determined to ace this intense contest.

Both former international openers of distinction, the coaching careers of the 44-year-olds have taken a largely similar path. Both have strong links to Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League. McCullum's sensational 158 for KKR against Royal Challengers Bangalore (now Ben-



India's head coach Gautam Gambhir (L) and his England counterpart Brendon McCullum. ANI/PTI

galuru) lit up the inaugural game of the first edition. Gambhir captained the team to its first two titles (2012, 2014), and was a prolific run-getter in both campaigns.

Both gave back to KKR after their playing days. Gambhir returned as team mentor to guide them to a third title in 2024 before succeeding Rahul Dravid as India chief coach. McCullum took the team to the IPL final in 2021, their first since 2014, before leaving the next year to take over as England chief coach.

The former New Zealand skipper's push to get the team to iden-



tify with his philosophy of all-out aggression with the bat marked his tenure with KKR. McCullum wasn't one for batters building an innings, or worry about losing their wicket. His bid to carry that thrill-a-ball cricket lit up English cricket after he took over and joined forces with Ben Stokes, the games and audacious run chases bringing in the fans in droves.

However, the inability to beat an Indian team in transition last summer and then capitulating 1-4 in the Ashes series in Australia has left pundits and the media calling for the sacking. His comment after the pink-ball Test

defeat in Brisbane that his players actually did too much heavy training in the run-up didn't win admirers and reports of heavy drinking by the players during their mid-Ashes break in Noosa raised more questions. The revelation that Harry Brook was punched by a bouncer in Auckland added to the demand for his ouster.

This T20 World Cup campaign thus could not have come sooner. McCullum has both backed white-ball skipper Brook, one of the game's top batters, and demanded that criticism of the players should be toned down as

it helped no one. Brook repaid the support with a match-winning 50-ball century against Pakistan and then announced his promotion to No.3 was "All Bazz".

His "express yourself" approach in Test cricket seems to have tapered off, especially after the Ashes debacle, but it seems to be helping England find belief in their white-ball game, especially after the 2023 ODI World Cup flop show in India. McCullum showed his seemingly cavalier coaching philosophy contained some winning psychology too when he asked young Rehan Ahmed to "bat like Sehwag", referring to India's Sultan of free-swinging batsmanship. With 43 to get from 18 balls against New Zealand, Rehan swung the second ball from Glenn Phillips out of the park, igniting the finish with serial-player of the match Will Jacks.

Gambhir is on the other end of the spectrum but will surely sympathise with McCullum's Test travels. His first series, at home, was a 0-3 drubbing in Australia against New Zealand. An Australia tour loss followed by the Test retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma from Tests, and not pushing for victory in the England series (it ended 2-2) despite a surprisingly robust show by his

young team by not playing left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav at all, raised questions if red-ball was his forte. Then followed the 0-2 loss to South Africa, although losing in-form skipper Shubman Gill to a neck injury was a huge setback.

A combative character, Gambhir initially brushed aside doubts if three left-handers at the top would fail the match-up test of T20. However, acknowledging the issue after off-spinners made early in-roads was rewarded with Sanju Samson finally finding form with a match-winning 97 in the virtual quarter-final against West Indies.

Gambhir is in control of the team and has BCCI's backing. Unlike McCullum, who wants his players to enjoy their cricket, Gambhir insists that his players put the team first and go to battle for the country. Like McCullum though, his contract too runs until 2027, although the England coach appears to be on a sticky wicket after the Ashes loss.

No team has successfully defended the T20 World Cup title. But Gambhir will be expected to outsmart a familiar adversary and give India the chance to make amends for their 2023 ODI World Cup final loss at home.

# Special flights from Gulf land in Capital, fliers recount ordeal

Gargi Shukla and Jasjeev Gandhiok

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** For Madhuri Dwiwedi, who managed to escape conflict-hit Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on flight through Oman's capital Muscat to reach Delhi, the past 72 hours have been so chaotic that she forgot to inform her daughters' teachers that they would not be able to attend online classes on Tuesday.

"On Sunday, I received a message from my daughters' school that classes would be online on March 2 and 3, and would continue unless tensions in the Gulf improved. We reached Muscat yesterday, so my daughters attended their classes. As we were uncertain about our travel plans to India and only secured tickets this morning, I completely forgot to inform their teachers," said Dwiwedi, who returned to India along with her husband and two daughters, both below the age of three. The family has been settled in Dubai for the past six years.

While Dwiwedi travelled through Muscat, others secured special flights from Dubai to India. The third special flight carrying around 150 Indians from Dubai landed at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport at around 12.50pm on Tuesday.

The special flights came even as operations at Delhi air-



Relief, joy as stranded Indians from Gulf land at the Delhi airport. Operations at IGIA were hit for the fourth day amid flight curbs due to the West Asia crisis. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

port remained impacted for the fourth consecutive day due to airspace restrictions amid the escalating conflict in West Asia.

As of Tuesday, four special flights — one on Monday evening and three on Tuesday — had reached Delhi, carrying over 1,100 Indians from Dubai. Though limited flights have resumed from airports in the West Asia, at least 80 flights to and from Delhi were cancelled on Tuesday. Additionally, over 200 flights, including domestic services, were delayed.

"Of the 80 cancelled flights, 36 were departures and 44 arrivals. The situation has started improving as two flights from Dubai landed on

Tuesday," an airport official said.

According to FlightRadar24, a flight-tracking website, more than 200 flights were delayed until Tuesday evening, with an average delay of 15 minutes.

At least 87 flights were cancelled on Monday and 104 on Sunday.

Delhi airport wrote on X: "Given the changing geopolitical situation in [West Asia], some westbound international flights may be subject to delays or operational adjustments."

It asked passengers to check the latest updates with their respective airlines before travelling to the airport and, if necessary, consider alternate routes or connections sug-

gested by the airline. Airport officials said additional help desks were set up in the international security holding area and departure forecourt, and quick reaction teams were deployed across check-in, boarding, arrival, transfer, and ticketing areas.

"Advisories are being issued on social media platforms in real time. Airport staff are also distributing water bottles, tea, and refreshments via mobile food kiosks," the official quoted above said, adding that hot meals and hygiene kits are also being provided.

"Further, additional recliners and medical teams have been made available. Over 3,000 bags belonging to pas-

sengers whose flights were cancelled have been returned so far," the official added.

For four-year-old Shamik Vahishta and his parents Arvind (35) and Deepa (34), the end of their week-long vacation to Dubai was nothing short of dramatic, said Arvind.

"We were supposed to return on February 28, but our flight was cancelled at the last minute. At first, we planned to wait at the airport for the next available flight, but after receiving alerts and announcements to stay indoors, we decided it was safer to move to a hotel," said Noida-based Arvind.

"We're truly grateful to Air India. It felt like a covert evacuation. Around 10pm on Monday, we received a call and message about a morning flight, though they said it was still a 50-50 chance. We told them we were ready to take the risk," he added.

Repeated announcements and non-stop sirens were unsettling, said 34-year-old Hardik Doshi, describing the scene at Abu Dhabi airport early Tuesday.

"I went on a company-sponsored leisure trip last Wednesday and was scheduled to return on March 1. Around 400 employees from different departments were on the trip. After the cancellations, we were all split up. No one knows how many have returned or are still stuck at a hotel in Dubai," said Mumbai-based Doshi.

## In festive colours



Residents come together to celebrate Holi across Delhi and NCR, welcoming the season of spring with gulal, water guns, and delicacies. SUNIL GHOSH/HT PHOTO

# No dry day on Holi: Liquor vends to stay open today

Saloni Bhatia

saloni.bhatia@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Liquor vends in Delhi will remain open today as Holi is not on the list of dry days that will be observed this year, said officials.

In an order issued in January this year, the excise department directed that liquor vends and licensed premises shall observe dry days on select occasions in January, February and March this year under Rule 52 of the Delhi Excise Rules, 2010.

According to the order, January 26 (Republic Day), February 15 (Maha Shivratri), March 21 (Id-ul-Fitr), March 26 (Ram Navami) and March 31 (Mahavir Jayanti) were on the list of dry days this year from January to March.

All licensees were instructed to display the order at a conspicuous place on their premises.

In 2021, the then Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government had slashed the number of dry days to three under the new excise policy, which was later scrapped in July 2022.

Meanwhile, AAP leaders criticised the Rekha Gupta led government on the matter.

Senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia posted on X saying, "The real liquor scam in Delhi has now begun. By keeping liquor shops open even on Holi, the Delhi government has given open permission to earn crores of rupees on a festival day. Does even a single ED or CBI officer have the courage to ask questions about this scam?"

AAP Delhi chief Saurabh Bharadwaj shared the Delhi government's order on X and said, "You may recall how the BJP-led central government created

chaos in Delhi in the name of liquor. They lied at every step to defame the AAP government and trapped us in false cases. But now during the BJP government, in the name of liquor, their true values have come before everyone. They are neither Sanatanis nor patriots. They are merely an uneducated group hungry for power."

Bharadwaj said that so far, the government kept all liquor shops open on Chhath Mahaparv, Ravidas Jayanti, and now on Holi as well. "Is it not CM Rekha Gupta's responsibility to protect our daughters from the hooliganism and obscenity that will occur on the streets after people consume alcohol?" he questioned.

HT reached out to the Delhi government for a comment on the matter, but no response was received by the time of going to print.

# Uttam Nagar: Man mowed down by bus after falling off his scooter

Karn Pratap Singh

karn.singh@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A 30-year-old man died after he fell off his scooter and was run over by a bus near Uttam Nagar West Metro station in southwest Delhi on Tuesday morning, said police, adding that the scooter hit the door of a stationary car that was opened suddenly by its occupant.

Police identified the deceased as Daksh (single name), a resident of Uttam Nagar. The accident happened around 8.30am when he was returning home after dropping a relative at the metro station.

Deputy commissioner of police (DCP) (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said that at 8.40 am, the police control room received a call regarding the accident.

Locals and passersby told

**THE 30-YEAR-OLD LOST BALANCE AFTER CRASHING INTO THE DOOR OF A CAR THAT HAD STOPPED ON HIS LEFT SIDE**

police that three vehicles — a bus, a Toyota Etios car and a scooter — were involved in the crash. The car bearing Delhi's registration number stopped on the left side of the road on the request of a passenger, who was feeling unwell, police said after speaking to the car driver.

"As the passenger opened the car's right rear side door, a scooter coming from behind crashed into the opened door as its rider did not get enough time to apply brakes. As a result, the

scooter rider lost balance and he fell off of the two-wheeler. At the same time, a DTC bus coming from behind ran over the scooter rider, killing him on the spot," said DCP Singh.

Police said that the bus was plying on route number 887 from Ghumanhera village to Tilak Nagar, when the accident took place. The deceased's body was shifted to Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) hospital's mortuary for autopsy, the police said.

DCP Singh said that a case of rash driving and death by negligence was registered under sections 281 and 106 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Uttam Nagar police station.

However, the police did not specify against whom was the case registered.

DTC did not respond to HT's request for a comment on the incident.

{ GOVT ORDER }

# 70 Delhi Police officers shifted in major reshuffle

HT Correspondent

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A major reshuffle took place in the Delhi Police on Tuesday as the government ordered the transfer and posting of at least 70 officers, police said.

The order, issued with the lieutenant governor's approval on Tuesday, mandated changes at levels of special commissioners, joint commissioners, additional commissioners, deputy commissioners of police and additional DCPs.

According to the order, seen by HT, the reshuffle included transferring senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officers Virender Singh to DG (Home Guards), Anand Mohan to DG (Prisons) and Surendra Singh Yadav to DG (Civil Defence).

Among senior-level changes, IPS officer Sanjay Kumar Jain was posted as officer on special duty (OSD) to the commissioner of police, with the additional charge of joint commissioner of police (tech and PI). Joint commissioner of police (traffic) Kime Kamjng was appointed as joint CP (armed police).

IPS officer Dheeraj Kumar moves from joint CP (armed police) to joint CP (crime), heading the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF). Ajit Kumar Singh was posted as joint CP (eastern range) and Sanjay Kumar Tyagi takes over as joint CP (traffic).

IPS officer Vijay Kumar (2007 batch), who was OSD to the commissioner, is now joint CP (southern range).

2009 batch officer Monika Bhardwaj shifted from traffic to additional CP (IFSO), while officer Vijayanta Arya was posted as additional CP (traffic). Satya Vir Katara was given charge of additional CP (recruitment) and Nidhin Valsan moves to additional CP (tech and PI).

District-level changes include Sachin Sharma, who was serving as DCP (outer) will take charge as DCP (New Delhi), while DCP (traffic) Shank Jaiswal was moved to DCP (Rohini). Rajiv Kumar was posted as DCP (east) and Kushal Pal Singh as DCP (Dwarka).

Rajendra Prasad Meena was posted as DCP (Shahdara) while Akanksha Yadav was transferred as DCP (north-west).

Vikram Singh was posted as DCP (outer) and Anant Mittal as DCP (south). Rohit Rajbir Singh has taken over as DCP (central).

Ankit Chauhan, who was serving as DCP (south), was posted as DCP (special branch) and Ankit Kumar Singh, who was DCP (Dwarka), was given the post of DCP (vigilance).

In the DANIPS cadre, multiple ACPs have been assigned additional DCP responsibilities in current duty-charge arrangements.

# RIVAL GANGSTER HELD FOR FIRING AT CAR CARRYING BISHNOI'S LAWYER

Jignasa Sinha

jignasa.sinha@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A week after several rounds of bullets were fired at a car in north Delhi's Kashmere Gate in which Lawrence Bishnoi's lawyer was travelling, the Delhi Police on Tuesday said they have arrested the key conspirator who was also the assailant.

Police said Rohit Godara and Goldy Brar gangs had planned to kill advocate Deepak Khatri, 45, who has been representing Bishnoi in a few cases.

The accused, Rohit Solanki, 26, is an associate of the Rohit Godara gang and targeted Khatri over the recent gang rivalry and differences.

According to police, when Khatri was returning from a temple with his friends Rishab Kapoor, Vikas Sharma, Umesh and Sandeep in a car around 10pm on February 24, the accused Solanki fired at the car, and Sandeep suffered bullet injuries on his shoulder.

"The team analysed more than 300 CCTVs and found a few suspects roaming around. The images were matched with active members of the different gangs operating in Delhi-NCR. The probe led to the identification of Solanki, a resident of Pooth village, northwest Delhi," DCP (north) Raja Banthia said on Tuesday.

"He was nabbed on Monday from his friend's house in Majra Dabas village in northwest Delhi," said the officer.

Police said the accused had earlier attempted to kill Khatri in Dehradun but failed.

# Nearly 4,000 'pink cards' issued on first day of rollout

Snehil Sinha

snehil.sinha@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) on Tuesday began issuing smart cards to women commuters, replacing the existing pink paper tickets used to avail free bus rides. DTC said it issued nearly 4,000 cards across various centres on the first day of the roll-out till 5 pm.

A spot check by HT at several DTC pink card centres found that the process of issuing the new QR code-based cards was largely smooth, with roughly 40-45 cards issued at each centre during the day. Officials added that a bigger rush is expected from Thursday after the Holi celebrations.

DTC officials said the smart card system has been introduced to streamline the free travel scheme for women and reduce reliance on paper tickets, while maintaining a digital record of the number of trips taken. The QR-based PVC card is expected to be more durable than the paper slips and can be used across all NCMC-compliant platforms.

Officials added that the smart card will gradually replace the pink paper slips currently issued to women passengers for free travel on Delhi government buses. However, no fixed date has been announced for discontinuing the paper slips.

At the counters, applicants were required to provide basic identification details. Officials



Women receiving the pink cards at Scindia House near CP on Tuesday. ARVIND YADAV/HT

recorded the commuter's name, Aadhaar number, and mobile phone number before issuing the card.

"The process is fairly simple. We note down the commuter's name, Aadhaar number and phone number, and take a photo of the Aadhaar card. Then the card number is recorded against the applicant before handing over the QR-based card," said a DTC official posted at one of the distribution centres.

Commuters who received the card on Tuesday said the system was quicker than expected.

Yogita Gupta, a college student who applied for the card at a DTC centre in south-east Delhi, said, "They only asked for my Aadhaar and phone number. I went to get the card on Tuesday because the crowd would increase after Holi, but the process is not time-consuming."

## ₹69.6L AWARDED TO 2021 CRASH VICTIM'S FAMILY

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) has awarded ₹69.61 lakh compensation to the family of a 54-year-old army personnel who died in a road collision in 2021.

Presiding Officer Anjani Mahajan was hearing the claim petition filed by the wife and four children of the deceased army personnel, Bal Kishan. On the afternoon of October 29, 2021, Bal Kishan was going to Sihol Palwal from Andhop Palwal on his motorcycle.

Around the time he reached near Kidwari in Chandhul, his motorcycle was struck by a negligently driven truck due to which he fell down and sustained fatal injuries. He was taken to Civil Hospital, Palwal, where was declared brought dead.

# 3k traffic personnel to check Holi violations on city roads

Karn Pratap Singh

karn.singh@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Traffic Police on Tuesday said that if a motorist is caught committing traffic violations such as drunken driving, red light jumping and over-speeding during Holi celebrations on Wednesday, the driving licence will be seized and the motorist will be liable for a minimum three months of suspension. Nearly 3,000 traffic personnel will keep a strict vigil across the Capital on Holi.

Special focus will be on vehicles driven by minors, and action

will also be taken against the registered owners of those vehicles, said additional commissioner of police (traffic) Dinesh Kumar Gupta.

"As per the directions of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, in cases of drunken driving, red light jumping, using a mobile phone while driving, dangerous driving, and over-speeding, the driving license will also be seized and liable for suspension for a minimum period of 3 months," said Gupta.

Traffic personnel will be deployed at 134 major intersections in the city, while 79 teams

equipped with alcoholometers will assist security personnel at special integrated police pickets to nab revellers creating a nuisance on roads or disturbing the city's law and order, he added.

"We urge the public to obey traffic rules and not drive after consuming alcohol. Motorists should also observe the prescribed speed limits, obey traffic signals, and not be involved in racing or competition with other vehicles. Two-wheeler riders and pillion riders should wear helmets and avoid triple riding and performing stunts," said Gupta.

## 280 HELD IN DRIVE TO CHECK ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ON HOLI

**NEW DELHI:** Nearly 5,000 people were apprehended and 280 arrested by the Delhi Police as part of a two-day crackdown against habitual offenders, bootleggers, drug peddlers, and other miscreants in southern parts of Delhi. "Operation Aaghat" was launched to prevent illegal activities during Holi celebrations, senior police officers said on Tuesday.

Nearly 2,500 police personnel from south districts carried out special area checks and drives on March 1 and 2.

**Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.**  
Corporate Sports Division  
1st Floor, Tower B, Deendayal Urja Bhawan,  
5, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070  
Ph. No: 011-26751413/21, e-mail: ongsports@ongc.co.in

**ADVERTISEMENT**  
**Engagement of 2 Hockey sportspersons on stipend basis**  
ONGC invites online applications from meritorious sportspersons in the age group of 18 to 30 years for engagement on stipend in the range from Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 70,000/- per month in the following Games/Sports:

Games/Sports	Hockey
Men	2 No.

Interested and eligible sportspersons may apply between **04.03.2026** to **10.03.2026** by submitting application in the prescribed format through ONGC's official email address [ongcsports@ongc.co.in](mailto:ongcsports@ongc.co.in). Visit [www.ongcindia.com](http://www.ongcindia.com) for details of stipend scheme and term & conditions. Applications will be accepted only through online mode.

In case any candidate is found to have submitted false or fabricated certificate/document/information, the candidature of such candidate will be rejected with legal action as deemed fit.

**Amul Milk**

**HAPPY HOLI**

**AMUL DOODH PEETA HAI INDIA**

# Okhla landfill sewage damaging key road, PWD writes to MCD

Paras Singh

paras@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Public Works Department (PWD) has said the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)'s poor management at the Okhla landfill site and frequent overflow from its drains are causing repeated damage to the arterial road Ma Anandmayee Marg in south-east Delhi, which connects the Outer Ring Road near Kalkaji to the Mehrauli-Badarpur (MB) Road.

The agency has written multiple letters to the civic body stating that sewage overflow mixed with silt from the Okhla landfill is causing damage to the road and creating "unsafe driving conditions" for motorists.

The road is also plagued by the heavy movement of MCD trucks carrying garbage and the stray cattle menace. Commuters say the stretch remains a traffic nightmare, especially during peak hours.

Ramanjot Sethi, a commuter travelling towards Nehru Place from MB Road, said, "The damaged road, unauthorised car and truck repairs, trucks parked on the carriageway, thick dust in the air, and most of all hordes of cows near Govindpuri and the Okhla industrial area — this arterial stretch shows failure at every level. Are they waiting for accidents to happen?" he said.

A parallel artery to NH-19 connecting Okhla-Sukhdev Vihar to Tughlaqabad, Ma Anandmayee Marg caters to commuters passing through Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Tughlaqabad, Okhla and nearby areas towards Faridabad.

The road also handles hundreds of vehicles and trucks carrying municipal waste from south Delhi to the Okhla landfill and Tehkhand waste-to-energy plant.

One of the letters from PWD (subdivision SER-1) to the MCD executive engineer said multiple communications have been sent, through which "the issue of outflow of dirty water mixed with silt from SLF Okhla site on Maa Anandmayee Marg has been brought to their notice".



The pothole-riddled (top) and broken stretch of Maa Anandmayee Marg in south-east Delhi. RAJ K RAJ / HT PHOTOS

"However, the problem still persists and no remedial action has been taken at site. Due to continuous discharge, the nearby drain is repeatedly getting choked despite regular cleaning, resulting in deposition of silt and water on the carriageway. This is creating unsafe driving conditions and causing further deterioration of the road," the letter adds. PWD has asked the MCD to identify the root cause and ensure permanent rectification of the problem.

MCD officials did not respond to queries on the matter. PWD had undertaken a traffic volume survey of Ma Anandmayee Marg, which revealed that the road has a traffic volume exceeding 10,000 PCU (passenger car units) per hour, which rises further during peak hours.

Earlier, HT had reported that leakages from a nearby reservoir were also damaging Ma Anandmayee Marg. PWD had written to the Delhi Jal Board in December and January, urging it to address the leakage source and compensate PWD for recurring repair work on the road.

"Due to constant leakage of water from the Delhi Jal Board facility near ESI Hospital, the Ma Anandmayee Marg maintained by the Public Works Department is getting damaged... We are once again requesting you to take steps to plug the leakage source. Otherwise, the Delhi Jal Board will have to bear the expenses for carrying out repair work on the damaged road," the note said.

The issue, the DJB said, has since been rectified.

{ 'PHANSI GHAR' ROW }

## Kejriwal: Will appear before panel on Mar 6

Saloni Bhatia

saloni.bhatia@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said he will appear before the Delhi Assembly's privileges committee on March 6 in connection with the "Phansi Ghar" controversy and demanded that the proceedings be live-streamed.

The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) national convener on Tuesday posted on X saying, "Delhi is grappling with pollution, roads are broken, there are heaps of garbage everywhere, hospitals are facing a shortage of medicines, and the Delhi Assembly has called me to answer questions on a 'phansi ghar'."

Kejriwal, in the letter to the committee (a copy of which he shared on X), said he received the summons issued to him on February 18 under Rules 172 and 220 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

He said he will appear before the committee on March 6 at 3pm. "My appearance is without prejudice to my legal and constitutional rights, remedies, objections and contentions, all of

which are expressly reserved. In the interest of transparency and public accountability, I request that the proceedings of the Committee in the present matter be live-streamed," read the communication from Kejriwal.

The issue refers to "Phansi Ghar" (gallows chamber), a room that the AAP government publicly showcased in August 2022 as a historical execution chamber on the assembly premises.

It became a political flashpoint after last year, when Speaker Vijender Gupta showed maps and shared other details, claiming it was a lift chamber used for transporting tiffins, not an execution room.

The development follows proceedings of the Delhi assembly in January this year, when the house adopted the first report of the Committee of Privileges after a motion was moved, agreeing with the report presented on January 6, 2026.

The report recorded that the absence of the AAP leaders mentioned from committee sittings on November 13 and November 20, 2025, remained unexplained despite repeated communications being sent to them.

## RESIDENTS TOLD TO LEAVE 'UNSAFE' PALLIKA DHAM UNITS BY MARCH 7

**NEW DELHI:** Issuing another public notice on Tuesday, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) asked Palika Dham residents to vacate the buildings that were deemed "unsafe and dangerous" by March 7.

Last July, NDMC declared the building complex "dangerous" due to its dilapidated condition. It has since issued multiple notices asking residents to vacate, but they are hesitant to do so.

The Palika Dham complex, which has 150 Type-1 quarters, houses around 800 residents.

"The complex is structurally unsafe. To prevent accidents, residents were asked to vacate," an NDMC official said.

Raju Dholakia, president of the permanent RWA, said they are in touch with local representatives. "We have been assured that no action will be taken against us. Other buildings in the NDMC area are older than our complex, but NDMC insist on demolition instead of repairing the complex."

To be sure, these buildings were not repaired since the 1970s, when they were built. The tiles are broken, iron rods are visible in places and plaster keeps falling off.

## Ggm police auction accused's vehicle to compensate victim

Debashish Karmakar

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**GURUGRAM:** A car purchased by a rape accused was attached and auctioned by police for ₹11.3 lakh to compensate the amount that he allegedly extorted from the victim, police said on Tuesday. Investigators said Section 107 (attachment, forfeiture or restoration of property suspected to be proceeds of crime) of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) was invoked in the case for the first time in the country to compensate a victim.

Police said the 34-year-old victim, working at a multinational firm, had alleged that the man, from Rajasthan's Jaipur, had raped her last year on the pretext marriage and shared her compromising photographs with his friends.

He also took ₹24 lakh and gold jewellery from her, claiming he needed it to start a business, but, instead, he used it to purchase a car in his mother's name and repay a loan taken by his younger brother. The victim alleged the accused gave the

jewellery to his mother.

On her complaint, an FIR was registered against him under sections 69 (sexual intercourse by employing deceitful means), 77 (voyeurism), 308(2) (extortion) and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Information Technology Act at Sector-10 police station on January 2.

Police said the accused, a photographer by profession, was arrested on January 4 and is still in judicial custody.

Inspector Kuldeep Singh, station house officer of Sector-10 police station, said that on January 11, police moved the court seeking to attach the car as the proceeds of crime.

"The order approving the attachment of the car, a Volkswagen Virtus, was passed on January 21," he said.

Police then fixed a base price for the vehicle based on a quote from the transport department and handed the ₹11.30 lakh over to the victim on Friday after auctioning the car through eAuction India, a central government portal, on February 25.

## Delhi temperatures to rise further, says IMD

Jasjeev Gandhiok

jasjeev.gandhiok@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Temperatures in the Capital are set to climb once again after a brief spell of relief brought by cool northwesterly winds, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting a steady rise through the week.

The maximum is expected to touch 34°C on Wednesday, rise to 35°C Thursday, and reach around 36°C by Sunday.

Meteorologists attribute the warming to a shift in wind direction and the absence of western disturbances over north India.

At Safdarjung, Delhi's base observatory, the maximum temperature on Tuesday was recorded at 31.5°C — four degrees above normal and slightly higher than Monday's

30.9°C. IMD officials said the region has not witnessed any significant western disturbance since late January. "February only experienced weak weather activity, which failed to bring meaningful rainfall," an official said.

Mahesh Palawat, vice-president at Skytem Weather, said the changing wind pattern is now driving the temperature rise. "Colder northwesterlies have given way to dry westerlies from Rajasthan and Pakistan. These winds contribute to a gradual increase in daytime temperatures," he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality deteriorated, with the AQI rising to 216 on Tuesday, placing it in the "poor" category.

Dry winds carrying coarse dust have contributed to a spike in PM10 levels.

{ YOUTUBER STABBING }

## Second suspect also killed in exchange of fire with Gzb cops

Peeyush Khandelwal

peeyush.khandelwal@htlive.com

**GHAZIABAD:** The second suspect in last week's stabbing of YouTuber Saleem Wastik in Ghaziabad was killed in an exchange of fire with police late Tuesday, officials said. The development comes two days after his younger brother, identified earlier as the first accused in the case, was also killed in a similar encounter.

Wastik was allegedly attacked around on February 27 at his office-cum-residence in Ali Garden, Loni. Two men, who were unidentified at the time, allegedly stabbed him and fled on a motorcycle. He remains critical at a Delhi hospital, according to his son, Usman Ahmad.

Police said the first suspect, Zeeshan Ali, was tracked down on Sunday. He was allegedly riding a motorcycle with another man, later identified as Gulfam. Officers said the duo opened fire when a police team attempted to stop them. Zeeshan was killed in retaliatory firing, while Gulfam escaped. Both were residents of Khoda in Ghaziabad.

On Tuesday, police said Gulfam was located beneath the Hindon elevated road near Khoda following specific inputs. According to Piyush Kumar Singh, additional deputy commissioner of police (crime), he was again riding a KTM motorcycle with an unidentified associate when officers intercepted him. "The team asked them to

stop, but they opened fire. Police retaliated. The suspect sustained bullet injuries and was taken to hospital," Singh said. The second rider fled. Gulfam died during treatment at a private hospital in Indrapuram, said Nimish Patil, DCP (Trans-Hindon zone).

Investigators said evidence, including CCTV footage showing the two men fleeing on a motorcycle with bloodstained clothes, had established their involvement in Wastik's attack.

An FIR filed by Wastik's son named two unidentified bikers and three others, including a political functionary and a builder. Police said no evidence has yet emerged linking those named individuals to the attack, and further probe is ongoing.



दिल्ली में भरने हैं  
**विकास**  
के **रंग**

Happy होली

Happy होली

**आप सभी को होली की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं**

यह पर्व आपके जीवन में सुख, समृद्धि और आनंद के नए रंग भरे



Froth and dirty water at the Wazirabad barrage on the Yamuna River on Tuesday. SANJEEV VERMA/HT PHOTO

## Froth at Wazirabad raises alarm about Yamuna pollution

Paras Singh and Jasjev Gandhiok  
htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Toxic froth and an ammoniacal stench at the Wazirabad barrage, a crucial drinking water source for Delhi, have triggered fresh concerns about pollution levels in the Yamuna, with activists warning that contamination may now be creeping into upstream stretches of the river, once considered relatively cleaner.

Typically, visuals of toxic foam on the river surface are observed downstream at Kalindi Kunj near the Okhla barrage, after 22 major drains add to the pollution load. The water quality at Wazirabad is generally considered relatively better, and the city draws raw water from the Wazirabad pondage area to feed two of its water treatment plants. Activists have expressed concern after recent photographs showed frothing.

Yamuna activist Pankaj Kumar posted visuals on X, tagging government functionaries, and wrote: "Normally, the stretch downstream of Wazirabad does not have this kind of visible toxic froth. This same water is being treated and supplied to the people of Delhi. What is the reason for this froth in the upstream sections?"

The Yamuna enters Delhi near Palla and flows 48km through the national capital before exiting at Asgarpur. This includes the 22km stretch from Wazirabad to Okhla, which is the

most polluted segment, as 22 major drains empty into it.

Yamuna water quality reports from November and December indicate undesirable levels of faecal coliform, phosphate and ammoniacal nitrogen, along with deteriorating biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and chemical oxygen demand (COD) levels, which are key indicators of organic pollution and overall river health.

Bhim Singh Rawat, a Yamuna activist and member of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), said, "The city draws its drinking water from there. There should be no phosphate or pollutant load at this point, but the situation is deteriorating."

During a spot check on Tuesday, HT saw froth in the water flowing through the barrage. An ammoniacal stench was also noticeable near Sur Ghat, adjacent to the barrage.

Kumar suggested the source could lie in Haryana, where industrial activity continues.

In November, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), in an affidavit before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), said instructions had been issued to Haryana to cover drain number six. The affidavit came after the NGT took suo motu cognisance of a media report in July 2024 highlighting thousands of fish deaths in the Yamuna.

No comment was received by the Delhi government by the time of going to print.

# Survey reveals massive silt build-up in Najafgarh drain

Paras Singh  
paras@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Buried beneath layers of sludge and neglect, the Najafgarh drain, once the Sahibi river, has emerged as a critical fault line in Delhi's flood control and pollution management system.

A government-commissioned bathymetric survey has found that over 150 sub-drains from Delhi and Gurugram empty into the 57km channel, while nearly 9.1 million cubic metres of silt have accumulated on its bed.

Officials say the findings have laid bare the scale of deterioration and are now guiding an ambitious clean-up under "Mission Sahibi".

A senior official from the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) department said they have begun desilting heavily clogged stretches on priority. "The objective is to ensure unobstructed flow of rainwater and reduce the risk of waterlogging. Additionally, drain banks are being upgraded and

### Government's desilting push

#### WHAT THE STUDY FOUND

- 57-km-long Najafgarh drain receives discharge from over 150+ sub-drains from Delhi and Gurugram (Sahibi River)
- 9,100,000 m<sup>3</sup> of silt accumulated
- It contributes to 70% of the wastewater going into the Yamuna in the Delhi stretch

#### AIM OF THE PROJECT

- To restore the original water-carrying capacity
- To reduce waterlogging in Dwarka, Matiala, Palam, Uttam Nagar, Mundka, Janakpuri, Vikaspuri
- To reduce pollution load entering the Yamuna

#### WHAT IS BEING DONE (UNDER MISSION SAHIBI)

- Clogged portions of drain to be desilted on priority
- Work underway between Ambrahi Bridge and Kakrola
- 32 advanced machines deployed, along with amphibious excavators

strengthened, enhancing structural stability. This campaign runs for over 13 hours daily and involves the use of amphibious excavators," the official said. The project is aimed at reducing waterlogging in catchment areas such as Dwarka, Matiala, Palam, Uttam Nagar, Mundka, Janakpuri and Vikaspuri. The immediate focus is the stretch between Ambrahi Bridge and Kakrola Village Bridge. Officials

said embankments are also being strengthened.

The Najafgarh drain contributes nearly 70% of the wastewater entering the Yamuna in Delhi, making its restoration central to the larger river rejuvenation effort. "Overall, the Najafgarh drain is 57.14km long and has a complex system of 150 big and small drains originating in Gurugram and Delhi. We are using 32 advanced

machines for the desilting work, which will restore the original water-carrying capacity of the drain," the official said.

Earlier interventions focused primarily on 32 major feeder drains and 74 smaller sub-drains, while the main channel continued to choke.

On July 11, Union home minister Amit Shah chaired a review meeting on the Yamuna and directed that drone surveys be conducted of the Najafgarh and Shahdara drains. He stressed the need to double Delhi's sewage treatment capacity to 1,500 MGD (million gallons per day) by 2028 as part of a multipronged strategy to rejuvenate the Yamuna.

Bhim Singh Rawat, a Yamuna activist and member of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), said, "Delhi's overall sewage generation estimates are also faulty as we do not factor in the groundwater being used by people in the sewage output. This could be a massive chunk."

### GOVT TO DEVELOP E-CATALOGUE FOR ARTISANS TO SHOW THEIR WORK

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government will develop an e-catalogue for artisans to ensure visibility for their products in national and international markets, officials said on Tuesday.

Under the CM Skill Development Scheme, the Delhi Khadi Village Industries Board (DKVIB) will provide training to artisans by partnering with multiple organisations empanelled with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

"Each artisan will have an e-catalogue created with their profile, photographs, and product details. These will be uploaded on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform, giving their products visibility," added an official, adding that artisans registered on the e-Shram portal shall avail the scheme's benefits. **HTC**

## Special cell to investigate death threats to defence entrepreneur

Jignasa Sinha  
htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Police commissioner last week directed the special cell to probe the death threats made to an entrepreneur in central Delhi over the past few months.

Three bike-borne assailants also fired a bullet outside his house in Amritsar, Punjab, in November last year. A CCTV footage of the incident shows the men sticking a note on the residence's gate and then making a video before opening fire.

According to police, Sahil Luthra, managing director of Vijayan Trishul Defence Solutions Pvt Ltd (VTDS) in central Delhi's Barakhamba Road, filed a complaint in May last year alleging that unknown persons tried to hack into the company's

official email IDs and social media handles. However, Luthra filed a fresh complaint on Friday alleging he has been receiving death threats from multiple international numbers. After these threats, the special cell is now investigating the case.

Luthra told police he received calls on Thursday from numbers in Portugal and Germany. "The callers claimed responsibility for the firing in Amritsar and also warned him of further action. The callers said they belong to an international network and demanded ₹10 crore," said a senior police officer.

The callers allegedly claimed to be from the Babar Khalsa International and Goldy Brar alliance. "We are probing who is making the calls. We are also looking into the recent threats issued to Bollywood actors and

directors," the officer said.

Luthra, in the complaint, stated, "The nature of these threats has now escalated, they are directly stating that I will be shot and killed. I am deeply disturbed...living under constant anxiety and fear for my family members' lives...They (callers) have also stated that they are aware I have security protection..." In an email response dated Friday, accessed by HT, the Delhi Police commissioner's office confirmed that they have taken cognisance of the complaint. "Your email has been acknowledged by the Commissioner of Police, Delhi and the same has been referred to the Special Commissioner of Police/Special Cell..."

Police said Amritsar Police are also looking into the allegations and the firing incident.

Advertisement No. 34/2026  
**Government of India**  
**Public Enterprises Selection Board**  
 invites applications for the post of  
**Director (Projects)**  
 in  
**GAIL (India) Limited**  
 (A Govt. of India Undertaking - A Maharatna Company)  
 Last date of submission of applications by applicants is by **1500 hours on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2026**  
 Last date of forwarding of applications by the Nodal officers to PESB is by **1700 hours on 02<sup>nd</sup> April, 2026**  
 For details, login to website <https://pesb.gov.in>

**SCHOOL OF OPEN LEARNING, CAMPUS OF OPEN LEARNING UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

Congratulations Meritorious Achievers (2025) of University of Delhi for their remarkable accomplishment

 MAMTA GUPTA MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL & JAI NARAIN VAISH PRIZE FOR M.COM SRISHTI School of Open Learning Master of Commerce Examination, CGPA - 9.061	 DR. V.K.R.V. RAO MEDAL JIYA School of Open Learning Master of Business Administration, CGPA - 9.250
 PROF. T.K. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN GOLD MEDAL & LALA RAM MOHAN PRIZE ANUSHKA PACHAURI School of Open Learning M.A. Examination in History, CGPA - 7.875	 KARAN SINGH MEDAL & PROF. C.J. CHACKO PRIZE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AMISHA DABAS School of Open Learning M.A. Examination in Political Science, CGPA - 7.738
 GOPALKRISHNA MEDAL IN LIBRARY SCIENCE RINKU BISHT School of Open Learning Bachelor of Library & Information Science CGPA - 8.545	 PROF. S. DASGUPTA MEMORIAL GOLDMEDAL SAMEENA KHATOON School of Open Learning Master of Library and Information Science CGPA - 8.333

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Professor Yogesh Singh for his invaluable support & guidance

Government of Haryana

# Heartiest Greetings on the festival of colours

# Holi

March 4, 2026

"Happy Holi to all of you. May this auspicious festival, filled with joy and happiness, infuse everyone's life with new enthusiasm and energy, and deepen the spirit of unity among our countrymen."

