



# Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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You made 'Sheesh Mahal', we will build houses for the poor

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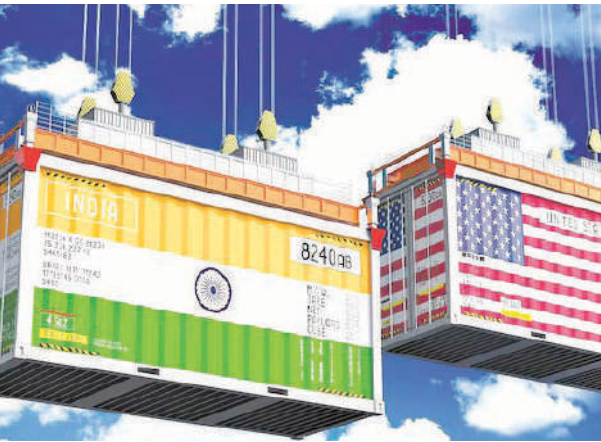
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RR face tough test against KKR after record bowling collapse

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BSE Sensex ends flat; Nifty50 above 23,650

## India may offer tariff cuts on US imports



**New Delhi:** India appears willing to cut tariffs on more than half of US imports worth 23 billion dollars to avoid heavy tariff duty on the Indian exports. Representatives of the two countries are expected to finalize a trade deal during their extensive talks here.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has already reduced custom duty on American breweries and motorcycles while presenting annual budget.

This would be one of the

biggest tariff cuts being taken by the Indian government to avoid reciprocal tariffs that could hurt Indian exports.

The government is trying to reduce the impact of US President Donald Trump's global reciprocal tariffs, which are set to take effect from April 2. The new tariff regime imposed by the Trump administration has disrupted international markets and created concerns among many countries, including America's Western allies.

According to reports, the

new US tariffs could impact 87% of Indian exports to the US, which are worth around \$66 billion

The proposal for reducing tariff on the US goods is still under discussion, and Indian government has not made a final decision. Other options being explored include adjusting tariffs for specific sectors instead of a broad tariff cut and negotiating reductions for selected products rather than reducing tariffs across multiple industries.

A US delegation, led by Brendan Lynch, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, is scheduled to visit India for trade talks which began today.

Tuesday. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in February, the two countries agreed to start early trade deal talks to resolve their tariff disputes. However, India's willingness to reduce tariffs depends on whether the US agrees to ease reciprocal tariffs.

## Delhi CM presents national capital's Rs 1 lakh cr budget



**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday presented a Rs 1 lakh crore budget for 2025-26 in the Union Assembly which proposes 31.5 per cent more expenditure than the budget for 2024-25.

In the budget presented on the second day of the budget session, a provision of Rs 28,000 crore has been made for the development of infrastructure in the budget.

When the Finance Minister Mrs. Gupta stood up to present the budget, the members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) raised Modi-Modi slogans in the House and greeted her by thumping the table.

Presenting the Rs 1 lakh crore budget for the financial year 2025-26 in the Assembly, Mrs. Gupta said that this budget will not only open new avenues for the

overall development of Delhi but will also strengthen the possibilities of progress in every field.

She said the budget will give a new dimension to education, health, transport and infrastructure development in the capital. She said that a provision of Rs 28,000 crore has been made for the development of infrastructure in the budget.

The Chief Minister said that the provisions made for the infrastructure sector would be used for expansion of roads, bridges, drainage, transport and other public services. Gupta expressed confidence that the budget will be a strong step towards transforming Delhi into a smart and modern city.

This is the first budget of the BJP government which came to power in Delhi after 27 years.

## Income Tax Bill to be taken up for discussion in next monsoon session: FM Sitharaman

**New Delhi:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Lok Sabha on Tuesday that the new Income Tax Bill will be taken up for discussion in the next Monsoon session of Parliament.

In her reply to the debate on Finance Bill 2025, Ms Sitharaman said that the bill proposes to remove seven Customs tariff rates for industrial goods.

The Income-Tax Bill of 2025 was presented in Lok Sabha on February 13, 2025, with the objective of superseding the existing Income-Tax Act of 1961.

It also codifies a comprehensive framework for faceless assessments under

Clause 273.

Speaking on the Financial Bill, the Finance Minister said the Union Budget of 2025-26



is aimed at boosting domestic production and enhancing export competitiveness.

Sitharaman reiterated the rationalisation of Customs duty structures and cuts

announced in her budget speech aimed to boost domestic production.

She added that "Rationalisation of Customs will also benefit importers".

Ms Sitharaman said, "This Budget session has introduced provisions and certain reformatory steps through the Finance Bill, which we hope will be taken up for discussion in this House during the Monsoon session."

"The Union Budget of 2025-26 provides unprecedented tax relief to honour taxpayers and is aimed at boosting domestic production and enhancing export competitiveness," she added.

## Lok Sabha extends tenure of JPC on One Nation One Elections till Monsoon Session

**New Delhi:** The Lok Sabha approved extension of the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on 'One Nation, One Election' Monsoon session.

This came after the JPC Chairperson P P Chaudhary sought an extension for the committee on simultaneous polls.

The Constitution Amendment Bill on 'One Nation, One Election', currently under review by the JPC, proposed simultaneously during the Lok Sabha and state assemblies elections.

JPC chairman Chaudhary moved the motion in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday regarding an



extension of time for presenting the report on the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill ('Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024 and

the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024').

Meanwhile, the JPC examining the 'One Nation, One Election' bill is set to meet today at 3 pm today.

During the meeting, Attorney General of India R Venkataramani and Justice D N Patel, the former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and

Chairperson of the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), will make representations before the JPC.



**Srinagar:** In a major setback to separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir, two important organisations -Jammu Kashmir People's Movement and Democratic Political Movement have severed all their ties with All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

This umbrella secessionist organisation has already become

## Two separatist groups cut all ties with Hurriyat

inactive in defunct the Valley after the revocation of Article 370 in August, 2019.

Leader of the DPM Mohammad Shafi Reshi had announced his party's complete disassociation the headline faction (Geelani Group) of All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that separatism has become history in Jammu and Kashmir, crediting the unifying policies of the Narendra Modi-led government for dismantling separatist sentiment in the region.

Taking to social media, Shah highlighted that two organizations linked to the Hurriyat Conference have severed ties with separatism, marking a

major shift in the political landscape of J&K.

"I welcome this step towards strengthening Bharat's unity and urge all such groups to come forward and shed separatism once and for all," Home Minister said on X.

Calling it a "big victory" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed, peaceful, and unified Bharat, Shah said the move further solidifies the government's commitment to national integration in Jammu and Kashmir.

Leader of the DPM Mohammad Shafi Reshi had announced his party's complete disassociation the headline faction (Geelani Group) of All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

## Kunal Kamra refuses to apologise for Shinde remark



**Mumbai:** Kunal Kamra has condemned the demolition of a studio in Mumbai while adding that he won't apologise over his controversial remark on Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"I will not apologise. I don't fear this mob, and I will not be hiding under my bed, waiting for this to die down," Kamra wrote in a post on X.

Earlier, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis also asked him to apologise and said that the state will not tolerate such things.

His statement came after protests by Shiv Sena workers and a police case filed against him following his remark on Shinde's 2022 rebellion against the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

A clip of the joke went viral on social media on Sunday, sparking outrage.

## India, China hold border talks, discuss early resumption of cross-border cooperation



**New Delhi:** India and China held border talks in Beijing today, during which peace and tranquility on the border was stressed. Both sides also exchanged views on early resumption of cross-border cooperation and exchanges, including trans-border rivers and the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra.

This was discussed during the 33rd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) held today in Beijing.

The Indian delegation was led by Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia), and the Chinese delegation was led by Hong Liang,

Director General of the Boundary & Oceanic Affairs Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a statement said.

Held in a positive and constructive atmosphere, the meeting comprehensively reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas.

Peace and tranquility on the border are critical for the smooth development of overall bilateral relations.

The two sides explored various measures and proposals to give effect to the decisions taken during the 23rd meeting of the Special Representatives on the India-China boundary question in Beijing in December 2024

and to advance effective border management.

The two sides agreed to maintain and strengthen relevant diplomatic and military mechanisms towards this end. They also exchanged views on early resumption of cross-border cooperation and exchanges, including on trans-border rivers and Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra.

The two sides agreed to work together to make substantial preparation for the next meeting of the Special Representatives (SR), which will be held in India later this year.

The Indian delegation leader paid a courtesy call on Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei, it added.

## RS Chairman calls meeting of floor leaders on alleged cash recovery at judge's residence

**New Delhi:** Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has convened a meeting with floor leaders on Tuesday at 4:30 PM to discuss the matter concerning the alleged recovery of a huge amount of cash at the residence of Delhi High Court Judge Yashwant Verma.

As soon as the House convened for the day, Dhankhar shared this information. He stated that he would meet with the Leader of the House, JP Nadda, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, again at 4:30 PM today.

Earlier, he told the House that a notice has been received under Rule 267 demanding discussion on this issue but

has not being accepted. He however, said that members can raise this issue during the Zero Hour.

In response, Congress member Pramod Tiwari emphasized the gravity of the issue, stating that it should be discussed. The Chairman remarked that the matter extends beyond judicial mismanagement, as it is connected to the sovereignty, supremacy, and significance of Parliament.

He said, "Hon'ble Members, this House, keeping dignity in mind, demonstrating dignified conduct, unanimously created a legal system in 2015, and that constitutional structure that emanated unanimously with



one abstention from the Parliament endorsed by state legislatures should be rule of law because it was sanctified by the Hon'ble President by appending her signatures under Article 111. Now is the befitting occasion for all of us to reiterate that because that

was a visionary step endorsed by Parliament. And imagine if that had taken place, things would have been different".

He said, "Now, before the nation, there are two situations, one, what emanated from the Indian Parliament, duly endorsed by State

Legislatures, sanctified by the Hon'ble President by appending signatures under Article 111, and second, is a judicial order".