**-Narendra Modi**

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana  
[www.prharyana.gov.in](http://www.prharyana.gov.in) Follow us on @dipharyana

[ ASSAULT OF GANGSTER AT TIHAR ]

# Murder charges framed against 6 former officials

Arnajjit Sur

arnajjit.sur@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court has framed murder charges against six former Tihar Jail officials, including Narendra Meena, the then deputy superintendent of jail, on the alleged brutal assault and murder of gangster Ankit Gujjar inside the jail in August 2021 for "failing to yield to their extortion demands".

The city court even questioned the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for dropping the "murder" charge under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in its chargesheet, which only found the officials guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder under section 304(II) of the IPC.

The order passed by special judge Sanjay Jindal on Monday said it was clear that Gujjar was subjected to "extortion by the accused jail officials" and after he refused to pay more money, they "developed a grudge against him", following which he was brutally assaulted.

The accused include Ram Avtar Meena and Deepak Dabas, then assistant superintendents; Dinesh Chhikara, the head warden; and Harool Meena and Vinod Meena, the wardens. Following the incident, they were suspended for alleged misconduct by the then director general of prisons, Sandeep Goel.

"The deceased Ankit Gujjar

**THE ORDER SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT ANKIT GUJJAR HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO 'EXTORTION BY THE ACCUSED JAIL OFFICIALS'**

was beaten by the multiple accused persons with multiple weapons in the form of polycarbonate lathis by giving multiple blows," the court said.

The judge emphasised that there were reasons to believe that such lathis were carried by the accused for using criminal force on Gujjar and two other inmates. While there was nothing on record to suggest that such lathis were readily available at the spot and were used spontaneously, the court stated, "... the beatings were given on various parts on the body of the deceased including several vital parts as it is so clear from the details of injuries given in the postmortem report... it is also evident from the record that medical care was denied to the deceased after the incident".

The court also noted that the initial FIR lodged at the Hari Nagar police station was registered under IPC section 302 (murder), but the CBI's chargesheet was filed under IPC section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), among

other offences.

"There is no explanation in the chargesheet as to on what basis section 304 has been invoked, and section 302 has been dropped. Simply because the IO has not invoked section 302 IPC in the chargesheet, it cannot be said that the ingredients of the said offence cannot be considered by this court," the court said.

Observing that it was strange why CBI had not included the offence of extortion, the court went on to separately frame section 384 (extortion) of the IPC against Narendra.

On the intervening night of August 3 and 4, 2021, Gujjar, a gangster facing trial for multiple cases of murder and under the Gangster Act, was allegedly assaulted along with his two co-inmates, Gurpreet and Gurjeet. Gujjar succumbed to his injuries on August 4.

The court said that Narendra had allegedly demanded ₹2 lakh from Gujjar.

CBI claimed that Narendra and the other accused "denied proper medical treatment" to the victims and even "concealed information" regarding Gujjar's health from his family.

The Delhi High Court had on August 8, 2021, transferred the probe from Delhi Police to CBI after Gujjar's kin filed a writ petition demanding an impartial probe by an independent agency.

## HC: FAILURE TO GET ASSESSEE'S INFO CAN'T BE GROUNDS TO CONTINUE LOC

Shruti Kakkar

shruti.kakkar@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court has held that the failure of tax authorities to obtain information about an assessee's overseas assets cannot be a ground to continue a Look Out Circular (LOC) indefinitely, particularly when income tax proceedings have concluded, and no demand remains outstanding.

A bench of justices Dinesh Mehta and Vinod Kumar, in a judgment delivered on February 27, observed that the prolonged continuation of such an LOC would infringe an individual's fundamental rights.

The court rendered the decision while hearing a petition filed by two businessmen, Gaurav Dalmia and Mridu Hari Dalmia, who challenged the Income Tax (I-T) Department's decision to issue and continue a LOC against them without justification. They contended that a search was conducted at their residence and business premises in March 2021, following which an LOC was issued in April - May 2021 without any prior intimation.

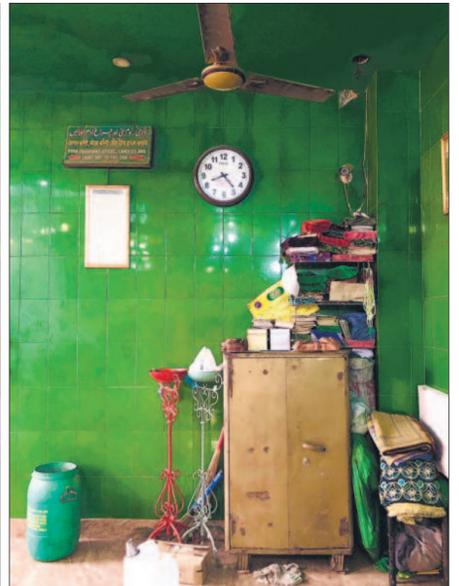
"A search was conducted on 17.03.2021... the proceedings have been pending for about five years. If, for one reason or another, the respondents are not in a position to gather or elicit information from the foreign countries, the petitioners' rights cannot be kept suspended for an indefinite period," the court observed.

## Delhiwale

EXPERIENCE YOUR CITY LIKE NEVER BEFORE



Mayank Austen Soofi



## Rang de Dilli

Seeing the city through the colours of Holi

**{ PUBLIC INTEREST }** Some of us see the world in rang. To understand how colour can turn the ordinary luminous, google the New York street-life photos clicked by the great Saul

Leiter, where snow, shadows, umbrellas and anonymous citizens dissolve into impressionist poetry of colours. And today is Holi, when Delhi becomes colour. Let's invoke the festival by revisiting three places in the city defined by red, blue and green respectively.

**Red:** Walk along the long footpath on Netaji Subhash Marg that runs parallel to the red sandstone ramparts of the Red Fort. The path is separated from the fort walls by a green lawn, which remains out of limits. Anyways, to many Indians, especially those who live outside Delhi, the fort's strongest image is this grand sweep of red wall, made of the red sandstone that has been baked by centuries of sun and season. Every Independence Day, the Prime Minister stands on these red ramparts to address the nation. Indeed, to everyone who looks at the Red Fort from this footpath, the red edifice seems whole and impregnable, almost eternal in time. Step inside the red monument, and the illusion at once shatters. Much of the original palace complex was destroyed by the British after our

failed uprising in 1857. That said, as you walk, notice the narrow vertical slits in the red walls. Once, guards must have aimed their weapons through them. Today, the same slits release sudden flurries of grey pigeons, bunches of them spewing out of the red stones in swift, startling bursts.

**Blue:** In a city where a clear blue sky mostly exists like a rumour, it is dreamlike seeing Shivji Bhagwan gleaming in bright blue. Shiv Hanuman Mandir stands in Daryaganj's Pandit Rallaram Sharma Chowk. Atop the temple sits a blue-bodied Shiva, in yogic composure, gazing down at the restless world: honking traffic, bargaining shoppers, food vendors, rickshaw pullers, labourers. The temple has the Jaipur Namkeen Bhandar kachori-subzi stall attached to it like a limpet. Inside the sacred precincts, a peepal tree rises through an opening in the ceiling, its trunk piercing branching out above, leaning reverently over the blue deity.

**Green:** In Old Delhi's Meena Bazaar stands a tiny grave chamber, the resting place of Hazrat Hare Bhare Shah. Almost nothing is known about the Sufi mystic. But his shrine speaks silently in one single colour. This colour matches with the mystic's name: hare, or hara, which is green. So, inside the shrine, you'll see a green donation box, a green chaddar over the grave, green tiles decking up the grave chamber's walls, green lamps, and sometimes even visiting pilgrims happen to be in dresses that are coloured green.



**READ:** For more stories by Mayank Austen Soofi, scan the QR code

## SEVEN, INCLUDING 2 KIDS, INJURED IN CYLINDER BLAST IN SWAROOP NAGAR

**NEW DELHI:** Seven people, including two children, were injured in an LPG cylinder blast in an apartment in outer Delhi's Swaroop Nagar area on Tuesday, police said.

The blast led to a fire in the building housing the single-room apartment where five people, including a woman and two children, were staying.

"A police team reached the spot and found the third floor of the building engulfed in fire. The impact of the blast was such that debris fell on the second floor, injuring two women. The fire was doused, and the people in the room were rescued. All the injured were shifted to Burari Hospital," said DCP (outernorth) Hareshwar Swami.

All seven injured suffered minor injuries and are stable. A probe is underway to ascertain the cause of the cylinder blast, the DCP added.

## CM inaugurates flower festival



Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta at the inauguration of the two-day NDMC flower festival at Central Park, Connaught Place, in New Delhi on Tuesday. According to officials, more than 15,500 potted plants of 48 varieties have been displayed across 18 themed sections with seasonal blooms, such as dahlias, petunias, pansies, and marigolds, among key attractions. ARVIND YADAV/HT

## HT Homage

**LOVE YOU & MISS YOU**

**Mrs. Soma Kamboj**  
(19-04-1956 - 04-03-2016)

Your life was a blessing, your affection and unconditional love was unmatched, your benevolence immense. The void will forever remain and so will your substance. The greatest loss was not losing you, it was losing the part of us that went with you.

**FONDLY MISSED AND REMEMBERED BY**  
Kamboj Family  
BIOMEDICARE / SHREY NUTRACEUTICALS : 9810400342

## HT Unforgettable

**In Loving Memory of H.K. Kawatra**  
5th Death Anniversary  
07.03.1926 - 04.03.2021

It's been 5 yrs that you left us. All those beautiful memories we shall always cherish. Fondly remembered by: Kapil Kawatra & Anands.

## Have fun with facts on Sundays

Catch the latest column of **TWTW** THE WEEK THAT WAS A quiz on the week's development.

**ई निविदा विज्ञापित**

कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता :- मध्य प्रदेश राज्य आपदा प्रबंधन प्राधिकरण, ई- 5 पर्यावरण परिसर अरेरा कॉलोनी भोपाल

**ई निविदा क्रमांक :- 220/D-8A/MPSDMA/2026 (Tender ID:- 2026\_DMA\_485574\_1)**

आपदा मित्र योजनांतर्गत मध्यप्रदेश के 45 जिलों में वालेंटिंस के लिए Emergency Responder Kits including printed training module, certificate and identity card क्रम करने के लिए ई-निविदा (https://mptenders.gov.in) पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि 26.02.2026 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे से दिनांक 12.03.2026 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे तक निर्धारित है। प्राप निविदाओं को दिनांक 13.03.2026 अपराह्न 05:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। इच्छुक निविदाकर्ता अन्य शर्तों की जानकारी (कुल - 15 पृष्ठ) वेबसाइट : www.mpsdma.mp.gov.in तथा www.home.mp.gov.in पर प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

G-26833/25 **उप संचालक**

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir**  
Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Kashmir  
Emporium Garden, Srinagar  
Tele fax: - 0194-2482032, 474234, email: kash\_flori@jk.gov.in

**GIST of Short e-Tender Notice No. 03 of 2026**  
Dated: 28.02.2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of J&K UT, bids are invited in (double cover system) from photographers having photography Trade License duly Registered with Tourism Department or any other relevant Department for **Outsourcing of Photography at Tulip Garden Srinagar during Tulip Show-2026** of Floriculture Department Kashmir as per details given below:-

S. No.	Period of contract	Reserve Bid (Rs. in Lakhs)	Value of security deposit @ 10%	Cost of tender document (Non-Refundable)
1.	Tulip Show-2026 (Bloom Period)	Rs. 15,00,000.00	Rs. 1,50,000.00	Rs. 1000.00 in the shape of Demand Draft

The bidding document(s) consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, terms and conditions and other details can be seen/downloaded through the Departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Period of downloading of bidding document	28.02.2026 from 04.00 PM to 10.03.2026 up to 02.00 PM
2.	Bid submission Start Date	28.02.2026 from 04.30 PM
3.	Bid submission End date	10.03.2026 up to 02.00 PM
4.	Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online)	12.03.2026 at 02.00 PM

Sd/-  
Accounts Officer  
(Member Secretary DLPC)  
Floriculture Department,  
Kashmir

DI/PK-11524-25

**In Loving Memory**

**Inder Raj Malhotra**  
May 27, 1932 - March 2, 2026

Your life was a blessing, Your memory is a treasure, You are loved beyond words and Missed beyond measure

Please join us as we send our love and prayers to Our beloved Father for his onward journey.

On Thursday, 5th March'26, from 3.00 to 4.00 PM

Address:  
Sharda Mandir, Sharda Niketan,  
Pitara Pura, New Delhi - 110034

Deeply missed and remembered by:  
Sanjeev and Geeta Malhotra (Son and Daughter-in-law)  
Seema and Sanjeev Nayyar (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
Rajiv and Achla Malhotra (Son and Daughter-in-law)  
Grand Children: Akshay & Sriya Malhotra,  
Porangana & Angad Chawla,  
Saarthak & Deepika Malhotra, Pratinnay Nayyar  
Great Granddaughter: - Avira Chawla

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice  
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement System  
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001 for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	82250083C	Inj Pembrolizumab 100mg	65 Nos	27.03.2026

Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details.  
2. No manual offer will be entertained.  
Tender Notice No. Tab/Inj, Medicines Dated: 03.03.2026 723/2026

Serving Customers With A Smile

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE  
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)  
The Divisional Engineer-IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work:

1	Name of work with its location	Pre and post tamping survey for design mode tamping in the section of DEN/VI/DLI. (NIT 131-2025-26-W-IV) (NIT 131-2025-26-W-IV)
2	Approx. Cost of work	(1) Rs. 79,76,435.07
3	Earnest money	(1) Rs. 1,59,500.00
4	Date and Time of submission of tender and opening of tender	Bidding Start date for work no. Up to 15:00 hrs. On 10.03.2026 opening of e-Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 24.03.2026
5	Website particulars, published e-tender, notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and web site where the tender form can be downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

No. 128-W/260/Tender Notice/NIT131/25-26-W-IV Date: 02.03.2026 721/26

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
T. Notice No.: 230-Elect/TRD/PRY/JE-Tender Notice/2026/620 Date: 02.03.2026

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer/TRD/ N.C. Rly/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite the following E-Tender, the details of the tenders are as under:-

T. No.: 230-TRD- WC-1009-2026

Description of work : 25kV OHE modification and Electrification work due to Provision of longer loop line at Chunar (CAR) station of Prayagraj Division.

Advertised value: Rs. 3,79,23,201.16 Bid Security: Rs. 3,39,600.00

Completion Period: 12 Months Bidding system: Single Packet

Tender Closing date & Time: 23.03.2026 & 14:00 Hrs

Tender opening date & Time: 23.03.2026 & 15:00 Hrs

Note: (1) The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders shall be available on Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) 21 days prior to the date of opening of the tender. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate. (3) In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. 488/26 (D)

North central railways [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in) @CPRONCR

**I.C.A.R.-Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute**  
Library Avenue, Pusa, New Delhi-110012

**Advertisement Notice (Interview)**

Online Interview via Video Conferencing shall be held on **18.03.2026** for the post **01 Research Associate & 01 Senior Research Fellow** and the last date for candidates for applying shall be **16.03.2026** on contractual basis for the projects running in the Institute and will be co-terminus with the project. The incumbent shall not have any claim for regular appointment under ICAR-IASRI. The details of eligibility conditions and other relevant information are available on the Institute's website [https://iasri.icar.gov.in/Emp\\_vacancy.aspx](https://iasri.icar.gov.in/Emp_vacancy.aspx).

Sd/-  
Assistant Administrative Officer

File no. 1(1)/2026-GAS

## SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that this girl (depicted in the Photo) **Named:** Nazmeen, **D/O:** Mubin, **R/O:** Kh. No. 14/11/1, Outub Vihar Ph-1, Goyla Dairy, Delhi, **Age:** 21 years, **Height:** 5 feet 2 inch, **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Fair, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Orange Colour Anarkali Suit, missing since **20.02.2026** at **07:00 am** from her home under area of **P.S.**

**Chhawla, New Delhi.** In this regard a **DD No. 44A, dated 20.02.2026** has been lodged at **P.S. Chhawla, New Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this missing girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

**SHO**  
**P.S. Chhawla, New Delhi**  
Ph: 011-24368639 Ph. 011-25316100, 8750871631  
Fax: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/2757/DW/2026

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male (depicted in the photo) **Named Unknown** S/o: Unknown R/O: Unknown, Age about 30-35 years. He was found Dead at Gate No. 2 in front of parking area on footpath Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 15A Dt. 28.02.2026, U/s: 194 Bhatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023**, has been lodged at **P.S. Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi.** The Dead body has been preserved for identification in the Mortuary of Subzi Mandi for 72 Hours. His physical description is as under.

**Sex:** Male, **Age:** About 30-35 years, **Height:** 5'7" **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Black Shirt and Brown Pant. Any person is having information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone number:-

**Ph. No. 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**Website: http://cbi.nic.in**  
**E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in** **S.H.O**  
**Fax No. 011-24368639** **PS: Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi**  
**DP/2764/Rly/2026** **Ph. No.: 011-23961522, 8750871302**

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of male **Named:** Unknown S/o: Unknown, R/o : Unknown, **Age:** About 55years, **Height:** 5'4", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Mehroon Color Shirt and half Sweater and Blue Color Pant who was Found at Foot Path Gate No.6, Gulmohar Enclave, Hauz Khas, Delhi. In this regard a **case DD No. 24A dt. 27.02.2026**, has been registered at **PS: Hauz Khas, Delhi.** Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO  
P. S: Hauz Khas, Delhi  
DP/2786/SD/2026 Tel. 8750870821,9968597323

# 42 candidates in Cong first list for Assam elections

Utpal Parashar  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**GUWAHATI** : The Congress on Tuesday released a list of 42 candidates for the upcoming assembly polls in Assam, becoming the first party in the state to announce contenders for the election. State Congress president and deputy leader of the party in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, will be contesting the election from Jorhat, the parliamentary constituency he currently represents.

Assam is expected to go to polls in April for its 126-member assembly. The Congress, which is in talks with several Opposition parties to form an alliance against the ruling BJP-led government, has earlier said it plans to contest 100 seats.

Gogoi has been targeted by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who has alleged that the son of former chief minister Tarun Gogoi has links with the Pakistan establishment.

A special investigation team (SIT) report has also levelled similar allegations against Gogoi's British wife, Elizabeth, who was earlier posted in Pakistan and later in India as a representative of a climate action



Gaurav Gogoi

group. Gogoi has admitted visiting Pakistan once in 2013, before he was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 2014, along with his wife who had official work there. He has, however, denied all allegations and rejected insinuations that he acted against national interest.

Other prominent candidates in the list include former state unit president Ripun Bora from Barchalla and Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia from Nazira, his family stronghold.

Among women candidates, sitting MLA Nandita Das has been fielded from the Hajo-Sualkuchi (SC) seat, while state women's wing president Mira Borthakur Goswami will contest from Dispur. At present, the ruling BJP's strength in the 126-member assembly is 64, while its allies AGP has nine MLAs, UPPL has seven and BPF has three members.

## S-400 PURCHASE

aircraft did not take to the skies on May 10 when India blasted enemy airbases, air defence radars and command control systems. Early on the morning of May 10, 2025 an Indian BrahMos strike destroyed the Northern Command and Control network of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) at Chaklala Airbase in Rawalpindi. Pakistan sued for peace soon after.

The defence ministry is now waiting for the IAF and the Indian Army's proposal to buy 13 Russian Pantsir S-1 self-propelled missile systems, which counter medium-range surface-to-air missiles, short-range rockets, and kamikaze drones, the people cited above added. While 10 Pantsir systems will be purchased by the IAF to protect the 10 S-400 systems that Indian armed forces will ultimately have, three will be purchased by the army to tackle cruise missiles, attack helicopters, loitering ammunition, armed drones, rockets and short-range missiles on the borders.

Even though the modalities of S-400 acquisitions are to be negotiated, HT learns that all the five systems will be purchased outright, with maintenance, overhaul and repair given to Indian private sector players. Another route will be followed in the case of Pantsir — there will be an initial outright purchase under the fast-track route, but some systems will be made in India by private firms as the requirement is urgent. The Pantsir system is currently used by the UAE forces — and its effi-

cacy has been demonstrated in its ability to shoot Iranian kamikaze drones out of the sky.

India's size, the presence of adversaries on its western and northern borders, and its 11,000-km coastline, mean the country needs advanced air defence systems to not only counter enemy fighters and bombers way beyond visual range but also to neutralize ballistic missiles. The ongoing Iran-US war has highlighted the need for anti-ballistic missile systems globally due to proliferation of Chinese long-range missiles in the Indian sub-continent and West Asia. This apart, Turkey has been supplying low-cost kamikaze drones and loitering ammunition to Pakistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Maldives and Bangladesh with the strategy of saturation bombing the enemy.

## IRAN WAR

"Following an enemy attack, a projectile struck an Airbus aircraft... this plane is completely damaged," the agency said. "The shockwave (from the strike) caused damage to the airport terminal," it added, noting a second aircraft had also been hit.

The spiralling nature of the war raised questions about when and how it would end. Trump seemed to leave open the possibility for more extensive US military involvement, telling the New York Post on Monday that he was not ruling out the possibility of "boots on the ground".

The administration has given various objectives. While the initial US-Israeli strikes killed Iranian

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Trump urged Iranians to overthrow their government, senior administration officials have since said regime change was not the goal.

Trump said Monday the military campaign's four objectives were to destroy Iran's missile capabilities, wipe out its navy, prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon and ensure that it cannot continue to support allied armed groups.

Trump said Tuesday that "someone from within" the Iranian regime might be the best choice to take power once the US-Israel campaign is finished.

Speaking from the Oval Office Tuesday, Trump said Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of Iran's toppled Shah, is not someone that his administration has considered in depth to take over.

As far as possible leaders inside Iran, "the people we had in mind are dead," Trump said. "I guess the worst case would be to do this, and then somebody takes over who's as bad as the previous person, right? That could happen. We don't want that to happen."

Iran's leaders are scrambling to replace Khamenei, who ruled the country for 37 years. It is only the second time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that a new supreme leader is being chosen. Potential candidates range from hardliners committed to confrontation with the West to reformists who seek diplomatic engagement.

The supreme leader has the final say on all major decisions, including war, peace and the country's disputed nuclear programme.

Across Iran's capital, aircraft were heard overhead and explosions rang out throughout the night into Tuesday.

The Israeli military said it conducted a wave of airstrikes on sites that produce and store ballistic missiles, in Tehran and Isfahan. Strikes caused two explosions at a broadcasting facility in Tehran, Iranian state TV said, adding that no one was injured.

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog said Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment site had sustained "some recent damage," though there was "no radiological consequence expected." The US hit Natanz during the 12-day war in June, when Israeli and American strikes greatly weakened Iran's nuclear programme.

Without offering evidence, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Iran was rebuilding "new sites, new places" underground for making atomic bombs. Iran has said it has not enriched uranium since June, though it has maintained its right to and says its nuclear programme is peaceful.

New rounds of US and Israeli airstrikes rattled Tehran and several other Iranian cities.

"Since midnight, my wife and I have been hearing the sound of explosions," said Ali Amoli, an engineer living in north Tehran. "Sometimes from the west side of the city and sometimes from other directions." Streets and gas stations appeared quieter than in recent days. Local media published images of a damaged commercial plane at Bushehr airport that broke apart following an airstrike on

Tuesday. A north Tehran resident who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation described growing fears in the capital as it comes under heavy bombardment. The resident said most stores in the normally bustling area of Tajrish were closed and that ATMs were mostly "out of cash." Bakeries and supermarkets were open, though.

An attack from two drones on the US Embassy in Riyadh caused a "limited fire," according to Saudi Arabia's defence ministry, and the embassy urged Americans to avoid the compound. It followed an attack on the US Embassy in Kuwait. US Embassies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Lebanon said they were closed to the public.

The US State Department ordered the evacuation of non-emergency personnel and family in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. In addition, the US has urged citizens to leave more than a dozen Middle Eastern countries, though with much of the airspace closed many remained stranded.

The State Department said Tuesday it is preparing military and charter flights for Americans who want to leave the Middle East. Several other countries arranged evacuation flights for their citizens.

The US-Israeli strikes have killed at least 787 people, according to the Iranian Red Crescent Society. The Iranian-supported militant group Hezbollah has also attacked Israel, whose retaliatory strikes killed 52 people in Lebanon.

The US military has confirmed six deaths of American service

members. In addition, three people were killed in the United Arab Emirates, and one each in Kuwait and Bahrain.

Iran has hit many countries deemed safe havens in the Mideast in retaliation for the US-Israeli strikes. Recent targets included two Amazon data centres in the United Arab Emirates and one in Bahrain. The centres in the UAE were hit, while a drone struck near the one in Bahrain, causing damage, the company said.

Iran has also struck energy facilities in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and attacked several ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all oil traded passes, sending global oil and natural gas prices soaring.

"The Strait of Hormuz is closed," declared Iranian Brig Gen Ebrahim Jabbari, an adviser to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, vowing that any ships that passed through it would be set on fire.

Oil and natural gas prices climbed, and stock prices fell sharply. The conflict has spread to Lebanon, where Hezbollah fired missiles at Israel on Monday, prompting Israel to retaliate.

On Tuesday, the Israeli military hit Beirut with more airstrikes and said it had moved additional troops into southern Lebanon and taken new positions on several strategic points close to the border.

The UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon later said its peacekeepers saw Israeli troops going into and then out of Lebanon. But Israel's army said its troops are still operating in Lebanon.

## { 13,000-CRORE SCAM CASE }

# Belgium court weighs Choksi's extradition

Neeraj Chauhan  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI** : A Belgian court on Tuesday heard the arguments for the extradition of Mehul Choksi, people familiar with the matter said, adding that evidence against the fugitive diamondaire was discussed by the Indian side and Choksi's defence team.

An officer said that the outcome of Tuesday's extradition hearing, which took place from 2 pm to 4 pm (Belgium time), "will be marked to the ministry of security and interior which will have the final say on whether to approve the court's decision and send Choksi back to India."

The interior ministry, this person said, may take at least a month to decide on the extradition. The decision of the court was not known till late evening as the legal team present in the court in Antwerp were yet to brief officials in Delhi.

"We are hoping for a positive decision as there was robust evidence against Choksi and all the courts in Belgium had earlier rejected all his appeals," said an officer who asked not to be named.

The legal team of Choksi has urged the Antwerp court to not extradite Choksi.

In December last year, Belgium's Supreme Court had



Mehul Choksi

rejected Choksi's appeal against his arrest in Antwerp on New Delhi's request, and had ruled that his claims of being a subject of a political trial in India, or that he was abducted in 2021 in Antigua and Barbuda at the behest of India and runs risk of torture, are not "factual".

Choksi, 65, is held in a prison in Antwerp following his arrest on April 11 last year at India's request. Indian investigators have accused Choksi of six bank frauds, between 2018 and 2022, involving amounts totalling nearly ₹13,000 crore.

Choksi's extradition has been sought under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 120 B (criminal conspiracy), 201 (destruction of evidence), 409 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 477A (falsification of accounts), and sections 7 and 13 (bribery) of the Prevention of Corruption Act; which are crimes in Belgium as well under the dual criminality clause of the extradition treaty.



Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh interacts with the tour group members at 33 Assam Rifles during the flagging-off of the National Integration Tour in Imphal on Tuesday. ANI

## { MULTI-COMMUNITY INITIATIVE }

# Manipur CM inaugurates national integration tour

HTC and Agencies  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**IMPHAL** : Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Tuesday flagged off a national integration tour from Keithel Manbi in Imphal West district, and interacted with Kuki students present on the occasion.

At the launch of the tour, during which 24 youths from different communities of the state would be visiting Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Kolkata and Mumbai to spread the message of harmony, Singh asked the Kuki students whether they had food.

During the interactive session with youths participating in the tour, the chief minister asked the Kuki youths in their dialect: 'Bu na neh tah am?' (Have you eaten food?). Came the reply from the six Kuki youths: 'Ka Ne Tai' (We

have taken food), an official statement said.

In a symbolic gesture of unity and inclusiveness, a group was formed comprising one member from each community, and a flag was handed over to them to represent collective harmony and shared identity, it said.

In a post on X, the chief minister said, "Pleasure to flag off the National Integration Tour (NIT) group comprising 24 young participants from different communities today at the 33 Assam Rifles, Keithel Manbi Garrison, in the gracious presence of the IG Assam Rifles (South) and other distinguished dignitaries." The National Integration Tour is an initiative aimed at fostering unity through shared experiences, he said, adding youth will have the opportunity to witness the diverse cultural landscapes,

## Brahmaputra's Deepstambh

Strengthening River Tourism  
Enabling Sustainable Growth

These lighthouses are unique in terms of tourism. Because of their grand structures, lighthouses have always been centres of attraction for people.

~ Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

# Laying of Foundation Stone for RIVER LIGHTHOUSES

at

**Bogibeel • Pandu • Silghat • Biswanath Ghat**  
On the Brahmaputra | National Waterway-2 | Assam

### PROJECT BLOCKS

#### BOGIBEEL (Dibrugarh)

- Located on South Bank
- Supports IWAI cargo terminal movement
- Strengthens Upper Assam navigation corridor

#### PANDU | KAMRUP (Metro)

- Located on South Bank
- Greenfield navigation aid
- Supports cruise and ferry operations

#### BISWANATH GHAT (Biswanath)

- Only North Bank lighthouse
- Greenfield navigation aid
- Supports cruise and ferry operations

Total Approved Outlay

## ₹84 Cr.

Construction Timeline  
24 Months per site

### How Deepstambh Benefits People

- Enables safer 24x7 vessel movement on the Brahmaputra
- Supports growing cargo and passenger traffic on NW-2
- Promotes river cruise tourism and local entrepreneurship
- Generates employment during construction and operations
- Strengthens Assam's inland connectivity

Foundation Stone to be Laid by

## SARBANANDA SONOWAL

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways

In august presence of

**RANJEET KUMAR DASS**  
Minister of Tourism  
Govt of Assam

**CHARAN BORO**  
Minister of Transport  
Govt of Assam

**JAYANTA MALLABARUAH**  
Minister of Public Health Engineering  
Govt of Assam

**BIJULI KALITA MEDHI**  
MP  
Guwahati

**SIDDHARTHA BHATTACHARYA**  
MLA  
East Guwahati

Enabling Waterways. Enriching Assam. Empowering the Northeast.

Organised by:  
Directorate General of Lighthouses & Lightships (DGLL) | Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) | Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)

[dglil.nic.in](http://dglil.nic.in) | [dglilindia](http://dglilindia) | [dglilindiaofficial](http://dglilindiaofficial) | [Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships - DGLL](http://Directorate%20General%20of%20Lighthouses%20and%20Lightships%20-%20DGLL) | [dglilnoida4557](http://dglilnoida4557) | [iwai.nic.in](http://iwai.nic.in) | [IWAI\\_ShipMin](http://IWAI_ShipMin) | [iwai\\_shipping\\_india](http://iwai_shipping_india) | [IWAI.MoPSW](http://IWAI.MoPSW) | [IWAI\\_ShipMin](http://IWAI_ShipMin) | [IWAI](http://IWAI)

Scan. Connect. Watch

CBC 37211/13/0007/2526

## SPOTLIGHT | WAR IN WEST ASIA

## India calls for restraint, flags safety of citizens

Rezaul H Laskar

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** India emphasised the security of nearly 10 million Indians living in West Asia and the need to safeguard crucial trade and energy supply chains while calling for an early end to the Iran-US war on Tuesday, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the ramifications of the widening conflict with the leaders of Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.

This was the second time that New Delhi called for de-escalation and restraint by all stakeholders in the region since Israel and the US launched military strikes on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and senior military leaders and triggering a wave of deadly retaliatory attacks against Israel and several other countries, including those hosting US military bases.

Oil prices have surged nearly 13%, hitting their highest level since January 2025, since Iranian forces effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz. Natural gas prices rose as QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest exporters, halted production following attacks on its facilities. These developments have increased concerns in India, the world's second largest purchaser of crude, with around 85% of its needs met through imports.

"In this background, India strongly reiterates its call for dialogue and diplomacy. We raise our voice clearly in favour of an early end to the conflict. Already, many lives have been regrettably lost and we express our grief in that regard," the external affairs ministry said in a detailed statement issued three days after its initial response. The ministry noted that nearly 10 million Indian citizens live and work in the Gulf region



PM Narendra Modi discussed the ramifications of the widening conflict with the leaders of Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. NARENDRA MODI/PTI

and said: "Their safety and well-being is of utmost priority. We cannot be impervious to any development that negatively affects them." With India's trade and energy supply chains passing through the region, it warned that any "major disruption has serious consequences for the Indian economy".

As the conflict widened with further US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iranian attacks on several West Asian countries, Modi spoke on phone with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani as part of a continuing outreach to the leadership of the region.

During these conversations PM Modi reiterated India's message of dialogue and diplomacy and expressed our voice clearly in favour of an early end to the conflict. Already, many lives have been regrettably lost and we express our grief in that regard," the external affairs ministry said in a detailed statement issued three days after its initial response. The ministry noted that nearly 10 million Indian citizens live and work in the Gulf region

and said: "Their safety and well-being is of utmost priority. We cannot be impervious to any development that negatively affects them." With India's trade and energy supply chains passing through the region, it warned that any "major disruption has serious consequences for the Indian economy".

firmly in solidarity with Qatar and strongly condemn any violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We emphasised the urgent need to restore peace and stability in the region through dialogue and diplomacy," the PM said on social media after his phone call with Sheikh Tamim.

Modi conveyed similar messages to Kuwait's Sheikh Sabah and Oman's Sultan Haitham and said sustained diplomatic engagement is key to the "earliest restoration of regional peace". He also thanked all three leaders for their support for the Indian community at a challenging time.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar too spoke with foreign minister Constantinos Kombos of Cyprus, which currently holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), and EU foreign and security policy chief Kaja Kallas to discuss the conflict in Iran and the situation in West Asia.

Modi had earlier spoken to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Jordan's King Abdullah II, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-

yahu and United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and expressed deep concern at the evolving situation. He also condemned attacks on these countries.

The ministry highlighted the prominent role played by Indian citizens in the global workforce, particularly at sea, while voicing concern over attacks on merchant shipping.

"Already, some Indian nationals have lost their lives or are missing as a result of such attacks in the last few days," it said. At least three Indian seafarers were killed in Iranian strikes on two merchant vessels in waters off Oman since the weekend, and about 20 more Indians were injured in strikes across West Asia. Indians account for roughly 12% of the global seafaring workforce, with more than 320,000 active sailors, and attacks on merchant vessels during recent regional conflicts have frequently resulted in Indian casualties.

The Indian side said the conflict had not only intensified but spread to other nations in recent days, and "destruction and deaths have mounted", while normal life and economic activities came to a halt. "As a proximate neighbour with critical stakes in the security and stability of the region, these developments evoke great anxiety," the statement said, adding that the situation had deteriorated significantly and continuously in the holy month of Ramzan.

Like the statement issued on February 28, the one on Tuesday was silent on the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader or civilian casualties caused by the strikes on Iran. As the US and Israel continued their strikes, Iranian state-run media outlets reported that the death toll had risen to 787.

## CBSE DEFERS CLASS 10, 12 BOARD EXAMS IN WEST ASIAN COUNTRIES

Sanjay Murya

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Tuesday further postponed class 10 and 12 board examinations scheduled for Thursday and Friday in several West Asian countries following the US-Israel joint strikes on Iran and the latter's retaliatory strikes on neighbouring Gulf states.

Extending its earlier decision of postponing the examinations amid the "current situation" in West Asia, the board in a fresh circular on Tuesday informed principals of over 150 CBSE-affiliated schools in Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that after a "critical review" of the situation in parts of the region, it has decided to postpone examinations scheduled for both class 10 and 12.

"The new dates shall be announced later," the circular said. "All students are advised to stay in touch with their schools for updates and follow official announcements carefully."

This comes two days after CBSE had postponed the March 2 examinations in the same West Asian countries, saying it would review the situation before taking a call on examinations of subsequent papers. The ongoing war in West Asia has affected thousands of Indian students studying in CBSE-affiliated schools in the region, particularly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia.

"We are yet to estimate the number of affected students. Our current focus is on reviewing the situation in affected countries and issuing timely updates and circulars containing all the relevant information," a CBSE official said, declining to be named.

## 'No shortage of energy, have sufficient reserves'

Rajeev Jayaswal

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The West Asia conflict does not pose any immediate threat to India's energy security, according to people aware of the matter who cited what they said were crude oil and fuel stocks of 25 days each, as the government sought to allay concerns from observers following repeated escalation in hostilities in the Gulf—a region from where close to half of India's crude oil imports come.

Petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India has sufficient energy reserves to deal with the ongoing situation and that consumers of petrol, diesel and cooking gas will not immediately face any shortage.

India imports just over five million barrels of crude per day, of which roughly 2.5 million bpd transit the Strait of Hormuz, the 33-kilometre passage between Iran and Oman through which shipping has ground to a near-halt after Iranian retaliatory strikes on the Gulf. Qatar, which is one of the main suppliers of LNG, paused production on Monday.

The ministry said it has established a 24x7 control room to monitor supply and stock positions across the country. "At present, the government is reasonably comfortable in terms of stocks," it said in a statement, adding it was "cautiously optimistic that phased measures can be taken, if required, to further mitigate the situation."

People with direct knowledge of the matter said India has crude oil stocks for 25 days and fuel stocks



Hardeep Singh Puri

for 25 days, over and above the stockpile in strategic petroleum reserves—and has diversified its energy sourcing from over 40 countries, reducing dependence on Hormuz supplies to 40%.

Over 60% of India's energy needs are now met from producers in North America, Latin America, West Africa and the Asian part of Russia, they said, requesting anonymity, adding that cargoes not routed through the Strait would remain available to mitigate any temporary disruption.

On natural gas, India also holds cooking gas stocks sufficient to last over three weeks. New Delhi is in touch with producers including Canada and Norway for additional LNG supplies, as Iran's attack has disrupted the production capacity of Qatar, one of India's major suppliers. "Besides Qatar, India is having long-term, large supply contracts for LNG from the US, Australia and Russia," one of the people said. The government noted that only 50% of India's natural gas requirements are met through imports, and that domestic gas output is sufficient to meet cooking gas requirements in an emergency.

The person cited above said the

conflict is not being seen as one that will stretch on. "The war is unlikely to continue for long and we do not foresee any threat to country's energy security immediately," he said. People estimated that situation may ease in the next couple of weeks.

The conflict's impact on supply is no longer merely logistical after developments this week. Iraq has cut output at the giant Rumaila oil field, as storage tightens due to export disruptions at Hormuz, Bloomberg reported. Saudi Aramco halted operations at its Ras Tanura refinery after a drone strike on Monday, while debris from an intercepted drone caused a major fire at the UAE oil-trading hub of Fujairah, Bloomberg reported. This facility is unique since it opens into the Gulf of Oman, accessible to vessels from the Indian Ocean without having to navigate the Strait of Hormuz.

Kpler, which tracks global energy flows, puts India's combined commercial stocks—including strategic reserves and floating cargo already at sea—at around 100 million barrels, or 40-45 days of import cover.

Besides inventories of crude oil and products held with refiners, pipelines and depots, the state-run Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd operates three underground storage facilities with a combined capacity of 5.33 million tonnes. Two planned expansions—at Chandikhol in Odisha (4 million tonnes) and an additional facility at Padur in Karnataka (2.5 million tonnes), announced in 2021—remain incomplete.

{ FROM TEHRAN } SAYS INDIAN EMBASSY

## 'Most Indian students moved to safer locations'

Rezaul H Laskar

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Hundreds of Indian students have been moved from the Iranian capital of Tehran to safer locations, including the city of Qom, people familiar with the matter said on Tuesday amid the widening of the Iran-US conflict and continuing American and Israeli bombardment of the country.

The Indian embassy in Tehran said in a statement that "most Indian students" in Tehran had been relocated to safer places outside the city because of the "heightened risk perception" in the Iranian capital. The embassy made arrangements for their transportation, food and accommodation.

The people cited above said there were some 300 Indian students in Tehran, mostly from Jammu & Kashmir, and most of them had been shifted to Qom and other cities. There are some 3,000 Indian students in Iran, including about 2,000 from J&K. About 1,000 Indian students had left Iran when widespread protests against the government erupted last December, they said.



The Indian embassy said "only a small number" of Indian students remained in Tehran. ANI/REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

The Indian embassy said "only a small number" of Indian students, who declined the mission's offer to be relocated, remained in Tehran.

The embassy reiterated its earlier advisory urging Indians in Iran to stay where they are, remain indoors, avoid unnecessary movements, exercise due caution, and avoid all areas witnessing protests or demonstrations.

The embassy also called on Indian nationals to remain in regular contact with the mission.

There have been no reports so far of Indian casualties in the Israeli and US attacks on Iran,

which have killed more than 780 people since the weekend.

There are some 9,000 Indians in Tehran, including small traders, theological students and a small number of professionals. The number has declined in recent years because of regional tensions and the downturn in trade relations. Shia pilgrims from India also travel to Iran every year, but their numbers too have fallen in recent years.

The Iran-US conflict has widened with Tehran launching attacks against several West Asian countries, including those housing American military bases, after Iranian Supreme

Leader Ali Khamenei was killed in a strike on his office compound in the capital on Saturday.

## Many students still stranded in parts of Iran

Meanwhile, several Indian students particularly staying in places like Urmia and Khuzestan Province feel stranded amid constantly deteriorating security situation with no option to return, and limited communication from family and friends.

For 23-year-old Labeed Qadri, a native of Srinagar currently pursuing an MBBS at Urmia University, every minute is fraught with fear as missiles are being launched. "The situation has not been good at all for the last few days. Here in Urmia, attacks are taking place repeatedly. About one hour ago, an attack happened just 300 metres from my dormitory," said Qadri.

Another student said poor internet connectivity as stranded them digitally as well from family and friends. "We don't have proper internet access, only view have access to Virtual Private Network (VPN) and that too works quite slowly and it takes so long time to deliver just one

message," said Asif Gulzar, who belongs to Jammu and Kashmir's Pattan Baramulla and is a third-year MBBS student in Ahvaz, Jundishapur University of Medical Science.

Other students told HT that the Indian Embassy has advised them to stay indoors since evacuation is currently impossible, and they are managing amid the uncertainty with support from locals and the university.

"The Indian Embassy has told us to stay indoors, as the borders and airspace are closed. We cannot evacuate through other countries right now," Qadri said.

While they navigate the situation in war-hit Iran, their families in India are struggling with helplessness over the entire situation.

"My daughter was here in Kashmir and returned just 15 days ago when the situation seemed to have stabilised, but now our communication is limited to a few text messages. "She tries to sound calm, yet we all know how terrible things really are," said the father of a third-year medical student in Iran, adding that over the past four days he has regretted every minute that he allowed her to go back.

Zia Haq

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The war in West Asia is roiling the fertiliser business in India, with imports being hit by an increase in shipping costs and the closure of a key route, and domestic manufacturing being crimped by shortage of gas, analysts and fertiliser industry executives said.

Deals for fertiliser imports are typically finalised during December-February for the summer season, but with shipping costs doubling and no vessel being able to clear the Strait of Hormuz, a globally critical chokepoint for most shipments, the situation is dire, analysts said. The domestic crop-nutrient industry is staring at another key risk—a shortage of imported gas supplies, which fire fertiliser plants. Qatar on Monday paused production of liquefied natural gas, as Iran continued to retaliate against Gulf countries following Israeli and US strikes against it. India imports around 50-60% of its natural gas.

In 2024, the domestic fertiliser industry accounted for about 30.6% of India's total natural gas consumption, making it the single largest user. India is the top importer of UAE's LNG and the second-largest buyer of Qatari gas, according to commerce ministry data. "State-run gas companies have already started to ration gas supplies to industrial buyers from Tuesday," a fertiliser industry executive said, requesting ano-



India is a net importer of fertilisers, buying 20-21 million tonnes annually. HT

**India is a net importer of fertilisers, buying 20-21 million tonnes annually.** HT

nymity. The benchmark freight rate for large crude tankers on Monday rose to an all-time high of \$423,736 per day, according to the London Stock Exchange Group.

This has had a ripple effect on all containerised cargo. "The increases, including for shipping and insurance, has raised fertilisers import costs by nearly 25-30%," said Supal Sharma, a director at fertiliser trading firm Epic Abundance Ltd.

Shipping through the strait, wedged between Iran and Oman, has ground to a halt. As well as for global trade, the waterway is a vital passage for Indian shipments, carrying half of India's crude oil and gas, nearly 60% of fertilisers and most other commodities.

"Indian importers last month concluded imports of 1.3 million tonnes of urea for the summer season. The focus now is on how to get existing contracts delivered safely, instead of focussed on forward deliveries, for which a wait-and-watch stance is being adopted," said Anand Tewotia, an

agent of Sai Fertilisers Ltd.

India is a net importer of fertilisers, buying 20-21 million tonnes annually. Imports of finished products and raw materials are sourced almost entirely from West Asian and Gulf countries as well as north African producers, such as Egypt and Morocco.

India had a sufficient buffer stock of fertilisers for the winter season, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament on October 15. Urea stocks on October 31 were 6.8 million tonnes, higher than the winter demand of 5 million tonnes. Qatar, the UAE and Oman together supply nearly 76% of India's sulphur imports, while Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran are the three top exporters of urea, the most used crop nutrient in India. All of them ship through the Strait of Hormuz.

Morocco, which supplies India with phosphates, typically uses the Seuz-Red Sea conduit, where vessel movement has become difficult due to potential attacks from Yemeni Houthis, an Iranian ally. Nearly 40% of supplies used the Suez waterway.

Global container shipping lines, such as Hapag-Lloyd, CMA CGM and MSC, have reversed decisions to return to the Seuz Canal-Red Sea route due to escalating risks.

The Red Sea risks imperil imports from Russia, another big supplier of phosphate-based nutrients to India.

## 37 Indian ships stuck in Persian Gulf, Oman

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** As many as 37 Indian-flagged ships with over 1,000 seafarers are stuck in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the adjoining sea areas as the key shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz is closed due to the ongoing military actions involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

While some ships are carrying crude oil and LNG to Indian ports, others are on the way to bring petroleum products from the Gulf nations.

A total of 37 Indian-flagged ships with 1,109 sailors are stuck in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the adjoining sea areas due to the closure of the key shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz, an official privy to the development told PTI.

The Directorate General of Shipping is in regular touch with the shipping companies and is closely monitoring the situation.

At least three Indian seafarers on board foreign-flagged vessels were killed, and one was injured

in West Asia due to the current conflict.

A dedicated quick response team has been set up by the shipping ministry to enable timely coordination among authorities, and ensure immediate response to emerging situations and facilitate prompt assistance to Indian seafarers and their families.

Shipping companies and Recruitment and Placement Service Licensees (RPSLs) have been advised to exercise caution in crew deployment and maintain regular communication with seafarers and their families. Helpline numbers have also been activated and shared with the families of the seafarers through RPSLs.

The directorate general of shipping also issued an advisory for maritime operators to assess voyage-specific risks following the disruptions of the shipping route and closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran.

It is closely monitoring the evolving maritime security situation in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the adjoining sea areas.

{ EVACUATION EFFORTS }

## India to operate 58 flights to Middle East

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian government announced Tuesday that airlines will operate 58 flights to the Middle East on March 4 and are deploying additional capacity to evacuate tens of thousands of passengers stranded by widespread regional conflict.

"Special arrangements are being made to facilitate the movement of stranded passengers, with airlines deploying additional capacity where required and coordinating closely with foreign aviation authorities and Indian missions abroad to ensure safe and orderly passenger movement," the civil aviation ministry stated.

The government's intervention comes as the scope of the war expands during its fourth day, triggering massive global and domestic aviation disruptions. More than 12,300 flights have been cancelled worldwide since Iran's first retaliatory strike, paralysing major transit hubs such as Dubai and Doha, according to aviation tracker Flightradar24.

In India, the escalating crisis

## Relief for stranded fliers

**33** relief and repatriation flights operated on March 3 - 24 by Indian carriers and 9 by foreign airlines.

These included flights by Air India, IndiGo, Air India Express, SpiceJet, Akasa Air, Emirates and Etihad. Flights connected India with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman.

**53** Flights from India to Europe, UK, North America.

These included flights by Air India, which operated its scheduled flights to Europe and North America via alternative routing through Oman, southern Saudi Arabia and Egypt. US-bound flights made technical stops at Rome. Other carriers include British Airways, Lufthansa, Turkish.

**58** flights scheduled for Wednesday.

involving the United States, Israel and Iran has resulted in 1,221 cancellations by Indian carriers and 388 by foreign carriers to date. The civil aviation ministry figures, tracking disruptions since February 28, show Indian carriers cancelled 104 international flights on Tuesday alone. Over the past three days, 1,117 international flights were grounded. Globally, the cancellations continue to reverberate as out-of-position aircraft and crew members force carriers to run special evacuation flights.

Domestically, Indian carriers

operated 24 flights on Tuesday. The scheduled 58 flights for March 4 include 30 by IndiGo and 23 by Air India and Air India Express. Additionally, Emirates and Etihad operated nine flights from the Gulf region in the preceding 24 hours.

Notwithstanding the planned operations, Air India stated on the social media platform X: "In view of the continuing situation in the Middle East, Air India has extended the suspension of most flights to and from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Qatar until 23:59 hrs IST on 4 March

2026."

The ministry noted that Indian carriers have undertaken calibrated schedule adjustments, progressively resuming long-haul operations through alternative routings to avoid restricted airspace. The government is continuously monitoring airfares to prevent undue price surges. "All airlines have been advised to maintain transparent communication with passengers and ensure adherence to regulatory requirements concerning refunds, rescheduling and passenger assistance," the ministry stated. Indicating a slight improvement in the region, the UAE economy ministry said the country is establishing safe air corridors allowing up to 48 flights an hour.

More than 80 additional flights are scheduled, providing a capacity exceeding 27,000 passengers, the ministry stated.

There are close to 9 million Indians in the Gulf countries, and another 10,000 in Iran apart from hundreds, and potentially thousands, of Indian citizens caught at West Asia airports that function as crucial stopovers for longhaul flights.

## WAR DIARY

## LEFT PARTIES ACCUSE GOVT OF STAYING SILENT

**NEW DELHI:** Left parties on Tuesday held a protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar against the US-Israel attack on Iran and the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, accusing the Centre of maintaining silence on the issue.

Scores of protesters gathered here, holding placards and raising slogans against the attack. They urged people to "stand against the attack" and express solidarity with the Iranian people.

"The silence of the government of India over (US President Donald) Trump's imperialist hooliganism, the attack on Iran... Why is Narendra Modi quiet?" CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat said. "He held Netanyahu's bloodied hands and said it is the voice of the people of India... How is this the voice of the people? You went to Israel to help a genocide," she said. "Did you go there to give a stamp of approval?" she asked, further questioning if the Israeli prime minister wants to "completely decimate Gaza".

PTI

## INDIA INCLINED TO BUY MORE RUSSIAN CRUDE: DEPUTY PM

**MOSCOW:** Russia on Tuesday claimed that India has signalled "renewed interest" in importing larger volumes of Russian crude oil amid disruptions in energy supplies following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz after US and Israeli strikes on Iran.

The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most critical oil shipping chokepoint. It is facing disruptions after Iranian actions in response to US and Israeli strikes.

"Yes, we are getting signals of renewed interest from India," Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak told the state-run TV Rossiya 1 on the sidelines of an event in Moscow.

Nearly a fifth of the world's oil supply and a significant share of liquefied natural gas exports pass through the narrow waterway linking the Persian Gulf with global markets. Novak did not rule out the possibility that the European Union could also ease its decision to curtail imports of Russian hydrocarbons in view of the unfolding energy crisis.

PTI

# Def ministry signs ₹5,083-cr pacts for ALH, Shtil missiles

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The defence ministry on Tuesday signed two contracts worth ₹5,083 crore for six advanced light helicopters (ALH) for the coast guard, and Shtil surface-to-air vertical launch missiles for the navy to boost their operational readiness.

The ALH contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is worth ₹2,901 crore and covers operational equipment, an engineering support package, and performance-based logistics support, while the one for missiles was signed with Russia's Rosobronexport and is valued at ₹2,182 crore, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The induction of the new ALHs will significantly enhance the coast guard's capability to carry out duties, including the protection of artificial islands, offshore installations, fishermen, and the marine environment, it added.

"These twin-engine helicopters incorporate state-of-the-art features superior to the currently operated airborne platforms and are capable of undertaking a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore-based airfields as well as from ships at sea." The project will involve the supply of equipment from more than

**ALH CONTRACT IS WORTH ₹2,901 CR, WHILE THE ACQUISITION OF SHTIL MISSILES IS GOING TO BE AT A COST OF ₹2,182 CR**

200 MSMEs and is expected to generate approximately 6.5 million man-hours of employment. HAL recently fixed a nagging flaw afflicting a key component of the transmission system of the navy and coast guard's ALHs and they are likely to be cleared to fly again in April, ending the longest grounding of an aircraft in the Indian military.

The workhorse fleet was grounded in January 2025 following a fatal coast guard crash.

The acquisition of Shtil missiles is intended to substantially enhance the air defence capabilities of frontline warships against a wide spectrum of aerial threats, the defence ministry said.

"The system will reinforce the layered air defence architecture onboard the platforms of the Indian Navy by providing rapid reaction, all-weather engagement capability and improved survivability in contested maritime environments..." it added.

## Navy to induct frigate Taragiri on March 14

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Navy will commission its latest indigenous stealth frigate, Taragiri, on March 14, with the induction further strengthening the navy's ability to secure the country's maritime interests in the vast Indian Ocean region where China is seeking to expand its footprint, officials aware of the matter said on Tuesday.

The commissioning ceremony will take place in Visakhapatnam, they added. The navy took delivery of Taragiri, the fourth Nilgiri-class stealth frigate under Project 17A, from Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) last November. The seven-ship P-17A is worth around ₹45,000 crore.

The remaining three frigates are expected to be inducted into the navy by year-end. Nilgiri, Udaygiri and Himgiri were commissioned into service last year, and Mahendragiri, Dunagiri and Vindhayagiri will follow Taragiri into the navy this year.

The navy is working towards becoming fully self-reliant by 2047

when India celebrates 100 years of independence. Around 60 warships are under construction at various Indian yards.

The P-17A platforms showcase the country's warship building prowess, have an indigenous content of 75% and come with modern weapons, sensors and systems to dominate the sea battlespace. P-17A is a follow-on of the Shivalik-class (P-17) stealth frigates and represents a significant upgrade over the previous warships.

Nilgiri and Udaygiri were built at MDL, which has also constructed Taragiri. Mahendragiri is being constructed at MDL too. Himgiri was built at Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited, where Dunagiri and Vindhayagiri are in different stages of construction.

The frigates are/will be equipped with modern weapons, sensors, and electronic warfare suites, including the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, MF-STAR surveillance radar, the Barak-8 surface-to-air missile system and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

## INFANT DIED AFTER BRICK KILN OWNER BARRED HOSPITAL VISIT, SAYS FATHER

**Senjuti Sengupta**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**JAIPUR:** A two-month-old infant of two Uttar Pradesh-based labourers died at a brick kiln in Rajasthan's Udaipur district after the owner allegedly forbade them from taking the child to any hospital for treatment, alleged the victim's father.

Inspector of Ghasa police station, Surendra Singh, said, "No case has yet been lodged in this matter. We are carrying out an investigation. Necessary action will be taken accordingly."

The father of the deceased, Raj Jatav (27), said, "A few days after reaching the kiln in Ghasa, my daughter fell sick. I repeatedly requested permission to take her to a hospital, but the owners and other managing staff refused every time," he said.

The kiln authority allowed Raj to take her to a local PHC only on February 25 when Anaya's condition seriously deteriorated, he said. "However, the PHC's doctor diagnosed that Anaya was suffering from pneumonia and asked us to immediately shift her to a better hospital. We asked the management for money to get her admitted to a private hospital in the city, but they refused again, forcing us to return to the kiln and resume work. Meanwhile, Anaya passed away on Saturday," said Raj.

## Girl dies by suicide at Manipur relief camp

**Thomas Ngangom**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**IMPHAL:** A 17-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide at a relief camp in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday, police said, adding that an unnatural death case has been registered.

Due to the ongoing tensions in the ethnic strife-torn state, the girl and her family were displaced from Leimaram Waroiching, Bishnupur, and had been taking shelter at the Leimaram High School relief camp since March 3, 2023, police said.

In December last year, the Manipur administration had resettled 257 displaced people from 64 households in a relief camp in Bishnupur.

"A few days back, the girl had asked her family to return to their home as she didn't want to stay at the relief camp. On Tuesday, she was found dead at the northern side of the camp's veranda," a police officer said.

Police registered a case under

Section 194 (unnatural death) of BNSS and the body was sent to the Regional Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) Hospital, Imphal, for post-mortem examination, the officer added.

"The girl was studying in Class 12 and was appearing for the ongoing higher secondary examination conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (CoSHEM). The examination began on February 17 and will end on March 20," the officer said.

Of the 31,530 students appearing for the exam, 412 are internally displaced students from both hills and valley.

The state government had implemented a phased rehabilitation programme and was targeting to resettle 40,000 displaced people by March 31.

**HELP IS JUST A CALL AWAY**  
SNEHI: 011-65978181  
SUMAITRI: 011-46018404  
9315767849

## BOY, 15, BEATEN TO DEATH OVER GOAT THEFT SUSPICION

**Debabrata Mohanty**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**BHUBANESWAR:** A 15-year-old Class 9 student was allegedly beaten to death by villagers on suspicion of goat theft in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, while his friend remains critical, police said on Tuesday.

Police arrested 12 people in connection with the incident after a video of the assault went viral on social media, officials said. According to police, Sambit Bindani (15), from Bhutkadi village under Badampahar police limits, and his friend were tied up and brutally beaten by residents of Indukudi village under Tiring police station on Monday. The villagers accused them of stealing goats.

Sambit was staying at his maternal uncle's house and studying in a government high school in Basingi village under Behalda police station. He succumbed to his injuries during treatment, said police, adding that further probe is on.

## 3 DEAD, 2 INJURED AS CAR CRASHES INTO CRANE IN MP

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Three people were killed and two others injured after the car they were travelling in collided with a stationary crane in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district in the early hours on Tuesday, police said.

"Five friends were returning from dinner at 3 am when their car collided with a crane near the Basant petrol pump on Itarsi road. Three of them died on the spot while two were critically injured," Betul sub-divisional police officer Sunil Lata said.

The bodies were stranded in the car and recovered by breaking the windshield, the officer said. "An investigation is underway to determine whether the crane was parked in the wrong place or if the accident was caused by over-speeding."

Hrithik Solanki, a taxi driver in Bhopal, was behind the wheels of the car at the time of the accident, police said.

## UP: Rape accused guns down 17-year-old victim

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**LUCKNOW:** A 22-year-old man, wanted by the police for raping a 17-year-old, shot dead the victim early on Tuesday in Uttar Pradesh's Basti district, officers said, adding they are now on the lookout for the absconding accused.

According to the police, around 1 am on Tuesday, the accused entered the victim's house through its back door and fired two shots at the girl — one in the head and another in the neck — while she was sleeping next to her brother. The accused also assaulted and threatened the brother. When the girl's mother, who was sleeping outside, confronted the attacker, he also fired at her but missed.

Basti additional superintendent of police (ASP) Shyamakant said the family identified the accused, and teams have been formed to apprehend him.

"The man, a resident of the same village as the victim, had

**THE 22-YR-OLD ACCUSED, WHO WAS BOOKED IN DECEMBER FOR DRUGGING AND RAPING THE VICTIM IN BASTI, IS ON THE RUN**

drugged and raped the girl in December last year and took photos and made videos of the act, which he threatened to make public. He had even posted some of them on social media on December 16. The family then lodged a complaint, and the police registered an FIR on December 17 against the accused at Kalwari police station under POCSSO Act and IT Act. The accused had been on the run since then," said Shyamakant.

The girl's father works in Punjab while she lived with her mother and brother, and was preparing for the UP Board exams, police added.

## 6 from Raj returning home for Holi die in UP e-way accident

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**LUCKNOW:** Six people from Rajasthan died and seven others, including four children, were injured when a private double-decker bus crashed into the moving van they were travelling in on the Yamuna Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district early on Tuesday, police said.

Police booked the bus driver for causing death and injuries due to reckless driving and are working to trace him.

Hathras additional superintendent of police RP Kushwaha said the accident occurred



**The bus driver was booked for causing death and injuries due to reckless driving.**

around 4 am near milestone 141, close to Garhi Hariya village under Sadabad police station limits. The bus was travelling from Delhi to Gorakhpur, while the van was heading from Delhi

to Rajakhera in Dholpur district of Rajasthan. All 13 occupants of the van were residents of Dholpur and were returning home to celebrate Holi.

Police said the impact hurled the van nearly 10 feet off the road, crushing its rear portion completely. The bus's front was also damaged, though its passengers escaped unhurt.

Preliminary probe suggests overspeeding and negligence may have led to the accident. Superintendent of police Chiranjeev Nath Sinha said the bus driver was attempting to overtake the van at the time of the crash.

## Boy killed in leopard attack in Dudhwa buffer zone in UP

**LAKHIMPUR KHERI:** A 14-year-old boy was killed in a leopard attack in the buffer zone of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh, officials said.

Dudhwa reserve deputy director Kirti Chaudhary said the boy, Raj Kamal (14), was walking near the railway track on Monday night when a leopard attacked and killed him.

The body, bearing several bite injuries, was recovered on Tuesday near a railway track in north Nighasan range.

## Indian envoy meets Bangladesh minister

**MIRZA FAKHRUL DHAKA:** Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma on Tuesday paid a courtesy call on Bangladesh's local government, rural development and cooperatives minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, holding discussions over various issues. The discussions included enhanced cooperation to strengthen local governance structures and rural development, which are shared priorities of both countries.



**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Textiles**  
**Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)**

**SUBJECT: INVITING FRESH APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN INDIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THE YEAR 2025-26.**

The office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) invites applications from the eligible Master Craftsperson who have completed the age of 60 years on or before 31st December, 2025 for the year 2025-26 for Financial Support in Indigent Circumstances @ Rs.8,000/- (Rs. Eight thousand Only) per month as per the guidelines as detailed below: -

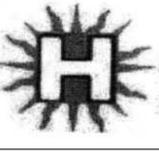
- Master craftsperson who are the recipient of Shilp Guru Award, National Award, Merit Certificate or State Award in Handicrafts will be eligible for being considered for financial assistance.
- The annual income of the artisans should not exceed Rs. 1,00,000/-. An income certificate for the financial year 2025-26 issued by the Office of District Magistrate/ Revenue Department/Tahsildar/ Collector/ Circle officer of the concerned state is necessary as proof of income.
- The applicant should not be a recipient of similar financial assistance from any other source.
- The artisans should not be less than 60 years of age as of 31st December 2025. Age may be relaxed in the case of artisans with disabilities at the discretion of the Committee.
- Details of the applicant, filled in The Online application, should be verified as per the guidelines of the scheme and his/her photo on the Online Application Form and Award Certificate should be verified by the concerned officer of Handicrafts Service Centre/Regional Offices, before recommending and forwarding the Online Application to headquarter office of O/o the DC(Handicrafts).
- The award certificate and photograph should be verified by the concerned Assistant Director/Regional Office of the office of DC(Handicrafts). The regional language certificate should be submitted duly translated either English/Hindi.

The interested eligible Master craftsperson may submit their Online Application through the website (<https://indian.handicrafts.gov.in>) of this office, latest by **02.04.2026**, and the concerned HSC may forward the same with their comments /recommendation to Regional Offices latest by **10.04.2026**. The same may be recommended or forwarded to the Headquarter office in New Delhi, latest by **20.04.2026**. The details of the scheme/guidelines, as well as other requisite details, may be obtained from Handicrafts Service Centre(s)/Regional Offices and can also be downloaded from the office website: <http://handicrafts.nic.in>

The addresses and telephone numbers of the Regional Offices of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) are detailed below for seeking any information

- Regional Director (Central Region), Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Kendriya Bhawan, AIGanj, 7th Floor Sector H, Lucknow-226024 (UP) Phone no. 0522-2324033, 2326703
- Regional Director (Western Region) Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), A-3 Wing, 3rd Floor, C.G.O Complex, Belapur, CBD, Navi Mumbai-400614 Phone no. 022-22663854, 022-22661959
- Regional Director (Northern Region) Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), West Block no. 8, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066. Phone no. 011-26175784, 26109760
- Regional Director (Southern Region), Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Shastri Bhawan, 26, Haddows Road, Chennai-600 006 (Tamil Nadu) Phone no. 044-28276321, 044-28237908
- Regional Director (Eastern Region) Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), CGO Complex, 3rd Floor, A Wing, DF Block, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700064 (West Bengal) Phone no. 033-23596744.
- Regional Director (North Eastern Region), Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Central Block, 2nd Floor, Housefed Office Complex, Beltola Bashista Road, Guwahati-781006 (Assam) Phone no. 0361-2230367/0361-2266123

**Issued By:**



**Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)**  
**Ministry of Textiles,**  
**Government of India**  
**Plot No. 8, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj**  
**New Delhi-110070**  
**Website <http://handicrafts.nic.in>**  
**Phone no. 011-26109602, 26103562**





**निदेशालय, सूचना, लोक सम्पर्क एवं भाषा, हरियाणा**



**आजादी की पहली लड़ाई का शहीद स्मारक, अम्बाला कैंट**

**'निविदा सम्बन्धी सूचना'**

1857 की क्रान्ति की याद में वीर जवानों की बहादुरी एवं शहादत को नमन करने के लिए अम्बाला कैंट में (अम्बाला कैंट-दिल्ली) नेशनल हाईवे-44 पर 'आजादी की पहली लड़ाई का शहीद स्मारक' का निर्माण किया जा रहा है। यह एशिया का सबसे बड़ा स्मारक बनाया जा रहा है, जिसमें प्रतिदिन हजारों लोगों का आवागमन होगा।

स्मारक के सम्पूर्ण परिसर जैसे सम्पूर्ण प्रशासनिक ब्लॉक, संग्रहालय भवन, ऑडिटोरियम भवन, ओपन एयर थिएटर, आवासीय ब्लॉक, पार्किंग ब्लॉक, मेमोरियल टॉवर, स्मारक का बाहरी क्षेत्र जैसे गलियारे, सीढ़ियाँ, लॉबी, वांशरूम, विश्राम कक्ष, पेन्टी, भोजनालय/कैंटीन, सामान्य क्षेत्र, रिसेप्शन, प्रतीक्षालय, रास्ते और प्रवेश द्वार इत्यादि की सामग्री सहित सफाई हेतु **Integrated Facility Management Services for Housekeeping & Cleaning Services** प्रदान करने वाली एजेन्सी/फर्म की आवश्यकता है।

विभाग द्वारा उक्त क्षेत्र में अनुभव रखने वाली एजेन्सी की सेवाओं हेतु <https://etenders.hry.nic.in> पर निविदा लगाकर बोलियाँ आमंत्रित की गई हैं जिसकी अन्तिम तिथि 25.03.2026 को सायं 4:00 तक है। इस निविदा की ID: 2026\_HRY\_506305\_1 है। इसके दस्तावेज व अन्य शर्तें उक्त वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड की जा सकती हैं। अगर कोई बोलीदाता शहीद स्मारक देखना चाहता है तो वह किसी भी दिन सायं 5:00 बजे से पहले देख सकता है।

पता: सूचना, लोक सम्पर्क एवं भाषा विभाग, हरियाणा, एम.सी.ओ. नं. 200-201, सेक्टर-17 सी, चण्डीगढ़, फ़ोन नं. 0172-5046246  
ई-मेल: [directorshaheedsamarak@gmail.com](mailto:directorshaheedsamarak@gmail.com)

# BJP announces 9 names for RS polls; Nabin from Bihar

Sanjeev K Jha  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday announced nine candidates for the 2026 biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha across six states, setting the stage for the high-stakes polls later this month.

At least three states — Maharashtra, Bihar and Odisha — are likely to see a contest. From Bihar, where five seats are falling vacant, the BJP nominated party chief Nitin Nabin and state leader Shivesh Kumar. Separately, a Janata Dal (United) minister said that chief minister Nitish Kumar's son, Nishant Kumar, was set to enter politics.

"He will be given a bigger responsibility in the party. What responsibility he is going to get will be decided in a day or two," said minister Sharwan Kumar. Asked if Nishant can be sent to the Rajya Sabha, Kumar said, "Anything can happen."

Thursday is the last date of filing nominations for the March 16 elections.

In the state where 41 first-preference votes are required to win a seat, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has the numbers to win four seats outright. It requires three opposition votes to win the fifth seat, likely to go to former minister Upendra Kushwaha.

In Assam, where three seats go to the polls, the BJP fielded sitting MLA Terash Gowalla and cabinet minister Jogen Mohan.

Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated on Tuesday that BJP won't be fielding any candidate for the third seat as the party has no chance of winning.

In Assam, which has 126 MLAs in its assembly, at least 32

## BJP list for March 16 RS polls

**BIHAR**  
CANDIDATES: **SHIVESH KUMAR, NITIN NABIN**  
Nabin is the BJP national president and represents the Bankipur assembly constituency in Bihar; Kumar is a former MLA from Sasaram and has held several organisational posts in Bihar BJP

**ASSAM**  
CANDIDATES: **TERASH GOWALLA, JOGEN MOHAN**  
Mohan is a cabinet minister in the Assam government; Gowalla is a legislator from the Dulaijan constituency.

**WEST BENGAL**  
CANDIDATE: **RAHUL SINHA**  
Sinha has been the West Bengal BJP president and party's national secretary

**ODISHA**  
CANDIDATES: **SUJEET KUMAR, MANMOHAN SAMAL**  
Samal was elected unopposed for the fourth term as the Odisha BJP president in July 2025; Kumar is a sitting Rajya Sabha MP from Odisha.

**HARYANA: SANJAY BHATIA** is a former BJP MP from Karnal who vacated his seat for Manohar Lal Khattar in 2024.

first preference votes are needed to win when the contest for three seats. The BJP has 67 members in the assembly, while the Congress has 22.

In Chhattisgarh, where two seats are falling vacant, member of the party's Chhattisgarh State Women Commission, Laxmi Verma, was named as the candidate.

As 31 first-preference votes are required to secure a victory, the BJP (54 seats) and the Congress (35 seats) can win one Rajya Sabha seat each.

In Haryana, where two seats go to the polls, former MP Sanjay Bhatia was named as the candidate. As 31 votes each are required for the two candidates to make it to the Rajya Sabha, the other seat will go to the Congress.

In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the ruling BJP has 48

MLAs, Congress 37, the INLD has two, while three Independents support the ruling party.

In Odisha, where four seats go to polls, the party nominated party's Odisha unit president Manmohan Samal and outgoing Rajya Sabha MP Sujeeet Kumar.

Dilip Ray is also filing nomination saying he has BJP support and he's likely to square off for the fourth seat against joint CONG-BJD candidate Datteswar Hota.

With 79 MLAs of its own and the support of three Independents, the BJP commands 82 votes in the 147-member assembly. As 30 first-preference votes are required per candidate to secure victory, the party can comfortably elect both its nominees and still have 22 surplus votes in hand.

In West Bengal, where five seats go to the polls, former

West Bengal unit president Rahul Sinha was named as the candidate. With an absolute majority in the Assembly, the TMC held the four other seats and will win them again.

With 75 legislators in the 294-member Assembly against the Trinamool Congress's 215, the BJP has the numbers to ensure Sinha's victory.

In Bihar, Nabin's candidature assumed significance as he recently took over as the BJP's national president, marking a generational shift in the party's top leadership.

A prominent face from Bihar, Nabin held key organisational and ministerial responsibilities in the state and is considered close to the party's central leadership.

Party leaders indicated that sending Nabin to the Rajya Sabha would provide him a parliamentary platform commensurate with his organisational responsibilities. As national president, he is expected to steer the party through a series of crucial assembly elections and prepare the ground for the next general election cycle.

The second nominee from Bihar, Kumar, is regarded as an organisational hand with experience in state-level party affairs.

In Maharashtra, where seven seats are falling vacant, the ruling Mahayuti can win six and there might be a contest for the seventh seat, which the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi is hoping to win.

NCP (SP) has said party chief Sharad Pawar should be the opposition nominee but the Congress and the Shiv Sena (UBT) have expressed reservations.

(With inputs from Ritesh Mishra, Utpal Parashar, Tanmay Chatterjee and Debabrata Mohanty.)

## DMK ALLOTS ONE RAJYA SABHA SEAT TO ALLY DMDK

Press Trust of India  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**CHENNAI:** Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK on Tuesday allotted one Rajya Sabha seat to its ally, DMDK, and the Assembly seats to be allotted to it will be made known later following negotiations, the parties said.

DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakanth will announce the candidate for the RS polls. DMDK leader LK Sudhish told reporters after signing the electoral pact with the DMK.

A party release from the DMK said one RS seat was allotted to DMDK following talks between DMK President MK Stalin and DMDK treasurer LK Sudhish.

It was also decided that the number of Assembly seats to be earmarked for DMDK will be decided following talks between the two parties, it added.

Leaders of both the DMK and DMDK were present when the electoral pact was signed by Stalin and Sudhish.

Of the six RS vacancies from Tamil Nadu, DMK could elect 4 and the main opposition AIADMK 2.

In the 2020 elections, the DMK-led alliance won four of the six Rajya Sabha berths in Tamil Nadu. In the 234-member assembly, the DMK holds a majority with 133 seats.

The Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK)—the party of the late actor and former opposition leader Vijayakanth—joined the ruling DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) on February 19.

# LS privileges panel formed; Prasad to head

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday constituted the House's Privileges Committee for the 18th Lok Sabha, appointing BJP leader and former Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad as its chairman.

This is the first time members have been appointed to the panel in the 18th Lok Sabha.

The 15-member committee has eight MPs from the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and seven from the Opposition. The panel deals with complaints of breach of privilege by lawmakers against officials as well as against fellow MPs. The committee comes into effect from Tuesday.

Apart from Prasad, the BJP members on the panel are Brijmohan Agrawal, Jagdish Shettar, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo, Jagdambika Pal and Trivendra Singh Rawat.

The Opposition members include Congress leaders Tariq Anwar, Manickam Tagore and Manish Tewari, DMK's T.R. Baalu, Kalyan Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress, Shiv Sena MP Shirringappa Appa Chandu Barne, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Ganpat Sawant and Samajwadi Party MP Dharmendra Yadav.

However, Congress MP Manickam Tagore, named as a commit-



Ravi Shankar Prasad

tee member, said he could not attend the meeting as he was suspended. "I am suspended. I can't attend the Committee meeting," Tagore posted on X.

Tagore is among eight Opposition MPs who were suspended for the remainder of the Budget session. The second phase of the session will begin on March 9 and conclude on April 2.

The committee has been formed amid frequent threats of breach of privilege notices exchanged between treasury and Opposition benches in recent sessions. During the recent Budget session, the BJP had initially planned to move a breach of privilege notice against Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi over alleged misleading remarks against PM Narendra Modi. However, the plan was dropped at the time as the privileges committee had not yet been constituted.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey later moved a substantive motion against Gandhi.