Dhankhar said, "Hon'ble Members, I had the benefit yesterday of the wise counsel, experienced counsel of Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition who were gracious enough to respond to my invitation for an interaction on this very critical issue that is agitating minds in all branches of governance".

"I have scheduled a meeting after seeking convenience at 4.30 p.m. today with the floor leaders as suggested by Leader of the Opposition and agreed to by Leader of the House and

timing has also been indicated to the concerned," the Chairman said.

He further added, "I do not wish to be judgmental on any issue but one thing which has found widespread acceptability in the country is that the entire material available with the Supreme Court has been shared with the people at large and constitution of a committee with that speed I'm sure things will be available to us".

Kharge then praised the Chairman for his deep knowledge of the Constitution. He also said that transparency in the House is important, and said he is looking forward to a discussion with the leaders of the House at 4.30 pm today.

## Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls : Mamata

**Kolkata:** Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls, said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Attending a high tea reception at India House in London, hosted by Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom, Banerjee said, "Bengal has always believed in building bridges, not walls. As we continue to expand our global footprint, we look forward to fostering stronger ties with our partners in the UK and beyond."

"Today, I was honoured to attend a high tea reception at India House, hosted by Shri Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom. The event brought together the official and business delegation from Bengal alongside eminent



leaders from the industry, cultural, and social sectors in the UK, all united by a shared vision for deeper collaboration," Banerjee added. "Our discussions centred on strengthening economic partnerships, enhancing people-to-people ties, and exploring new avenues of cooperation that benefit both Bengal and Britain. By harnessing our collective potential, we aim to create opportunities that are mutually enriching and future-ready," she stated.



# High Drama in Odisha Assembly: 12 suspended Congress MLAs refuse to leave well of House

**Bhubaneswar :** The Odisha Assembly witnessed high drama on Tuesday as twelve Congress legislators, who were suspended for seven working days by Speaker Surama Padhy, refused to leave the well of the House. The Speaker directed the Marshals to evict the suspended Congress MLAs. However, Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati announced that the suspended MLAs would spend the night inside the well. He stated that the Congress legislators would continue their protest until the state government conceded to their demand for the formation of a

House Committee to probe the rising atrocities against women and ensure their safety in the state. Although the house was adjourned for the day after multiple adjournments, the suspended Congress MLAs continued to stage a sit-in dharna inside the well in support of their demand. The House witnessed chaos when it convened at 10:30 AM to take up the day's business. Opposition Congress and BJD members, holding placards, trooped into the well of the House and raised slogans in support of their respective demands. Congress members, holding placards, disrupted



proceedings by beating cymbals and playing trumpets near the podium, demanding the formation of a House Committee to address rising crimes against women. Meanwhile, BJD members, also holding placards, demanded

proportional reservations for SC, ST, and OBC candidates in engineering and medical education. They also called for a 27 percent reservation for OBCs in jobs and education. Due to the Opposition's protest, the House could not function for the day and was adjourned for 14 times before being finally adjourned for the day. During the session, the Speaker convened an all-party meeting to resolve the deadlock, but it remained inconclusive. As Congress members continued their unruly behavior, Government Chief Whip Saroj Kumar Pradhan moved a motion

condemning their actions and pressed for their suspension from the House. The motion was adopted by a voice vote, and the Speaker announced the suspension of 12 out of the 14 Congress members present in the House for seven working days. The Speaker also directed the Assembly Marshals to evict the suspended MLAs. However, the suspended Congress MLAs refused to leave, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House multiple times. Eventually, at 6:52 PM, the Speaker adjourned the House for the day until 10:30 AM on Wednesday, without conducting any business.

## Child among 5 trapped in lift at Kannur Railway station



**Kannur:** Five commuters, including a child, were trapped in a malfunctioning lift at Kannur Railway Station on Monday, causing them to miss the Vande Bharat Express. The ordeal commenced around 3 pm when the group, having arrived at Platform No. 3 attempted to access Platform No. 1 via the station's elevator. However, a sudden technical fault caused the lift to stall, trapping the passengers inside. Upon receiving the alert, officials promptly mobilised a rescue operation. However, as the extrication efforts proved more protracted than expected, the train was compelled to depart after halting for 10 minutes, leaving the passengers stranded in the station. Following their safe release which took more than an hour, railway authorities arranged special facilities for the people to travel in Kannur Express as a gesture of accommodation and goodwill.

## No domicile policy in teachers' appointment in Bihar

**Patna:** Ruling out violation of domicile policy in teachers' appointment, Bihar Education Minister Sunil Kumar said that there is no such policy in the appointment of teachers in the state. While replying to a question of RJD member Bhai Virendra during the pre-lunch sitting in Bihar assembly on Tuesday, Kumar said that the government was not mulling over introducing the domicile policy. However, he said that of the total number of teachers, 80 percent were from Bihar and only 20- 22 percent were from outside the state. He informed that a requisition for the appointment of 7000 specially abled teachers has been sent to the Bihar Public Service Commission which would soon initiate the process. Through his supplementary, Bhai Virendra raised the issue of giving more opportunities to the aspirants of other states in the appointment and said that the state was supposed to implement the domicile policy during the appointment. Bhai Virendra said that 121 specially abled aspirants of other states have been appointed whereas only 44 aspirants of Bihar got the opportunity in the appointment.

## Bihar deprived of World Bank assistance, of 476.90 crore for NNP: CAG

**Patna:** Bihar was deprived of Rs 476.90 crore World Bank assistance under Neer Nirmal Pariyojna (NNP) due to delay in implementation of the scheme and less expenditure till March 2020, according to a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary tabled the CAG report (Performance and Compliance Audit-Civil) of the Bihar government for the year ended 31 March 2022 in the state assembly on Tuesday. The report said that as Project implementation Plan (PIP), the schemes were to be completed in three batches up to March 2017, March 2019 and March 2020, respectively. However, none of the batches completed all its phases till December 2022. As per the PIP, the World Bank was to contribute

around Rs 803.00 crore (50 per cent of the project cost) to



the project. Due to delays in implementation and less expenditure till March 2020, Bihar received only Rs 326.10 crore and was deprived of World Bank assistance, amounting to Rs 476.90 crore, the CAG report revealed. The report further disclosed about diversion of NNP funds of Rs 64.21 crore towards payment of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and non-eligible schemes.

The CAG report said that in Ghogha Ghat (West Champaran) and Silao (Nalanda) multi-village schemes (MVSs) expenditure of Rs 19.44 crore incurred on laying of 34.62 km length of rising main pipes, was avoidable as water supply was provided to households by utilising ground water instead of by using surface water sources. In Rajauli (Nawada), Ghogha Ghat (West Champaran) and Silao (Nalanda) MVSs 24,123 multi-jet water meters installed, at a cost of Rs 4.11 crore for collecting the user fee became idle as the Department had decided (June 2021) to charge user fee at a fixed rate of Rs 30 per month, for each connection. According to the report excess expenditure of Rs 3.57 crore was incurred in five divisions on installation of Elevated Service Reservoir (ESR) with higher capacity than required.

## BJP govt did nothing except dividing society, spreading hatred: Akhilesh

**Lucknow:** Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has done nothing during its entire tenure except dividing the society and spreading hatred. In a statement issued here, Akhilesh said, "Following the policy of lies, loot and dishonesty, the BJP government has pushed the state into the darkness of inflation, unemployment and anarchy. The BJP government wants to hide corruption, ruined law and order and failures through misuse of government funds and false propaganda. But the public knows everything. It is ready to teach the BJP a lesson in the 2027 assembly elections." He said that the BJP government has deceived the people of the state in the name of doubling the income of farmers, investment and



zero tolerance. "Injustice and atrocities are at their peak in the entire state. The poor are not getting justice. The bullying of the strongmen is going on under the protection of the government," he said. The SP chief said, "From the top of the power to the police station, tehsil, officers and employees are involved in corruption. Commission and profiteering have reached their peak in every work." He said that no matter

how big claims the BJP government makes through false advertisements, everyone knows the ground reality very well. "The BJP government, which has looted the hard-earned money of the people, will never be forgiven. UP is lagging behind in every standard of health, education, employment. The law and order situation is continuously deteriorating. UP has reached the top in the

incidents of crime against daughters and women. Incidents of molestation are coming to light from various districts of the state," he claimed. Akhilesh said that there are no facilities for medicine, treatment and investigation in hospitals. "In the name of medical college, incomplete buildings are seen falling into ruins. Organised corruption is going on in this government in the name of investment. Now it is understood why the Invest Summit is being held in the BJP government, behind this is not investment but the BJP's greed for commission," he alleged. He said that every section is troubled by the wrong policies of the BJP government. "The public will put an end to this misrule by removing the BJP from power in the 2027 elections," he said.

## No database of Bihar Rajya Fasal Sahayata Yojana : CAG

**Patna:** The Cooperative Department did not have any database of potential beneficiaries required for planning, monitoring, and ensuring satisfactory coverage under the Bihar Rajya Fasal Sahayata Yojana, according to a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. The Deputy Chief Minister, Samrat Choudhary, tabled the CAG

report (Performance and Compliance Audit- Civil) of the Bihar government for the year ended 31 March 2022 in the state assembly on Tuesday. The report revealed that out of 50,91,243 verified applications, 52 percent of applications (26,30,462 applications) were rejected, due to issues relating to Land Possession Certificates (LPCs), self-declarations,

absence during verification, and others. The report said that against the overall financial assistance of Rs 1,424.59 crore related to 24,08,275 transactions, benefits amounting to Rs 867.36 crore, relating to 15,27,419 transactions had been paid with delays ranging up to 21 months. Due to non-linking of Aadhaar with the farmers' bank accounts,

closure of accounts etc., transactions amounting to Rs 51.11 crore had failed, across different crop seasons during 2018-21. According to the report, neither meetings of the State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) nor District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) were held timely nor was the impact of the Scheme evaluated.