KP Unnikrishnan

## EX-UNION MIN UNNIKRISHNAN DIES IN KERALA

**KOZHIKODE:** Former Union minister K P Unnikrishnan, who was regarded as one of the prominent figures in Indian politics during the 1980s and 1990s, died in the early hours of Tuesday, his family said.

He was 89. He died while undergoing treatment for age-related ailments at a private hospital in Kozhikode, they said, adding His cremation will be held at Manari crematorium on Wednesday.

Having been elected to the Lok Sabha six consecutive times from Vadakara, he served as a Union minister in the VP Singh Cabinet, holding the portfolios of Surface Transport and Communications during 1989-90.

During his tenure as Minister, he oversaw the evacuation of Indians during the Gulf War.

Condoling the demise of Unnikrishnan, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said he had attempted to preserve Nehruvian values within the Congress.

Unnikrishnan was a Keralite who stood tall in national politics, he said. "At crucial moments, the nation listened to his positions," Vijayan said, paying tribute to "the strong national advocate of democratic secular politics".

Born on September 20, 1936, he was educated at Madras Christian College in Chennai, PTI

## { TRACED TO DISTRIBUTOR IN CHINA }

# Chinese GoPro camera used in Pahalgam attack: NIA probe

Neeraj Chauhan  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A GoPro Hero 12 camera suspected to have been used in the April 22, 2025 terror attack at Baisaran Meadow in Pahalgam, Kashmir has been traced to a distributor in China, according to an investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which is approaching the Chinese government seeking information on the device.

According to an application filed by the federal anti-terror probe agency before a Jammu court, a letter rogatory or LR (a judicial request seeking information from a foreign country) is being issued seeking assistance regarding the camera.

"...during the course of investigation of aforesaid case, various material objects and electronic devices connected with conspiracy and execution of said terrorist attack have been examined. One such crucial electronic device is a GoPro Hero 12 Black Camera, bearing serial No.C3501325471706 which is relevant for establishing pre-attack reconnaissance, move-

ment and operational preparation of terrorist module involved in Pahalgam attack," said a Jammu court order on Monday permitting NIA to issue LR to China.

NIA originally approached the manufacturer of GoPro in Netherlands seeking details on the supply chain and the activation of the device.

The manufacturer, GoPro B.V. informed the agency that the camera "was supplied to AE Group International Limited, a distributor based in the People's Republic of China; and was activated on January 30, 2024 at Dongguan, People's Republic of China."

"The manufacturer has further stated that it does not possess downstream transaction details or end-user records of the said

device. The activation, initial use and commercial trail of the said device lie within the territorial jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China, and the information necessary to trace the purchaser, end-user and associated technical records can only be obtained through judicial assistance of the Chinese authorities, hence the application," said the court order issued on Monday.

The court allowed NIA to issue the LR to China.

The April 22 terror attack at the picturesque Baisaran meadow brought India and Pakistan at the brink of a full-scale war. India launched Operation Sindoor in the early hours of May 7 and struck terror and military installations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) before the May 10 ceasefire.

Three terrorists -- Suleiman Shah, Hamza Afghani alias Afghan and Jibril -- who shot dead 25 tourists and a pony operator on April 22 at Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam were killed by security forces during an encounter on July 28 in Dachigam forest area.



P Chidambaram and MK Stalin,

## CHIDAMBARAM MEETS STALIN AMID IMPASSE ON SEAT SHARING

Press Trust of India  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**CHENNAI:** Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram, accompanied by TNCC chief K Selva-perunthagai, called on Chief Minister M K Stalin at his camp office here on Tuesday amidst an impasse between the two parties over the seat-sharing talks.

During the hour-long meeting with Stalin, Congress leaders discussed various issues affecting both the parties and a final decision would be taken soon, a source in the Congress said.

The source said both the parties wanted the alliance to continue but there had been some disagreement over the number of seats that would be allotted to the Congress. Initially, the DMK had offered one Rajya Sabha seat to the Congress and the talks hinged on the number of seats to be allocated to the party, which had demanded 39 seats.

It is likely to settle for 28 seats and two Rajya Sabha seats, the source added.

"DMK wants the alliance to continue. Talks are continuing and our leader will arrive at a good decision. Our leader wants to amicably resolve the issue," DMK spokesperson TKS Elangovan told reporters in Vellore in the state.

Earlier, Selva-perunthagai called on Chidambaram and following a discussion, both went to the CM's residence.

The Congress high command had asked Chidambaram to resume the talks directly with the DMK leadership and bring about an amicable solution following a dead lock during the Congress seat-sharing committee led by Tamil Nadu in-charge Girish Chodankar and the DMK.

## 10TH INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS FROM OCT 7-10: SCINDIA

**NEW DELHI:** Union telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has unveiled the 10th edition of telecom industry event India Mobile Congress to be held from October 7-10 this year, according to a statement on Tuesday.

The dates were unveiled at global telecom event Mobile World Congress 2026 being held at Barcelona in Spain.

"As India completes a decade of telecom transformation, India Mobile Congress also enters the 10th edition, enabling global launches, startup discovery, partnerships and industry-government collaboration," Scindia said while unveiling the dates.

IMC 2026 will bring together industry leaders and global enterprises from over 100 countries. PTI

## { BOOK ON R&AW } RETD ARMY OFFICER ON TRIAL

# SC salvo to CBI on classified files in OSA case

Abraham Thomas  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court recently directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to decide within a month whether to provide "sensitive" documents to a retired Army officer facing trial under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) for exposing alleged irregularities within the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) in a book published in 2007.

In a hearing on Friday, the top court said confidentiality cannot be grounds to deny the veteran these documents if they are the basis for prosecuting him under OSA. A bench of justices JK Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar said: "If you (CBI) are using the documents against him, you cannot say they are confidential. You find a way out without invit-

ing an order from this court." The court was hearing a petition filed by Major General (retired) VK Singh who blew the lid off the irregularities within the R&AW in his book "India's External Intelligence - Secrets of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)" published soon after his retirement in 2007.

Singh's lawyer Suroor Mander pointed out that the documents are crucial to his defence. "My client seeks 12 documents and statements by four witnesses." She pointed out that the trial court ruled in their favour and directed that a copy of each document be provided under some conditions. But the Delhi high court reversed that ruling, citing that confidentiality permitted only inspection of the documents, Mander said.

"Why are you not permitting him the documents?" the bench asked CBI, represented in court by additional solicitor general (ASG) Davinder Pal Singh.

The ASG said, "There is sensitivity attached to these documents. They are interested only in knowing which documents they are. The high court has allowed inspection, which serves their purpose."

The matter will be taken up next on April 10.

The court told CBI, "Our inten-

tion is to ensure that a person implicated by certain documents is not deprived of that same material." CBI requested the matter be taken up after four weeks to obtain instructions. Mander requested a stay of the trial, which the bench did not consider necessary since CBI was represented in these proceedings.

CBI registered the case against Singh in September 2007 accusing him of revealing secret information that prejudiced the security of the nation. In April 2008, the Centre gave the authorisation for filing a charge sheet under OSA. In 2009, the trial court took cognisance of the charge sheet under sections 3 and 5 of OSA dealing with "spying" and "wrongful communication" besides other offences of criminal breach of trust by public servant and criminal conspiracy under the IPC.

The court told CBI, "Our intention is to ensure that a person implicated by certain documents is not deprived of that same material." CBI requested the matter be taken up after four weeks to obtain instructions. Mander requested a stay of the trial, which the bench did not consider necessary since CBI was represented in these proceedings.

CBI registered the case against Singh in September 2007 accusing him of revealing secret information that prejudiced the security of the nation. In April 2008, the Centre gave the authorisation for filing a charge sheet under OSA. In 2009, the trial court took cognisance of the charge sheet under sections 3 and 5 of OSA dealing with "spying" and "wrongful communication" besides other offences of criminal breach of trust by public servant and criminal conspiracy under the IPC.

The court told CBI, "Our intention is to ensure that a person implicated by certain documents is not deprived of that same material." CBI requested the matter be taken up after four weeks to obtain instructions. Mander requested a stay of the trial, which the bench did not consider necessary since CBI was represented in these proceedings.

CBI registered the case against Singh in September 2007 accusing him of revealing secret information that prejudiced the security of the nation. In April 2008, the Centre gave the authorisation for filing a charge sheet under OSA. In 2009, the trial court took cognisance of the charge sheet under sections 3 and 5 of OSA dealing with "spying" and "wrongful communication" besides other offences of criminal breach of trust by public servant and criminal conspiracy under the IPC.

The court told CBI, "Our intention is to ensure that a person implicated by certain documents is not deprived of that same material." CBI requested the matter be taken up after four weeks to obtain instructions. Mander requested a stay of the trial, which the bench did not consider necessary since CBI was represented in these proceedings.

CBI registered the case against Singh in September 2007 accusing him of revealing secret information that prejudiced the security of the nation. In April 2008, the Centre gave the authorisation for filing a charge sheet under OSA. In 2009, the trial court took cognisance of the charge sheet under sections 3 and 5 of OSA dealing with "spying" and "wrongful communication" besides other offences of criminal breach of trust by public servant and criminal conspiracy under the IPC.

The court told CBI, "Our inten-

## { BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING }

# In a first, woman officer to take over as superintendent of Srinagar Central Jail — once home to militants, separatists



Saba Shawl was earlier posted as staff officer, DG (prisons), HT

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**SRINAGAR:** For the first time, a woman officer has been appointed as the superintendent of Srinagar Central Jail, one of the Union Territory's oldest prisons, which once housed several high-profile inmates, including militants and political prisoners.

According to an official order issued on Monday evening, four officials were posted as superintendents to different jails in

Jammu and Kashmir. Saba Shawl, a 2012 batch official, was assigned responsibility for the Srinagar Central Jail.

Before her latest posting, Shawl was posted as the Staff Officer, Director General of Prisons J&K. She has also served as a public relations officer in the J&K Prisons department.

Saba's transfer was issued through an order No. 145-Home of 2026 dated March 2.

A resident of posh Pir Bagh locality in Srinagar, Shawl

holds a master's degree in social work and cleared the prestigious Kashmir Public Service Commission examination in 2012.

Officers who know her said that Shawl is well versed in her job. "She holds tremendous experience, though it will be a challenging job for her but she knows the department very well," an officer said, who asked not to be named.

Central Jail Srinagar is the oldest jail in the UT with its building bearing signs of age

and decay. It houses more than 900 prisoners, including several political prisoners and is well guarded not only by the police but also by CISF.

The jail has been in the news in the past after raids were carried out in the prison and phones were recovered from the prisoners. In the past, the jail has housed foreign militants and top separatist leaders.

However, most of them have been shifted to another high-profile jail in the UT, such as Kot Balwal, Jammu.

**OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER IN CHIEF  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, NAVA RAIPUR, ATAL NAGAR  
(CENTRAL TENDER CELL)  
E-Procurement Tender Notice  
Main Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>**

Tenders are invited for the Following works:-

S. No.	System Tender No./Date	Name of Work	PAC Amount (Rupees in lacs)
1.	186269 First Call 25.02.2026	CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE i/c APPROACHES ACROSS BELATJORE NALLA ON DEOBHOG-JHAKHARPARA ROAD.	429.84
2.	186271 First Call 25.02.2026	CONSTRUCTION OF 50 SEATER GIRLS AND BOYS HOSTEL, ADDITIONAL ROOM AND BOUNDARY WALL FOR DEGREE COLLEGE AARA, DIST-JASHPUR.	418.03
3.	186277 First Call 25.02.2026	Construction of Mahidbara to Bantipathra Road Length 2.50 K.M. including Bridges & culverts at Block-Pandariya, Distt. - Kawardha (C.G.)	258.47
4.	186328 Second Call 25.02.2026	Construction of Tribhawna to Kodpali Approach Road Length 1.50 Km., Machida kalmi Sudupali Road Length 2.50 Km. & High School Midmida Approach Road Length 0.90 Km. Total Length 4.90 Km.	679.35
5.	186330 Second Call 25.02.2026	Strengthening of Mopka Khaira Gataura Jairamnagar Road Total Length 13.66 Km (MDR No. 7) km. 1, 2 and 7 to 14/8 = 9.70 km.	993.93
6.	186320 Second Call 25.02.2026	CONSTRUCTION OF (BALANCE WORK) HOSTEL BUILDING (4th & 5th FLOOR) FOR GIRLS AT GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE RAIPUR I/C. ELECTRIFICATION WORK. DIST. RAIPUR(DN. NO.2, RAIPUR).	214.30
7.	186321 Second Call 25.02.2026	Construction of Chandiyabhatha to Khudiya Approach Road Length 4.35 km.	576.13
8.	186325 Second Call 25.02.2026	CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE ACROSS KOKIYA RIVER INCLUDING APPROACH ROAD ON BHALUMUNDA TO KHAJURGHAT ROAD.	331.85
9.	186314 First Call 25.02.2026	Construction of Balance Civil Work of 750 Seater Auditorium Building at Jagdalpur i/e Electrification (Work Code - W12714)	796.04
10.	186318 First Call 25.02.2026	Construction of Balance Specialised Work of 750 Seater Auditorium Building at Jagdalpur (Work Code - W12714).	367.25
11.	186360 Third Call 26.02.2026	Construction Of High Level Bridge and Approach Road Across Maniyari River On Ghanaghat-Bagharra Road.	388.58
12.	186361 Second Call 26.02.2026	Construction of Devarmal to Dholnar Road Length 3.00 Km.	395.16
13.	186362 Second Call 26.02.2026	Construction of Bijrakapa (Kala) to Harnachaka Road Length 7.60 Km.	1192.58
14.	186366 Second Call 26.02.2026	Construction of H.L. Bridge across Ahiran River on Darri Barrage - Barampur Chowk Road.	1663.42
15.	186372 Second Call 26.02.2026	Construction of Birampur-Thengabhat Road Length 3.00 K.m. & Dadi Pachbhayia Amcho Road Length 2.75 K.M Total Length = 5.75 Km including Bridges & culverts at Distt. - Bemetara (C.G.) (Group Tender).	672.55
16.	186390 First Call 26.02.2026	Construction of High Level Bridge i/c Approach Road Across Jhink River(Gona) on Umeshwarpur-Maniharidand (kerhyapar) Road.	475.87
17.	186391 First Call 26.02.2026	Construction of Kosamkunda to Jaitpur Road Length 2.25 km.	256.42

Last Date of Tender Downloading S.No. 11 date 10.03.2026, S.No. 16 To S.No. 17 date 20.03.2026, S.No. 01 To S.No. 03 date 18.03.2026, S.No. 09 To S.No. 10 date 19.03.2026, S.No. 12 To S.No. 15 date 16.03.2026. Other Tenders Date are Schedule as date 13.03.2026. For more details on the tender and bidding process please visit the above mentioned portal.

Sd/- Chief Engineer  
(Central Tender Cell)  
Office Of Engineer In Chief  
P.W.D. Nava Raipur Atal Nagar

G-252606989/4

# HT Education

## LPU's 15 AI Innovations Command National Spotlight at India AI Impact Summit 2026

### Upholding Government of India's Vision as Global Industry & Academic Leaders Engage with Student Innovators

Fifteen AI-driven innovations developed by students of Lovely Professional University became a focal point of industry and academic engagement at the six-day India AI Impact Summit 2026, with leading technology corporations, IIT experts, policymakers, and global delegates initiating detailed discussions around product scalability and real-world deployment.

Spanning intelligent defence drone systems, AI-powered precision agriculture models, autonomous robotics solutions and applied analytics platforms, the projects reflected LPU's integrated AI-driven academic framework where research, industry exposure and start-up incubation operate in alignment. The student teams presented working prototypes and application-ready models, demonstrating technical maturity beyond conventional classroom experimentation.

Representatives from Tata Consultancy Services, Qualcomm, Infosys, and global security solutions provider Gunnebo interacted extensively with the innovators. Faculty and researchers from IIT Madras and IIT Bombay reviewed the technical frameworks of the projects, while academic delegates from Nepal explored collaborative research possibilities.

Multiple industry representatives expressed interest in mentorship support, structured incubation and potential pilot integration, signalling commercial and industrial relevance of

the student-built solutions. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Founder Chancellor of LPU, Col. Dr. Rashmi Mittal, Pro Chancellor of LPU, visited the LPU stall and appreciated the application-oriented depth of the innovations, and guided the student innovators to focus on globally competitive, scalable AI solutions addressing national priorities.

Speaking on the achievement, Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal stated, "The India AI Impact Summit has reaffirmed the power of homegrown innovation. We are proud that 15 AI-driven projects from LPU ranging from defence-focused drones and smart agricultural systems to autonomous robotics solutions, have been widely appreciated at the summit. This recognition reflects the strength of our research-driven ecosystem. At LPU, we provide advanced AI labs, high-performance computing infrastructure, dedicated research centres, industry collaborations, incubation support, and experiential learning platforms that empower students to transform ideas into scalable solutions. Our focus is not just on developing technology, but on nurturing problem-solvers who can create meaningful impact for society and position India as a global AI leader."

The projects were developed under the mentorship of Ruhul Choudhary and Mandeep Saini, supported by LPU's Innovation Hub, which prioritizes



Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Founder Chancellor of LPU, Col. Dr. Rashmi Mittal, Pro Chancellor of LPU attending the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi alongside LPU students

product-building, interdisciplinary collaboration and start-up progression from early-stage ideation to market readiness.

Students shared that the summit provided direct exposure to corporate evaluation frameworks, technical scrutiny, and commercialization expectations, strengthening their confidence and refining deployment strategies. With its AI-enabled campus infrastructure, industry-integrated academic design, and emphasis on innovation-led entrepreneurship, LPU continues to strengthen its position as a university where AI is not confined to the curriculum but actively drives research, product development, and career pathways

The admission process for the 2026 batch at LPU has started, and the last date for submission of application forms is approaching soon. Admission to LPU is highly competitive. To get admission into the university, students have to clear the entrance exam, as well as LPUNEST 2026 and an interview for select programs. To learn more about the examination and admission process, interested students can visit [www.lpu.in](http://www.lpu.in) or scan the QR code.



Scan the QR code to learn more



## Can AI assessments enable better learning

Abhishek Gopalka and Ruchita Brajabas

letters@hindustantimes.com

For India to turn its demographic promise into an economic reality and thrive in an AI world, the Viksit Bharat dream must be rooted in what happens inside classrooms. Yet national assessments show a persistent learning crisis: barely 45% of Grade-5 children can read at a Grade-2 level and only about 31% can perform simple division. These sobering numbers show that a systemic rethink is needed; more of the same won't do. The solution can start from a simple premise: teachers should spend their time and energy on teaching, and the entire ecosystem should enable that. Pairing this philosophy with rigorous, frequent outcome measurement – which in turn informs immediate classroom action – can help teachers teach the right competencies at the right learning levels. This is the essence of the "Assessment-to-Action" approach: Assess comprehensively (all competencies), universally (every child) and accurately, at regular intervals, without increasing teacher burden. Close the loop for the teacher by converting assessment data into personalized, competency-linked, student-specific teaching next steps and nudges. Use the same assessment data as the single source of truth for all other stakeholders – from parents to policy makers.

Let's look at Rajasthan as a case study. The Rajasthan School Education Department has pioneered the Assessment-to-Action system, conducting AI-based assessments of around 40 lakh students in Grades 3 to 8, two to three times a year since 2023. Under this model, teachers take a photo of students' answer sheets on a mobile phone, after

which an AI algorithm – (developed by PlayPower Labs) digitizes and corrects responses with over 96% accuracy. Based on the results, teachers receive personalized recommendations and nudges on which competencies to reteach, which students to focus on, along with competency-linked lesson plans, bite-sized videos, worksheets and more. The end-to-end experience runs on the department-owned Shikshak app.

Early results are compelling. Within two academic years, the number of districts with more than 50% of students behind grade level fell from 18 to five. Teachers report substantial time savings – correction time has dropped from 5–6 minutes per child to under a minute. They also appreciate the specificity and usability of the feedback, and how it enables them make classroom action more intentional.

The state has also implemented AI-enabled Hindi reading assessments for 35 lakh students using a tool developed by Wadhvani AI. These voice-recognition models score fluency across dialects and accents and feed results into targeted reading campaigns such as Prakhara Rajasthan. The state has begun piloting AI-supported scoring of subjective assessments with PlayPower Labs; a study in Jodhpur shows promising results with over 90% accuracy – an important step toward assessing reasoning and written expression at scale. Practical lessons about AI in public education

Several other states – including Gujarat, Assam and Andhra Pradesh – are implementing AI-enabled digitization in different contexts, signaling a nationwide readiness to leverage AI in school education reform. These gains underscore three practical truths about AI in public educa-

tion. First, AI is most valuable when it automates routine, time-consuming tasks such as scoring, digitization and aggregation, so that teachers don't have to. Second, data matters only when something can be done with it. A closed loop that moves from assessment to insight (where to focus) to action (teaching aids) is what makes a useful tool. Third, success depends on state ownership and human-centered design. Tools that reduce teacher workload, align with curricula and are co-designed with educators are the ones that will be adopted and sustained.

Regular, reliable, census-based assessment data enables a system-wide focus on learning outcomes, giving policymakers a clearer view of what works and allowing decisions to be based on classroom needs.

One of the biggest benefits of this granular, census data is its predictive capacity: which students are at risk of dropping out, which interventions are improving outcomes, which schools need more support. These insights can make the social sector more evidence-led, data-driven and accountable.

Rajasthan's story offers a pragmatic blueprint not just for education but for other sectors too – showing how AI can be used to digitize outcomes at scale without increasing the burden on teachers, nurses or farmers. Only when children leave school with conceptual clarity and the habits of reading, reasoning and problem-solving can they become fully contributing citizens. The simple mantra – let teachers teach, let AI assess – may be the most radical and humble step towards a truly Viksit Bharat.

Gopalka is India Leader, Education and Social Impact Practice, BCG & Brajabasi is Principal, BCG

Note to Readers: We would like to inform our readers that some of the content on our pages is paid for by the brands concerned. We would like to emphasise that no sponsored content does or shall appear in any part of HT without it being declared as such to our valued readers.

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)  
Mobile No. 96461-10914

E-Tender Enq. No. 7777/P-1/EMP-13253 Dated: 25.02.2026

Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2026\_POWER\_162326\_1 for Procurement of H.T. Nuts AND Bolts (FS Group) for the year 2025-26 for whole plant at GGSSTP, Roopnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 27.02.2026 from 05.00 PM onwards.

Note: Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

RO No. 1079/12/2025/26/9046 RTP-29/26

**Have fun with facts on Sundays**

Catch the latest column of **TWTW**

A quiz on the week's development.

सत्य विज्ञान संभाग  
Division of Agronomy  
भा.क.अनु.प. - भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान  
ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute  
पुसा, नई दिल्ली-110012/Pusa, New Delhi-110012  
Phone: 011-25841488, Email: [ddo6.iari@iari.res.in](mailto:ddo6.iari@iari.res.in)

Dated: 2.3.2026

**WALK-IN-INTERVIEW**

A walk-in-interview for one post of Project Assistant (01-PA) on a purely temporary/contractual basis, up to March, 2027 or until the project's completion) under the project "Application of Advanced Technologies for Improved Productivity and Resource-use Efficiency in Regenerative Agriculture Production Systems" will be held on 02nd April, 2025 at 10.00 A.M. through physical mode. For details about the vacancies, essential and desirable qualifications and other information, please visit the institute's website: [www.iari.res.in](http://www.iari.res.in).

Sd/- Asstt. Admn. Officer  
Division of Agronomy  
ICAR-IARI, New Delhi-12

**POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH**

**CORRIGENDUM**

Ref: Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. P(EP)/25-26/G/04

Following changes are made:-

Sr No.	Equipment/Item Name	Original Bid Submission Date	Revised Bid Submission Date	Original Bid Opening Date	Revised Bid Opening Date	Deptt. Name
13	Extra Corporeal Shockwave Lithotripter	25.02.2026	12.03.2026	26.02.2026	13.03.2026	Urology
14	Fully Automated Immunoassay System: Enzyme Linked Fluorescent Assay (ELFA)/ Chemiluminescence Enzyme Immunoassay (CLEIA)/ Electrochemiluminescence Immunoassay (ECLIA). (Under buy back policy-Fully automated enhanced Chemiluminescence Immunoassay Analyzer-Model Vitros 3600)	25.02.2026	12.03.2026	26.02.2026	13.03.2026	Virology

All other details shall remain the same.

PGI RC Adt. 2026 HR-000134 Professor In-Charge (EP)

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
(External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division)

**EMANELMENT OF FILMMAKING AGENCIES FOR COMMISSIONING OF SHORT FILMS/DOCUMENTARIES FOR MEA**

XPD Division has launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) for empanelment of filmmaking agencies for commissioning of short films/documentaries for MEA. The EOI is available on GeM Portal with ID GEM/2026/B/7308582 as well as at MEA website [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)

Last date of submission of bids is 23 March 2026.

CBC 14101/11/0028/2526

**POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH**

**CORRIGENDUM**

Ref: Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. P(EP)/25-26/G/04

Following changes are made:-

Sr No.	Equipment/Item Name	Original Bid Submission Date	Revised Bid Submission Date	Original Bid Opening Date	Revised Bid Opening Date	Deptt. Name
12	Gamma Camera with Accessories	25.02.2026	11.03.2026	26.02.2026	12.03.2026	Nuclear Medicine

All other details shall remain the same.

PGI RC Adt. 2026 HR-000133 Professor In-Charge (EP)

**HSSC Hydrocarbon Sector Skill Council**  
(A society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860)  
OIBD Bhawan, 2nd floor, Tower-C, Sector 73, Noida -201301

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for appointment as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), HSSC. Interested applicants may send their application in the prescribed proforma at [caree@hsscindia.in](mailto:caree@hsscindia.in) along with detailed CV and self-attested copies of documents in support of educational qualifications, age, experience etc within 21 days from the date of advertisement. For more details, please visit HSSC website [www.hsscindia.in](http://www.hsscindia.in)

Sd/-  
CEO, HSSC

CBC 33115/12/0001/2526

**HARYANA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
BAYS NO. 33-36, SECTOR-4, PANCHKULA-134112  
PH. 0172-2572395, FAX: 2572359  
E-mail: [dir-trf\\_herc@nic.in](mailto:dir-trf_herc@nic.in), website: [herc.gov.in](http://herc.gov.in)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice for public hearing on the petition(s) filed by UHBVNL (Petition no 5 of 2026) and DHBVNL (Petition no 6 of 2026) under Section 42 (4) of the Electricity Act 2003 and Regulation 22 of Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and conditions for grant of connectivity and open access for intra-State transmission and distribution system) Regulations, 2012 and amendments thereof for determining the Additional Surcharge for Second (2nd) Half of FY 2025-26 and approval for levying the same to the Open Access consumers till the issuance of the next order. (HERC/Petition no 5 of 2026 and HERC/Petition no 6 of 2026)

General public/stakeholders are hereby invited to file their written comments/objections/suggestions on the above petition(s), which can be downloaded from the website of HERC (<https://herc.gov.in>), free of cost. All interested parties may submit five copies of their comments/objections along with supporting documents, if any, to the Secretary, HERC, Bays No. 33-36, Sector-4, Panchkula-134112 along with an affidavit and soft copy of the same at email id: [secretary\\_herc@nic.in](mailto:secretary_herc@nic.in) and [dir-trf\\_herc@nic.in](mailto:dir-trf_herc@nic.in), with a copy of the comments/objections to Managing Director, UHBVNL and DHBVNL (Email: [md@uhbvn.org.in](mailto:md@uhbvn.org.in), [md@dhbvn.org.in](mailto:md@dhbvn.org.in)) on or before 20.03.2026. The objections should carry full name, complete postal address and phone number/email address, if any, of the person sending the objection. The Commission will afford an opportunity of hearing to the stakeholders filing written comments/objections on or before the due date. The public hearing in respect of above case(s) shall be held on 24.04.2026 at 11.30 AM in the in the court room of the Commission.

Sd/-  
Secretary  
HERC, Panchkula

RO No. 1243/11/155/2026/43502/C/19/7

**GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT MAGISTRATE,**  
**CENTRAL NORTH DISTRICT**  
**DISTRICT MAGISTRATE OFFICE COMPLEX, RAMPURA, DELHI-35**

**F. No.: Award Nos. 40 & 50/80-81/Haiderpur Shalimar Bagh/339-40** **Dated: 02.03.2026**

सार्वजनिक सूचना पत्रक  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

In continuation of earlier Public Notice issued on 22.01.26 with respect to Kh. Nos. 12 min and 13 min of Village Haiderpur, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi acquired by Government vide Award Nos. 40 & 50/80-81, all unauthorized occupants of unauthorized built-up structures in abovesaid acquired land situated on Road No. 320, Village Haiderpur, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi are hereby given final opportunity to be heard and submit objections, if any, on **5th and 6th March, 2026** from **10 am to 3 pm**, as to why possession of the above acquired land should not be taken for the purpose of road widening in public interest.

The written reply, alongwith documentary evidence and contact details, may be submitted/ presented during personal hearing before the **Additional District Magistrate (Central North) at the Office of the District Magistrate, Central North District, Rampura, Delhi-35, or via email to [lac.centralnorth@gmail.com](mailto:lac.centralnorth@gmail.com)**

In case of failure to submit any reply or sufficient justification/representation, it shall be presumed that none of the unauthorized occupants of above acquired land has any lawful right/claim/interest over the said land and the competent authority shall proceed to take possession of the acquired land as per law.

Sd/-  
**Land Acquisition Collector/ADM**  
**Central North District**

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0457/25-26



# OPINION

The  
**Hindustan Times**  
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

## Rebuilding frayed ties

The outcomes of Mark Carney's New Delhi visit point to a welcome rebound in India-Canada relations

The process of resetting India-Canada relations, which began with PM Narendra Modi's meeting with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney in June last year, has entered a new phase of consolidation. Carney's visit to New Delhi this week culminated in the signing of crucial agreements for cooperation in the mining and processing of rare earth minerals and long-term supply of uranium ore to fuel India's nuclear reactors. In line with Carney's call at the World Economic Forum for "middle powers" to come together to forge a new path in the face of great power hegemony, there was talk by the two sides of using trade and investments to shore up the rules-based order and to deepen security cooperation. The agreement on the supply of uranium ore marks a significant turning point since India had used plutonium derived from a reactor supplied by Canada for its first atomic test in 1974. The new Strategic Energy Partnership, which covers nuclear, LNG, solar and hydrogen, could play a key role in meeting India's growing energy needs in view of Canada's extensive gas and uranium reserves.

Modi's and Carney's remarks made it clear that both countries are determined to put the diplomatic row — triggered by former PM Justin Trudeau's comments about the killing of a Khalistani separatist in Canada in 2023 — behind them as they focus on concluding a free trade agreement by the end of this year and put in place new measures such as a defence dialogue to support maritime security cooperation and stability in the Indo-Pacific. In that context, Carney's visit and the rebound in India-Canada relations marked a moment of sanity amid widespread chaos on the global stage.

However, the shadow of the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar still hangs over the relationship, with leaks from the Canadian side leading to a media report that linked two Indian officials to the episode on the very day that Modi and Carney met. The two sides have decided to isolate such matters from the overall relationship by keeping them firmly within the purview of a security dialogue. More disclosures should be expected when the trial in the case begins later this year. New Delhi and Ottawa will do well to ensure there are adequate guardrails to cope with any further developments. The focus should remain on the more transformative aspects of the relationship, including trade and strategic cooperation.

## Electing a post-uprising government in Nepal

Six months ago, Nepal's Gen Z stormed the streets and forced the government in Kathmandu to quit. The massive mobilisation built around social media, left the legacy political outfits, some of them with a record in battling the monarchy and even parliamentary forces, running for cover as the protests turned violent and targeted the ruling elite. At least 77 people died in the protests, and then Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli, was forced to resign. The interim administration, headed by former Chief Justice of Nepal Sushila Karki, dissolved the House of Representatives and promised fresh elections. On Thursday, Nepal will vote to elect a new parliament. And, its youth — 42% of the population is in the 16-40 age bracket — will hold the key. History tells us that street mobilisations are successful in forcing out governments but less so in shaping electoral outcomes in progressive ways, as the Arab Spring showed. But Bangladesh, most recently, and Sri Lanka, last year, revealed mature electorates voting for political and economic stability.

In Thursday's election, over 60 political parties have fielded candidates for the 275 parliamentary seats (165 will be directly elected and 110 under the proportional representation system). Balendra Shah, a 35-year-old rapper-turned-Kathmandu mayor, is seemingly the Gen Z face, though he is currently aligned with the Rashtriya Swatantra Party. The leadership of Nepali Congress is now with a younger generation, which may help it in the hustings. The two main Communist parties — Oli's Communist Party of Nepal and Pushpa Kamal Dahal's CPN-UML — have chosen to ride out the storm rather than opt for an overhaul of personalities and policies. Nepal's political crisis and the street anger could be traced to divided electoral outcomes — no government in Kathmandu has completed a full term since 1990, and parties have had no qualms in forging coalitions of convenience, often betraying the mandate. A clear outcome in Thursday's polls may help the country avoid that trap and engage constructively with its restive youth.

## The lessons from India's HPV vaccine programme

The delay in introduction serves as a reminder that scientific advancement can be impeded by mistrust, political contestation, and inadequate communication

India is poised to roll out the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for adolescent girls in the coming weeks. With this step, the country will incorporate all 13 antigens recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for national immunisation programmes. It is a milestone that signifies both culmination and transition — the completion of India's childhood immunisation basket, and a decisive shift towards recognising adolescence as a critical window for preventive health.

The HPV vaccine will also be the first in India's Universal Immunisation Programme to be offered exclusively to adolescents. Until now, national immunisation efforts have focused primarily on infants, young children, and pregnant women. This policy evolution signals a broader and more mature vision — one that acknowledges that prevention cannot, and should not, conclude in early childhood.

Yet, this imminent rollout is not merely an administrative development; it follows nearly 18 years of deliberation, controversy, and delay. The protracted interval between initial consideration and actual introduction offers instructive lessons for all public health initiatives.

The first HPV vaccine was licensed

globally in 2006 and became available in India by early 2008. During 2008-09, an HPV vaccine demonstration project — led by PATH, an international non-profit organisation, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the respective state governments — was launched in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. The objective was to generate empirical evidence on the feasibility, acceptability, coverage, and cost of delivering the vaccine in diverse settings, for possible induction into India's national vaccination program. Girls aged 10-14 years were vaccinated in Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh and Vadodra district of Gujarat, with different delivery models being tested.

However, reports of deaths among some vaccinated girls in 2009 triggered widespread alarm. Though subsequent investigations concluded that the fatalities were not causally linked to the vaccine, allegations of inadequate consent procedures and ethical lapses — particularly in vulnerable and tribal populations — fuelled public mistrust. The matter was vigorously debated in Parliament, became headline news, and, in 2010, the Union government suspended the project.

What ensued was a prolonged phase of policy inertia. HPV vaccination became enmeshed in wider debates concerning pharmaceutical influence, research ethics, and adolescent sexuality. Despite repeated recommendations from government-constituted but independent technical advisory bodies on immunisation, India refrained from inducting the HPV vaccine into its national programme. The episode demonstrated a sobering reality: Scientific evidence, however robust, is insufficient in the absence of public confidence.

The cost of this delay must be measured not merely in elapsed years but in forfeited opportunities. Entire cohorts of girls aged out of the optimal vaccination window. Meanwhile, many countries progressed with alacrity. By January 2026, around 164 countries had introduced the HPV vaccine and collectively administered over 500 million doses. Nations such as Australia and the UK are now on the cusp of eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem, following sustained and comprehensive vaccination strategies.

In India, cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women, with an estimated 80,000 new cases and more than 42,000 deaths annually. Persistent infection with high-risk HPV types — particularly types 16 and 18 — accounts for the majority of these cancers. The vaccine slated for deployment in India, Gardasil, protects against HPV types 16 and 18, among others. HPV vaccines are non-live, incapable of causing infection, and have demonstrated impressive efficacy — ranging from 93% to 100% — in preventing cervical cancers attributable to vaccine-covered types. Since 2022, the WHO has endorsed a single-dose schedule for girls aged 9-14 years, enhancing affordability and programmatic feasibility. The global strategy aspires to achieve 90% vaccination coverage among girls by age 15, as part of a concerted effort to eliminate cervical cancer.

India's inclusion of HPV vaccination is therefore both overdue and momentous. The controversy that delayed its

particularity types 16 and 18 — accounts for the majority of these cancers. The vaccine slated for deployment in India, Gardasil, protects against HPV types 16 and 18, among others. HPV vaccines are non-live, incapable of causing infection, and have demonstrated impressive efficacy — ranging from 93% to 100% — in preventing cervical cancers attributable to vaccine-covered types. Since 2022, the WHO has endorsed a single-dose schedule for girls aged 9-14 years, enhancing affordability and programmatic feasibility. The global strategy aspires to achieve 90% vaccination coverage among girls by age 15, as part of a concerted effort to eliminate cervical cancer.

India's inclusion of HPV vaccination is therefore both overdue and momentous. The controversy that delayed its



Chandrakant Lahariya



India's decision to proceed with HPV vaccination is both a corrective and a forward-looking step.

introduction by nearly 15 years offers several salient lessons.

First, communication must be intrinsic to programme design rather than relegated to an afterthought. Communities require lucid explanations of why a vaccine is being offered, how it functions, and what safeguards are in place. Data alone cannot substitute trust. Even coincidental adverse events can destabilise programmes if institutional responses appear opaque or defensive. Prompt, independent investigations and transparent disclosure are indispensable for sustaining credibility.

Second, ethical standards in public health interventions must be visibly demonstrable, particularly when programmes involve adolescents or marginalised communities. Perceptions of exploitation can eclipse scientific merit. The events of 2009 illustrate how fragile trust can be — and how arduous its restoration.

Third, prevention demands political consistency. Unlike outbreaks, the success of vaccination is measured in terms of diseases that fail to materialise. This very invisibility can engender complacency. Enduring commitment, rather than episodic enthusiasm, determines lasting impact.

The forthcoming HPV vaccination, being offered free, will promote equity across socioeconomic strata. However, we need to remember that vaccination alone will not suffice to eliminate cervical cancer. Screening — through Pap smears or HPV testing — must con-

tinue, particularly for older women who remain unvaccinated. A comprehensive strategy integrating vaccination, screening, and timely treatment offers the most efficacious path forward.

Simultaneously, India must broaden its preventive horizon. Historically, India's immunisation policy has focused on infants and pregnant women; institutionalising adult vaccination for high-risk groups and the elderly should constitute the next frontier of India's preventive health architecture.

India's decision to proceed with HPV vaccination is both a corrective and a forward-looking step. The delay in introduction serves as a reminder that scientific advancement can be impeded by mistrust, political contestation, and inadequate communication. Yet the eventual rollout also attests to institutional resilience and the capacity to learn from past missteps. If implemented with transparency, sustained political will, and meaningful community engagement, the HPV programme could emerge as another consequential public health achievement — shielding future generations of women from preventable malignancies and reaffirming the primacy of prevention in national health policy.

Chandrakant Lahariya is a practising cardio-metabolic physician, health policy expert, and specialist in parenting and child development. The views expressed are personal

## What lies ahead in the Iran-West Asia crisis

The assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a joint strike by Israel and the US, underlined that the war aims have expanded beyond the issue of Iran acquiring nuclear capability to regime change. Iran has announced the formation of a three-member Guidance Council, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, head of the judiciary Mohsen Ejaei, and one jurist from the Guardian Council. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has launched fresh missile attacks on Israel and the US bases in the region. US forces have suffered casualties; Abu Dhabi and Dubai airports have been hit. Iran has shown a continued capacity to prosecute the war.

The joint attack came a day after Oman's foreign minister Badr Al Busaidi told CBS that a "peace deal is within our reach". Military action has pre-empted a diplomatic solution. This was a repeat of the events of last June, when Israel attacked Iran in the middle of US-Iran negotiations.

The US-Iran indirect negotiations were taking place against the background of a major US military build-up in the region, which included two aircraft carriers — USS Abraham Lincoln and USS Gerald Ford. In his State of the Union address, he stressed that Iran cannot have nuclear weapons. The Iranian foreign minister had already given this assurance. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended Israeli actions as removing an "existential threat". Trump justified US actions in terms of defending the American people against "imminent danger" from Iran.

How serious was the Iranian threat? Iran started enriching uranium beyond the level permissible under the nuclear deal of 2015, only after Trump had withdrawn from the agreement negotiated by his predecessor. A day before the strike, Al Busaidi had disclosed that Iran had agreed not to stockpile its enriched uranium. Without this, it is not possible to build a bomb. He added that Iran's existing stockpile was to be diluted and converted into fuel. *The Wall Street* published an article citing a US intelligence agency that Iran did not have the missile capacity to threaten the American people.

The bombing campaign is predicated on the assumption that this will bring Iranian protesters to the streets again. The coming days will test this assumption. At the height of protests in December-January, Trump had said that "help is on the way". This did not materialise. The protests were driven by an external catalyst — the US sanctions. Continued sanctions and military intervention do not necessarily endear the US or Israel to the Iranian people.

Before the Israel-US strike, nine heads of Arab governments wrote to Trump advising against military action. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have stated that in case of war, their land and airspace will not be used. The IRGC Navy had also carried out exercises in the Hormuz Strait to demonstrate its ability to choke off the waterway that carries 20% of the global oil supply. The events since have demonstrated that military action

against Iran is bound to have major collateral

damage on the neighbouring countries.

There is no alternative source that can compensate for the loss of 20% of the global oil supply in case the Hormuz Strait is closed. Since the beginning of this month, the price of Brent crude, an international benchmark, has gone up by \$4.54 per barrel. After the war broke out, it jumped further by \$5.59 per barrel. A one-dollar increase in crude oil price, if sustained, would translate into an increase of India's annual crude import bill by ₹14,000 crore. Apart from crude oil, the supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) will also be affected in case of a flare-up in the Gulf. Fifty-five percent of India's LNG supplies traverse the Hormuz Strait. An oil tanker in the Hormuz Strait has been set ablaze. The ARAMCO refinery in Saudi Arabia has been hit. Qatar Energy has halted LNG production following an attack on one of its facilities. In case of any further attacks on oil infrastructure or shipping, there will be a sharper increase.

As the Indian ambassador to Iran, I had the privilege of negotiating the agreement for Indian participation in Chabahar port. However, at this stage, no development is possible. The project will remain important to us for future access to Afghanistan. Iran is the critical link to shorter access to Russia and Central Asia through the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

The first Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation was a war of necessity. The second Gulf War in 2002 was a war of choice. Though the military outcome was decided quickly in America's favour, instability continued for more than a decade, draining America's treasury and costing thousands of casualties to the US Army. It also led to the rise of ISIS. The governments in Baghdad were not necessarily of America's choice.

Widening the war aim to regime change has made it difficult for the US to climb down without losing face. It could trap America in an open-ended conflict. President Trump has mentioned that the war could continue for up to four weeks. Will this be enough to bring about regime change or force Iran to accept US-Israeli terms?

Iran's position has hardened. It is time to step back from the brink, accept an immediate ceasefire, and return to the negotiating table. Three rounds of negotiations between Iran and the US made progress and can be built upon. Under the nuclear deal of 2015, only the secondary US sanctions were removed. Lifting of all US sanctions could allow participation of American companies in Iran's oil and gas sectors.

The next step could be a conference to discuss regional security with the participation of all countries, including Israel. A cooperative framework is always preferable to forever wars.

DP Srivastava negotiated the Chabahar agreement as India's ambassador to Iran. The views expressed are personal



DP Srivastava

{ KEIR STARMER } PRIME MINISTER, THE UK

This government does not believe in regime change from the skies

In the UK Parliament, on the decision to not allow the country's bases for the initial US-Israel strikes on Iran

## Why China must opt for lower growth targets

China achieved a \$1.19 trillion trade surplus in 2025 — 20% higher than in 2024 — helping meet its 5% growth target. It needs a large trade surplus for sustained economic growth because other sectors of the economy cannot meaningfully contribute to economic growth in 2026 and beyond.

There is broad agreement within China's leadership that the "old economy" or the traditional investment and export-driven growth model/strategy is no longer politically and economically viable. Non-productive investment in infrastructure and manufacturing and rising government spending have fuelled high debt levels, while declining returns on capital since 2008 have prompted further capital injections, deepening financial pressures.

The capital required to drive economic growth in China has nearly doubled since the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, reflecting the increasingly debt-dependent nature of GDP expansion.

Increasing debt levels tend to suppress economic growth by introducing uncertainty about the allocation of future servicing costs. While this can culminate in a debt crisis, China is more likely to encounter extended periods of low growth, comparable to the stagnation seen in the erstwhile Soviet Union after the early 1960s and in Japan following the early 1990s.

China needs higher domestic consumption, but growth in spending has remained limited despite government measures. Retail sales recorded a modest 0.9% rise in December 2025 — the slowest pace since 2022. While the government has committed to proactive measures in 2026 to restore confidence, structural weaknesses in the economy persist.

The contraction in consumption stems not only from the property downturn and falling housing prices but also from wider economic fragility and high youth unemployment of around 20%. The real estate sector, contributing about 15% of GDP, remains in prolonged downturn, with large volumes of unsold property depressing prices. As household wealth declines due to falling property prices, consumers have become increasingly cautious, and continued weakness in the sector is likely to further dampen confidence and spending.

After Covid-19, confidence in government policy has eroded and consumer spending has weakened as people grow more pessimistic about the economy. China is experiencing price stagnation, while employers are reducing wages as workers accept lower pay in an increasingly competitive labour market. Consumers are delaying purchases in anticipation of better

deals, which in turn encourages firms to further cut prices. This dynamic raises the risk of a deflationary cycle that could force business closures and slow economic growth.

The "new economy" focused on high-tech innovation, green energy, and digital services under the aegis of President Xi Jinping's Made in China 2025 initiative — launched in 2015 — is also not going to lead to higher economic growth. While high-technology industries are expanding, they are suffering from low profitability due to intense competition and heavy reliance on local/provincial government support. Declining profits, a "race to the bottom," and excess capacity — where supply outpaces demand — have pushed many Chinese firms to rely on exports for survival. At the same time, excessive competition is forcing companies to scale back or shut down operations, contributing to rising unemployment. Government subsidies and financial assistance are also increasing local debt burdens, which are likely to weigh on future economic growth.

According to data from China's National Bureau of Statistics, the "new economy" remains too small to offset the slowdown in the "old economy", contributing only about 20% of GDP growth. Rhodium Group estimates suggest that during 2023-2025, the contraction in output from the "old economy" was roughly six times greater than the gains generated by the "new economy".

China's economy will continue to expand at a lower rate because of the problems in the old economy and the inability of the new economy to compensate for the former's slowdown. This necessitates increasing exports and trade surplus. The size of China's trade surplus plays a crucial role in determining debt accumulation, as it offsets the need for non-productive investment to sustain GDP growth. Higher trade surplus reduces the share of inefficient spending in the economy, whereas a lower surplus intensifies reliance on debt-driven investment.

However, burgeoning exports and a massive trade surplus are not sustainable in an increasingly uncertain trade environment. Rising protectionism globally and push back by countries against China's distorted mercantilist trade policies will also hinder exports. Beijing should accept lower economic growth and fix lower annual growth targets, more in line with the growth capacity of the economy.

Raj Verma is non-resident scholar, Sigur Center for Asian Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. The views expressed are personal

SPOTLIGHT | WAR IN WEST ASIA

# Global mkts tumble amid oil price spike

The dollar climbed against euro, sterling and yen; bitcoin fell 1.35% to \$68,496.40 while gold declined

Reuters  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW YORK/LONDON:** Stock indexes around the world tumbled and government bonds rose with the dollar on Tuesday, as a widening conflict in the Middle East pushed oil prices up sharply for a second straight day and exacerbated investor concerns about inflation.

US crude oil prices jumped more than 7% along with Brent as the war, started over the weekend, intensified with Israel attacking Lebanon, and Iran responding with strikes against energy infrastructure in Gulf countries and tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas typically passes.

Wall Street indexes were down nearly 2%, following European stocks' more than 3% loss after MSCI's Asia Pacific index closed down 3.5%. South Korea led the decline in Asian markets on Tuesday, with a weaker won helping to send the KOSPI down 7.2%. "The market is concerned that the US is getting pulled deeper into this conflict than investors had expected with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and increased risk of broader and longer regional instability," said Tim Chruskey, senior portfolio strategist at Ingalls & Snyder in New York. "The administration is pulling us into a conflict where historically, issues last and last. We could get pulled in even deeper."

And rising oil prices raise concerns about inflation, Chruskey said: "It will send energy stocks higher but it is a negative to the global economy."

On Tuesday at 11:32am, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 904.58 points, or 1.85%, to 48,000.20, the S&P 500 fell 118.38 points, or 1.73%, to 6,762.65 and the Nasdaq Composite fell 415.20 points, or 1.82%, to 22,333.66.

MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe was down 25.73 points, or 2.45%, to 1,024.10 while the pan-European STOXX 600 index fell 3.18%. After paring some gains, Cboe's Volatility index, also known as Wall Street's fear gauge, was up 3.6 points at 25.06 after rising as high as 28.15, which was its highest level since November 20.

Meanwhile, government bond markets from the euro zone to

the United States and Britain sold off sharply on concerns that sustained higher inflation would likely force central banks to turn more hawkish.

US Treasury yields rose sharply for a second straight session with the benchmark US 10-year note's yield up 1.3 basis points at 4.065%, from 4.052% late on Monday. The 30-year bond yield rose 0.9 basis points to 4.7078% and the 2-year note yield, which typically moves in step with interest rate expectations for the Federal Reserve, rose 2.1 basis points to 3.508%.

**Dollar rises against Euro**  
In currencies, the US dollar climbed to multi-month peaks against the euro, sterling and yen as the Middle East conflict triggered broad demand for safe-haven assets and fuelled expectations of prolonged global inflation.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of currencies including the yen and the euro, rose 0.78% to 99.27, with the euro down 0.86% at \$1.1586. Against the Japanese yen, the dollar strengthened 0.29% to 157.8 and sterling weakened 0.76% to \$1.3303.

In cryptocurrencies, bitcoin fell 1.35% to \$68,496.40.

In oil markets, US crude rose 7.57% to \$76.62 a barrel and Brent rose to \$83.43 per barrel, up 7.25% on the day. It touched the \$85 level earlier in the day.

Adding to energy supply uncertainties, Qatar had halted its production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) on Monday, prompting precautionary shutdowns of oil and gas facilities across the Middle East. Qatari LNG production makes up about 20% of global supply.

The surge in energy prices also complicates the Federal Reserve's efforts to keep inflation under control, with policymakers already showing signs of division around the impact of artificial intelligence on the US economy. The US will take action to mitigate rising energy prices due to the spike in the price of oil, Secretary of State Rubio said.

Oil inflation concerns came as ISM manufacturing data released on Monday showed US activity grew steadily in February, but a gauge of factory gate prices raced to a near 3-1/2-year high amid tariffs, already highlighting upside pressure on inflation even before the attacks on Iran. In precious metals, gold prices were weighed down by a stronger dollar and fading prospects of an interest rate cut as inflation concerns intensified. Spot gold fell 4.01% to \$5,113.22 an ounce. US gold futures fell 4.63% to \$5,049.30 an ounce.

**BOMBINGS ROCK WEST ASIA FOR FOURTH DAY**

Graves are being prepared for the victims of a strike on a girls' elementary school in Minab, Iran in which at least 165 people were killed.

**ESCALATION ON LAND AND AT SEA**  
By U.S., Israel, Allies  
Israel said it had seized areas of southern Lebanon in a conflict with Hezbollah. Iran's Red Crescent Society said the death toll since Saturday had risen to 787.

**By Iran, Allies**  
The US shut its embassies in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait after drone attacks in the region. Falling debris from an intercepted drone caused a major fire at the UAE major oil-trading hub of Fujairah.

**HIT BY IRAN, ALLIES**  
**HIT BY U.S., ISRAEL, ALLIES**

- Hit by Iran, Allies**
1. Riyadh: 2 drones struck US Embassy
  2. Dammam commercial port: Fuel tank struck by drone
  3. Fujairah port: Drone debris hit Fujairah Petroleum Industrial Estate, causing a fire
  4. Dubai: Iranian missiles hit city
  5. Qatar: Missiles, suicide drones struck US naval, air base
  6. Bahrain: Drone, missiles struck US airbase
  7. Kuwait: Drone struck US base
  8. Erbil: Drones struck hotel housing US troops
  9. Tel Aviv: Struck by missiles
  10. Oman: Drone struck Ras Al-Jaima port

- Hit by U.S., Israel, Allies (MISSILES AND BOMBS)**
1. Bushehr: Struck airport and passenger aircraft, no reports yet on casualties,
  2. Qom: Building hosting Assembly of Experts comprised of clerics that selects the next Ayatollah struck,
  3. Kish: US navy destroys radar site near airport,
  4. Isfahan, 5. Beirut, 6. Shiraz, Fars Province, 7. Kerman, 8. Khorramshahr, 9. Amir al-Mu'minin Brigade in Ilam, 10. Paveh, 11. Marivan, 12. Urmia, 13. Punak neighborhood of Zanjan, 14. Khomein city in Markazi, 15. Shahin Shahr, Isfahan, 16. Khashan Missile City, Isfahan, 17. Tehran, 18. Karaj, 19. Pardis

## War threatens supply chain disruptions for agri mkts

**WASHINGTON:** Agriculture traders rushed to adjust positions with the escalating conflict threatening to disrupt supply chains from corn and soybean meal to fertiliser and sugar.

President Donald Trump said the US bombing campaign against Iran could last for weeks. The conflict is already reverberating across the Middle East and putting a squeeze on the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway for the global oil trade and other commodities.

On Monday, soybean oil surged as much as 3.9% to hit a two-and-a-half-year high, following steep gains in crude oil that are expected to make renewable fuels made from agricultural feedstocks such as soybeans and corn more attractive.

**Soybeans**  
The attack on Iran also shakes US relations with China, which has condemned the strikes. The conflict imperils an upcoming meeting in China between Trump and Chinese president Xi Jinping and throws into question whether the Asian nation — the world's top

consumer of soybeans — will continue securing supplies of the key US crop. "If the Iranian war is ongoing in late March, it will be politically difficult for Xi to host Trump in Beijing," AgResource Co. said in a note. "The political ties between the US/China are fraying, which at minimum will delay China's purchase of US soybeans, and could derail it."

**Corn**  
Corn markets are focusing on potential disruptions from the conflict for supplies out of Brazil, the world's second largest exporter of the grain. Iran is the top buyer of Brazilian corn, accounting for roughly 22% of shipments last year.

**Sugar**  
Volume in the sugar market rose as speculators covered short positions, reacting to higher energy prices, according to Mike McDougall, an analyst at McDougall Global View. Sugar is also used in biofuel production and demand can get a boost when crude moves higher. The premium that refined sugar carries over the raw variety also jumped.

**Wheat**  
Wheat fell as much as 2.8%, giving back a portion of last week's steep gains as traders waited to see if grain shipments would be affected by the conflict. Investors had rushed to cover short bets on potential upheaval from a US intervention in Iran. "Wheat was the leader last

week with aggressive short-covering taking place," StoneX risk management consultant Matt Campbell said in a note. "While the impacts on wheat's supply and demand in an Iranian conflict are not overly high, the managed money wanted to be on the sidelines while it was taking place."

**Agencies**  
letters@hindustantimes.com  
**LAHORE/ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan has closed certain routes within Karachi and Lahore Flight Information Regions (FIRs) at specific times for the military exercises involving fighter jets of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in view of the evolving regional situation, a spokesperson for the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said, PTI reported.

## PAK CLOSES CERTAIN AIR ROUTES FOR MILITARY DRILLS AS WAR IN WEST ASIA INTENSIFIES

This could impact airlines using Pakistani airspace to travel towards the West. Meanwhile, Pakistani airspace has been closed for Indian airlines since the conflict with India in May last year.

"The PAA on Monday issued a NOTAM announcing the closure of certain routes within the Karachi and Lahore Flight Information Regions (FIRs) at specific times," the spokesperson said in a statement.

According to the notification, these air routes will remain unavailable for commercial operations from March 3 to March 31, between 9am and 3pm daily.

**Pakistan says it killed 67 Afghan security forces**  
Afghanistan's ground forces attacked Pakistan's military positions at 16 locations along the southwestern border early Tuesday and fired on multiple points in the northwest, triggering intense clashes in which 67 Afghan security force members and one Pakistani soldier were killed, as fighting between the two neighbours entered its fifth consecutive day, AP reported.

Pakistan "successfully repelled these multiple attacks" along the Afghan border, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said. Afghan forces carried out ground assaults in 16 locations in the southwestern districts of Qilla Saifullah, Nushki and Chaman in Balochistan province, Tarar said on X.

## China showing few signs it will directly supply arms to Iran

**Bloomberg**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump's assault on Iran has killed the country's supreme leader and left it burning through missiles, but there's little sign Tehran can count on Beijing to bolster its defences.

Reports have swirled in recent months of Chinese air defence systems destined for Iran alongside claims China is shipping missile propellant ingredients to the Islamic Republic, although neither side has publicly commented. After Trump's strike, China's Foreign Ministry dismissed a separate account that Beijing was poised to arm Iran with supersonic anti-ship missiles as "not true".

So far, there isn't any evidence from the battlefield that Chinese weapons have been deployed, a contrast with the recent Thai-Cambodia border war and India-Pakistan conflict. President Xi Jinping has limited China's public support to condemning the US for attacking Tehran, which supplies about 13% of its seaborne crude.

"It's hard to say China is a major arms supplier to Iran, but it does supply dual-use tech," said Yang Zi, research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. "China is limited by sanctions as well as considerations over its ties with Sunni Gulf states and Israel."

The Pentagon warned in a report last year that China's defence relationship with Iran is now focused on Chinese com-

panies selling dual-use components for Iran's ballistic missile and drone programmes.

After the International Atomic Energy Agency in September 2005 said Iran was not complying with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the United Nations Security Council — including China — unanimously adopted a resolution that established a de facto embargo on the export to and import from Iran of certain items and technology potentially related to nuclear weapons.

China officially stopped selling weapons to Iran after 2005. Before that Beijing supplied a range of missiles, aircraft and artillery to Iran, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Direct weapon sales from China to Iran are also deterred by US sanctions. The supply of Chinese dual-use items, however, provides a cover of deniability in line with Beijing's play-book for Russia.

Over the past eight years, more than 100 Chinese and Hong Kong entities have been added to the US Entity List for assisting Iran's export control evasion efforts, according to a report last November by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

While China is now the world's fourth-largest arms exporter, Beijing has avoided selling arms to countries sanctioned by the US. That includes its "no-limits" partner Russia, although the Asian nation has continued to sell Moscow dual-use components.

{ ACT OF TERRORISM } U.S. INTEL WARNS OF IRANIAN ATTACKS ON HOMELAND DUE TO MIDEAST WAR

## Indian-American student among 4 killed in Texas

**Agencies**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**WASHINGTON:** A 21-year-old Indian-American student is among four killed in a shooting outside a bar in Austin that is being investigated as a possible act of terrorism, PTI reported.

Heightened security concerns have emerged across the country after attacks on Iran this weekend by the United States and Israel, and retaliation by Iran.

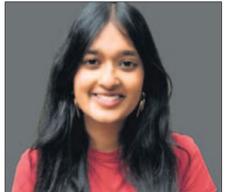
Savitha Shan, an Austin native and a dual-degree senior at the University of Texas at Austin, was fatally shot when a gunman opened fire in a crowded enter-

tainment district on West Sixth Street on Sunday.

She was months away from graduation and was described by university officials as an outstanding student leader studying management information systems and economics.

The identities of the two persons who died at the scene of the shooting have been confirmed by Chief Lisa Davis of the Austin police at a news conference on Monday afternoon. They are Ryder Harrington, 19, and Shan.

According to a US intelligence assessment, Iran and its proxies could target the US with attacks in response to the Saturday killing of



Savitha Shan

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei by Israeli and US strikes, Reuters reported.

The February 28 threat assessment produced by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the

Department of Homeland Security said Iran and its proxies "probably" pose a threat of targeted attacks on the United States, although a large-scale physical attack was unlikely.

A spokesman for the University of Texas at Austin confirmed Shan was a student at the school and said her legal last name was Shanmugundaram, according to school records, the New York Times reported. Texas university president, Jim Davis, described Shan in a letter to campus as "a child of loving parents. A loyal friend to many. A Longhorn preparing to change the world". Shan was a graduate of the Lib-

eral Arts and Science Academy and was widely regarded as a high-achieving and community-oriented student.

Federal authorities, led by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, are investigating the attack for possible international or ideological links. The suspect, identified as 53-year-old Ndiaga Diagne, a naturalised US citizen originally from Senegal, was killed by police at the scene. Investigators said materials recovered from the scene and the suspect's residence included an Iranian flag and extremist writings, prompting authorities to examine the possibility of self-radicalised terrorism.

## Inside the US-Israeli plan to kill Khamenei

**HTC and Agencies**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI/TEHRAN:** Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 86, was killed in an airstrike on Saturday, part of the US-Israel intelligence operation, which was years in the making, the Financial Times (FT) has reported.

According to the FT report which cited multiple sources, Israel spent years hacking Tehran's traffic cameras and gaining access to mobile phone networks to monitor the movements of Khamenei and his security detail. Nearly all traffic cameras in Tehran had been hacked for years, with footage encrypted and transmitted to servers. The hack allowed the Israeli and American forces to pinpoint Khamenei's location leading to his elimination in a targeted strike on Saturday, ANI reported.

An Israeli intelligence official told FT that long before the bombs fell, "we knew Tehran like we know Jerusalem". "And when you know a place as well as you know the street you grew up on, you notice a single thing that's out of place," the official added.

Advanced algorithms supplemented intelligence files on the personnel guarding top Iranian officials, compiling information such as home addresses, work schedules, commuting routes and — crucially — which officials they were typically tasked with protecting. The result was what intelligence professionals describe as a "pattern of life".

The above formed part of a long-running intelligence effort that ultimately set the stage for the assassination of Khamenei. This real-time stream of surveillance — one among hundreds of intelligence sources — was not the sole method Israel



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

and the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) used to pinpoint exactly when Khamenei would be present at his office that Saturday morning and who would be alongside him.

By gaining control of mobile phone networks, Israel was also able to interfere with individual components of roughly a dozen

mobile phone towers near Pasteur Street, causing calls to appear as if lines were busy and preventing Khamenei's security team from receiving potential warnings, the FT reported.

When US and Israeli intelligence determined that Khamenei would be holding a Saturday morning meeting at his office near Pasteur Street, officials viewed the opportunity to strike him alongside other senior leaders as especially advantageous.

They assessed that once open warfare fully unfolded, tracking such figures would grow far more difficult as Iranian officials retreated to hardened underground bunkers.

Tracking individuals once required labour-intensive confirmation and risked false identifications. In recent years, Israel's algorithm-driven intelligence infrastructure has largely automated that process.

stature, absolute certainty was required. Israeli doctrine mandates that two independent senior officers verify with high confidence both the presence of the target and the identities of those accompanying him, as per the FT report.

According to two people familiar with the matter cited in the report, Israeli intelligence drew on signals intelligence Unit 8200 — including compromised traffic cameras and infiltrated mobile networks — indicating the meeting was proceeding as scheduled.

US intelligence reportedly possessed an even more solid source: a human asset, both individuals said. The CIA declined to comment.

The US military cleared the path for Israeli fighter jets to bomb Khamenei's compound by launching cyber attacks "disrupting, degrading and blinding Iran's ability to see, communi-

cate and respond", the report quoted as saying General Dan Caine, chair of the US joint chiefs of staff.

Caine said the compound was struck in daylight following a "trigger event" carried out by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) with US intelligence support.

Israeli aircraft, which had flown for hours to synchronise their arrival, released as many as 30 precision-guided munitions onto Khamenei's complex, according to a former senior Israeli intelligence official.

The Iranians were meeting for breakfast when they were killed, US President Donald Trump told Fox News.

The Israeli military said the timing offered a key benefit. "The decision to strike in the morning rather than at night allowed Israel to achieve tactical surprise for the second time, despite heavy Iranian preparedness," it stated.

### WAR DIARY

#### FRANCE DEPLOYS JETS OVER UAE TO PROTECT ITS BASES

**PARIS:** France has deployed Rafale fighter jets over the United Arab Emirates to protect its naval and air bases against Iranian attacks, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Tuesday. France has hundreds of navy, air force and army personnel based in the UAE. Its Rafale aircraft are stationed at Al-Dhafra base near Abu Dhabi. On Sunday, "a hangar at a French base in the United Arab Emirates was hit by a drone", Barrot said.

#### US 'HARDEST HITS' ON IRAN ARE STILL TO COME: RUBIO

**WASHINGTON:** Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the US military would step up its military attacks against Iran, a stark warning after two days of strikes across the country that the Trump administration says took out its leadership and crippled its ballistic-missile programme. "I'm not going to give away the details of our tactical efforts, but the hardest hits are yet to come from the US military," Rubio told reporters.

#### '10% OF GLOBAL FLEET CAUGHT IN HORMUZ BACKUP'

**CALIFORNIA:** Container ships account for roughly 100 of the

750 ships ensnared in the Strait of Hormuz backups following US and Israeli attacks on Iran, Jeremy Nixon, CEO of container carrier Ocean Network Express (ONE), said. "About 10% of the container ship global fleet is caught up in this," Nixon said at S&P Global Market Intelligence's TPM26 conference. "All of that cargo is going to start backing up" in shipping hubs and key ports in Europe and Asia, Nixon said. ONE and rival container carriers such as industry leader MSC have stopped booking cargo to the Middle East, said Nixon, who on July 11 is stepping down as CEO of ONE.

#### X HALTS REVENUE SHARING FOR A.I. WAR VIDEOS

**WASHINGTON:** Social media platform X announced on Tuesday it would suspend creators from its revenue sharing program for 90 days if they post AI-generated videos of armed conflicts without disclosing they were artificially made, it said.

The policy change, announced by an X executive on the Elon Musk-owned platform, targeted what the company described as a threat to information authenticity during wartime, as generative AI tools make it increasingly easy to produce misleading footage.

HT

## Father who gave gun to US school shooter guilty

**WINDER:** A Georgia man, Colin Gray, who gave his teenage son the gun he's accused of using to kill two students and two teachers at a high school in Atlanta in September 2024 was convicted of second-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter on Tuesday.

**US judge nod for Epstein victims, estate settlement**  
**NEW YORK:** A US judge granted preliminary approval on Tuesday to an agreement for Jeffrey Epstein's estate to pay \$35 million to resolve a class action lawsuit that accused two of the disgraced financier's advisers of aiding and abetting his sex trafficking of young girls.

**Spacey accused of sexual assaults dating back to 70s**  
**LONDON:** Three British men suing Oscar-winning US actor Kevin Spacey over alleged sexual assaults asked London's High Court on Tuesday to allow them to rely on accusations by seven others, one dating back to the 1970s, at a civil trial in November.

**China ousts three generals from top advisory body**  
**BEIJING:** China's top political advisory body has voted to remove three retired military generals Han Weiguo, Liu Lei and Gao Jin, state media said, a week after nine military officials were ousted from its legislature, days before thousands of delegates from across China meet for a political conclave.

## Old guard vs new leaders in Nepal's post-uprising polls

Utpal Parashar

htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**GUWAHATI:** Nepal is gearing up for a very crucial election this week, the first after last September's violent youth-led uprising in Kathmandu and beyond — popularly called the Gen Z protest — led to the overthrow of the government. Voting for the Pratinidhi Sabha (house of representatives), the lower house of Nepal's parliament, will take place on March 5.

The election will pit well entrenched mainstream parties against a relatively new one that many believe could be the front runner. It will also decide whether the political careers of the old guard, who have been the most visible faces of Nepal's politics and government for decades, will remain relevant or a younger set of leaders will take charge.

"It's an unexpected and special election. Our constitution has no provision of snap polls, but it became necessary due to what happened in September. The formation of the interim government and dissolution of the parliament took place as special provisions which were not there in our constitution. The first expectation from this election is that it will bring the constitution on track," said Krishna Khanal, retired professor of political science in Tribhuvan University.

## The Gen Z protest

What started as a peaceful protest by thousands of youths on the streets of Kathmandu on September 8 took a turn for the worse when police opened fire leading to 19 deaths and injuries to many others. While the protests were primarily against the government's move to ban 26 social media platforms, the greater demand was for a control on corruption, rule of law and good governance.

The next day youths turned up in far greater numbers and targeted important buildings in the capital such as the prime minister's office, the parliament, several key ministries, the Supreme Court and set on fire the offices of major political parties. They also assaulted a former prime minister and his



Security personnel arrive at a polling station ahead of the parliamentary elections in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

wife, who was foreign minister in the incumbent government. The fury spread outside the Kathmandu Valley as well with mobs targeting government offices, houses and businesses of prominent politicians. At some places, prisons were broken down leading to many criminals escaping. The violence resulted in the ouster of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Three days later, an interim government led by former chief justice, Sushila Karki, assumed office as the country's first woman prime minister. The protests had claimed 77 lives and left more than 2,300 injured.

"This election is different as it is being held in the backdrop of last year's protests seeking end to corruption, rule of law and good governance. After the interim government took charge, leaders of the protest signed an agreement with it on changes they want in Nepal. So, the new government will be under pressure to implement the deal," said Bipin Adhikari, professor of constitutional law in Kathmandu University.

Over 18.9 million voters will exercise the ballot on March 5 to elect 275 parliamentarians. Of them, 165 will get elected through direct voting while the rest 110 through proportional representation — parties will be allocated these seats based on the number of popular votes they get. There are 65 parties contesting the polls and over 3,400 candidates in the fray—

this time nearly 3,000 of them are below the age of 60.

Voting will start at 7am on Thursday and end at 5pm the same day. Counting will start immediately and the results of the 165 first-past-the-post seats will likely be declared within two to three days. Results for the remaining seats will take a few more days.

## Ire against old parties

The Nepal Congress was headed by Sher Bahadur Deuba, a 79-year-old who had been prime minister on five occasions. KP Sharma Oli of CPN-UML was 74 and was prime minister for the third time before the protests forced him to quit. And the Maoists were headed by Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), 71, who also held the Prime Minister's post thrice. The Nepalese youth were tired of them and wanted reform and change.

The protests had some effect. In October, Deuba was succeeded by Gagan Thapa, a 49-year-old parliamentarian with a mass appeal who will also be the party's prime ministerial candidate for this election. The party also brought in many young faces.

A former prime minister, Jhala Nath Khanal, whose house in Kathmandu was torched during the protests and his wife was set on fire will also not contest. Though Oli is still the president of CPN-UML, the party has also brought in new faces. The Leftist parties in Nepal

also made changes. In a rebranding exercise last November, several of these unified as the Nepali Communist Party (NCP). Prachanda was made the coordinator of the new outfit and another former prime minister, Madhav Kumar Nepal of Communist Party of Nepal-United Socialist, became the joint coordinator.

## The party in focus

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), a party formed four years ago by a popular TV host, is in focus in this election. The centrist party contested the 2022 election and emerged as the fourth largest with 21 seats. It was also part of a coalition government for six months in 2024 with founder Rabi Lamichhane assuming the post of deputy prime minister.

The RSP is also in focus because of the entry of Balendra Shah, popularly known as Balen, into the party in December last year. A rapper and former mayor of Kathmandu, the 35-year-old was one of the prominent faces of the protests and was expected to become the interim prime minister. He is the RSP's prime ministerial candidate and will take on Oli in Jhapa. Shah and his party attracted large crowds during campaigning which ended on Monday and is said to be the front runner. "RSP is being seen as the party to beat in this election. But there's been some progress made by Nepali Congress, which is strong as ever and has brought in young faces. The CPN-UML is also gaining some ground. It is difficult to say who will come out on top but RSP, Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and NCP are likely to become the top four parties," said Adhikari.

The election will also decide the fortunes of old parties like Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), which wants a return of the monarchy, and several smaller players from the Terai-Madhes region which borders India. Though these parties might not make a big impact, they could play a role in government formation if no single party manages to secure the 138 seats needed to form government.

## IN TARAI, PRICE HIKE, POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT TOP VOTER ISSUES

Sandeep Bhaskar

letters@hindustantimes.com

**RAXAUL/BIRGANJ:** As Nepal heads into another crucial election, the mood on the streets reflects a mix of hope, frustration and cautious optimism. In the bustling marketplaces of Parsa and Bara districts in Nepal's Terai region — which account for eight of Nepal's parliamentary seats — unemployment, cost of essential goods and political instability dominate conversations as voters prepare to cast their ballots.

However, no single party appears dominant in the two Terai districts. "You cannot run the government by emotions and tearing down all the established institutions. We need a matured political party and political will to lead a country," said Saraj Chaurasia, 38, a resident of Sedhwa village in Parsa district.

Voter fatigue is also palpable. "We want leaders who stay accountable for five years, not five months and provide corruption free and good governance," said a shopkeeper in Birganj.

Meraj Alam, a younger voter from Bara district favours a change in the guard. In Parsa, former Birgunj mayor Vijay Sarawagi believes that the impact of the "Gen Z protest" has fizzed out. "There is no one major issue for which the people are looking to cast their vote. The Gen Z protest looks to have lost its sheen during the interim government," says Sarawagi.

In tea stalls across the two districts and along the highways that connect to Kathmandu and other parts of the hills, cost of daily essentials and migration of youths to India often crop up in conversation. "We want political stability which is only cornerstone of growth and development," said Madhav Rajpal, a Birgunj-based businessman.

## Florida universities freeze H-1B hiring

Bloomberg

letters@hindustantimes.com

**MIAMI:** Florida's public university system, one of the nation's largest, froze hiring via H-1B visas, emulating a move by Texas to restrict a programme that's become a focal point for President Donald Trump's broader immigration crackdown.

The Board of Governors that oversees Florida's 12 public universities voted 14-to-2 to not hire any candidates who need such visas this year and study whether their past use had disadvantaged US workers. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ordered the board to end the practice in October, claiming universities were using them to replace US citizens. The board members who voted against the measure said it would hurt Florida's ability to attract the best talent. "This sends a message to people looking at Florida that this is not a place where they can come to work," said Carson Dale, a board member who represents the system's 430,000 students and voted against the proposal.

DeSantis said in October that "universities across the country

are importing foreign workers on H-1B visas instead of hiring Americans."

Florida's decision followed a similar move by Texas. The H-1B programme, one of the primary vehicles for bringing skilled, white-collar workers into the country, has been a focus of the administration's crackdown on immigration that includes initiatives aimed at expanding border enforcement and deportations.

In September, Trump issued a proclamation that imposed a new, \$100,000 fee on H-1B applications and prioritised higher-paid applicants. Florida's public universities sought H-1B visas for 600 employees in fiscal 2025, according to US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Across the US, colleges apply for thousands of H-1B visas each year, mainly for laboratories, engineering programs, medical research centers and high-tech fields like artificial intelligence. According to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, just over half of US postdoctoral researchers in the health, engineering and science fields had H-1B or other temporary visas as of 2023.

## TRUMP TOLD ME OF 'SOME GREAT TIMES' WITH EPSTEIN: CLINTON

**WASHINGTON:** Former President Bill Clinton told lawmakers that President Donald Trump told him he had "some great times" with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein before their relationship soured, according to a video released on Monday.

In a videotaped deposition to the House of Representatives Oversight Committee, Clinton said under oath that Trump brought up Epstein at a golf tournament in 2002 or 2003.

"Somehow he knew I had flown in Epstein's aircraft," Clinton said. "He said, 'You know, we had some great times together over the years, but we fell out all because of a real estate deal.' Trump has said the relationship soured after Epstein hired young women who worked at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

## OPENAI CHANGING PENTAGON DEAL, SAYS SAM ALTMAN

**BENGALURU:** OpenAI Chief Executive Sam Altman said on Monday that the ChatGPT-maker is working with the US Department of Defense to make some changes in their agreement.

"We have been working with the DoW (Department of War) to make some additions in our agreement to make our principles very clear," Altman said in a post on X.

Altman said one of the additions to the deal states that the Pentagon has affirmed OpenAI services will not be used by Department of War intelligence agencies (for example, the NSA). Any services to those agencies would require a follow-on modification to our contract. Last week, the AI firm announced a deal to deploy technology in the Defence Department's classified network.