## Maha: Complaint lodged against Aaditya Thackeray, Dino Morea, Suraj Pancholi in Disha Salian death case

**Mumbai:** In an interesting development in celebrity manager Disha Salian death case, lawyer of her father submitted a complaint with the city police on Tuesday, accusing Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray and a former city police commissioner, among others, of being involved in the death of Disha Salian. "Today, we have filed a written complaint with the Commissioner of Police, and the Joint Commissioner of Police Crime has accepted it," the lawyer Nilesh Ojha told reporters here. "The accused in this case are Aaditya Thackeray, Dino Morea, Suraj Pancholi and his bodyguard, Parambir Singh, Sachin Vaze and Rhea Chakraborty." Disha, a former manager of the late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, died

on June eight, 2020, after falling from a high-rise in Mumbai. Police then registered an Accidental Death Report (ADR) case. Disha's death is being probed by an SIT (special investigation team) constituted by the government in 2023. In his complaint, Disha's father claimed that on June eight, 2020, his daughter had organised a party at her home that was attended by Aaditya Thackeray and actors Sooraj Pancholi and Dino Morea. Aaditya Thackeray has denied all the allegations, calling them 'baseless'. He claimed that the allegations were an attempt by the BJP to tarnish his reputation. "It has been ongoing for the past five years. If the matter is in court, I will respond in court," the Worli MLA had said last week.



## Rajanna to file complaint with Karnataka Home Minister over honey trap

**Tumakuru:** Karnataka Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna on Tuesday announced that he would be filing a formal complaint with Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara regarding an alleged honey-trap attempt targeting him. He stated the complaint would provide a detailed account of how he was approached and the circumstances surrounding the incident. Addressing a press conference here, Rajanna claimed that an individual had visited his Bengaluru residence on two occasions, each time accompanied

by a different woman. "During the second visit, he introduced a woman as a high court lawyer," Rajanna said, emphasising that he suspected a larger conspiracy behind the events. The minister revealed that his letter to the home minister elaborates on the incident and the reasons for the delay in filing the complaint. He urged investigators to determine whether the individuals involved were acting independently or at the behest of others. Rajanna expressed confidence that he could identify the person who allegedly attempted to trap him if confronted.



The allegations, initially raised by Rajanna in the Karnataka Assembly last week, have created a political uproar in the state and were also discussed in Parliament. The minister further alleged that a

total of 47 legislators across party lines had been targeted in similar schemes. Following these revelations, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Supreme Court seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the allegations. The petitioner, Binay Kumar Singh from Jharkhand, argued that serious claims made in the state legislature warranted an independent investigation. The PIL also suggested that prominent personalities, including judges, were victims of the alleged honey-trapping network.

# Every citizen feels safe in UP now: Yogi

**Gorakhpur:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said that over the past eight years, the state government has successfully created an environment of security, leading to a sense of safety for every individual. Talking to the reporters after attending a special programme in Gorakhpur, marking eight years of the state government's journey in service, security and good governance, the CM said, "While the previous governments fostered 'one district, one mafia,' today the government has introduced 'one district, one medical college' and 'one district, one product.' This has led to the creation of new jobs, the revival of MSMEs, and ushered in a new era of investment in UP." He highlighted that the transformation underway in UP was part of a larger

resolution made in 2017, where the BJP promised to provide security and respect for all. "We pledged that every village, every poor person, every farmer, youth, and the needy would benefit from the government's schemes without discrimination. The government has fulfilled these promises, ensuring that everyone has access to development and public welfare initiatives, with a focus on security and respect," he said. Yogi noted the extensive road network laid across the state. "UP is now number one in the country for having the most expressways. An excellent highway network has been developed, and interstate connectivity has improved. Our links to states like Nepal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi are now much

stronger," he said. He highlighted the government's work in connecting district headquarters with four-lane roads and tehsil headquarters with similar connectivity. "Plans are also in place to ensure that development block headquarters are connected with two-lane and four-lane roads," he said. He said that UP has emerged as a leader in infrastructure development, with the most expressways, metro networks, railways, and public facilities in the country. On the security front, the CM spoke about police reforms. He mentioned the establishment of seven police commissionerates, with senior officers like ADGs and IGs appointed to various levels across the state. He said, "This was complemented by significant improvements in



infrastructure at the district level. So far, more than 2.12 lakh police personnel have been recruited, with 1.56 lakh already in service. Recently, the recruitment of over 60,000 additional personnel has been completed." Yogi emphasised the substantial increase in training capacity for police personnel. "When we came into power in 2017, only 6,000 policemen could be

trained annually. Now, with more than 60,000 recruits, we have increased training capacity ten times," he said. He said that previously, police personnel had no dedicated accommodations, and barracks were non-existent. "Today, we are building high-rise buildings for police personnel in every district. One such building has already been constructed in Gorakhpur," he said.

The CM highlighted that the previous government had closed the PAC companies, which were crucial in controlling riots and ensuring law and order. "Today, we have restored all these companies, along with implementing reforms. Additionally, six companies of SSF and SDRF were formed," he said. He mentioned that for the first time, a hydraulic tender system has been introduced in the UP Fire Service to handle fire emergencies. "Furthermore, a forensic lab and a forensic institute have been established in the state," he said. Yogi pointed out that the response time for PRV-112 was over 25 minutes earlier, but now, the service can be accessed anywhere in just 7 minutes. "Similarly, the response time for the 108 ambulance service used to

exceed 25 minutes, but today, it operates within 7 to 12 minutes," he said. He discussed the transformation of Gorakhpur, noting that the double-engine government has significantly advanced the city's development in the past eight years. "The difference between Gorakhpur before 2017 and after 2017 is clear to everyone. This change is not only visible in Gorakhpur but will also be seen in Ayodhya, Lucknow, Kashi, Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Agra, Jhansi, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Saharanpur, Bareilly, Moradabad, and everywhere," he said. He said that before 2017, cities like Gorakhpur were considered among the dirtiest and most disorganised in the country. "Today, 17 cities in UP have become smart cities,

recognised for their cleanliness, safety, and improved public facilities. CCTV cameras have been installed in these cities, and the process of connecting all municipal bodies to district headquarters is underway," he said. The CM said that Gorakhpur is becoming a model city in the new UP and New India. "Gorakhpur's connectivity has greatly improved. Now, everyone in Gorakhpur receives uninterrupted electricity, and there is no discrimination. More than one lakh poor people in Gorakhpur have benefited from the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Vantangiya village has been recognised as a revenue village and every eligible person in Gorakhpur is receiving the benefits of government schemes without any discrimination," he said.





## OUR CITY

## Briefs :

Delhi HC reserves order on Engineer Rashid's petition to allow him attend Parliament session

**New Delhi :** The Delhi High Court on Tuesday reserved its order on Engineer Rashid Sheikh's plea to grant him permission to attend the ongoing parliament session. Engineer Rashid, who won parliamentary election from Baramulla constituency, is in jail in terror-funding related cases. A bench of justices Chandra Dhari Singh and Anup Jairam Bhambhani said that a detailed order would be issued in this regard very soon. The bench deliberated on certain conditions which could be imposed on Engineer Rashid for allowing him to attend this Lok Sabha session. A request will be made to the Lok Sabha secretariat to give permission of squatting police officials to accompany jailed parliamentarian to attend the session. Earlier, a trial court dismissed Engineer Rashid's plea for a regular bail in this terror funding case.

**BJP MLA demands closure of meat shops during Navratri in Delhi**

**New Delhi :** BJP MLA Ravinder Singh Negi on Monday called for the closure of meat shops across Delhi during the upcoming Navratri festival. He stated that even if the measure isn't enforced city-wide, he will work to ensure that meat shops remain shut in his Patparganj constituency. Negi, recalling his tenure as a Nigam Parishad, said he had previously raised a similar demand. "Even then, I urged that at least shops near temples should remain closed on Tuesdays and during Navratri. Following my request, shops across the area began shutting on Tuesdays," he told. Now, as an MLA, he aims to push for a wider implementation of this practice. "Navratri occurs twice a year and holds deep significance for us Sanatanis as it is dedicated to Maa Durga. We will urge everyone to close meat shops during these nine days," said Negi. "After 27 years, we have a government here, and we will demand that meat shops remain shut across Delhi. Even if it isn't enforced throughout the city, I will ensure it happens in my constituency," he added. Negi also mentioned that he plans to submit a formal request to the (DM), the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), and the Commissioner to implement the closure. Criticising previous administrations, he claimed they disregarded the sentiments of Sanatanis.

**Delhi To Set Up Centre For Real-Time Monitoring Of Air Quality, Water Pollution**

**New Delhi :** An integrated command and control centre has been proposed in the 2025-26 Delhi budget, presented by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday, for real-time monitoring of air quality, water pollution, noise levels, and waste management. Presenting the 2025-26 Budget in the Delhi Assembly, CM Gupta announced an allocation of Rs 506 crore for the environment and forest departments. A sum of Rs 300 crore has been earmarked for "Pollution Control and Emergency Measures" to implement eco-friendly reforms, and Rs 20 crore under the "Delhi Parks and Garden Society" scheme to support RWAs, NGOs, and other organisations in greening parks and public spaces. CM Gupta highlighted that a large-scale tree plantation drive targeting 70 lakh saplings will be launched to expand Delhi's green cover, control air pollution, and promote urban biodiversity.

# You made 'Sheesh Mahal', we will build houses for the poor

## BJP's Delhi Budget Jab At Arvind Kejriwal



**New Delhi :** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta fired 'sheeshmahal' jabs - a redux of barbs fired in campaigning for last month's Assembly election - at predecessor Arvind Kejriwal and the opposition Aam Aadmi Party Tuesday, as she presented her government's Rs 1 lakh crore budget for the city for 2025/26.