## HT Classifieds {Wednesday}

SCAN THE CODE TO BOOK YOUR ADS ONLINE →



www.htclassifieds.com

## PROPERTY

## SOUTH DELHI

**GK-2 KOTHI 300 sq yd**  
MALIK ESTATES  
9810039071  
KOTHI FOR sale 3 storied + basement S/E, near park, Peaceful Lane. Good opportunity for self users & Builders Call: Sanjay Malik 9810039071 Visit: www.malikestateagents.com

**GREEN PARK KOTHI 200 sq yd**  
MALIK ESTATES  
9810039071  
GREEN PARK kothi for sale 200 sq yd, 2-1/2 storied Freehold West facing peaceful location clean title genuine deal. Call: Sanjay Malik 9810039071 Visit: www.malikestateagents.com

**PANCHSHEEL ENCLAVE KOTHI 260 sq yd**  
MALIK ESTATES  
9810039071  
DOUBLE STORED Duplex, 4 BHK+ Car Parking, with Lawn, East Facing, Peaceful Location, Liveable House close to Park Rare opportunity Call: Sanjay Malik 9810039071

**SAFDARJUNG ENCLAVE KOTHI 260 sq yd**  
MALIK ESTATES  
9810039071  
OPPOSITE TRAUMA Centre, East Facing, 3 storeys, 15 Rooms, Suits Guest House, Nursing Home, Advocates, CA's other Professionals. Call: Sanjay Malik 9810039071

**TARA 9810055500 ANAND NIKETAN 6000sqft Built-up Bmnt+GF+FF**  
D-124, ANAND Niketan 270yds, 81 ment Floor 2nd Floor 6Beds, North East, 3Years Old, Independent Driveway, 3Car Parking, Tara Estate: C-18, FF, C-Bk Mrkt, Vasth Vhr. 9899755500

**TARA 9810055500 S.D.A DDA Independent Building**  
S.D.A DDA Indpt Building Ground/1st Floor 2nd Floor 6Beds, North East, Park Fac, Wide Road, Phold, Luxury Woodwork & well Maintained. Tara Estate C-18, FF, V.Vhr. 9899755500

## SOUTH DELHI

**FRIENDS COLONY EAST PANCHSHEEL ENCLAVE DEFENCE COLONY**  
OUTRIGHT SALE Friends Colony East 233 Yds @ 17.50 Cr. Panchsheel Encl. Corner 260 Yds @ 32 Cr Defence Duplex 217 Yds @ 28 Cr. Multiple Options Available # 999-000-00-50

**TARA 9810055500 VASANT ENCLAVE 1st & 2nd Floor Duplex**  
VASANT ENCLAVE Flat No. 84, HIG Category, 5bedrooms, 175 Sq.mtr Separate Entry on 1st & 2nd Floor Duplex, Exclusive Roof, Call: Tara, Estate C-18, FF, V.Vhr # 9899755500

**SAFDARJUNG ENCL 200/300 yds PRABHAT PANDEY 9810083465**  
SAFDARJUNG ENCLAVE 200/300 Yds Ground + Basement / First Floor Second Floor / Third Floor + Terrace # 9810083465 # 9999785858

**Buniyad 9910000257**  
VASANT VIHAR, 1200 sqyd, First Floor, Sep Gate & Separate driveway, Prime location, wide road, broker excuse #9910000257

**DLF - SUSHANT LOK FOR SALE RENTED SCO**  
Sunil Chandra: 9810980800  
FOR SALE, Rented SCO, Prime Location, Tenant Reputed Bank, Multiple Options, Range 10Cr-20Cr Sunil Chandra 9810980800

**NOIDA/GREATER NOIDA FOR SALE**  
In Sector-47 noida, 300mtr 5BHK duplex house, lease rent one time paid in very prime location Near to metro Connectivity. # 9999011116

**HOLI Special**

**MAGAS AUTOMOTIVE**

Leading Company **ORGANO BIOTECH (P) Limited**

**REQUIRED PARTNER** FOR THEIR JOINT VENTURES, DEALS IN LABORATORY PRODUCTS

Contact : 9968049207

Team Macas Pramod Kumar (GM Mkt.) +91 9810135047

CHANGE OF NAME	CHANGE OF NAME	CHANGE OF NAME
<b>1. PINKY</b> D/o No14330156F Ex L/Haw Late Lakshmi Chand R/o VPO Bhakti, Distt - Rewari (HR). That my name wrongly mentioned Pinky in my father's army record. My correct name is Pinky Kumari, here is a request to correct my name in my father's army record.	<b>1. DEEPAK</b> S/o Kripa Shankar R/o E-28, Ganesh Nagar Complex Pandav Nagar, Delhi 110092 has change my name from Deepak to Deepak Vishwakarma for all future purposes.	<b>1. ARSALIA</b> Bano W/o Akshay Kumar, resident of WZ-255, 80 Yards, Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110018, have changed my name from Arsalia Bano to Akshita for all future purposes.
<b>1. MEHRUNNISHA</b> W/o MD Nasim R/o Gram Payagamberpur, PO Dairma, PO Keoti Ramway, Dist Darbhanga, Bihar -847121, have changed my name to Mehrun Nisha for all future purposes	<b>1. FARZANA</b> Sheikh W/o MD Anzar R/o R-25-B, Flat No. 301, 3rd Flr, Galaxy Aptt, Gali No. 5, Jaga Bai Extn, Okhla, Jamia Nagar, ND-25, have changed my name to Sheikh Farzana Begum Ifthikhar Ahmed for all future purpose	<b>1. SIDHESWAR</b> Mahakud, resident of at Village & Po -Bolang, PS-Singla, District-Balassore, State-Odisha, PIN-756024 have changed my mother name from Ashalata Mahakud to Ashulata Mahakud in my service documents, vide Affidavit dated 28/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi.
<b>1. KARAN</b> Sethi S/o Suresh Sethi R/o, 68-B - Pocket-H, Dilshad Garden, New Delhi-110095. Have Changed my name Karan Kumar to Karan Sethi for all purposes.	<b>1. SAMEER</b> S/o, Hemant Agrawal R/o 1114- Eternia Tower, Mahagun Mezzaria, Sec-78, Noida, UP have changed my name to Sameer Agrawal for all purposes.	<b>1. RAJIV</b> Arora, owner of Inves-0204, Highland Park, Sector 103, Gurugram, hereby inform that the original payment Receipt Nos.:597955, 597956, 597957, 625960, 625961, 625963, 625964, 642432, 2259 and 2270 of total amt. Rs.1877061 have been lost somewhere in Sector-14 Market, Dwarka. If anyone finds the same, kindly contact: 8130422500
<b>1. SUBHASH</b> Chand Jindal S/o Late Sh. Tika Ram Jindal R/o 56-B, B.I. Block, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi - 110088, have changed my name from Subhash Chand Jindal to Subhash Jindal for all future purposes	<b>1. KAUSHAL</b> Sharma W/o. Devender Kumar Sharma R/o MB-27A, Gali No. 2, Shakarpur, Delhi - 110092 have changed my name to Kusum Lata for all future purposes.	<b>1. VISHU</b> Chawla S/o Raj Kumar Chawla R/o AB - 181, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi - 110088, have lost Original Property Document, Possession Letter of BH East, House No. 435 in the name of Lekh Raj Narang. Finder may please contact at above address or Mobile : 9899504344
<b>1. BHUPESH</b> Dumaal S/o Gitesh Singh Badasingh Dumaal permanent R/o At Post - Vijaygopal, Tehsil - Deoli, District - Wardha PIN - 442306 (Maharashtra) and present R/o H. No. 16, HT Hazu Khas, Jia Saraji, Delhi PIN - 110016 have declared with the affidavit that my name as per the School/College record is Bhupesh Dumaal and as per the Aadhaar/PAN Card record is Bhupesh Singh G Dumaal. These both names are of the same person i.e. the declarant of this newspaper announcement. Henceforth I shall be known by the name of Bhupesh Dumaal, for all future purposes.	<b>1. KHUSHI</b> D/o Mr. Sunil Dutt R/o Tower G-082, Indiabulls Enigma, Sector-110, Dwarka Expressway, Gurgaon-122017 have changed my name to Khushi Dutt for all future purposes.	
<b>1. TABASSUM</b> W/o Mohd Nazir Alam R/o C-10/107, Yamuna Vihar PO, Sheelampur, Dist. Shahdara Delhi-110053, have changed my name Tabassum to Tabassum Khatoon for all future purposes also declare both name are one and same person	<b>1. MOHD</b> Nazeer Alam S/o Mohd Waris R/o C-10/107, Yamuna Vihar PO Sheelampur, Dist. Shahdara New Delhi -53, has changed my name Mohd Nazeer Alam to Mohd Nazir Alam for all future purposes also declare both name are one and same person	
<b>1. ABHISHEK</b> S/o Braham Vir Singh, R/o H.No. 31, AMBA Enclave, Plot No. 28/1, Sec-9, Rohini, Delhi-110085, declare that Abhishek & Abhishek Nashier is one & same person. Hereafter I will be known as Abhishek Nashier for all future purposes.	<b>1. HARSH</b> S/o Mr. Sunil Dutt R/o Tower G-082, Indiabulls Enigma, Sector-110, Dwarka Expressway, Gurgaon-122017 have changed my name to Harsh Dutt for all future purposes.	
	<b>1. SUNITA</b> Sahoo W/o Sh. Rajkumar Sahoo R/o H.No. 0/31, 2nd Floor, Sector-88, Khari Kalan, Faridabad, Haryana-121002 have changed my name from Sunita Rani Bisoyi to Sunita Sahoo for all future purposes.	

## LOST &amp; FOUND

**THIS IS** to inform that I, Madhulika Taneja allottee of A-2/400, DLF Garden City Enclave, Sector 93, Gurgaon have lost 5 original receipts of this property. Finder may contact: 9810027855

**LOSS** of Original Receipts Nos. 485720 dt.12/12/2011 Rs.600000, 485892 dt.13/12/2011 Rs.200000, 489328 dt.10/01/2012 Rs. 500000, 490096 dt.16/01/2012 Rs.17000, 496135 dt. 02/03/2012 Rs. 200000, 508233 dt. 07/06/2012 Rs.200000, 516363 dt. 21/08/2012 Rs.193133.4, 532679 dt. 18/02/2013 Rs.17813.6, 55976 dt. 14/10/2013 Rs.268702.31, 582708 dt.02/07/2014 Rs.2185540, 582711 dt.02/07/2014 Rs.529900, 585478 dt.28/07/2014 Rs.268485, 586895 dt.12/08/2014 Rs.536970, 593913 dt.07/11/2014 Rs.130000, 595728 dt.29/11/2014 Rs.329536, 600477 dt.19/01/2015 Rs.260445, 603044 dt.23/02/2015 Rs.40679,605803 dt.01/04/2015 Rs.258665, 623538 dt.08/02/2016 Rs.26102,0517 dt.14/03/2017 Rs.2186, 70135 dt.06/03/2024 Rs.46689.63, 703088 dt.09/07/2024 Rs.57581, 703091 dt.09/07/2024 Rs.60719, against unit No. E-0105 of Ansal Heights Sec-86, Gurgaon Lost at Delhi. If found please contact Mr. Leela Krishna Tiku R/o Flat No-2058 Tower 12A Purvanchal Royal City, Sector CH Ghaziabad, Noida, YTC, Greater Noida, PO: Knowledge Park-I District: Gautam Buddha Nagar, State: Uttar Pradesh, PIN Code: 201310. Ph:9871353355

## PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE (REVOCAION)**  
Be it known to the general public that the Public Notice earlier published on behalf of my clients, Mr. Harvinder Bir Singh, S/o Late Sh. Bhog Singh, and Mrs. Ravinder Kaur, W/o. Sh. Harvinder Bir Singh, residents of BM-103, West Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, regarding severance of relations and disowning of their son Mr. Harshant Singh and his wife Mrs. Harmanjit Kaur, published in Virat Vaibhav and The Sikh Times newspapers dated 08th September 2017, is hereby revoked, cancelled, and withdrawn with immediate effect. The said Public Notice dated 08th September 2017 shall henceforth be treated as null and void and shall have no legal effect whatsoever. Accordingly, the aforesaid Public Notice shall not be acted upon, relied upon, or referred to by any person, authority, bank, institution, or third party for any purpose whatsoever. This revocation is issued to clarify the true and present position. The general public and all concerned are hereby informed accordingly.

Regards, **VANSH LUTHRA ADVOCATE**  
214, S-Block, Delhi High Court, New Delhi - 110003

**HT Classifieds FOR PROPERTY RELATED ADS**

Please Contact **Abhishek Tiwari 9899865804** **Gaurav 8630242501**

**HT Classifieds For classifieds advertising in any of the categories mentioned below**

**BUSINESS**  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
**EDUCATION**  
**RETAIL**  
**PROPERTY**  
**MATRIMONIAL**

Please contact our team on the numbers mentioned below:

Categories	Contact Person	Mobile No.
Business & Retail	Gaurav Sharma	9811226779
Property	Abhishek Tiwari & Gaurav	9899865804 8630242501
Matrimonial & Education	Ranjeet Singh	991891905
Employment	Shivani Jaitly	8920481741
Automobiles & B2B	Vishal Sachdeva	9910249013

Direct Line : 011-6656-1139 Telebooking : 1800-103-1800

**Have fun with facts on Sundays**

Catch the latest column of **HT TWTW** THE WEEK THAT WAS

A quiz on the week's development.

HT TWTW  
Take a cue from the clues

HT wknd  
Up to the task

HT FIRST VOICE: LAST WORD

# Govt sets up task force as West Asia conflict threatens cargo shipments

**Rajeev Jayaswal**  
rajeev.jayaswal@htlive.com

**NEW DELHI:** The government has constituted an inter-ministerial group (IMG) to ensure India's supply chain resilience amid the war in West Asia, Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

"Today, a consultation meeting was held with all stakeholder ministries, key logistics and trade facilitation partners to review the emerging geopolitical situation and its potential impact on India's Exports and Imports," he said in a post on X.

The government's readiness to facilitate trade operations was reiterated through measures such as procedural flexibility in export-related authorisations, coordination with customs and port authorities to ensure smooth clearance, and engagement with financial and insurance institutions to safeguard exporter interests, he said.

"In this context, the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) for Supply Chain Resilience' has been created, comprising members from Department of Financial Services, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Shipping, Ports & Waterways, Ministry of



Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal. PH

Petroleum & Natural Gas and Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, to facilitate effective coordination, monitoring and follow-up," he said.

"Government under PM @NarendraModi ji's leadership remains firmly committed to enabling a stable and responsive trade environment for our traders and exporters, safeguarding their interests and ensuring seamless operations," he added.

The ministry had on Monday convened an interdepartmental meeting along with other stakeholders to assess the emerging situation regarding both exports and imports. "Stakeholders presented an assessment of the evolving operational environment, including routing and transit-time changes, vessel scheduling adjustments, container/equipment availability, freight and insurance cost

trends, and implications for time-sensitive exports," the ministry said in a statement.

"The discussions covered the need to maintain predictability in cargo movement, minimise avoidable delays, and ensure seamless documentation and payment processes for exporters and importers," it said. The meeting was chaired by commerce department's special secretary Suchindra Misra and director general of foreign trade (DGFT) Lav Agarwal and was attended by representatives from logistics operators and shipping lines, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and ministries of petroleum, ports, shipping and waterways. Officials of export promotion bodies were also present in the meeting.

The commerce department reiterated the government's priority of ensuring continuity of export-import (EXIM) logistics and mitigating any disruptions to India's trade flows, the ministry said in the statement. "It was emphasised that the approach will remain facilitative and coordinated, with a focus on maintaining supply chain resilience,

protecting the interests of exporters—particularly MSMEs—with a view that essential imports required for domestic production and consumption are not adversely affected," it said.

During the meeting it was agreed by the stakeholders to maintain close, real-time coordination for monitoring route and capacity developments, surcharges, and equipment availability, it said. Mechanisms for facilitation of time-sensitive export segments such as perishables, pharmaceuticals, and high-value manufactured exports were also discussed. The meeting emphasised strengthening facilitation at ports and ensuring smooth cargo evacuation to avoid congestion and extended dwell times, it said.

"The Government reiterated its readiness to facilitate trade operations, including, procedural flexibility in export-related authorisations in cases of genuine disruption; coordination with customs authorities to ensure smooth clearance; engagement with financial and insurance institutions to support exporter interests; and continued inter-ministerial coordination," the statement said.

## ALUMINIUM RALLIES AS IRAN CRISIS PROMPTS QATAR TO HALT OUTPUT

**Bloomberg**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

Aluminium jumped after Qatar's state-owned energy producer said it would halt output of the metal as the Iran war throttles supply lines for smelters throughout the Middle East.

Prices rallied as much as 3.8% in London before paring some gains. QatarEnergy halted the production of aluminium and some chemicals, as it grappled with the consequences of Iranian attacks that forced the shutdown of its major liquefied natural gas plant.

QatarEnergy holds a 50% stake in Qatalum, a major regional joint-venture partner Norsk Hydro ASA. Hydro subsequently said the specific implications for aluminium production at Qatalum are currently unclear and Hydro is seeking to obtain more information.

Aluminium has bucked a broader downturn in metals markets as the Iran crisis deepens, with traders focused on potential supply dislocations or production cuts in a region responsible for about 9% of global output.

Copper fell more than 2% in London amid steep losses in stocks, bonds and currencies as the widening war in Iran reverberates through global markets.

Iran has stepped up its response to US-Israeli attacks by targeting US allies, and President Donald Trump has said there is no fixed timeline for his military action. The State Department urged Americans to leave countries across the Middle East, citing "serious safety risks" amid dangers from the war.

Qatar's announcement adds to signs of growing stress for producers in the region and their customers in markets spanning Asia, Europe and the US.

# PM Modi urges quality push to power exports

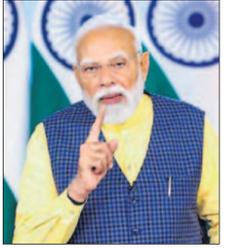
**Rajeev Jayaswal**  
rajeev.jayaswal@htlive.com

**NEW DELHI:** Rapid progress of the Indian economy is a major foundation for a Viksit Bharat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, reiterating the resolve to "build more, produce more, connect more" and emphasising "export more" by enhancing the quality of Indian products to take full benefit of the recently signed major free trade agreements (FTAs).

"India has signed free trade agreements with many countries. A huge avenue of opportunities has opened up for us. In such a situation, it is our responsibility not to compromise on quality. If we are to focus our maximum strength, intelligence, power, and understanding on one thing, then we must place a strong emphasis on quality. The quality of our products must meet global standards, and not only that, but even better [than the global standard]," he said while addressing the second edition of the budget webinar series, which focused on "Sustaining and Strengthening Economic Growth".

India is the fastest-growing major economy of the world. According to the National Statistics Office's (NSO) GDP numbers with revised base year released on February 27, the Indian economy is projected to grow by 7.6% in 2025-26, higher than the previous estimate of 7.4% under the old data series. Experts are optimistic that the high growth rate would be sustained because of several key FTAs concluded by India. In its latest edition of Economic Watch, EY said: "In the background of India's extensive bilateral trade agreements with other major economies or economic groups, India's medium-term prospects have brightened up. We estimate India's real GDP growth to be in the range of 6.8-7.2% in FY27."

Speaking at the EY Entrepreneur of the Year awards in Mumbai on February 25, Union com-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ANI

merce minister Piyush Goyal spoke about India's expanding global trade footprint as New Delhi concludes nine FTAs covering 38 nations, giving Indian businesses preferential access to nearly two-thirds of global trade. "These agreements will help Indian goods, services, agricultural and fisheries products, and labour-intensive sectors reach new markets, integrate into global value chains and enhance talent mobility," he said. India has recently concluded FTAs with several countries, such as Australia, the UAE, the UK, the EU, New Zealand and Oman, newly finalised a deal with the US and engaged with Canada and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The Prime Minister on Tuesday pointed at these emerging opportunities and said: "To achieve this, we will have to study, research, and understand the needs of other countries and the expectations of their people. We need to study the preferences and comfort levels of people in other countries," he said, emphasising on the need to invest on innovation and quality. "Quality creates a golden opportunity for us in this competitive world today. We must manufacture user-friendly products to meet these needs. Only then will we be able to capitalise on these opportunities. With the free trade agreement now in place, this highway of development is ready for you," he said.

# Gas regulator preps new storage plan as war blocks supplies

**Rituraj Baruah**  
rituraj.baruah@livemint.com

**NEW DELHI:** India's energy regulator is moving to plug a widening hole in the country's gas supply chain as the conflict in West Asia threatens supplies of natural gas that is vital to power, fertiliser and city gas distribution networks.

According to two people aware of developments, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is preparing to propose overground

storage facilities for natural gas near the country's existing LNG (liquefied natural gas) terminals—India currently has eight such terminals. The storage would be used for both commercial purposes and for strategic requirements during exigencies, they said. "PNGRB may propose the government to set up storage reserves for LNG, preferably near existing terminals to support India's growing demand at times of exigencies and ensure energy security," one of the two people said on the condition of

anonymity, adding that the regulator would approach the ministry of petroleum and natural gas to frame rules under the PNGRB Act.

The urgency follows a halt in tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which carries more than half of India's LNG imports, and a spike in prices of LNG after an attack on QatarEnergy's Ras Laffan complex on Monday.

The move assumes significance considering India imports 55% of its gas requirement and holds barely 20 days of inven-

tory—including supplies in transit. In terms of LNG, India has stocks of up to 21 days, the officials said. Natural gas imports stood at \$14.9 billion in FY25, according to data from Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, of which Qatar's share was about 50%. According to government data, natural gas accounts for about 7% of India's energy basket and the government aims to take it to 15% by 2030.

Another person said the regulator was of the view that a surcharge may be imposed on the

usage of gas to fund construction of the reserves. "The surcharge would support the capex (capital expenditure) and do away with the need for viability gap funding for such projects," the second person said, also requesting anonymity. This person added that overground storage facilities would require a shorter construction period and lower capex compared to underground salt cavern-based strategic reserves.

Queries emailed to the regulator remained unanswered till press time.

# India-Japan talks on rare earths advance

**Reuters**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Japan is in talks with India to jointly explore rare earth deposits in the desert state of Rajasthan, two people familiar with the discussions said, as Tokyo seeks to reduce reliance on China for supplies critical to magnet manufacturing.

Last month, India's mines minister G. Kishan Reddy said three hard rock rare earth deposits containing 1.29 million tonnes (mt) of rare earth oxides had been identified in Rajasthan and Gujarat in western India.

Following on a preliminary agreement on critical minerals that Japan and India signed last year, Tokyo has expressed interest in the Rajasthan deposits and plans to send experts to the site, said the people, who are directly involved in the decision-making. They declined to be named as the deliberations were not public. They did not say when those experts were due to arrive.

In Rajasthan, the Japanese

government would be looking to provide technology for extraction as well as funding in exchange for a stable offtake of rare earths to be taken to Japan, the people said, adding that hard rock deposits required extraction techniques that India does not have currently.

India's ministry of mines and the Japanese embassy did not respond to Reuters emails seeking comment.

Japan is examining mining projects worldwide to diversify mineral supplies, including rare earths, Naoki Kobayashi, deputy director at Japan's ministry of economy, trade and industry, told Reuters.

However, Kobayashi denied any discussion on specific corporate partnerships or technology provision in Rajasthan.

Like Japan, India also wants to cut dependence on Chinese imports. Rare earths are essential for permanent magnets—used in electric vehicle motors, wind turbines, fighter jets and drones—critical for India.

# Farm, construction equipment face major emission overhaul

**Soumya Chatterjee**  
soumya.chatterjee@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has proposed new emission standards for tractors, harvesters, power tillers and construction equipment.

The ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH) proposed tightening Rule 115A of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, by introducing TREM Stage V (Tractor Emission Stage V) norms for agricultural machinery and strengthening CEV Stage V (Construction Equipment Vehicle Stage V) standards for construction equipment through a draft notification issued on Friday. The public can submit comments to the draft in the next 30 days.

In the tractor engine segment between 56 to 560 kilowatts, particulate matter limits will be cut by 40%, from October 1, 2026. For the first time, manufacturers in this segment will also have to control not just the weight of particles emitted but the number of particles released, a move that effectively pushes companies

**IN THE TRACTOR ENGINE SEGMENT BETWEEN 56 TO 560 KW, PARTICULATE MATTER LIMITS WILL BE CUT BY 40%, FROM OCT 1**

towards advanced emission control technologies.

The 37-56 kW category will see a similar 40% tightening, though with a longer runway. These engines will shift to the stricter limit from April 1, 2032.

The most dramatic change is proposed for smaller tractors in the 19-37 kW range. This segment will first move to an intermediate standard in 2028 and then, by April 1, 2032, shift to Stage V limits. Between the current and final stage, particulate emissions in this category are set to fall by nearly 96%, marking one of the steepest reductions across segments.

Higher-powered engines above 560 kW will also come under Stage V norms from Octo-

ber 1, 2026, bringing them into a tighter regulatory net.

"The draft TREM regulations take India part of the way toward global emission standards but stop short where it matters most. While tractors below 25 hp (horsepower) and above 75 hp will move to TREM V by 2026, matching the EU and surpassing the US, the 25 to 50 hp segment, which makes up half the domestic market, will remain on outdated norms until 2032," said Aravind Harikumar, who leads off-road decarbonisation research in India for The International Council on Clean Transportation.

He added, "This delay means India will continue allowing tractors that emit 20 to 40 times more particulate matter than those sold in the US and EU. Even the interim TREM IIIA standard proposed for 2028 still permits particulate matter levels about 20 times higher than TREM V. This risks locking in highly polluting tractors for the next decade and undermining gains from cleaner vehicles and fuels elsewhere."

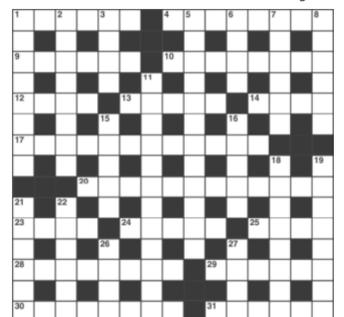
## { THE CROSSWORDS }

### CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Soldier with papers in order (6)
  - How mince is cooked by Chinese? (4,4)
  - I misdo translations due to language peculiarities (6)
  - Downtour makes it hard to see (8)
  - The way to travel to gain time (4)
  - Fun and games in Parliament (5)
  - It must have been sunk skiffily (4)
  - Hard case for the beautician? (4,8)
  - Prospective challenge faced by shop assistants? (12)
  - People go crazy running this way (4)
  - Recreation wear (5)
  - Jewish priest of evil disposition (4)
  - Supporter leaped exultantly about the street (8)
  - Could be Mr A to Z of music (6)
  - Act a central role then quit (8)
  - Trojan bully (6)
- DOWN**
- Files put in the wrong order with malicious intent (8)
  - International shipping line (8)
  - She takes me up to mother (4)
  - To be frank the throat and ear need treatment (5-2-5)
  - Good evidence of a beating? (4)
  - Wiped out as deer may well be (6)
  - A weedy type and stinky (6)
  - Period of overtaking on the road? (7,5)
  - He may play a drunken Croat (5)
  - Period of calm for one after exercising (5)
  - Join in but don't seize the lot (4,4)
  - Make me turn sharp and sour (8)
  - Touched for a drink (6)
  - Support played (4,2)
  - New star stayed a major role in Russia (4)
  - Nothing can be blamed for world revolution (4)

### PUZZLE 17424

© Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



### QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Western US state (6)
  - Produce routinely (5,3)
  - Defame (6)
  - Often experienced (8)
  - No longer alive (4)
  - Mutual harmony (5)
  - Fit of peevish annoyance (4)
  - Let oneself be seen (4,4,4)
  - Neutral mediator (6,6)
  - Enfold (4)
  - Abnormally large (5)
  - Power of holding attention (4)
  - East African country (8)
  - Fencing sword (6)
  - Generous (8)
  - Powerful (6)
- DOWN**
- Author of fiction (8)
  - Exercise of the will (8)
  - Adroit (4)
  - Cruel nature (5,2,5)
  - Pour down (4)
  - Abominable (6)
  - Table of fixed charges (6)
  - Before noon (4,8)
  - Giver (5)
  - Widespread alarm (5)
  - Minor military engagement (8)
  - An attribute (8)
  - Transfer (6)
  - Automatic gun on aircraft (6)
  - Gather in large body (4)
  - Vehicle for hire (4)

### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (17423)

**CRYPTIC**

S N A P S   C O N T E S T  
E N L U I G A  
R I D A T R O C I O U S  
V R N A O T  
A M O N G S T S T A K E  
N M E I L  
T H E O R Y D A R I N G  
D E E G A  
S T A G E M A R S H A L  
I F F B A T T L  
T U R N E D O U T I G E  
E O R S I N O  
D R E S S E S O R G A N

**QUICK**

B A B E L L I A I S O N  
E I T E M A A  
L O G G R E E N E Y E D  
G H H W E I  
T N E R I T A S O B E R  
U A V T A  
M O D I F Y C Y P R U S  
E G O E I  
O L D E R H U R T F U L  
F O R E A R M E D C O N  
E U R M E E C  
R I G I D L Y R I D G E

### { SUDOKU }      DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★★★

			4					
4		8				2	9	
	3			7		5	1	
							3	5
1	5	7		6		4	2	
6	2							
2	8	4				6		
7	4				5		8	
			9					

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

**GAME ZONE:** Scan the QR code for more daily puzzles and brain teasers

# Apple debuts more M5 chips with MacBook Pro

**Vishal Mathur**  
vishal.mathur@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Apple's week of product announcements shifted focus to Apple Silicon on Tuesday, with the debut of the M5 Pro and M5 Max chips in the new 14-inch and 16-inch MacBook Pro models. The MacBook Air has also got a generational refresh with the M5 chip, bringing the latest silicon across Apple's mainstream laptop lineup.

The M5 Pro and M5 Max chips introduce what the tech giant calls a Fusion Architecture, which combines two dies into a single system-on-a-chip. This enables higher bandwidth and lower latency, while integrating a new CPU, a scalable graphics chip, a neural engine and unified memory. The chips will feature architectural similarities, such as an 18-core CPU with six super cores and 12 all-new performance cores, though in different



The M5 Pro, M5 Max feature a Fusion Architecture combining two dies into one system-on-a-chip.

states of tune.

Apple says the M5 Pro chip gets an up to 18-core CPU with an up to 20-core GPU, with a Neural Accelerator in each core for AI compute. This has four additional CPU cores compared to M4 Pro, which means an up to 30% performance boost. The M5

Max gets an up to 40-core GPU, supporting up to 128GB of unified memory, and the new CPU architecture is up to 15% faster than the M4 Max.

The Apple MacBook Air with M5 (not to be confused with the M5 Pro or M5 Max) succeeds the M4, with improvements includ-

ing double the starting storage capacity at 512GB, faster SSD performance, and Apple's N1 wireless chip with Wi-Fi 7 support. The MacBook Air will be available in 13-inch and 15-inch models.

The 13-inch MacBook Air with M5 will be priced ₹1,19,900

onwards while the 15-inch MacBook Air with M5 will cost ₹1,44,900 onwards.

The 14-inch MacBook Pro and the 16-inch MacBook Pro now offer the choice of the M5 Pro and M5 Max chips, alongside the already available M5 option. Here too, base storage has been doubled, with the M5 Pro machines configured with at least 1TB storage and the M5 Max arriving with at least 2TB storage—much like the MacBook Air with M5's faster SSD upgrade, the MacBook Pro with M5 Pro and M5 Max will also get 2x faster SSD. Apple says these MacBook Pro iterations deliver up to 24 hours of battery life.

In India, the 14-inch MacBook Pro with M5 Pro starts at ₹2,49,900, while iterations with the M5 Max chip start at ₹3,99,900. The 16-inch MacBook Pro with M5 Pro is priced at ₹2,99,900, while the same screen size with the M5 Max chip will cost at least ₹4,29,900.

## { WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE **HIGH** **LOW**

**WEDNESDAY**  
Strong surface winds during day time  
33°C | 16°C

**THURSDAY**  
Strong surface winds during day time  
34°C | 18°C

**FRIDAY**  
Mainly clear sky  
34°C | 17°C

## ALMANAC

Today is 4th March 2026  
14 Ramadan, 1447  
07 Chaitra, Krishna Paksha, 01  
Sunset: Wednesday at 06:22 p.m.  
Sunrise: Thursday at 06:42 a.m.  
Moonset: Wednesday at 07:02 a.m.  
Moonrise: Wednesday at 07:20 p.m.

## TEMPERATURE IN METROS

Delhi 33°C | 16°C  
Mumbai 37°C | 22°C  
Kolkata 33°C | 22°C  
Chennai 34°C | 23°C

**Northern Coalfields Limited**  
(A subsidiary of Coal India Limited)  
**Tender Notice**

All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, works and Services are available on website of Coal India Limited [www.coalindia.in](http://www.coalindia.in) / respective subsidiary Company. CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> & central public procurement portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal <https://gem.gov.in>.

**Government of Gujarat**  
**Narmada, Water Resources, Water Supply & Kalpsar Department, Gandhinagar**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE 17 of 2025-26**

(1) Name of Work:-	Providing, Fabricating, Supplying, Erecting, Testing & Commissioning of 60T Gantry Crane-I No. with 10T Auxiliary Hoist with Complete Electrification work including control panel, control cables, cable reeling drum, all cables etc., with all accessories with all fitting, etc. complete and replacement of crane rails, with dismantling existing rails including breaking of second stage cement concrete of rail track embedded in spillway slab and Providing & Erection of new Rail with embedded parts, cement concrete of rail track for Panam Reservoir Project as per the Drawings & specifications.
(2) Estimated Cost	Rs. 82,48,245.00
(3) Pre-Bid Meeting (Off line)	On 10/03/2026 at 12.00 Hrs.
(4) Last Date/Time for receipt of Tender (ON LINE)	On 27/03/2026 upto 16.00 Hrs.
(5) Name & Address of the Executive Engineer Concerned:	Executive Engineer Irrigation Mechanical Gate & Store Division No.1, Baroda Heights, MIG-"D" Block, 10th Floor, Room No.1001,1002, Near Bankers Hospital Manjalpur, Vadodra-390009.
(6) Further details can be downloaded from <a href="http://www.tendersprocure.com">www.tendersprocure.com</a> and also seen on Information & Broadcasting Department's website <a href="http://www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in">www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in</a> Any kind of amendments will be published only online & it will be consider final & binding to all bidders.	(INF-VAD-1564-25-26)

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Name of work and its location : 34-R2-SRDEE-G-DLI-2025-26  
Repair, servicing, overhauling & strengthening of 11 KV HT installation at colonies over DLI division.

Approx cost of the works in : Rs. 1,43,93,868/-  
Address of the office : Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.  
Earnest Money : Rs. 2,22,000.00/-  
Last Date & time of submission of tender : 25.03.2026, 16.00 Hrs.  
Opening of tender : 25.03.2026, 16.00 Hrs.  
Website & notice board : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 729/2026

**माध्यमिक शिक्षा मण्डल मध्यप्रदेश**  
**भोपाल**

ई-मेल : [mpbse@mp.nic.in](mailto:mpbse@mp.nic.in) वेबसाइट : [mpbse.nic.in](http://mpbse.nic.in)  
फोन : कार्या. : (0755) 2551650, फैक्स : (0755) 2552061  
क्रमांक/3169/क्रय/2026 भोपाल, दिनांक : 03.03.2026

**निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना**

वर्ष 2026-27 में मण्डल के विभिन्न कक्षाएं एवं सहायकी कार्यालयों की आवश्यकतानुसार कम्प्यूटर कन्स्यूमेबल सामग्री क्रय हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उक्त निविदा वेबसाइट <https://mptenders.gov.in> के माध्यम से केवल ऑनलाइन प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। ऑनलाइन निविदा प्रस्तुत करने हेतु विस्तृत प्रक्रिया Annexure-III पर स्थाई गई है। निविदा से संबंधित महत्वपूर्ण तिथियां (Key Dates & Time) निम्नानुसार हैं:-

- 1) Tender Publishing Date : 05.03.2026 at 05:00 P.M.
- 2) Tender Purchase Start Date : 06.03.2026 at 05:00 P.M.
- 3) Bid Submission Start Date : 06.03.2026 at 05:00 P.M.
- 4) Bid Submission Closing Date : 26.03.2026 up to 03:00 P.M.
- 5) Technical Bid Opening : 27.03.2026 at 03:30 P.M.
- 6) Commercial Bid Opening : 30.03.2026 at 03:00 P.M.

म.प्र. माध्यम/124745/2026 सचिव

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)  
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in) (Phone No. 01881-275289)  
E-mail: [se-hq-gssstp-ropar@pspcil.in](mailto:se-hq-gssstp-ropar@pspcil.in)

E-Tender Enquiry No. 712/P-2/EMPW-13254 Dated: 16.02.2026

Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Purchase Cell-2) GGSSTP, Ropar invites E-Tender ID No. 2026\_POWER\_160381\_1 for Hiring consultant for Flexible operation implementation as per CEA guidelines on 4x210 MW Units of GGSSTP, Ropar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 16.02.2026 onwards.