The reference to allegations Mr Kejriwal misused Rs 45 crore of taxpayers' money to refurbish his former residence - allegations that went a long way towards ensuring the Bharatiya Janata Party won the election - were not the only attacks. She also called him "Delhi's malik (owner)" and said he had promised to "transform it into London", but instead left behind traffic jams and incomplete projects.

"There is a lot of difference between us... you made promises, we will fulfil them. You abused other states' governments, we will work together. You made the 'sheeshmahal', we will build houses for the poor. You installed (gold

toilets worth lakhs, we will make toilets for the poor..." she declared.

Ms Gupta also announced plans to develop Delhi into a 'tourism hub' - with the Bharat Mandapam, a trade hall, on the list of tourist attractions, she said - for which Rs 177 crore is to be allocated.

"We will include 'sheeshmahal' on the circuit," she declared, "We will sell tickets and show people..."

Mr Kejriwal could not respond immediately as he was not in the House; the AAP boss lost his seat after a poor showing in the February election.

The AAP, which won over 60 seats in 2015 and 2020, managed only 22 this time, and three-time MLA

Mr Kejriwal lost his New Delhi seat.

The 'sheeshmahal' controversy was widely seen as a key reason for the AAP's defeat in last month's election, with the BJP hammering Mr Kejriwal and his party over the alleged corruption.

Ms Gupta has been leading that charge; on the day she was to be sworn in as Chief Minister, the BJP leader vowed to turn Mr Kejriwal's former residence - 6, Flagstaff Road - into a museum.

And, days later, her colleague Parvesh Varma - who defeated Mr Kejriwal to win the New Delhi seat - told reporters he would personally conduct a tour of the bungalow.

Fast-forward a month,

### Delhi CM announces Rs 300 crores budget for mitigating pollution

The Delhi Government on Tuesday allocated Rs 300 crores for controlling pollution in metropolitan city which has become major health hazard.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta presented one lakh crore budget for the year 2025-26 and also announced 500 crores for environment and forest department.

Delhi has become most polluted city in the

world, and it has caused health issues to children and elderly citizens.

Stubble burning, construction dust, and vehicle emissions cause serious pollution problems. It is because of that the BJP government is focusing on controlling pollution.

Water and air pollution need major attention to provide people better air quality as well as clean drinking water.

and Ms Gupta's jabs in the Assembly today underscore the BJP's determination to use the 'sheeshmahal' controversy to keep its rivals on the backfoot.

Meanwhile, on the subject of Ms Gupta's first Delhi budget, the Chief Minister announced a "historic" Rs 1 lakh crore outlay that included Rs 28,000 crore for capital expenditure and provisions to clean up the Yamuna River and pay Rs

2,500 in monthly cash aid for eligible women, both pre-poll promises.

Accompanied to chants of "Modi, Modi", the budget included a 'common pass' for women on public buses. Plans to set up 50,000 CCTV cameras - to ensure women's safety - were also announced.

## "Not Done Any Analysis"

### Atishi Slams Delhi Government's Budget 2025-26

**New Delhi :** Attacking the Delhi government for making a Budget without an economic survey, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital, Atishi, on Tuesday said that the govern-

ment has admitted that they have not done any analysis to make the Budget.

"Is it a good thing that they are saying that they are forming a Budget with reviewing the situation of Delhi's financial condi-

tion? I think this means that the Delhi government itself is admitting that they have not done any analysis to make this Budget," Atishi told reporters.

She expressed surprise at the absence of the Economic Survey, which typi-

cally precedes the budget presentation.

"It is surprising how the budget was made without an economic survey. To date, we have not seen any government making a budget without an economic survey," she said.

## Railways to run general train to decongest platforms at Delhi stations

**New Delhi :** Due to heavy congestion at New Delhi Railway Station on Sunday, caused by delays in the departure of five trains—including two affected by mechanical issues—the railways is planning to introduce a contingency train with general coaches and unreserved seats in such exceptional situations to ease platform overcrowding.

Officials clarified that this service would be exclusively for passengers holding unreserved tickets, while those with reserved seats would need to wait for their scheduled trains. Although such instances are infrequent, authorities aim to have this plan in place to accommo-



date the large number of unreserved ticket holders waiting on platforms. This measure is expected to help decongest the station swiftly. "We are working on a strategy to handle such scenarios where train delays lead to an unexpected rise in passenger num-

bers. Since a significant portion of travelers have unreserved tickets, introducing a general train in these cases will provide quick relief," said a source.

On Sunday evening, the New Delhi station saw heavy footfall, particularly on platforms 12 and 13,

due to the delay of key trains. The Shiv Ganga Express, originally scheduled for 8:05 PM, departed at 9:20 PM, while the Swatantrata Senani Express was already stationed for its 9:15 PM departure, along with the Jammu Rajdhani Express and Magadh Express. The crowd surge prompted immediate crowd-control measures, though no injuries were reported.

To handle similar situations in the future, the railways has decided to keep two standby trains at approximately 60 major stations across the country, ensuring preparedness for passenger surges, especially during festive seasons.

## Nap & go! Pod hotel set up for in-transit travellers at New Delhi metro station

**New Delhi :** A new pod hotel is now available for passengers at New Delhi metro station, offering them a convenient place to rest while waiting for their trains. Located near New Delhi Railway Station, this facility aims to cater to travellers in transit who need a place to spend the night.

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has been working on several property development projects to generate non-fare revenue, including retail, entertainment, and office spaces across various metro stations. "At New Delhi metro station, which serves as an interchange for the Yellow and Airport Express Lines, the vendor has developed a pod hotel for passengers looking for overnight accommodation. The pod hotel is now operational. Of the 3,000 square metre area, a portion is dedicated to the hotel, with the remainder used for other commercial purposes," said a DMRC official.

In addition to the pod hotel, DMRC has recently developed various properties, such as retail, food, and office spaces at Malviya Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Azadpur, and Faridabad Sector 20B metro stations. A banquet hall has also been established at Noida Electronic City metro station.



Future property development projects include an industrial space at Mohan Estate metro station covering 8,900 square metres, a commercial space with parking at Kohat Enclave over 6,090 square metres, retail and office spaces at Azadpur spanning 21,000 square metres, and retail areas on the ground and first floors of Anand Vihar metro station, covering around 4,100 square metres.

"DMRC is introducing several new property development projects across the National Capital Region

as part of its ongoing efforts."

These initiatives will not only boost non-fare revenues but will also provide residents with new shopping, entertainment, and office space options," added the official.

As per DMRC, these property development activities are in line with global metro systems, which, being capital-intensive, rely on non-operational revenue streams-such as retail, real estate, and advertising-to stay financially viable without government subsidies.

"These commercial ventures enhance the appearance and atmosphere of metro stations, attracting more commuters and improving ridership, thus supporting better traffic integration," the official explained.

Although DMRC's property development efforts faced challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, effective planning and stakeholder engagement have allowed them to boost non-fare revenues to approximately 20% of total revenue generation. However, challenges such as the complexity of obtaining approvals and difficulties with land use changes continue to hinder Delhi Metro Rail Corporation's ability to fully realise the potential of these projects, said the official.

## INDIA bloc student wing protests at Jantar Mantar

**New Delhi :** Student organizations affiliated with INDIA bloc parties staged a protest against the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, paper leaks, the UGC draft rules and growing privatization of education at Jantar Mantar here on Monday.

The protest was led by Congress-led student wing, National Students' Union of In-

dia (NSUI)-led INDIA.

During the demonstration, the members of the several student organisations shouted slogans while holding aloft placards, against the ruling dispensation.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and several other MPs from the Opposition parties also participated in the protest.





## Developed India: 2047!

There is a wide discussion on the Budget for 2025-26 presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The budget is not only based on economic matters but also includes social and political aspects. Especially in the backdrop of the upcoming state elections, some provisions have been linked to political strategy. However, the main objective of this year's budget is to take a significant step towards making India a developed nation by 2047. This far-reaching vision of the budget needs to be discussed seriously.

The background to this nationally important and ambitious concept of Developed India: 2047 is that on 15 August 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi resolved to realize a developed India with all-round development by 2047, i.e. in the centenary year of Indian independence. It is noteworthy that earlier, only once in the post-independence period, in 1956, the then Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had inaugurated a five-year plan at the national level to achieve the development of independent India. The five-year plan that Jawaharlal Nehru had started to give the country economic and development independence after political independence, suffered a setback during Indiraji's tenure. This is why, when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, she took the economic decision to nationalize selected and major banks in the country in 1969 and, feeling that this was not enough, Indiraji took the political decision to impose emergency on the entire country in 1975 and it is noteworthy in this regard that the five-year plans started by Nehru were completed.

Now, however, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented the concept of a developed India that is industrially productive and economically useful. The will for economic and industrial development requires political stability, leadership capacity and administrative readiness. In this regard, it is a plus that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP government have these things. These things have also been noted at the international level. Against the backdrop of uncertainty regarding the international business and economic situation, the so-called advanced countries and international economists, including the World Bank, were skeptical about what the development picture of India would be after the next 25 years. However, considering the three consecutive years of growth in GDP and the leadership that India has taken and maintained in the economic sector with this growth, the doubts of those who doubted India and Indians have now cooled down. According to international financial institutions and experts in this field, the situation has already been firmly established that India's economic and development leadership will continue till 2029.

Against this backdrop, it has now become practical and possible to think about what a developed India in 2047 will be or could be like. For this, it is essential to achieve and maintain the current domestic growth rate of 3.1 for the next 24 years. Only if this happens can the goal of a developed India be achieved in 2047. This raises the question of how and in what way the above-mentioned growth rate can be achieved consistently? To answer this doubt and question, it is of course necessary to review India's current performance. A big and important point in this context is that India's average annual growth rate has been 4 percent for more than thirty years and a long period from 1991 to 2023. This is a big plus for India. Even with all the factors including the Corona period and the economic instability that has arisen during the above period, the consistent growth rate achieved by India is significant.

In this regard, according to the 2024 Special Study Report on South Asia published by the World Bank, India has been advised to be cautious or take more care in order to increase the national growth rate and maintain it for a long time, citing the growth rate of South Korea in the two decades of 1960-1980. This report emphasizes on achieving development through employment and productivity.

According to the data available in the international context in terms of comparative figures and percentages in terms of growth and growth rate, the countries of the Indian subcontinent, including India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, had to wait with efforts until 2022 to achieve the annual per capita income that was in 1960. It was stated that employment and increasing productivity in Korea were the main reasons behind this. At present, Korea is considered to be the best in terms of economic-industrial development. According to the data available with the World Bank in terms of economic-industrial development, it is easy to compare India's development with Korea at present. In terms of comparative development and growth rate, Korea's progress in the economic-industrial sector from 1960 to 1980 can be easily compared with India's economic progress from 2000 to 2022. At the same time, Korea and India can also be compared in terms of production and labor productivity. In short, in the above statistics, the productivity of the manufacturing sector and labor was 6.1 percent, while in the case of India, the same figure was 5.3 percent. When considering the current situation and the context of developed India, this fact and percentage are definitely a plus in the case of India.

The same thing can be seen in the context of the age group of women in the manufacturing-labor sector. In order to achieve the expected growth rate, in the year 2022-23, the percentage of women under the age of 25 in Korea was 41.7 percent, while the percentage of women in this age group was 41.9 percent in the same financial year. This explains why the Prime Minister emphasizes the percentage of the youth in the manufacturing sector when talking about developed India.

In short, Narendra Modi's vision of a developed India in the next 20-22 years is a challenging prospect. However, with today's economic and industrial progress of India and the capabilities of Indians, the goal of a developed India in 2047 may seem difficult, but it is not impossible. Such a mindset is required to achieve the possibility of a developed India.

## Gol Taking Measures Against Online Gaming Addiction



The policies of the Central Government are aimed at ensuring an open, safe, trusted and accountable Internet for its users.

To help achieve this aim, the Central Government after exten-

sive consultations with relevant stakeholders notified amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules") under the Information

Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act") to address various socio-economic concerns emanating from online games. The Government is cognizant of the risks posed by online gaming and potential harms like addiction.

The IT Rules, 2021 casts specific obligations on online gaming intermediaries, including other intermediaries, social media intermediaries or platforms in relation to online games. Such intermediaries are required not to host, store or publish any information violative of any law for the time being in force. They are also obligated to ensure their accountability that includes their expeditious action towards removal of the unlawful information categorised under the IT Rules, 2021 or on the basis of grievances received against any information that, among other things, is harmful to child or that is relating or encouraging money laundering or gambling.

Further, IT Act has provisions to issue blocking orders to intermediaries for blocking access to specific information/ link in the inter-



est of sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for inciting cognizable offence relating to above following the due process as envisaged in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules, 2009.

MeitY has issued 1298 blocking directions related to online betting/gambling/gaming websites (including mobile applications)

between the year 2022- 24.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and publishes statistical data on crimes in its publication "Crime in India". NCRB doesn't maintain any specific data related to suicides linked to online gaming.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw in Lok Sabha.

## Gol Taking Measures Against Online Pornography

The policies of the Central Government are aimed at ensuring an open, safe, trusted and accountable Internet for its users.

The Information Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act") provides punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material and material containing sexually explicit act in electronic form. The IT Act also has stringent punishment for publishing or transmitting of material depicting children in sexually explicit act in electronic form.

Also, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules, 2021") casts obligations on the intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, to observe due diligence and if they fail to observe such due diligence, they lose the exemption from their liability under law for third-party information or data or communication link hosted by them. Such due diligence includes that in case a significant social media intermediary is providing services primarily in the nature of messaging

shall enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource for the purposes of prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offence related to rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material.

Such due diligence also includes that intermediaries shall remove within 24 hours any content which prima facie exposes the private area of any individual, shows such individual in full or partial nudity or shows or depicts such individual in any sexual act or conduct. Further, the rules provide for the establishment of one or more Grievance Appellate Committee(s) to allow users to appeal against decisions taken by Grievance Officers of social media intermediary on such complaints.

To ensure a good and healthy entertainment in accordance with the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952 and the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules 1983, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), regulates the public exhibition of films including adult films. Ac-



cording to the guidelines issued by them, films which are considered unsuitable for exhibition to non-adults shall be certified for exhibition to adult audiences only.

Further for online publishers of curated content, the IT Rules, 2021 prescribes the code of ethics publishers of online curated content, commonly known as OTT Platforms.

This code requires the OTT Platforms to classify content in specified age-appropriate categories, restrict access of age-inappropriate content by children, and implement an age verification mechanism for content classified as "Adult".

To further strengthen the mechanism to deal with such cybercrimes in a coordinated

manner, the Government has also taken several other measures, including the following:

(i) The Ministry of Home Affairs operates a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal ([www.cyber-crime.gov.in](http://www.cyber-crime.gov.in)) to enable citizens to report complaints pertaining to all types of cybercrimes, with special focus on cybercrimes against children. The Ministry has also set up the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to deal with all types of cybercrime, including cybercrime against children, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

(ii) The Ministry of Home Affairs has provided financial assistance to States and Union territories under

the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Scheme for capacity building, including for the setting up of cyber forensic-cum-training laboratories and training of personnel of law enforcement agencies, public prosecutors and judicial officers.

7(iii) Government has from time to time blocked websites containing child sexual abuse material (CSAM), based on lists from Interpol received through the Central Bureau of Investigation, India's nodal agency for Interpol.

(iv) Government has issued an order to Internet Service Providers, directing them to implement Internet Watch Foundation, UK or Project Arachnid, Canada list of CSAM websites/webpages on a dynamic basis and block access to such web pages or websites.

(v) The Department of Telecommunications has requested Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to spread awareness among their subscribers about the use of parental control filters, and has also directed ISPs with International Long-Distance li-

cense to block certain websites found to be containing CSAM.

(vi) To spread awareness on cybercrime, the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several steps that include dissemination of messages on cybercrime through the Twitter handle @cyberDost, radio campaigns and publishing of a Handbook for Adolescents/Students.

(vii) A MoU has been signed between the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), USA regarding sharing of Tipline reports on online child explicit material and child sexual exploitation contents from NCMEC. The Tip lines, as received from NCMEC, are being shared with States/UTs online through the National Cyber-crime Reporting Portal for taking further action.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

## India Plans Chandrayaan-4 Mission

Of the four astronauts undergoing rigorous training for the upcoming human mission, "Gaganyaan" one of them, Group Captain Shukla, has been selected to join the mission to the International Space Station, while others remain in an intensive preparatory phase to ensure mission success.

This was stated in the Lok Sabha today by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh. He asserted that India's space ambitions are set to reach new heights in reply to a question, while revealing crucial details about the upcoming Chandrayaan-4 mission. The mission, which will feature multiple advanced docking technology and lunar sample collection, is poised to be a major step toward India's goal of establishing its own space station by 2040.

Beginning his reply in the Lok Sabha to a discussion on Chandrayaan 4 and India's Space missions, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh shared with the House that Sunita Williams had landed back on the surface of Earth this morning at 3.27 AM after spend-

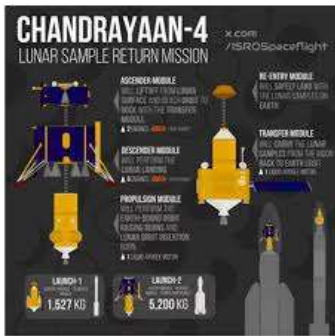
ing more than 300 days in the Space and our message of congratulations was put out by the social media soon thereafter around 4 AM defining this "as a moment of glory, pride and relief".

The Minister referred to PM Narendra Modi's letter to Sunita Williams in which he had conveyed his good wishes and extended her invitation to visit India. He also recalled that when Sunita came to India last time in 2007, he had met Shri Modi who was then the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted the importance of Chandrayaan-4 in strengthening India's space capabilities. "This mission will not just be about landing on the Moon but also about mastering docking and undocking procedures, a key re-

quirement for future interplanetary missions and space station operations," he said. The Minister further noted that India's long-term objective includes sending an Indian astronaut to the Moon, with Chandrayaan-4 serving as a precursor to that historic feat.

The mission will involve two launch vehicles carrying five components in total. These modules will execute complex manoeuvres, including docking in Earth's orbit before proceeding to the Moon. Upon reaching lunar orbit, the modules will separate, with the descender collecting samples while the ascender returns to dock with the remaining modules. The return module will then make its way back to Earth, simulating key aspects of crewed lunar missions. Dr. Jitendra Singh also touched upon



## PRITHVI Vigyan (PRITHVI) programme

The various components of ongoing research projects, such as ACROSS, O-SMART, PACER, SAGE, and REACHOUT, under the PRITHVI scheme are inter-dependent.

The overarching scheme of PRITHVI holistically addresses all the components to improve.

The understating of the Earth System Sciences and to provide reliable services for the country.

These integrated R&D efforts will help in addressing the grand challenges of weather, ocean, climate, seismological and geological hazards.

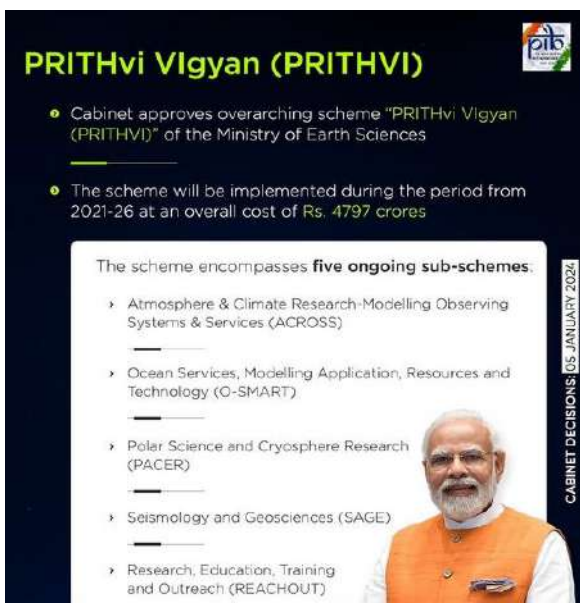
And explore the living and non-living resources for their sustainable harnessing.