Note: Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
RO No. 1079/12/2025/26/9043 RTP-28/26

**Government of Gujarat N.W.R.W.S AND K.DEPT.**  
Ex. Engr. Irr. Mech. Gate & Store Dn. No.1, Baroda Heights, MIG-"D" Block, 10th Floor, Room No.1001,1002, Near Banker Hospital, Manjalpur, Vadodra-390 009  
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. - (19) OF 2025-26

On behalf of The Governor of Gujarat state Online tender is invited for following works in S.B.D. form is invited by Above office, from the contractor who are registered in appropriate class/above in approved list of Contractors with the Government of Gujarat in Narmada, Water, Resources, Water Supply and Kalpsar Department or R&B Deptt. of Gujarat state. (1) Name of work:- Dismantling existing parts of Radial Gate and Providing Fabricating and Erecting New Gate leaf assembly, horizontal girders, Arms assembly, Turn buckle assembly, Hoist Platform, chequered plate and hand railing, Hoist mechanism parts, C.D unit and E.R unit cover, strengthening of foot-bridge of Radial Gate size 41'x27' - 10 no's and Replacement of work of R.B.H.R and L.B.H.R. gates and Hoist platform and walk-way chequered plate and Replacement of rubber seal of stoplog gates as per the Drawings & Specifications for Sukhi Irrigation Project. (2) Estimate cost - RS.5,49,52,101.00 (3) Last date for receipt of online tender 01/04/2026 up to 18.00 hrs. (4) Opening of Online Tender- Dt.02/04/2026 at 12.00 Hrs at the office of the superintending engineer, Irr. Mech. Circle No.1 Room 1,813, "E" Block, 8th Floor, Kuber Bhavan, 1 Kothi Compound, Vadodra-390 001 (5) Only Tender fee, EMD & Affidavit in Physical form submission Date: 10/02/2026 up to 18-00 hrs. At the office of the superintending engineer, Irr. Mech. Circle No.1 Room No.813, "E" Block, 8th Floor, Kuber Bhavan, Kothi Compound, Vadodra and other documents should have to scan online only. (6) Above tender can be seen & submitted online from the web site [www.tendersprocure.com](http://www.tendersprocure.com) and [www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in](http://www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in) (7) Any kind of amendments will be published only on online & it will be final & binding to all.

(INF-VAD-1561-25-26)

**मध्यप्रदेश पुलिस आवास एवं अधोसंरचना विकास निगम**  
कार्यालय परियोजना यंत्री, इन्दौर संभाग क्र.-1  
जी-13, प्रथम तल, एम.आई.जी. कॉलोनी, क्रिश्चियन एमिनेंट स्कूल के पीछे, इंदौर, मध्यप्रदेश : 9425601533

**निविदा सूचना क्र. 17/2025-26**

मध्यप्रदेश पुलिस आवास एवं अधोसंरचना विकास निगम, इन्दौर संभाग क्र. 1, इन्दौर द्वारा पुलिस आयुक्त कार्यालय भवन का निर्माण कार्य, ए.बी. रोड, इन्दौर; अनुमानित लागत रु. 24.81 करोड़ हेतु निविदा (क्र. 2026 - MPPHC\_486654) आमंत्रित की गई है। विस्तृत निविदा सूचना एवं अर्थ विकरण Portal : <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर देखे जा सकते हैं।  
म.प्र. माध्यम/124738/2026 परियोजना यंत्री

**कार्यालय कलेक्टर (आदिवासी विकास शाखा),**  
**जिला - रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)**  
**ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना**  
**Portal: <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>**

क्रमांक/8276/आवि/निर्माण/न.क्र./ 2025-26 रायगढ़,  
दिनांक 27/2/2026

छत्तीसगढ़ शासन, लोक निर्माण विभाग में पंजीकृत टेकेदारों से मिले के अनुरूप संचालित निम्नलिखित कार्य नवीन ई-पंजीयन में पंजीकृत टेकेदार हेतु दिनांक 12.03.2026 तक निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	निविदा क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	लागत (लाखों में)
1	186536	पो.मै. आदिवासी कन्या छात्रावास छाल वि.ख. धरमजयगढ़ भवन निर्माण कार्य।	286.46

निविदा में भाग लेने की प्रक्रिया एवं निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी Portal : <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> में देखी जा सकती है।  
सहायक आयुक्त आदिवासी विकास रायगढ़  
G-252606996/3

**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION NAGROTA**

**SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Short e-NIT No. 87 of 2025-2026/Nagrota Dated: 25.02.2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Name of Division	Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Permanent Restoration of Jagti road to Nagrota Jammu Damaged on 26th to 30th August 2025 (2nd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	5.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	07 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A & B Class
2	Permanent Restoration of Seri Pandit to Dhar Dharochan Road by way of Providing and Laying T-Wire Crates at Km 5th. (2nd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	39.29	600	2% of Advertised Cost	03 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A & B Class
3	Construction of road from Main road Kupper to mohalla Gujra via house of Fateh Ali & Others. (Under UT Capex 2025-26)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	29.13	600	2% of Advertised Cost	03 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A & B Class
4	Permanent Restoration of Road by way of P/L of T-Wire Crates on Road from Manga to Sanan Palla Jammu Damaged on 26th to 30th August 2025. (2nd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	8.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	01 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
5	Permanent Restoration of Road by way of P/L of T-Wire Crates on Road from Dumuni to Kal Grah Jammu Damaged on 26th to 30th August 2025. (2nd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	20.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	02 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B & C Class
6	Permanent Restoration of Road from Marh to Dunga. (2nd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	15.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	02 Month	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
7	Restoration of Road from Devak to Bhawani and other allied links. (Length 3.50 km) (Under Capex Budget). (3rd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	9.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	20 Days	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
8	Removal of Pot Holes on J. A Road Km 16th to 28th and allied links Manually. (Under Pot Holes Programme 2025-26) (3rd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	5.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	15 Days	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
9	Removal of Pot Holes on Upper Thather link road. (Under Pot Holes Programme 2025-26) (3rd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	13.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	15 Days	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
10	Removal of Pot Holes on link road to Gurha Brahmana Opp. Radha Swami Satsang. (Under Pot Holes Programme 2025-26) (3rd Call)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	10.00	600	2% of Advertised Cost	15 Days	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class
11	Construction of Link road from Choudhary cement store to H/O Pintu Kumar via Baglamukhi Mandir, Mishriwala (Under Non Plan)	PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota	10.32	600	2% of Advertised Cost	30 Days	(1300 Hrs) on or after 12.03.2026	A, B, C & D Class

**Position of AAA : Accorded.**  
The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q.), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://ktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:-

Sr.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25.02.2026
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25.02.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 02.03.2026 to 11.03.2026 upto 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	XXXXXXXX at XXXX Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota
4	Bid submission Start Date	02.03.2026
5	Bid Submission End Date	11.03.2026 upto 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	12.03.2026 on or after 1300 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MH 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota and upload the same i.e. treasury challan / receipt, Earnest Money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota. The CDR/FDR/BG. The date of earnest money/Bid Security should be with the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota at the time of allotment.
2. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after due date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder needs not to make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids.
3. The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Website [www.ktenders.gov.in](http://www.ktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota. The date for same shall be intimated separately.
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
5. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if :-
  - a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
  - b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issue of letter of acceptance.
  - c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement on same day of allotment of work contract as per Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department Jammu's Circular No. CEJ/G/12660-87 dated 07.10.2021.
6. **Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.**
  - 6.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.ktenders.gov.in](http://www.ktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.
  - 6.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
  - 6.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
  - 6.4 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
  - 6.5 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBD with technical bid online.

No. - EE/ND/2025-26/9564-73 Sd/-  
Dated: 25.02.2026 Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Nagrota

DIP-J-12312-25

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Tender Notice Invitation of**  
**Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)**

N.I.T. No.	33 (A, B, C, D)/25-26/WE
<b>Name of work with its location</b>	A. Annual maintenance of Lawn/Parks & hedge in the S/o SSE/Hort./NDLS under ADEN/Hort./NDLS. B. Supply & maintenance of indoor well developed ornamental potted plants, average 11" to 5" on trellis basis at CRS Office, Northern Circle, CRIS Complex, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi in the S/o SSE/Hort./SOJ for two years and in HQ office Baroda House in the S/o SSE/Hort./BH and in DRM office New Delhi, CPMSGU, Control Room in TRM office New Delhi, C/CRS office, Railway Board Media Centre, TA Building and at NRCH main Administrative building in the S/o SSE/Hort./NDLS under ADEN/Hort./NDLS. C. Annual Supply of Horticulture material in the S/o SSE/Hort./BH & JE/Hort./HNZM under ADEN/Hort./NDLS. D. Annual Supply of Horticulture Material in the S/o SSE/Hort./SPM & SSE/Hort./SOJ under ADEN/Hort./NDLS.
<b>Approx. Cost of work:</b>	A. ₹74,99,999/- B. ₹2,91,20,546.40 C. ₹74,96,440.65 D. ₹99,99,938.27
<b>EMD Amount</b>	A. ₹1,50,000/- B. ₹2,95,600/- C. ₹1,49,900/- D. ₹2,00,000/-
<b>Completion period of work</b>	A. 16 Months B. 24 Months C. & D. 12 Months
<b>Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender</b>	Closing date of tender on 27.03.2026 at 15:00 hrs.
<b>Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.</b>	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>
<b>No. : 128-W/269/O.E.T./NIT No. 33 (A,B,C,D)/25-26/WE Dated: 03.03.2026</b>	728/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**

**Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)**  
The Divisional Engineer/IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work.

1. **Name of work with its location** : TSR(P)-20 TKM with their own Contractor SQRS machine in the section of ADENROK & ADENUJI under DEN/IV. (NIT-132-25-26-W-IV)
2. **Approx. cost of work** : (1)Rs. 3,96,83,505.76/-
3. **Earnest money** : (1)Rs. 3,48,500/-
4. **Date and Starting time for filling e-tender & Tender opening time** : Starting time for filling e-tender is Date-11/03/2026 at 15:00 hrs. & Tender opening time is Date-25/03/2026 at 15:00 hrs.
5. **Website particulars, published e-tender notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and website where the tender form can be downloaded** : Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

No. 128-W/260/Tender Notice/25-26-W-IV Dated : 03.03.2026 727/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**  
**(ORIGINAL COMPANY JURISDICTION)**  
**IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 1956 AND IN THE MATTER OF**  
**MS/. OKARA AGRO INDS. LIMITED (IN LIQN.)**  
**IN CO. APPL. (M) No. 115/2002**  
**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

Tenders/bids are invited for E-Auction of the following assets and properties of the Company (in Liqn.) on "As is Where is and whatever there is basis" from the prospective buyers. The details of Reserve Price and EMD are as under :-

Lot No.	Description of the Property	Location	Reserve Price (In Rs.)	EMD 10% of the Reserve Price (In Rs.)
1.	Office/Shop 104, First Floor, Sunder Singh Building, Abdul Aziz Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi.	815 Sq. Ft. / 1165 Sq. Ft.	72,00,000/-	7,20,000/-

- (1). Inspection of the above assets/properties will be held on 12th & 13th March, 2026 between 11.00 A.M. to 5.30 P.M.
- (2). The E-Auction will be conducted through the website <https://olauction.enivida.com> on 20.3.2026 between 11.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto time extension of 10 minutes each time, if the bid is made in the last 10 minutes before the closing of E-Auction.
- (3). The bidders/tenderers should submit their online offer through the website <https://olauction.enivida.com>
- (4). The tenderers should collect the detailed information, terms & condition through the website <https://olauction.enivida.com> and may also take help from the below contacts :- Navneet Mishra : 9560364871, Amrendra Kumar : 9355030628, Anand Kumar : 9355030602.
- (5). The EMD amount (interest free) should be deposited through the modes available on the portal. The last date of request and participation in E-Auction and online submission of EMD is 18.3.2026.
- (6). This sale is subject to confirmation by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi.

DATE : 2.3.2026 Sd/-  
PLACE : New Delhi (S. MEENAKSHI)  
OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR  
HIGH COURT OF DELHI

**HIGH COURT OF MADHYA PRADESH: JABALPUR**  
**// NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER //**

e-Tenders are invited by the High Court of Madhya Pradesh for the "Supply of "Smart Phones" for the District and Tehsil Courts in the State of Madhya Pradesh". The last date of online tender submission is 08th April, 2026 before 06.00 P.M. (mandatory). The sealed tenders complete in all respect addressed to "Registrar General, High Court of Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur" must be submitted before 05.00 P.M. on 09th April, 2026 (mandatory). The technical bids of the tender shall be opened online on 10th April, 2026 at 11.30 A.M. The detailed tender document is available in the official website of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh [www.mphc.gov.in](http://www.mphc.gov.in) and Government e-procurement portal [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in).

G-26858/25 Sd/-  
REGISTRAR GENERAL

**No. A-35020/05/2025-Admn. II**  
**Union Public Service Commission**  
**Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road**  
**New Delhi-110069**

It is proposed to fill up the two (02) vacancies in the grade of Deputy Director (IS) [General Central Service, Group- 'A', Gazetted, Non-Ministerial] in Level-11 of pay matrix on Deputation (Including Short Term Contract) basis in the O/o UPSC. The details like General conditions, Eligibility Criteria, Age limit, proforma of application form etc. are available on the website of UPSC at the link <http://www.upsc.gov.in> as vacancy-circulars.

(Aparna Srivastava)  
Under Secretary (Admn. II)  
CBC 55103/11/0009/2526 Union Public Service Commission

**POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH**

**TENDER NOTICE**  
Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/sole agents on the prescribed form for below mention items for two years.

Sr. No.	Name of Drug/Material	Due Date	Opening Date
1.	Tab. Phenobarbitone 60mg	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
2.	Rate Contract of Inj. Anti Rabies Immunoglobulin (Human) and (Equine) 300IU/2ml	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
3.	Tab. Nicotine Chewing Gum 2mg	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
4.	Inj. N-Acetyl Cysteine 200mg/ml, 5ml amp	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
5.	Inj. Calcium Chloride 10%, 10ml amp	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
6.	White Soft Paraffin (Vaseline) 1kg pack	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
7.	Inj. Prostigmin 500mcg/ml	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM
8.	G. Tropicamide 0.8% + Phenylephrine 5%, 5ml vial	18.03.2026 upto 12.30 PM	18.03.2026 at 02.00 PM

The tender will be opened at Committee Room attached to the office of Medical Superintendent, Nehru Hospital, PGIMER Chandigarh. Details of Tender Notice & Tender Form are available at our website [pgimer.edu.in](http://pgimer.edu.in) & [eprocure.gov.in](http://eprocure.gov.in)  
PGI RC Advt. 26 HR-000147 Officer In-charge (HFD), Proc. Drugs & Dressing

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE**

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./ AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HARYANA AGRO INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED, PANCHKULA	EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR EMPANELMENT OF SUPPLIERS WITH HAICL FOR PARTICIPATION IN E-BIDDING FOR SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITY ITEMS FOR HARHITH RETAIL PROJECT OF HARYANA AGRO INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPLY PURPOSE (PANCHKULA)	03			

SPORT

# Unbeaten Proteas run into the doughty Kiwis

**RCB to play two games in Raipur**  
BENGALURU: Defending champions RCB will play five of their home matches at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and the remaining two fixtures at Raipur's Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in the upcoming IPL, the franchise said on Tuesday.

**Renuka ruled out of Australia Test**  
PERTH: Pacer Renuka Thakur is ruled out of Friday's one-off Test against Australia due to workload management. Kashvee Gautam has been named as replacement, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement.

**Adkar in team for Billie Jean King Cup**  
NEW DELHI: Vaishnavi Adkar was drafted into the Indian team for the Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group 1 tie, to be held from April 6. The 21-year-old Adkar recently made history by becoming the first Indian woman to reach the W100 final since Sania Mirza.

**Somshuvra Laha**  
somshuvra.laha@htlive.com  
KOLKATA: They have been here, but not done that. Two sides long defined by composure, adaptability and, at times, heartbreak, now stand one game away from another shot at the ultimate prize. Look up South Africa and New Zealand's history to understand the fickleness and cruelty of sport. They don't complain though. They keep trying.  
This semi-final is about learning from the past and exorcising the ghosts and pains of not being able to go all the way. Expect athleticism, sublime catching and smart cricket. If tournaments are about peaking at the right time, both teams have arrived here by different but equally compelling routes. Unbeaten, tactically supreme, South Africa have impressed by resisting the urge to play one-dimensional, high-risk T20 cricket. Instead, they've blended strategy with bursts of power, a template that has served them well in pressure games.  
Aiden Markram's leadership has been central. His batting previously focused on anchoring the middle overs against spin but now he has reinvented his cricket by attacking the bowlers in the Powerplay itself.  
After him, South Africa have deployed the trio of hitters—Dewald Brevis, David Miller and Tristan Stubbs—with defined roles—to counter spin, pace and to finish—and a high success rate. But their real edge may lie with the ball.  
South Africa's pace unit has been tactically outstanding, relying on a hefty variation of wide yorkers, good lengths and smart field placements. They have staggered their strike bowlers rather than front-loading them. The ability to hold back overs for match-ups has also repeatedly stalled opposition surges.  
The question for South Africa is familiar: can they sustain clarity under knockout pressure? History



South Africa's Tristan Stubbs (L), Quinton de Kock (C) and David Miller during training.

can potentially move on. So again, we're here now, which is ideal. But again, we know we've got a challenge tomorrow against a very good team."  
With the ball, New Zealand lean heavily on control and disciplined seam movement. But they have also unusually relied on Santner too much in the middle overs. If fast bowler Matt Henry isn't cleared to play—he is landing Tuesday night after a brief visit home for the birth of his second child—New Zealand may bring back Jacob Duffy.  
On the batting front, New Zealand's Powerplay numbers might not always be explosive, but they are efficient. There could be a temptation to bring Glen Phillips up the order, considering the small boundaries at Eden Gardens. Where New Zealand might run into trouble though is the death overs, where Corbin Bosch averages 6.25 runs per over.  
"It's not the easiest role nowadays, owning the death overs," said Markram. "But he, at least from a mindset point of view, really wants it and has been wanting it for a while. And I think now the numbers are showing and it's been a massive play for us."  
South Africa have often carried the narrative of near-misses in ICC events. But this group appears insulated from that noise. New Zealand, meanwhile, have turned knockout resilience into identity. They are comfortable being underdogs. In many ways, this semi-final represents modern T20 at its most evolved: data-informed, role-driven, emotionally measured.  
South Africa bring sharpened aggression and belief. New Zealand bring composure and tournament nous. One team will leave with another story of resilience.

# Sen topples world No.1 Shi Yu Qi in a thriller

**Avishek Roy**  
avishek.roy@htlive.com  
NEW DELHI: Lakshya Sen has his days: ordinary and incredible. On his ordinary game days, he can lose in the most unexpected fashion, leaving everyone to brood over his talent. Then there are days against fancied opponents, on bigger stages, when he demonstrates his class, shows what he can achieve at world level. On such days, Lakshya the competitor is simply at a different level. He dives, retrieves, smashes, deceives, controls the net, and puts the pressure back on his opponent with every shot. He is a bundle of energy on the court.  
In the first round of the All England Open in Birmingham on Tuesday, Lakshya produced one such show for the ages, taking out world No.1 and defending champion Shi Yu Qi 23-21, 19-21, 21-17, causing the biggest upset of the tournament on the very first day.  
The high-quality contest lasted 78 minutes, but it seemed the two clashed longer, pushing each other, stretching their limits, trying to outmanoeuvre and searching for the slightest of opening to kill. It was intense and physically draining. Lakshya is a treat to watch in such contests. He can keep you on the edge forever, still surprise his rival with his burst at the end, the way he did against the world champion in the decider. Their head-to-head is 2-4 now.  
Leading 11-10 in the tense decider, Lakshya stepped up brilliantly, winning points in heaps. At that point, Shi Yu Qi's levels dipped for the first time in the contest. He hurried through his shots under the relentless pressure he was put in. Lakshya sensed the desperation and punched back with more power in his smashes, more belief in his abilities. He was striking the shuttle from every corner of the court. Shi Yu Qi had no answers. He had given up against an opponent who was simply a notch better than him. Lakshya raced through the final few points, and as Shi Yu Qi's shuttle went long, he simply stood there for a moment facing his coaches, relieved to have



Lakshya Sen celebrates after beating China's Shi Yu Qi.

tamed the toughest opponent he could have drawn first up.  
The swift end was in contrast to the tantalisingly close first two games. Every point was tightly contested. Coming on the back of four successive wins against Lakshya, Shi must have fancied his chances. But he must have been wary of how tricky Lakshya could be when he gets going.  
For Lakshya, it was about playing patiently and constructing points. He started well, taking a 11-7 lead. Keeping the length tight and mixing his shots, Lakshya was not allowing Shi Yu Qi to go for his smashes. It was controlled aggression, and Lakshya would go for the kill when he sensed an opportunity. He was equally brilliant in net dribbles. Shi Yu Qi fought back as Lakshya showed nerves in closing out the first game which he led 18-12. Shi Yu Qi made it 18-16 and saved four match points before Lakshya took the lead after some sensational rallies.  
Shi Yu Qi rallied, injecting pace and precision in his strokes in the next game. He was cruising 13-9 when Lakshya staged a dramatic comeback but lost. In the decider, it all came down to who could control their nerves better.  
"I had to be patient throughout, and keep changing my tactics now and then. Once he starts reading the game you have to change a little bit," Lakshya said after the win.  
Lakshya entered the match prepared for the closing stages.  
"I have been through same situations a couple of times, when I lost really close matches (to Shi), but today I pulled it off. Net was crucial to get a good lift. There was not a lot of easy points, so I had to wait for my chances to hit. The only thing I prepared for was the closing stages. If I rush a little bit he has the experience to finish off close games. The last few matches I lost like that."  
Lakshya loves the stage. He reached the 2022 All England final. Those were his initial days in the big league when he would cause big upsets in major tournaments, but he has not been able to consistently deliver on that promise. Beating Shi will give him confidence as he faces Hong Kong's Angus KL Ng in the Round of 16 on Thursday. The first-day slaying of the defending champion has presented Lakshya with great possibilities. The important thing for him will be to produce his incredible days more often.

SPORT TODAY

**FOOTBALL**  
Premier League  
● Aston Villa vs Chelsea (1.00am, Thursday)  
● Brighton vs Arsenal  
● Fulham vs West Ham  
● Man City vs Nottingham Forest  
● Newcastle vs Man United (1.45am, Thursday)

**BADMINTON**  
All England Open  
Round 2 matches

**CHESS**  
Prague Festival  
Round 7 matches from 7.30pm

Hindustan Times  
**HT City**  
CHECK OUT TODAY'S EDITION  
**BALAM PICHKARI NOT A HOLI SONG ORIGINALLY, REVEALS PRITAM**

**ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL**  
SHANKAR VIHAR, DELHI CANTT - 110010  
**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT - TEACHING STAFF THROUGH WALK-IN-INTERVIEW**  
Army Public School, Shankar Vihar invites applications from qualified and dedicated professionals on a casual basis for the following posts:  
• PGT: Computer (AI), Mathematics  
• TGTs: Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), English, Spoken English, Computer cum AI, Mathematics, Social Science, Hindi, Sanskrit, Physical Activity Trainer (PAT), Atal Tinkering Lab Trainer  
• PRT: Computer, Western Music (Activity)  
• Assistant Teacher  
• Pre-Primary Teacher (Balvatika)  
Interested candidates are requested to fill application available on website online and submit their application form along with the self-attested copy of relevant documents by hand/by post so as reach Army Public School, Shankar Vihar by 09 Mar 2026.  
All qualifications must align with the norms set by NCTE. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview at APS Shankar Vihar.  
The school reserves the right to cancel candidature of one/all candidates without any notice.  
For queries: 011-26153559/58, Email id: apssv@awesindia.edu.in

**U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED**  
ANPARA - SONEBHADRA  
**Tender notice and scope of work**  
1. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7260564, Re-shafting/ repairing/ rewinding/ of 6.6KV, HT motors along with associated work as per scope of work of 2x500MW, BTPS, Anpara. Tender Cost Rs. 0.00, EMD Rs. 54,000.00, Last date of tender: 18.03.2026 (12:00 Hrs).  
2. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7283752, Supply of boiler spares for 2x500MW, BTPS, Anpara. Tender Cost Rs. 1180.00, EMD Rs. 14,000.00, Last date of tender: 14.03.2026 (15:00 Hrs).  
3. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7292448, Supply of ash protector & U clamp for boiler of 2x500 MW, BTPS, Anpara. Tender Cost Rs. 1180.00, EMD Rs. 35,000.00, Last date of tender: 13.03.2026 (20:00 Hrs).  
4. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7292542, Supply of PC pipes spares for 2x500MW, BTPS, Anpara. Tender Cost Rs. 1180.00, EMD Rs. 10,000.00, Last date of tender: 13.03.2026 (20:00 Hrs).  
5. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7292631, Supply of spares for FBAD system of 2x500MW, BTPS, Anpara. Tender Cost Rs. 1180.00, EMD Rs. 16,000.00, Last date of tender: 13.03.2026 (20:00 Hrs).  
6. E-Tender- GEM/2026/B/7195617, Routine, preventive & breakdown maintenance of ID/FP/PA fans, seal air fan and APH & its associated parts of unit no 4&5 of BTPS, Anpara. EMD Rs. 1,10,000.00, Last date of tender: 13.03.2026 (17:00 Hrs).  
For information regarding addendum corrigendum rejection of Bids kindly regularly visit website <https://tender.up.nic.in> or <https://gem.gov.in>.  
No. 3214/CE/Works/ATPS Dated: 28.02.2026  
"Save Electricity for the Nation"

**No.A-35021/02/2020-Admn.II**  
**Union Public Service Commission**  
Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road  
New Delhi-110069  
Date: 02.2026  
It is proposed to fill up 02 (two) vacancies in the grade of Junior Accounts Officer [General Central Service, Group 'B', Gazetted, Non-Ministerial] in the Pay Level-8 (Rs. 47600-151100) of the Pay Matrix of 7th CPC on Deputation (ISTC) basis.  
2. The details like General conditions, Eligibility Criteria, Age limit, proforma of application form etc. are available on the website of UPSC, i.e. <http://www.upsc.gov.in/> vacancy-circulars.  
(Aparna Srivastava)  
Under Secretary (Admn.II)  
Union Public Service Commission  
CBC 55103/11/0011/2526 Tel. No.: 011-23388476

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI (ORIGINAL COMPANY JURISDICTION) IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 1956 AND IN THE MATTER OF MS. OKARA AGRO INDS. LIMITED (IN LIQ.) IN CO. (A/M) 115/2002**  
**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**  
Tenders/bids are invited for E-Auction of the following assets and properties of the Company (In Liq.) on "As is Where is and whatever there is basis" from the prospective buyers. The details of Reserve Price and EMD are as under :-  

Lot No.	Description of the Property	Location	Reserve Price (In Rs.)	EMD 10% of the Reserve Price (In Rs.)
1.	Commercial Space / Shops	Shop No's 21, 22, 23 & 24 admeasuring 1092.72 Sq. Ft. at Ground Floor of Durga Chambers, D. B. Gupta Road, Naiwala, Karol Bagh, New Delhi.	3,11,60,000/-	31,16,000/-
2.	Commercial Space / Shops	Shop No's G-11 & G-12 admeasuring 765 Sq. Ft. situated on GF in Novelty Market, Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar), Saharanpur, U.P.	36,33,750/-	3,63,375/-

  
NOTE:- Shop No's 21 & 22 are in the name of M/s. Okara Agro Inds. Ltd. (In Liq.) and Shop No's 23 & 24 admeasuring 546.36 Sq. Ft. are in the name of Okara Leasing & Invest. Ltd. (In Liq.) admeasuring 546.36 Sq. Ft. and total space of 1092.72 Sq. Ft. will be sold as one single composite unit.  
NOTE:- Shop No's G-11 & G-12 situated on GF in Novelty Market, Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar), Saharanpur, U.P. are in the possession of Sh. Rohit Malik and are being used as part of Swadish Restaurant and will be sold on "As is where is whatever there is basis".  
(1) Inspection of the above assets/properties will be held on 12th & 13th March, 2026 between 11.00 A.M. to 5.30 P.M.  
(2) The E-Auction will be conducted through the website <https://olaction.envida.com> on 20.3.2026 between 11.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto time extension of 10 minutes each time, if the bid is made in the last 10 minutes before the closing of E-Auction.  
(3) The bidders/tenders should submit their online offer through the website <https://olaction.envida.com>  
(4) The tenderers should collect the detailed information, terms & condition through the website <https://olaction.envida.com> and may also take help from the below contacts :- Navneet Mishra : 9560364871, Amrendra Kumar : 9355030628, Anand Kumar : 9355030602.  
(5) The EMD amount (interest free) should be deposited through the modes available on the portal. The last date of request and participation in E-Auction and online submission of EMD is 18.3.2026.  
(6) This sale is subject to confirmation by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi.  
DATE : 2.3.2026 (S. MEENAKSHI)  
PLACE : New Delhi OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR HIGH COURT OF DELHI

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in)  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in) & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.  
(1) 13/S.M.- (JAL-O.A.)/2025-26, M/O of STP (P/L of Internal C.C. Road due to damage sewer line C/O Damaged manhole and other miscellaneous civil work at Sector-50 Compound), NOIDA. Cost Rs. 115.09 Lacs  
(2) 14/S.M.- (JAL-O.A.)/2025-26, O/M of Sewer line and MSPS/SPS at Expressway (Shifting of Deep Sewer Line due to Construction of Under pass at Change 6.10 K.M. Near Sector-108, Noida Gr. Noida Expressway), Noida. Cost Rs. 182.75 Lacs  
(3) 15/S.M.- (JAL-O.A.)/2025-26, M/O of STP (Supply and fixing of Sluice gate with its related allied work for control to backflow from Hindon river to STPs Sector-123), NOIDA. Cost Rs. 160.71 Lacs  
Which can be uploaded by date- 18.03.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date: 19.03.2026 at 11.00 AM. General Manager (Jal) NOIDA  
**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH (DME), MEGHALAYA PASTEUR HILLS, SHILLONG GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA**  
Email ID: [pasteurinsti@shillong.gov.in](mailto:pasteurinsti@shillong.gov.in) Tel No. 0364-2591510/9485106663  
No.DHSME&R/SMC/Tender/N/14/2025-26/961 Dated: Shillong, the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2026  
**CORRIGENDUM**  
In partial modification of the NIT No. DHSME&R/SMC/TENDER/V/09/2025-26/713 dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026, issued by the Directorate of Health Services Medical Education & Research (DME), Meghalaya, for "Supply and Installation of set of Equipment/Items for proposed Department of Microbiology, Pathology, Pharmacology & PSM as per NMC at Shillong Medical College, Shillong", the following corrigendum is hereby notified:  
"The last date and time for submission of the bid document is hereby extended from 03/03/2026 up to 1300 Hrs to 23/03/2026 up to 1700 Hrs."  
All other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged.  
SD/-  
Director of Health Services  
Medical Education & Research (DME)  
Meghalaya, Pasteur Hills, Shillong  
MIPR No.: 2928  
Dated : 02/03/2026

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
General Public is hereby informed that one Female (depicted in the photo) namely **Anjali D/o Ravi Shankar Shah R/o H.No. D-47, Gali No.-3, Mukund Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Delhi-94, Age-20** Yrs, has been reported missing since 20.02.2026 at 11.00 AM, from her Residence, vide DD No. 67A, Dated 21.02.2026, registered at Police Station Karawal Nagar, North-East Distt., Delhi-110094. Her physical description is as under:  
Sex: Female, Height: Approx 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Green Colour Suit-Salwar and Sandal on her Feet.  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing female but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about this missing female please inform to the following.  
SHO,  
Police Station Karawal Nagar, North-East Distt., Delhi-110094  
Ph.: 9205832616, 9069696880  
Website: <https://cbi.nic.in>  
DP/2672/NE/2026

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**  
General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Shifa, D/o Sameer, R/o H.No. D-32, Hari Enclave, Aman Vihar, Kirari, Delhi has been missing since 28.02.2026 from her home.** In this regard FIR No. 137/26, U/s 137(2) Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita-2023, Dated 01.03.2026 has been lodged at Police Station Raj Park, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under:  
Name: Shifa, Age: 13 Years, Height: 4'10", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Green Colour Kurti, Blue Colour Jeans Pant and White Colour Shoes in Feet.  
If anyone has any information about this missing girl please inform P.S. Raj Park, Delhi.  
Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 SHO  
Police Station Raj Park, Delhi  
Ph: 7217650235, 7065036123  
DP/2771/OD/2026

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sonam D/o Ram Gopal R/o H.No.4/12, Ram No.12, East Punjabi Bagh Delhi Also at: Village Hirai Kheda, Post: Atroli, Distt. Haridoi, Uttar Pradesh** has been missing/kidnapped from her home since at 19.02.2026 at 06:45 AM. In this regard, a FIR No. 81/2026 dt. 24.02.2026 U/S: 137(2) Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita-2023, has been registered at P.S.: Punjabi Bagh, Delhi. The description of the missing girl as under:  
Age: 17 years 6 Months, Height: 4'5" Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium, Face: Round, Wearing: White salwar suit and black slippers in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. Any person is having information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.  
Ph. No. 011-24368638, 24368641  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> S.H.O  
E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax No. 011-24368639 PS: Punjabi Bagh, Delhi  
DP/2443/WD/2026 Ph No. 8287641531, 8750871124

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
General public is hereby informed that a Girl Namely: **Komal D/o: Shiv Kumar R/o: H. No. 108 Kashiya Mohalla Gandhi Nagar, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from her home since 28.02.2026 at 07:00 PM. In this regard a FIR No: 018A, Dt. 01.03.2026, has been registered at P.S.: Gandhi Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing Girl as under:  
Age: 19 years, Height: 5' Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: Blue colour Kurti And Salwar And Red Sandal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. Any person is having information or clue about this missing Girl may kindly inform to the following.  
Ph. No. 011-24368638, 24368641  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> S.H.O  
E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax No. 011-24368639 PS: Gandhi Nagar, Delhi  
DP/2748/SHD/2026 Ph.: 8595895116, 8851226715

# Facing the form question: A greenhorn and a veteran

Abhishek and Buttler, two mavericks at different stages of the careers, are searching for runs in this WC

Rasesh Mandani

rasesh.mandani@htlive.com

**MUMBAI:** Abhishek Sharma will be playing his first ICC World Cup semi-final on Thursday. Jos Buttler will walk out as a seven-time T20 World Cup veteran. Both batters usually deal in the same currency – fours and sixes – but they are enduring nervy times at the moment.

How liberating it must feel to have the licence to thrill, Buttler might think of his younger self watching Abhishek. Surely, it must help more to have been there and done that, Abhishek may be thinking.

These are stray thoughts that run through your mind when runs are not coming. One half of the opening duo of the two semi-finalists is searching for ways to iron out creases from their game.

Abhishek has managed only 80 runs in 6 innings with 55 of them coming in one match against Zimbabwe. But as his scratchy stay at the crease in the previous match against West Indies showed, the left-hander is nowhere near where he wants to be.

Buttler has been doing worse. His 7 innings have lasted only 58 balls and produced 62 runs in all. He may have seen several blips in form over a career spanning 154 T20Is, but at 35, it might be getting harder to continue believing that runs are just around the corner.

The silver lining is that it does not take much for a swing in fortune in T20 cricket.

"Form sometimes is just an innings away," said Sunil Gavaskar in a media interaction ahead of the DP World Celebrity Golf Event to create awareness on the Champs Foundation. "We have seen it with two players in the last month and a half. Suryakumar Yadav and Sanju Samson.

In the New Zealand bilateral series, there were concerns around Suryakumar Yadav's form. Surya kept on saying he is not out of form but out of runs. Then, he started getting runs. Similarly with Sanju. Hopefully for India, Abhishek will be able to be back at his blistering best in the coming matches."

Sunny's views

Gavaskar has kept abreast of the younger format as a commentary regular. His advice to Abhishek is not to be obsessed with being in overdrive mode.

"Don't always look to bat in the fourth gear. Maybe up the gears as you settle in," he said. "Yes, you certainly want to take advantage of the Powerplay. Play to your strengths, but you can do it even batting in the third gear, as Sanju showed by getting 97 off 50 deliveries. Anyone doing that would have ensured his team gets double the runs. 190-200 in the semis and you are possibly looking at a winning score."

Abhishek's five previous dismissals have either come against spin or from failing to read slower balls bowled by pacers.

"In this format, spinners can



Abhishek Sharma		Overall in T20Is	In this WC			
M	Runs	Best	Avg	100s	50s	Strike rate
44	1,377	135	33.58	2	9	189.4
6	80	55	13.33	0	1	131.14

give you a feel that you have to go for maximums. You can mis-time and get out. In any case in this format, off-pace deliveries are difficult. Batters like the pace on the ball, to get under the ball and use the pace. With spinners, you have to power the ball and sometimes the bat speed is too much, leading to caught dismissals," said Gavaskar.

England are expected to use off-spinner Will Jacks prominently against Abhishek. But that won't be as easy now with Samson's presence, the back-in-form right-hander.

"Maybe the right-handers have to do more of the batting against Jacks because he is on a roll with the ball," said the batting legend. This tactical cat and mouse between the two sides could prove to be a key factor in the contest. As with Buttler, England continue to believe.

"Jos obviously would want some more runs, but I would certainly like him in my team rather than coming up against him on Thursday," Sam Curran told reporters on Tuesday.

"He's a quality player. He has done well on this ground many times. Hopefully, Thursday night is his night. We are not worried about him at all."



Jos Buttler		Overall in T20Is	In this WC			
M	Runs	Best	Avg	100s	50s	Strike rate
154	4,012	101*	33.71	1	28	147.7
7	62	26	8.85	0	0	106.8

## India delay training by an hour due to lunar eclipse

HT Correspondent

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

**MUMBAI:** The Indian team delayed their evening practice session by an hour, waiting for a lunar eclipse to pass.

According to Hindu belief, an eclipse is considered inauspicious and it seemed the Indian team did not want any bad omen for their World Cup campaign ahead of their semi-final against England at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday.

Floodlights at the Wankhede Stadium were switched on closer to 7pm, after the eclipse had concluded, by which time players started trooping in for the nets session.

The T20 World Cup co-hosts were earlier supposed to train in the evening slot of 6 to 9pm.

Some members of the support staff had arrived on the field before the players and a few coaches but the action started after some delay.



Axar Patel during training at the Wankhede Stadium. PTI

In fact, even the floodlights of the stadium were turned on around 6:50pm but not at full intensity, which was done moments before the rest of the team took the field.

India are unlikely to make any changes to their playing

eleven with Samson finding runs at the top and Tilak Varma slotting in nicely in the middle order. They are expected to keep faith in Varun Chakravarty, despite a few expensive overs from the mystery spinner lately.

## Samson, Archer and the short ball battle

Rasesh Mandani

rasesh.mandani@htlive.com

**MUMBAI:** Sanju Samson is facing the first ball of the fifth India-England T20I, after England's short balls caused him to be caught in the deep four times in a row. We are going back fourteen months. The venue is the Wankhede Stadium, the last time these two opponents faced each other in a T20I. Samson is up against Jofra Archer, who has already dismissed him thrice in the series in the same fashion.