Ministry of Earth Sciences supports interna-

tional collaborative projects of mutual interest under PRITHVI scheme. For the evaluation of collaborative proposals from global scientific institutions, a joint expert committee is set up, which evaluates and recommends the proposal.

Deep Ocean Mission was launched in 2021 with a total budget outlay of Rs 4,077 crores to be implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences. It is a multi-disciplinary programme with activities encompassing six verticals, namely a) Development of Technologies for Deep Sea Mining and Manned Submersible, Underwater Vehicles.

And Underwater Robotics for exploring and harnessing ocean resources, b) Development of Ocean Climate Change



Advisory Services, c) Technological innovation for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity, d) Deep Ocean Survey and Explo-

ration, e) Energy and Freshwater from the Ocean, and f) Advance Marine Station for Ocean Biology. Survey has been con-

ducted at potential sites of multi-metal hydrothermal sulphide mineralization along the Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges using autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) in March 2024 at ten locations, of which two locations of active and two locations of inactive vents showing sulphide mineralisation have been identified.

In order to enhance India's capacity to address climate change impacts through improved understanding of the atmosphere-ocean-pole interactions.

A number of activities have been carried out, including augmentation of the existing observational networks on land, poles and in oceans, augmenting the High-Performance Computing (HPC) facility, improv-

ing understanding of weather and climate processes and enhancing prediction capabilities by developing improved earth system models, Training and Research at MoES Institutes, as well as Collaborative Research.

Further, the Ministry has recently launched Mission Mausam with the goal of making Bharat a "Weather-ready and Climate-smart" nation to mitigate.

The impact of climate change and extreme weather events and strengthen the resilience of communities.

This information was given by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.



Briefs :

Commissioner tells engineering wing to clean all drains before monsoon in Karnal

**Karnal :** Ahead of the upcoming monsoon season, Karnal Municipal Corporation (KMC) Commissioner Dr Vaishali Sharma directed the engineering wing for the cleaning of all major drains, including Karna Canal, earlier known as Mughal Canal, Drain Number 1 and other medium and small drains in the city. She also directed officials to ensure timely repairs of stormwater disposal pumps installed at various locations. In a letter to all engineers of the engineering wing, Dr Sharma emphasised that every year, desilting and cleaning of these drains were carried out before the monsoon to prevent waterlogging in the city. She instructed executive engineers, assistant engineers, junior engineers, and technical experts to prepare detailed estimates for the cleaning, desilting and repair works of drains and disposal pumps in their respective areas. A deadline of one week has been set for the submission of these estimates to ensure timely administrative approvals and the invitation of tenders. The Municipal Commissioner stressed that all cleaning operations must begin well in advance to avoid waterlogging and inconvenience to residents during the monsoon. She also directed officials to strictly comply with the orders to ensure a smooth drainage system in the city.

'Ratnawali Yuva Saang Mahotsav' ends at Kurukshetra's Budha village

**Kurukshetra :** The four-day 10th Ratnawali Yuva Saang Mahotsav, organised at Budha Village, concluded on Monday. The mahotsav was organised by Indira Gandhi National College, Ladwa, on the directions of the Department of Youth and Cultural Affairs, Kurukshetra University. During the concluding programme, Kurukshetra Deputy Commissioner Neha Singh said education, coupled with active participation in cultural activities, played a pivotal role in the holistic development of students. She encouraged students to pursue their studies with dedication and integrity. College Governing Body president Pawan Garg spoke about the significance of cultural heritage, stating that 'saang' (traditional Haryanvi folk dance-theatre) was an integral part of the state's cultural legacy. He also expressed gratitude to the villagers for their hospitality in hosting the event. College Principal Dr Kushal Pal acknowledged the contributions of the Budha Sarpanch, former Sarpanches, and panchayat members for their efforts in organising the event at the village. In addition to cultural events, the college inaugurated a three-day cricket competition at the college stadium. Dr Kuldeep Singh, Head, Department of Physical Education, announced that Group A matches of the Inter-College Cricket Men's Category for Kurukshetra University would be held from March 24th to 26th at the Indira Gandhi National College sports ground.

## Kaithal cops bust gang involved in tower equipment theft, 4 arrested

**Karnal :** With the arrest of four persons, the anti-vehicle theft unit of the Kaithal police busted a gang allegedly involved in stealing remote radio unit (RRU) equipment from mobile towers across Haryana. It has recovered stolen property worth around Rs 35 lakh from their possession. The police impounded a car, tools used in the thefts, Rs 70,000 in cash, and 11 stolen RRU devices. The arrests have helped the police to solve 18 cases of equipment theft from mobile towers in various districts of Haryana, including Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Yamunanagar. Interacting with media persons, DSP Sushil Prakash said the investigation began after a complaint was filed by Ranbir Singh, a supervisor at RS Security, which provided security for mobile towers. According to the complaint, an RRU device was stolen from a tower in Faral village on March 13. Based on the report, a case was registered at the Pundri police station. The Superintendent of Police (SP),



Rajesh Kalia, assigned the case to the anti-vehicle theft unit, which cracked it while working on a tip off. A police team led by Inspector Ranjit and SI Pradeep, along with ASI Jasmer Singh, SI Shubhkaran, HC Sunil, HC Isham Singh, and HC Anil, tracked down and arrested the accused — Vinodi, Pawan and Kuldeep—from Dusaain village. Another accused, Vinod alias Kuku, was arrested from Gohida village in Karnal. During interrogation, the accused revealed that they had been working on mobile towers for five years but had faced irregular employment and

salary delays over the past two years. Knowing the high resale value of RRUs, which range from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per unit, they began targeting mobile towers at night. The gang confessed to committing six thefts in Kaithal, nine in Karnal, two in Kurukshetra and one in Yamunanagar. They would steal the RRUs and hand them over to their associate Sandeep from Indri, Karnal, who would then sell them in the black market, the DSP said. The accused used a systematic approach as they conducted survey during the day to identify potential targets.

At night, one member would climb the tower and act as a lookout. Two members would dismantle and remove the equipment. The others remained on the ground to keep a watch and alert the group of any people or vehicles approaching. When alerted, they would quickly hide the stolen equipment and vehicle to avoid detection.

The police are conducting further interrogations to identify additional accomplices and recover more stolen property. DSP Prakash assured that strict action would be taken against those involved in such organised crimes.

## Seven vehicles seized in Mahendragarh for illegal transportation of minerals

**Mahendragarh :** Despite ongoing efforts by the district authorities to curb illegal mining activities, the mafia continues to illegally transport mining materials from neighbouring Rajasthan to various locations within Mahendragarh district.

In the latest operation, the district mining authorities, in collaboration with the local police, have seized three trucks and four tractor-trailers involved in the illegal transportation of sand and gravel from Rajasthan. A total fine of Rs. 21.30 lakh has been levied and recovery actions are under way. Over the past two days, the joint team from both departments has also checked more than 500 vehicles. Rajesh Kumar, District Mining Engineer, Narnaul, stated that under the direction of the Chief



Minister, stringent surveillance measures were being implemented in Mahendragarh district to prevent illegal mining and transportation of minerals.

He also mentioned that the Director-General of the Mining Department was also

receiving regular updates regarding the issue. With the cooperation of the SHO from Narnaul, Nizampur, and Mahendragarh, three trucks and four tractors were seized as soon as they entered the district in the past two days.

## Juan village residents protest poor water supply

**Sonepat :** Enraged over poor water supply, Juan village residents, led by a Zila Parishad member Sanjay Badwasnia, on Monday staged a protest by breaking the earthen pots.

The villagers called for adequate water supply at the village. Badwasnia said the problem of improper water supply had been occurring for several days.

A booster had been set-up at the village, but was not functional so far, he added. To make matters worse, the erratic supply was being contaminated due to leakages in water pipes, he alleged. Villagers, especially women, were forced to bring potable water from their fields, he said. Badwasnia announced that 10 hand-pumps would be set up at the village to resolve the problem, and said these hand-pumps would be installed in areas where the issue was the most severe.

## atnali-2 gram panchayat felicitated for best sex ratio in Mahendragarh

**Mahendragarh :** The district administrative authorities on Monday felicitated the Satnali-2 gram panchayat for securing the first position on the basis of sex ratio at birth (SRB) in the district.

The village witnessed the birth of 1,232 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2024, while the average SRB of Mahendragarh was 902.

Three meritorious girl students of the village were also honoured by the authorities on the occasion as per a state government scheme. "Under the scheme, the Health Department honours three girls from government schools — who score the highest in Class X — in a village with the best sex ratio. In line with this, three girls of the Satnali-2 school, who secured first, second and third positions in the matriculation exams, were presented with cash prizes of Rs 75,000, Rs 45,000 and Rs 30,000, respectively," said Deputy Commissioner Vivek Bharti.

He added that the honoured students were Varsha, who scored 90.20 per cent marks, Khushboo, who scored 89.60 per cent marks, and Asha, who secured 89 per cent marks in the matriculation exams. "Due to various programmes and

schemes run by the government, girls are now bringing laurels to the nation in every field," he said.

The DC urged people to inform the district administration, the nearest government hospital, or Civil Surgeon's office in Narnaul if they received information about anyone involved in sex determination activities. The identity and address of the informer would be kept confidential, he said, adding that, as a reward, the government offered a financial incentive of Rs 1 lakh for informing authorities.

Civil Surgeon Dr Naveen Kumar said in Satnali-2 village, out of 58 births, 26 were boys and 32 were girls last year — with the SRB coming out to be 1,232.

Dr Vijay Yadav, Deputy Civil Surgeon (PNDT), emphasised that educating girls was essential for societal development.

"Each educated girl plays a significant role in the advancement of both her maternal and paternal families," he said.

Municipal Commissioner Manjeet Kumar, DDPO Hariprakash Bansal, Satnali-2 Sarpanch Manisha and SMO Dr Vikram Disodia were among those present at the felicitation programme.

## With paper recycling plant, Dyal Singh College leads the way in sustainability

**Karnal :** Dyal Singh College, Karnal, has taken a significant step towards environmental sustainability with the inauguration of its paper recycling plant.

Vice-Admiral Satish Soni (ret'd), General Secretary, Governing Body, Dyal Singh College, Sarabjeet Singh Sukhija, regional manager, and Abhishek Ranjan, branch manager, State Bank of India, inaugurated the plant. Enthusiastic members of Prakriti, the college's eco club, and teaching and non-teaching staff members were among those present at the inauguration of the unit. Soni ex-

tended his gratitude to the State Bank of India for their financial support in establishing the plant.

He said the bank's contribution had played a pivotal role in promoting ecological awareness and sustainability among students and faculty members. Principal Dr Ashima Gakhar said understanding the urgent need for eco-friendly initiatives, Prakriti club proposed and successfully implemented the installation of the waste paper recycling/hand-made paper making unit at the college.

The initiative was a step towards better waste man-

agement, as it transformed discarded paper and cotton rags into hand-made paper, thereby reducing dependency on forest resources and fostering a cleaner environment, the Principal added. The paper recycling plant operates on an eco-efficient mechanism, relying solely on mechanical processes such as waste recycling, pulping, sheet formation and natural drying. The unit causes zero air or water pollution, making it a model for sustainable practices.

The hand-made paper produced can be further customised into a range of final products — including

writing paper, carry bags, greeting cards, files and folders, envelopes, letterheads, certificate paper and innovative stationery items like pen stands, cube boxes, and document boxes. The initiative aligns with the vision of National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020) and contributes significantly to the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission, promoting cleanliness, waste reduction and environmental responsibility.

The project has the potential to provide students with internship opportunities in the field of sustainable development.

## Burdened with loans taken for costly shoes & clothes, youths rob liquor contractor of Rs 4.4L

**Panipat :** With the arrest of three persons, the police have claimed to solve a robbery case where Rs 4.48 lakh and a scooter were stolen from a liquor contractor in Panipat on March 11.

DSP (Headquarters) Satish Vats, during a press conference, said the accused had been identified as Robin, Anshul and Kunal of Kheri Gujjar village in Gannaur of Sonepat district. An associate of the accused, Ankit, was absconding, the DSP added.

Vats said the incident was reported to the police on March 11. Inderalp of Desraj Colony, in his complaint to the Sector 29 Industrial Area police, said one Ankush Kuthpal was found injured near Vrinda Enclave. Ankush told him that three youngsters on a motorcycle attacked him from behind and robbed him of a cash bag containing Rs 4.48 lakh and his scooter. SP Lokender Singh handed over the investigation of the case to a CIA-1 team.

The team, led by Sub-Inspector Sandeep Kumar, following a tip-off about the accused, nabbed Anshul and Robin from Sector 18 near a gurdwara, and Kunal near the Sewah bus stand. During the preliminary investigation, the accused accepted their involvement in the robbery, Vats said.

The accused revealed that they were burdened with loans due to their fondness for costly and branded shoes and clothes.

## Welcome gate to come up at Ambala-Saha road in Ambala Cantonment

**Ambala :** Haryana's Energy, Transport and Labour Minister, Anil Vij has released a grant of Rs 34 lakh from his discretionary fund for the construction of a welcome gate at Ambala-Saha Road (a stretch of NH-444A) in Ambala Cantonment.

The welcome gate will be constructed on the border of the municipal limit of the Municipal Council, Ambala Sadar, while coming from Yamunanagar direction. The Cabinet Minister said a grand gate would be constructed to welcome the travellers commuting from Yamunanagar to Ambala Cantonment.

He has directed the municipal council officials to hire an agency and get a design prepared for the welcome gate. He also assured that if additional funds were required for the construction, then more funds would be provided.

Earlier in 2022, a welcome gate, constructed at a cost of over Rs 2.50 crore in Ambala Cantonment, was inaugurated by Anil Vij.

The welcome gate installed on a single shaft is



of a cantilever shape. The height of the welcome gate is about 50-ft.

The minister said sincere efforts were being made by the municipal council towards the beautification of the Ambala Cantonment and the welcome gates at the entry points would help the council in this direction.

Besides this, the location to install a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has also been finalised by the municipal council.

Cabinet Minister Anil Vij had allocated a fund of Rs 50 lakh from his discretionary fund for installing a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Anil Vij said the statue would be installed near Sadar Bazaar Chowk.

The statue would be attractive, depicting Shivaji Maharaj riding a horse while holding a spear in his hand. This statue in Ambala Cantonment will symbolise bravery and unity.

The Cabinet Minister said, "We already have got the statues of Bhagat Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose at the Mini-Secretariat and Subhas Park, respectively, in Ambala Cantonment and now the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will be installed in the Sadar Bazaar.

The prime objective behind installing the statues of the bravehearts is to keep inspiring future generations to dedicate themselves to the nation."

**Karnal :** Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Yash Jaluka directed officials to ensure that all necessary arrangements for procurement of rabi crops in the grain markets were completed on time. As per government orders, the wheat procurement would commence from April 1, marking the beginning of the rabi season's procurement process. The ADC emphasised that there should be no delays in lifting crops from the grain markets and instructed that transporters failing to provide vehicles within the stipulated three-hour timeframe should be penalised.

He also directed mandi secretaries to form mandi-wise grievance redressal committees to address the grievances of farmers. "A banner displaying committee members' names and contact numbers should be placed outside the mandi office and at the market gate. This will help the farmers reach out to the grievance committee members for resolving procurement-related issues," he added. Chairing a review meeting on procurement preparations at the Mini-Sec-



retariat, the ADC stressed that all procurement agencies' supervisors must perform their duties with dedication and honesty. Any negligence in their work would result in strict action. He also assured the farmers that their payments for wheat procurement would be transferred to their accounts on time.

Subdivisional Magistrates (SDMs) have been instructed to inspect mandis in their respective areas and hold meetings with representatives of the farmer unions and clubs. Farmers should be encouraged to dry their produce before bringing it to the mandis, ensuring a smooth selling process. The Agriculture Department has also been directed to spread awareness among the farmers regarding proper procurement procedures. The meeting was attended by representatives from gov-

ernment procurement agencies, including the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Hafed, and Haryana Warehousing Corporation, along with mandi secretaries from all grain markets. The ADC directed mandi secretaries to ensure proper arrangements, including the installation of CCTV cameras, uninterrupted power supply, clean drinking water facilities with water coolers, well-maintained restrooms, and adequate sheds for farmers and labourers. Additionally, he emphasised that sufficient computers, scanners, and operators should be available for issuing gate passes. Any shortage of computers or scanners should be addressed immediately through procurement. The ADC further directed all procurement agencies to maintain an adequate

stock of gunny bags and tarpaulins and ensure the availability of moisture-testing machines in sufficient numbers. Special provisions, such as fire extinguishers, CCTV surveillance, and storage arrangements, must be in place for the wheat stored in open spaces. He also instructed procurement agencies to submit their storage plans in advance. Mandi secretaries were instructed to certify that all necessary preparations for wheat procurement were complete. Any shortcomings in this regard would lead to administrative action against the responsible officials. The ADC also stressed the importance of maintaining cleanliness in the grain markets and ensure that road repairs were completed before the procurement season began, preventing inconvenience to the farmers. He directed police officials to deploy patrolling teams around mandis during the rabi season and conduct regular inspections to curb the use of narcotic substances. Traffic management should be effectively handled to avoid congestion near the grain markets.

## Kumari Selja accuses BJP government of rising corruption in local bodies

**Sirsa :** Member of Parliament from Sirsa, Kumari Selja, criticised the BJP government for claiming to control corruption while it continued to grow. She stated that the local bodies had become centres of corruption, where no work could be done without paying bribes. Before the newly elected mayors and chairpersons took office, discrepancies worth Rs 1,400 crore were discovered in 62 municipalities, including 10 municipal corporations. Selja revealed that these discrepancies, which were uncovered by the Legislative Assembly's committee, showed that officials had taken advances for work but failed to provide any evidence or accounts for the spending. Gurugram had the highest discrepancies. She called it a scam and demanded a judicial inquiry, urging the government to take strict action against those responsible. The Legislative Assembly's committee audited the financial records of 10 municipal corporations for 2019-20, totaling Rs. 1,395.98 crore. Discrepancies in temporary advances were found, with Rs 781.75 crore from Faridabad and Rs 403.86 crore from Gurugram.