How does Samson react? He moves wide outside his off-stump to make room, his back leg way across, front leg in line with the off-stump and pulls Archer for a six in front of square leg. Archer follows him, but Samson repeats the dose, this time behind square leg. Then he cuts him over third man for four. This exchange between two equals faded from memory once Mark Wood's pace hurried Samson in the next over, leading to him holing out to square leg.

Samson's five dismissals facing bouncers became the lasting impression of his battles against England. Archer, a fast bowler whom Samson once captained in the IPL was the wrecker in chief. Come Thursday, as the succeeding chapter plays out, Samson will look to change the outcome.

Between then and now, Samson's world has undergone a whirlwind of change. From being pushed down the order and losing his place due to another pattern of dismissals - being caught in front of square, often in the circle - the batting hero has returned to his confident best with a career-best showing in the knock against the West Indies.

Samson rated his unbeaten 97 in Kolkata higher than his three T20I hundreds and it wasn't only because of the stage. That the high-on-intent batter could unravel layers of his game, not often seen, where he played offensive strokes without high risks—all while adjusting his playing tempo when he lost batting partners and saw the team home—made it a special knock.

After his Man of the Match performance, Samson reiterated that he had no plans to change his much-dissected backfoot trigger, a technique that brought him all the runs, although there were also occasions when he alternated by standing still to face the seamers.

What Samson rediscovered in his last innings was balance in strokeplay. This came with a minute technical switch from his previous struggles: being a fraction early with his backfoot trigger, allowing him time to transfer weight forward when required.

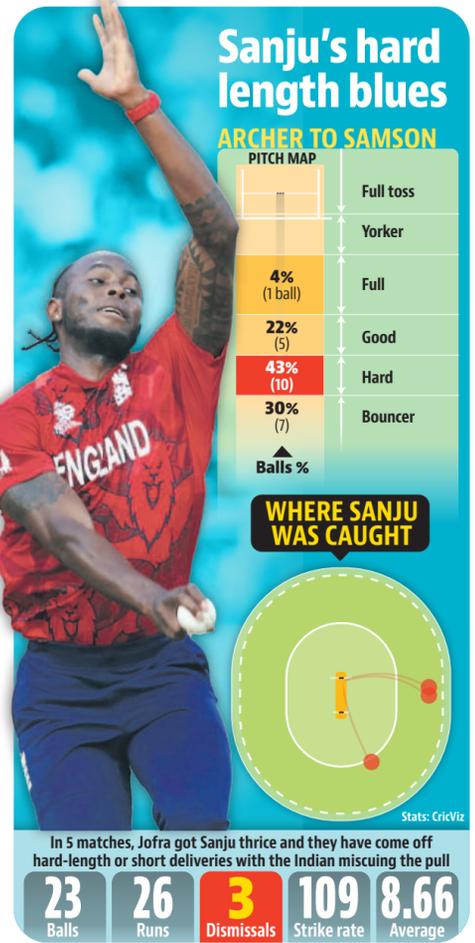
"I wouldn't want to go into the details, but yes, we did work on his initial (movement) a little," said Indian batting coach Sitanshu Kotak.

"We were just trying to create a better base for him. He also felt he was getting ready a little early, and that helped him."

"Some have called it the floating (front) foot, delaying the landing of that is what enables great players to do what they do. But, to do that, you need to have your weight on the back foot which helps to stay stable. So, ensuring it's already loaded and ready isn't a bad way to ensure you delay your front foot landing which allows you to play late," explained Zubin Bharucha, a batting coach who has worked closely with Samson.

When they last faced off, Archer attacked Samson with high pace at lengths shorter than 8m for more than 70% of the time according to ball-by-ball data. Thrice Samson holed out to the two waiting fielders at deep square and once to mid-on. On other occasions, Mark Wood and Saquib Mahmood got him out while pulling.

In Tuesday afternoon nets, Archer was letting the short ones rip. If the Wankhede surface plays true to reputation, there is



merit in trying the short ball play, all over again. The caveat is that if the batter finds the answers, the results could flip to the delight of the home crowd. Samson gave no extra attention to tackling short balls in the evening nets. Instead, he was happy perfecting his foot movements against Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh, simulating what he may encounter from the likes of Archer, Jamie Overton and Sam Curran.

"It will depend on the game situation, but Sanju will probably have no option but to take him on," said Bharucha of the impending Archer-Samson clash. "There could be a few adaptations along the way like the upper cut or leaving a few, but also knowing it's a small ground it might be prudent at various junctures to take it on depending on the angle you pick it up from."

For the packed house anticipating a blockbuster semi-final, watching England's quickest pacer challenge India's batting darling will be a mouth-watering prospect to look forward to.

England have a better spin attack than India. Varun has been got at. Dawson, Rashid and Will Jacks have been the best spin trio in the tournament.

Michael Vaughan, former England captain

I've heard a few lads say they wanted to play India anyway and it's going to be a massive occasion with a hell lot of pressure for both sides.

Harry Brook, England skipper

England have been getting better (in the tournament) and they'll have taken confidence from the wins and the tight win against New Zealand

Michael Atherton, former England skipper

## All-rounders Jacks, Curran hold the key for England

Sanjeev K Samyal

sanjeev.samyal@htlive.com

**MUMBAI:** England's Will Jacks has a tough role as an all-rounder. He is not among their first-choice batters or frontline bowlers, but showing great character he is making vital contributions with both bat and ball to make a difference to his team at this World Cup.

Jacks has repeatedly dug England out of tricky situations, contributing 191 runs batting in the finisher's role at No 7. In the Super Eights, he delivered in the big games for nerve-jangling wins over Sri Lanka, Pakistan and New Zealand. Filling the duties of the extra bowler behind the frontline five, he has chipped in with useful breakthroughs claiming seven wickets with his off-spin. Four Man of the Match awards underline his value to his side.

In Thursday's semi-final against India at the Wankhede Stadium, England will be banking on their spin all-rounder to make an impact. "Will's been amazing, it's such a different role for him than



Jaspriit Bumrah (L) and Sanju Samson during training. PTI

what he's used to I guess, scoring vital runs at number seven and bowling some very tough overs and taking many wickets," his teammate Sam Curran said on Tuesday at the Wankhede.

Jacks' best show has been against New Zealand. After finishing with figures of 4-0-23-2 – his wickets included the in-form Finn Allen and Glenn Phillips – he came and hit an 18-ball 32 not out at No 7. In a chase of 160, England needed 43 off the final 18 deliveries,

and Jacks shared an unbroken, match-winning stand of 44 from 16 balls with debutant Rehan Ahmed. Against Sri Lanka, he claimed three wickets in the powerplay for figures of 4-0-22-3 for another man of the match performance. In the big semi-final against the hosts and defending champions, Jacks' role is also important for England because he is well-versed with the conditions at the Wankhede, being a regular MI player last season.

## AFC Women's Asian Cup: Uncertainty over kits end one day before India-Vietnam game

Dhiman Sarkar

dhiman@htlive.com

**KOLKATA:** It was boots before the 2022 under-17 World Cup. In Perth, it was about match day kits for the senior team. Milestone moments for the women's football teams have had the All India Football Federation (AIFF) caught off-side. Twice.

The uncertainty over match kits for the AFC Women's Asian Cup had not ended when head coach Amelia Valverde and skipper Sweety Devi were addressing the media in Perth one day before their first game in group C, against Vietnam.

The okay from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to kits procured from a local supplier came after that. Cancelled earlier, the official photoshoot could happen only on Tuesday.

On Monday morning, the players received kits that "appear to have been manufactured for the under-15 or smaller athletes and do not fit at least 80% of the 26-player

squad," members of the India's squad said in a letter to the AIFF. HT has seen the letter.

"Over the past days, players and staff have already faced challenges due to the lack of appropriate clothing during preparation. The arrival of incorrect match kits at this crucial stage has further affected morale and disrupted our focus in the final days leading up to the match," the players wrote in a signed statement to the AIFF deputy secretary-general Satyanarayan Muthyalu.

AIFF swung into action after that and sourced kits from a European company with outlets in Perth. Working through the night, the kits were ready on Tuesday, said an AIFF official on Tuesday.

The practice kits India are using are from the old supplier whose contract ended last December, the official said. Not authorised to speak to the media, the official requested anonymity.

tralia since January 15, India played seven club friendlies in jerseys of that supplier, the official said. This was after AIFF's tender for a new kit manufacturer fetched no bids. AIFF asked two other former suppliers but talks reached a dead end, said a second official who also did not want to be named.

"An AIFF staff then went to Tirupur (in Tamil Nadu) and found a manufacturer who was ready to provide the kits," said the second official explaining the delay. Ill-fitting shirts then provided a twist to the tale.

In 2022, new boots for India's under-17 team reached after their final practice session, the delay attributed to the consignement being set by road.

On the football front, with one key player out injured and another joining last week, India hope to live down memories of the last edition and stay in the hunt for a 2027 World Cup berth. "In life there are no coincidences, so we are back to prove ourselves again," said

head coach Amelia Valverde at Tuesday's pre-match media conference in Perth. Valverde was replying to whether the players would try to redeem themselves after being scratched from the last edition in 2022, which India had hosted, because of a Covid-19 outbreak. Eight players in Australia including skipper Sweety Devi were part of that side.

In a separate message to HT, Valverde said that having qualified for the first time on merit, she told the players that "the occasion should not be bigger than our preparation. If we focus on our responsibilities and our identity as a team, then the tournament becomes an opportunity, not something overwhelming."

Japan and Chinese Taipei are also in India's group. Former world and Asian champions Japan start every tournament as one of the favourites and Chinese Taipei came close to World Cup qualification in 2022, she said.



India midfielder Sangita Basfore in her new kit. AIFF



# HTCITY

## Delhi

WISHING OUR READERS A HAPPY HOLI

Sisters Nupur and Kriti Sanon shared a goofy dancing video

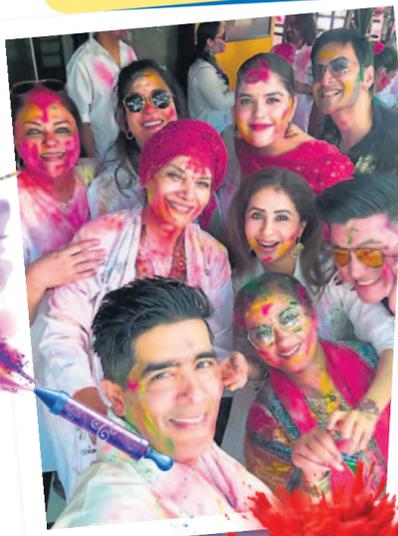
### Rang barse bheege celebs saare...



Ranbir Kapoor was papped playing Holi in Mumbai



The Kaushal-Kaif clan had a colourful blast as Vicky and Katrina were joined by their siblings, Sunny and Isabelle



Manish Malhotra shared a glimpse of the starry celebrations at Javed Akhtar and Shabana Azmi's bash



Neha Dhupia's fam jam saw a playgully intense, water-soaked scene



Varun Dhawan shared a loved-up selfie with wife, Natasha Dalal

Recalling her childhood celebrations in Mumbai, actor Bhumi Satish Pednekar shares her ultimate skincare hacks for a safe yet fun Holi

## 'FEASTING ON KARANJIS IS STILL THE BEST PART OF HOLI'

Natasha Coutinho  
natasha.coutinho@hindustantimes.com

Waking up at 6am on the day of Holi, actor Bhumi Satish Pednekar recalls filling up buckets of water balloons to engage in the ensuing festive bedlam. "My sister Samiksha and I would play with our friends from the building (in Mumbai). And my mother would fill buckets of water and pour it on

us from the balcony," the 36-year-old tells us, adding, "We weren't allowed to use colour, so we played with rose petals and genda phool. And pichkari, of course!" She is all set to celebrate Holi with her friends in the city today. "There's no escaping it! Now, I play with organic colours and I'm constantly telling my friends to fill a large bucket or inflatable mini pools to play," says the actor last seen in web series *Dadda*. To survive these festivities,

Bhumi has an arsenal of skincare tips: "I slather myself in coconut oil, from my ears to my toes. Use nail polish to avoid staining your nails. Another hack I swear by is wearing full coverage foundation; it really protects your skin." After creating a riot of colours, the festival is all about indulging in the delicious spread. "The most exciting thing was and still is the food. Feasting on karanjis (gujyas) is something I still look forward to indulging in on Holi," she shares.

### STOP PRESS

After Rajpal Yadav criticised his 'offer him work' remark, Sonu Sood clarified what he said. Rajpal had said, "Please get over the misconception that I need to keep asking for work... I work in a way that I get four times more work. I work even on vacations." Sonu tells HT City, "I did not say he needs work. I said, 'Sign him and pay advances because he deserves it.' Rajpal is currently out on interim bail after failing to pay ₹9 crore in a cheque-bounce case."



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM



Deepika Padukone and Kalki Koechlin in a still from the iconic Holi song

## Balam Pichkari not a Holi song originally reveals Pritam

Samarth Goyal  
samarth.goyal@hindustantimes.com

It features on every Holi playlist, blaring from speakers around festivities. But composer Pritam has revealed that *Balam Pichkari* from *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* (2013) was not originally conceived as a Holi track.

"Initially, it was not going to be a Holi song," the 54-year-old says, adding that the change happened after director Ayan Mukerji attended a Holi celebration in 2012. "(Ayan) told us, 'We have to set this song during Holi. It'll take the vibe to another level,'" he says. Over a decade later, Pritam is grateful for the love the song has

received. "*Balam Pichkari* trends at the top almost every Holi," he says, adding, "If I knew exactly what made it cut across generations, I would probably try to recreate it every time. But honestly, it's impossible to predict these things."

Nowadays, he feels that there is a seeming lull in iconic festival tracks. But Pritam insists, "There is always space for a good song. Platforms may change, listening habits may evolve, but emotions don't."

More on →03

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/PRITAMOFFICIAL

## Celebration is resistance, not cruelty: Mandana Karimi on Khamenei's death

Samarth Goyal

samarth.goyal@hindustantimes.com



Amid the US-Iran war, Irani actor-activist Mandana Karimi has reaffirmed her fierce opposition to the country's ruling establishment, following the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"No one celebrates innocent loss of life. But you cannot ask a nation that has endured decades of executions, imprisonment, torture, and mass crackdowns to react with conventional mourning," she says, adding that for many Iranians, "Celebration has become a form of resistance and a way to reclaim power over grief."

Addressing accusations that such reactions amount to endorsing foreign military intervention, she responds: "This was not a random foreign agenda imposed on us. No one wants bombs in their country, but when all internal paths to reform are blocked, people begin to look outward." Mandana, 37, adds how Irani citizens are now calling for political activist Reza Pahlavi as their leader. "The chants of Javid Shah (Long live the king, a slogan opposing the Irani government) did not start abroad... they started inside Iran. We see Pahlavi as a transitional alternative capable of uniting the country."

### ESHA GUPTA, PV SINDHU ARE NOW BACK HOME

Actor Esha Gupta and shuttler PV Sindhu, who were stranded in the UAE amid the air travel shutdown, shared respective updates about being "back home". Esha wrote, "I saw the strength of UAE... Thank you to our government for bringing the citizens home. Thank you to UAE government for working in solidarity with every country." Meanwhile, Sindhu wrote: "A heartfelt thank you to the incredible ground teams, Dubai authorities, airport staff, immigration, and every single person who stepped up and took such good care of us during a very difficult time." She had to pull out of the All England Open Badminton Championships 2026 due to the Dubai ordeal.

NOTE TO READERS: Some of the coverage that appears on our pages is paid for by the concerned brands. No sponsored content does or shall appear in any part of HT without it being declared as such to our valued readers.

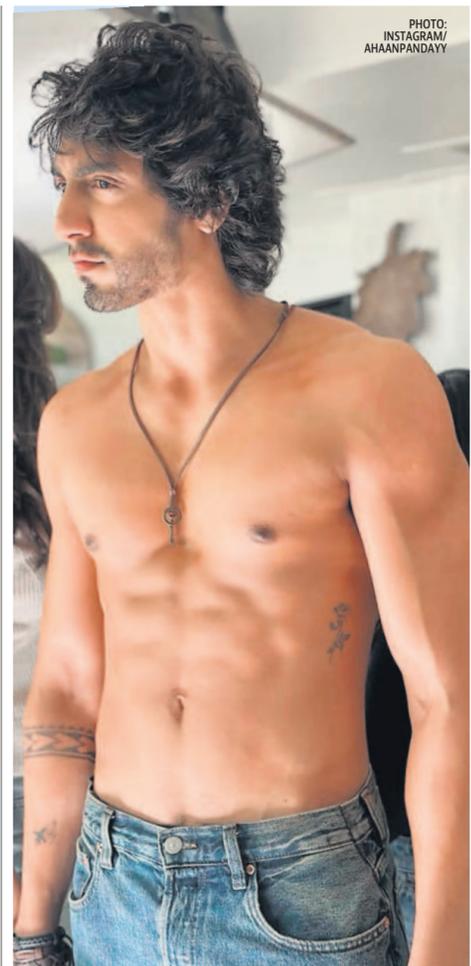


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/AHAANPANDAY

## Got one of the most painful surgeries after Saiyaara: Ahaan

Actor Ahaan Panday, who is currently undergoing a physical transformation for his next project, reveals having undergone a "painful surgery" after his debut film.

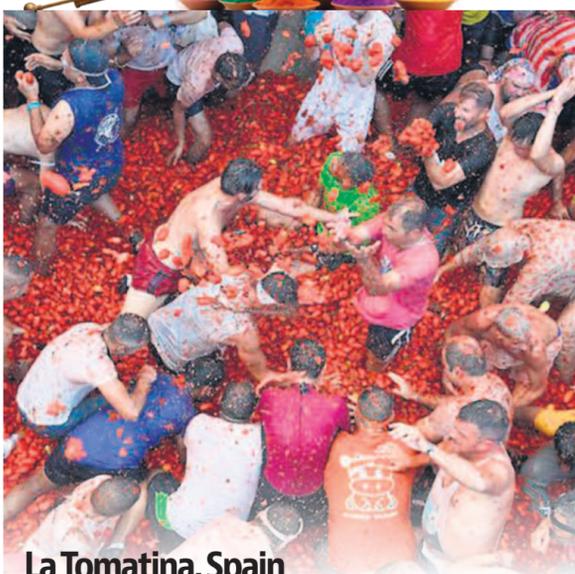
"I actually got a whole surgery done after the release of *Saiyaara* last year. And it's one of the most painful surgeries you can do, with the longest recovery time," he told Esquire India.

The procedure was to correct a lingering shoulder subluxation from an old

snowmobile accident, which was hindering his ability at the gym.

While the doctor told Ahaan his body would "go back to zero", making it "nearly impossible" to achieve the desired physique for his next, the actor was able to "prove everyone wrong".

"I went from being injured, to not being able to move, to not being able to lift, to being able to lift," he said, adding, "I don't know how nobody realised (that I spent months bound in a cast)."



**La Tomatina, Spain**

Held on the last Wednesday of August in Buñol, this annual festival turns the Spanish streets into a battlefield of tomatoes. To travel vlogger Anali Gupta, it felt like a scene straight out of Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (2011). "Between the smell of squashed tomatoes, coughing, almost throwing up, and even being smacked in the eye while filming, it was totally

intense," she shares. Said to be the world's biggest food fight, this festival remains on the bucket list of many Indians. Travel creator Waqar Azmi, informs that every third or fourth person there was Indian. "The crowd began singing Jhumma Chumma, and it felt like I was back in India," he shares.



**Battle of the Oranges, Italy**

This takes place during the Carnival of Ivrea, held every year in February. It is a three-day festival to commemorate the history of the Ivrean people's liberation. During the festival, teams on foot take

on helmeted riders in horse-drawn carts. Experiencing it, travel creator Devesh More quips, "The oranges seemed so fresh that I was confused whether they were meant to be thrown at people. I even took a little bite of some."



**Songkran, Thailand**

During this festival, all of Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai transform into water combat zones annually in April, marking the Thai New Year. "While walking on the street, I suddenly saw groups of people playing with water guns. Within minutes, someone splashed me, someone else handed me a water gun, and I knew this wasn't a festival you just watch," shares travel creator Anu Sai Meena. "There were unspoken rules: no pushing, no shoving, no forcing anyone. The streets shut down, and DJs played on moving trucks. But the moment the festival ends, everything goes back to being spotless," she adds.

**HT TRAVEL**  
on Wednesday

Scan here to visit HTTravel

**SPLISH SPLASH SPIRIT**

**MEET HOLI'S INTERNATIONAL COUSINS**



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM AND X

From tomato-covered streets in Spain to a melon-filled celebration in Australia, these global festivals match Holi's colourful energy with their own versions of playful, joy-filled revelry. Take a look

■ Akshita Prakash

**Boryeong Mud Festival, South Korea**

Held annually from late July to early August at Daechon Beach, Boryeong, this is Holi's dirtier sibling in the best way. The mud in Boryeong is rich in minerals, and Koreans celebrate that by turning it into a playful paradise. The festival includes mud baths, slides, wrestling, foam parties, water fights,

and concerts. Travel creator Maansi Arora says, "There were all kinds of challenges like wall climbing, balancing on wooden panels and a bunch of obstacle games. And then getting completely drenched in mud. The setup was like a water park, but instead of water, it was silky grey mud."



PHOTO: PTI

**Phagu Poomima, Nepal**

Celebrated around the same time as India, the country turns into a living canvas every spring for two days. "The Pahadi (hill communities) celebrate it on day 1, while the Terai belt (Southern Nepal), whose celebration reflects similar energy to that of UP and Bihar, celebrate it on day 2. People spill into the streets, colour everyone in sight, dance, making it a community celebration," says Ravi Kumar, a business consultant from Nepal living in Delhi.

**Classifieds { THEATRE & PLAYS }**

**ASHUTOSH RANA LIVE ON STAGE as Ravana**

HAVELLS PRESENTS FELICITY THEATRE

**HUMARE RAM**

DISCOVER RAMAYANA'S UNTOLD CHAPTERS

**SINGERS: SHANKAR MAHADEVAN, SONU NIGAM, KAILASH KHER & ASHUTOSH RANA**

DIRECTED BY GAURAV BHARDWAJ

WRITTEN BY NARESH KATYAVAN, RAHULL R BHUCHAR

LYRICS BY AALOK SHRIVASTAV, RAM KUMAR SINGH

MUSIC COMPOSER UDBHAV OJHA, SAURABH MEHTA

06-07-08 MARCH DAILY 2 SHOWS

KAMANI AUDITORIUM MANDI HOUSE, DELHI

TICKETS AVAILABLE ON bookmyshow or Call #7011636420

SHRIRAM BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA

**SHRIRAM SHANKARLAL MUSIC FESTIVAL**

06-08 March 2026

1, Copernicus Marg, Mandi House, New Delhi

Friday, 06th March 2026, 6:00 pm

Ramana Balachandhran - Saraswati Veena  
Siddhartha Belmannu - Hindustani Vocal  
Tejendra Narayan Majumdar - Sarod

Saturday, 07th March 2026, 6:00 pm

Sawani Shende - Hindustani Vocal  
Shashank Subramanyam - Flute (Carnatic)  
Sajan & Swaransh Mishra - Hindustani Vocal

Sunday, 08th March 2026, 10:00 am

Madhup Mudgal - Hindustani Vocal  
Biswajit Roy Chowdhury - Sarod

Sunday, 08th March 2026, 6:00 pm

Lokesh Anand - Shehnai  
Shashwati Mandal - Hindustani Vocal  
Shahid Parvez - Sitar  
with Anindo Chatterjee on Tabla

FREE ENTRY FOR ALL. ENQ.: 43503333, 23386428/29 • www.sbk.k.in  
(AN INSTITUTION OF BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA TRUST)

**#holihack**

**Chic and festive!**

Head scarves add a perfect amount of flair to your Holi look. If you struggle to get a grip on yours, digital creator Shilpi Gupta (@style.n.dine) has shared a hack on Instagram to easily tie one



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/STYLE.N.DINE

**Step 1**

Take a scarf, fold it into a triangle, and place it over your head.



**Step 2**

Secure it by using three or more tic tac pins so the scarf stays in place.



**Step 3**

Flip it backwards and tie a knot behind to further tighten it.



**Step 4**

Finish off with a pair of sunglasses and some makeup to get your perfect Holi look on.



**{ DAILY HOROSCOPE }**  
**Wednesday, March 04, 2026**

Dr Prem Kumar Sharma (Astrologer and Vaastu expert) can be contacted at: Delhi: 011-47033152, 40532026 (Sat to Mon); Panchkula: 91-172-2562832, 2572874 (Tues to Thurs); Mumbai: 09716145644 (Last week of every month)

✕ PREMASTROLOGER    📱 PREMASTROLOGER    📍 ASKPREMASTROLOGER

<p><b>ARIES</b> MAR 21-APR 20</p> <p>You will manage to bring down the price of an expensive item through hard bargaining. Blessings of a family elder will be reserved for you for your helpful nature. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> There is much that you want to tell your lover, so find the right opportunity. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 3 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Golden</p>	<p><b>LEO</b> JUL 23-AUG 23</p> <p>Money loaned to someone on good faith may not be returned. Some of you can expect good advice from someone close. A long drive will help some unwind and relax. Acquisition of property is in pipeline for some. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Those looking for love will get lucky. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 22 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Cream</p>	<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> NOV 23-DEC 21</p> <p>Business decisions benefit from a calm approach. Changes at home may not be to your liking, but little you can do about it. You may plan an overseas journey. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Take steps to restore a partner's confidence in continuing a relationship. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 6 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Saffron</p>
<p><b>TAURUS</b> APR 21-MAY 20</p> <p>Enhanced financial rewards are likely for a few. Those feeling unwell will show quick recovery. Your hospital shift flows smoothly today. Some of you may be attracted to occult sciences. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Romantic thoughts may cross your mind today and make you take a bold action. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 7 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Grey</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b> AUG 24-SEP 23</p> <p>Luck is likely to favour you on the financial front and bring in money. An exercise regime will ensure fitness. It is a good day for internal planning. A marriage or birth is likely to bring happiness. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Spouse may remain cross with you over an issue. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 17 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Magenta</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN</b> DEC 22-JAN 21</p> <p>A financial issue is likely to go in your favour. You will keep your dear ones happy by devoting extra time to them. A lot of travelling is foreseen in official capacity. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> You don't have to be shy in expressing your love for someone you have a crush on. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 7 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Brown</p>
<p><b>GEMINI</b> MAY 21-JUN 21</p> <p>Some good health options will keep you in good physical condition. You will need to manage your funds well to organise a function. Be careful in long-distance travel by road. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Romantic life remains satisfactory. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 11 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Pink</p>	<p><b>LIBRA</b> SEP 24-OCT 23</p> <p>Buying a new gadget or appliance is possible. Your new initiative will prove effective in coming back in shape. An enjoyable trip is on the cards. A property decision will be given in your favour. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Lovers will be most receptive to your ideas, so rejoice! <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 2 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> BEIGE</p>	<p><b>AQUARIUS</b> JAN 22-FEB 19</p> <p>Financial gains may keep your coffers brimming. A new exercise routine will work fine in improving your health. A lot of enjoyment is in store for those planning a vacation. Selling property seems profitable. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Loving gestures will be reciprocated in full measure. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 5 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Red</p>
<p><b>CANCER</b> JUN 22-JUL 22</p> <p>Focusing on improvement over initiation suits you today. A suitable marriage proposal for someone in the family is likely to be received. A chance for overseas travel may come to you. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> This is the best day to express feelings. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 5 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Green</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b> OCT 24-NOV 22</p> <p>You may need to stay alert and responsive at the shop while managing tasks calmly. Family will be most supportive in whatever you are doing. An out-of-town visit to meet relatives is on the cards for some. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Romance promises to keep you in an upbeat mood. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 8 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Silver</p>	<p><b>PISCES</b> FEB 20-MAR 20</p> <p>Monetary condition remains satisfactory, but you may still not find inner satisfaction. Daily workouts promise to work wonders for health. <b>LOVE FOCUS:</b> Partner will be all lovey-dovey, so expect something special in the evening. <b>LUCKY NUMBER:</b> 9 <b>LUCKY COLOUR:</b> Royal Blue</p>

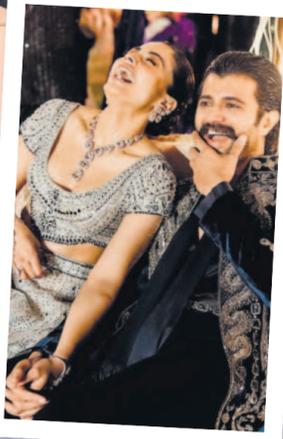
PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/ THEDEVERAKONDA

**Sangeet night, sealed with bling**



Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda

Newlyweds Vijay and Rashmika shared glimpses from their dreamy sangeet, held on February 24 in Udaipur. With dance acts and lavish décor, the evening felt straight out of a film. Dressed in custom Falguni Shane Peacock fits, Rashmika wore a silver lehenga, while Vijay picked an all-black look.



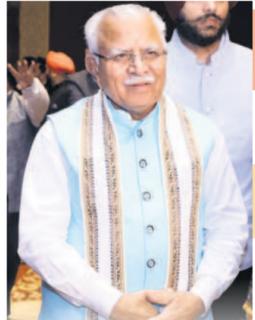
Union Cabinet Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah greeted the couple earlier in the day



Delhi Cabinet Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Tarvinder Singh, Union Minister for Defence Rajnath Singh with the bride and groom, Manleen Sirsa and Bhavleen Grewal



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta and Satwinder Kaur Sirsa



Union Cabinet Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs; and Minister of Power, Manohar Lal Khattar

**POWER AND POLITICS AT THIS GLITTERY RECEPTION**

Manleen Sirsa, daughter of Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Delhi's Minister of Industries, Environment, Food & Supplies, Forest & Wildlife, tied the knot with Bhavleen Grewal in a lavish ceremony held in Udaipur on February 15.

Following the celebrations, a reception dinner was held in the Capital on Sunday, welcoming a gathering of friends, family, and high-profile dignitaries.

The bride, Manleen, looked radiant in a peach-hued lehenga while the groom, Bhavleen, complemented her in a sharp, classic suit.

The evening was a star-studded affair, attended by renowned personalities from the political sphere, all of whom gathered to shower the newlyweds with blessings and love. HT



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan



Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu



Member of Parliament, Anurag Thakur



Delhi Cabinet Minister, Parvesh Sahib Singh



Sangita Saxena and Delhi LG Vinai Kumar Saxena



Union Minister of State for Electronics & IT, Commerce & Industry, Jitin Prasada



**Out of colour, Bollywood?**

Musicians reflect on the fading frenzy of Holi anthems in films

ILLUSTRATIONS: ADOBE STOCK

Singer Udit Narayan, says, "The depiction of our festivals is slowly decreasing in cinema," adding that many stories today are "more practical... about sex and crime," leaving little room for celebratory set-pieces. "If the story doesn't have scope, fitting a Holi song is next to impossible," he adds.



Composer Lalit Pandit, says, "Movies are more action-oriented and gruesome now, so the grandeur of Holi songs has fallen out of favour. Large festival sequences need time, extras and scale that modern shoots rarely allow."

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM AND YOGEN SHAH

Composer Pritam admits Holi songs are now "few and far between." He says, "Holi songs haven't vanished, but they don't stick. Maybe they're not as grand anymore for an organic connection with the listeners."

From *Rang Barse* to *Jai Jai Shiv Shankar*, Holi songs once came built into Bollywood storytelling. But how many of such Holi anthems can you recall from recent years, barring a few such as *Panwadi* (*Sunny Sanskari ki Tulsi Kumari*, 2025).

Listeners and composers both feel we need more Holi anthems. "Holi songs have been few and far between," agrees music composer Pritam behind hits like *Balam Pichkari*.

So what's stopping the makers? Many say stories and budgets have changed.

Trade expert Atul Mohan explains, "These days producers know that the revenue coming out of a film's music album is not as big as it used to be 20 years ago. Another reason, makers are making cinema of convenience, they are not willing to take risks or create something which is big on emotion."

Samarth Goyal

**HOLI PLAYLIST**

- *Rang Barse* — Silsila (1981)
- *Holi Ke Din Dil Khil Jaate Hain* — Sholay (1975)
- *Aaj Na Chodenge* — Kati Patang (1971)
- *Ang Se Ang Lagana* — Darr (1993)
- *Holi Khele Raghuveera* — Baghban (2003)
- *Soni Soni* — Mohabbatien (2000)
- *Do Me A Favor, Let's Play Holi* — Waqt: The Race Against Time (2005)
- *Balam Pichkari* — Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani (2013)



**FOR CHAMPIONS, WINNING IS A HABIT.**

PACKED WITH PLANT-BASED NUTRIENTS, CALIFORNIA WALNUTS FUEL PERFORMANCE FROM THE INSIDE OUT. REAL FOOD. REAL FUEL. BUILT FOR CHAMPIONS.

californiawalnuts.in

# 'HOLI IN DELHI IS A DIFFERENT VIBE'

Mumbaikar Preeti Jhangiani, who is married to Delhiite, actor Parvinn Dabass, creates a riot of colours as she gets candid about her connect with the Capital at Asita Park

Karan Sethi

PHOTOS: MANOJ VERMA/ HT

In a special shoot with HT City, the actor soaks in the festive fervour, drenched in colours



### MUMBAI VS DELHI: HOLI-DAY EDIT

Mesmerised by the charm of the festival, she gushes, "Holi in Delhi is just a completely different vibe... In Mumbai we celebrate for just one day, but in Delhi, it's a whole three-day festival. I've never celebrated here, but having a Delhi-style Holi in its full charm is on my bucket list now!"



**SRK'S PRO TIP**  
The song *Soni Soni* (Mohabbatein, 2000) is still a Holi fave. And memories of shooting rush back to her as she opens a packet of gulaal. "There's a line, 'Iss dil ko humne nahin, humein dil ne roka hai' that I was lip-syncing. I wasn't getting the shot right. Then, Shah Rukh (Khan, actor) told me, 'The camera catches every lie... You must sing the song'. His advice meant, do everything wholeheartedly. As soon as I followed it and sang my heart out, the shot was okayed."

ILLUSTRATIONS: ADOBE STOCK



### 'DELHI FOOD IS INCOMPARABLE'

The Mumbaikar started exploring the Capital when she began dating her now-husband, actor Parvinn Dabass. "Like all Mumbaikars, I didn't like Delhi at all, but later realised it is actually fun! The vibe, restaurants, food are incomparable. Everyone will hate me for this, but the golgappas, dahi chaats, mutton galouti and chicken kebabs are just amazing here."

### A PLAY OF NATURE

Drenched in the Holi spirit at Asita Park, she says, "The weather right now is perfect to enjoy Holi... Delhi is really, really beautiful. We don't have such open spaces in Mumbai. Greenery is something we really need to improve on in our city."

**Delhi Junction**  
FOR ALL THINGS FUN & FUNKY ABOUT DILLI,  
FOLLOW ON INSTA:  
@htcity.delhijunction

## Filmmaker Rajinderr Jaina plans a musical tribute to colours



PHOTO: HTCS

With gulaal colouring the air and cries of 'Holi hai!' filling our hearts, the festival of Holi (March 4 this year) is a rare day when even those who usually make excuses to step out, meet their friends and indulge in festivities. Holi celebrations are all about mending, renewing, and polishing relationships. And beyond the colours, laughter and celebrations, what truly binds people together are the timeless Bollywood songs that continue to bring generations to the dance floor, turning strangers into companions and moments into memories! Indian cinema has played a significant role in shaping the spirit of Holi through its iconic songs.

Keeping this sentiment alive, Dr Er Rtn Rajinderr Jain, who dons

the many hats of writer, producer, director, singer, and film and TV critic announces his next project. "My upcoming film, *Bedakhal*, is currently in the scripting stage. It will feature a Holi song to mirror our vibrant cultural essence." This festival of colours mirrors the onset of spring, symbolising growth beyond the past. With a nod to the profound story of Prahlad and Holika, a reminder of the fleeting nature of ego and the endurance of faith, Dr Jaina shares a deep message. "Holi reminds us every year that life is not black and white; it is beautifully colourful. The colours may fade by evening, but the memories of the people we meet wholeheartedly continue to paint our lives throughout the year," he shares.

HTC

## Corporate wali Holi: Clip from a Gurugram office goes viral

Want to celebrate Holi but stuck with deadlines? 'Corporate Holi' has entered the chat. Sharing glimpses from celebrations at her Gurugram-based office, a Reel by Instagram user @gaur.anshi depicts colleagues smearing colours on each other, dancing, feasting, and soaking in the festive mood. But one frame that stood out shows a man dancing enthusiastically, with his laptop held high. The video, which gained over 330k views within hours of posting, left Instagram users thoroughly amused. One commented, "That guy holding laptop and vibing, bhai next level." Another wrote, "FOMO but make it corporate." HTC

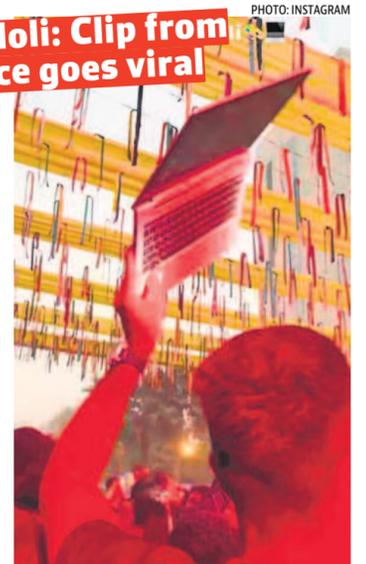


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

need\_more\_sleepz 2d · ❤️ by author  
Mujheee b khelni h esi holiiii 🎨👯

vinay\_dongarepatil 1h  
Bhai laptop leke aa gaya kya 😂

PHOTOS: PAWAN ARORA/ HT



## Do me a favour, let's play Holi!

From school students to college-goers, youngsters embraced the joy of colours



PHOTO: VIPIN KUMAR/ HT



Students appearing for the board exams de-stressed with a playful twist

PHOTOS: SUNILGHOSH/ HT