# Singhu border fully functional after 404 days

**Sonepat :** In what has come as a relief to thousands of commuters, the Delhi Police on Monday removed all barricades and debris from the Singhu border after 404 days, paving the way for the smooth flow of traffic.MLA Nikhil Madaan visited the Singhu border to review the situation and said the BJP government had made the national highway fully operational.The Delhi Police had barricaded the border on NH-44 on February 13 last year following the farmers’ protest 2.0. The police had sealed the main carriageway and service lanes on both sides of NH-44 with multi-layer barricades to stop the farmers from proceeding to Delhi. The Haryana Police stopped the farmers at the Shambhu border. The police had reopened service lanes, and later opened single lanes on the main carriageway (flyover) on March 13 last year, but two lanes on each



side were barricaded for over a year.Due to the blockade, people were forced to face jams for hours daily. But after the eviction of protesting farmers from the Shambhu border, the Delhi Police also removed the barricades from the Singhu border within four days. They completely cleared the carriageway at the Singhu border on the Delhi-Panipat lane and made it motorable on Sunday. However, the barricades have also been removed from the Panipat-Delhi lane, and debris was removed on Monday. The road is now fully functional. Subhash

Gupta, director, Kundli Industrial Association (KIA), said the Singhu border had been opened and there was no jam on the carriageway. Thousands of commuters, industrialists, employees in private and government jobs would benefit, he said. Madaan, who also asked for opening the lanes at the Singhu border during the ongoing Assembly session, said, “With the complete opening of the border, lakhs of people going to Delhi would get a relief from the long jams, as would industrialists, workers, traders and farmers of the region.”

# University of Health Sciences Rohtak to introduce digital marking system

**Rohtak :** Pt BD Sharma University of Health Sciences Rohtak (UHSR) has decided to implement a digital marking system for the annual and supplementary examinations of the MBBS course being run by various government and private colleges affiliated with the university across the state.

According to sources, this decision comes in the wake of the recent MBBS exam scam at UHSR, in which answer sheets were smuggled out of the university, allowing students to re-attempt them before submitting them again with the intent to pass through unfair means. Answer sheets of many MBBS students from a private college were found 'tampered with' under this scam. “The introduction of the digital marking system is aimed at preventing the possibility of tampering with answer sheets and speeding up the evaluation process to ensure timely declaration of results. A tender has been floated to hire a private agency to design the digital software and to implement the system efficiently,” said Dr HK Aggarwal, Vice-Chan-



cellor of UHSR.

He said the private agency would be responsible for scanning all answer sheets from both annual and supplementary exams of the MBBS course. These scanned answer sheets would then be sent digitally to the evaluators for marking.

“The software will be designed in such a way that evaluators can easily check the answer sheets digitally. After marking, they will send the an-

swer sheets back to the university through the software, which will also record the time of every action taken with the answer sheets. This system will help not only in keeping track of the evaluation process but also in identifying and addressing any issues that may arise,” Dr Aggarwal said.

The VC claimed that with the implementation of the digital marking system, the UHSR would be-

come the first government university in Haryana to adopt such a system for its examination papers. “Currently, there is an on-the-spot marking system in place at the university for evaluating the MBBS answer sheets. The sheets are not sent to the evaluators; instead, they come to the university to carry out the marking. This process is conducted under the surveillance of CCTV cameras,” he added. Dr Aggarwal emphasised his commitment to plugging loopholes, if any, in the examination system and implementing necessary reforms to strengthen it. “All outsourced employees have been moved from the examination branch to other departments within the university, and several other measures have been taken to ensure the confidentiality of the examination process,” he said.

As many as 41 persons, including 17 UHSR employees and 24 students of a private college, were booked in connection with the MBBS exam scam on February 15. Three of the employees have been arrested while the police investigation into the scam is still underway.

# Ensure no shortage of gunny bags, robust procurement for wheat: CM Saini

**Chandigarh :** Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has directed all procurement agencies to ensure smooth arrangements for the upcoming rabi marketing season 2025-26 so that farmers do not face any difficulties in selling their crops in mandis. Chairing a review meeting in Chandigarh, the CM emphasised that with an expected bumper wheat production, procurement agencies must be fully prepared. He instructed the marketing board to construct large sheds in vacant spaces within mandis to accommodate future needs.



India. A total of 75 lakh metric tonnes of wheat is set to be procured this season.Procurement of mustard started on March 15 and lentils from March 20, and it will continue till May 1. Wheat, barley and gram procurement will begin on April 1, while sunflower procurement starts from June 1. The government has secured a cash credit limit of Rs 6,653.44 crore for the rabi procurement. Additionally, banks have been instructed to ensure direct payments to

farmers’ accounts within 48-72 hours after issuance of the exit gate pass.

Haryana contributes 25% of the wheat to the Central pool and ranks second in wheat production nationwide. This season, 415 mandis will be operational for wheat, 25 for barley, 11 for gram, 7 for lentils, 116 for mustard and 17 for sunflower. The minimum support price (MSP) for wheat has been set at Rs 2,425 per quintal, Rs 1,980 per quintal for barley, Rs 5,650 per quintal for gram,

Rs 6,700 per quintal for lentil, Rs 5,950 per quintal for mustard and Rs 7,280 per quintal for sunflower.

CM Saini directed officials to ensure no shortage of gunny bags and asked commission agents to arrange chairs for farmers. To support farmers and labourers in mandis, 53 Atal Kisan Mazdoor Canteens are operational. A toll-free Kisan Call Centre will be set up to address complaints.

Additionally, 108 mandis in Haryana are now connected to the e-NAM platform for better transparency in transactions. All Deputy Commissioners have been ordered to form monitoring teams to oversee the procurement process and ensure smooth operations throughout the season. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, Raja Sekhar Vundru, and Principal Secretary to the CM, Arun Gupta.

# 450 employees under agri scheme without salary for seven months

**Ambala :** The Assistant Technology Managers (ATMs) and the Block Technology Managers (BTMs) working in the Agriculture Department under the Centrally sponsored ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Agency) scheme have been awaiting salaries for past nearly seven months. The employees said due to a lack of coordination between the Centre and the state, their salaries got stuck and they haven’t been paid since September last year. The employees under the banner of ATMA Staff Haryana, earlier this month, had submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Haryana regarding their pending salaries, and forming a state salary policy to ensure that the employees don’t have to wait for months to get their salaries.

In the memorandum, the employees mentioned that the contractual employees play a crucial role in various government schemes, including natural farming, Soil



Health Card scheme, Crop Residue Management, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Crop Cutting Experiment, Mera Pani Meri Virasat, PM Kisan Nidhi and PM Fasal Bima scheme. But due to delay in the budget from the Centre, the employees are not getting salaries and they were finding it hard to run their household expenses. An Assistant Technical Manager (ATM) in Ambala said, “We perform all field work, including propagating the government schemes related to farmers, Crop Cutting Experiment, soil sampling and various other surveys for the department and despite be-

ing an important link between the department and the farmers, the employees don’t get salaries in time. We have requested the higher authorities repeatedly to ensure that the salaries are given in time, but nothing happened.”Another employee said, “Only we know how we have been managing without the salaries. Next month, the new academic session will begin and like other parents we also need money to purchase books for our children and pay their school nd admission fee. We are not seeking regular jobs, but at least we should be provided salaries in time. We

have been appointed by the state hence it is the moral duty of the state to ensure that the employees get salaries every month.” The state body of the employees said the annual budget under the scheme is Rs 22 crore, and around 450 employees in the state are working under the scheme. The government should prepare a state salary policy and ensure that the employees get their salaries even if there is a delay from the Centre, and use its contingency fund to clear the salaries. “We have been told that the department has been trying to divert some funds to clear the salaries of the employees. We request the government to ensure that the salaries are cleared before the financial year ends” an ATM said.Meanwhile, Deputy Director Agriculture Ambala Dr Jasvinder Saini said, “The employees under the ATMA scheme are yet to get their salaries and we have taken up the matter with the higher authorities.

# HC sets aside recovery of excess payments to its employees

**Chandigarh :** Ruling against its own administration, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has asserted that it did not follow the rules of natural justice while carrying out recovery of “excess” amount paid to its employees. The assertion came as the high court quashed the recovery of excess salary paid to its Class III and IV employees, while making it clear that the action was illegal and in violation of settled legal principles.

Justice Harsimran Singh Sethi also directed the court and other respondents to refund any amounts

already deducted, while making it clear that the benefit would extend to all similarly placed employees, irrespective of whether they had approached the court.

The verdict came in response to a bunch of petitions challenging the court administration’s decision to recover excess pay from employees dating back to 2018. The petitioners contended that they had neither misrepresented facts nor committed fraud to receive the excess amount — an averment the court agreed to while relying on binding precedents from the Supreme Court. Referring to



the Supreme Court judgments categorically barring the recovery of excess salary paid to Class III and IV employees unless fraud or misrepresentation was in-

volved, Justice Sethi observed that the petitioners’ pay was fixed by the administration itself. There was no evidence that they were responsible for the fixation

or had knowingly received excess salary beyond their entitlement.

“A bare perusal of the Supreme Court rulings shows that no recovery of an excess amount paid can be done from a Class III and Class IV employee. It is a conceded position that in the present petitions, the petitioners are working on Class III and Class IV posts, and hence, the above said judgment covers their cases with regard to non-recovery of the excess amount paid to them,” Justice Sethi ruled.

The court observed a crucial aspect of the case was the delay in implement-

ing the pay revision. The court noted that the revised pay was granted to the petitioners from 2013 onwards, while the recovery order was issued only in 2019. This, too, violated the legal principle laid down by the apex court, which prohibited the recovery if the excess amount was paid for over five years.

Justice Sethi also found that the recovery was carried out without following due process. Show-cause notice was not issued to the petitioners before carrying out the deductions, depriving them of an opportunity to be heard.

# 67% registration of rabi crops on portal

**Hisar :** Despite the commencement of the rabi procurement season in the state, crop registration by farmers on the (MFMB) portal remains significantly low. The government has reopened the portal for registration until March 27. As per an Agriculture Department report, rabi crops in 60.21 lakh acres have been registered, out of the total 89.86 lakh acres of cultivable land on the portal, indicating a 67.01% registration rate.Registration on the portal is mandatory for the farmers to fetch MSP bene-

fits, and for procurement schemes. Among the districts, Charkhi Dadri recorded the highest registration at 91.72%, followed by Mahendragarh (82.94%) and Bhiwani (78.55%), ensuring that a majority of farmers would be able to sell their produce without complications on MSP. However, districts like Gurugram (42.33%), Mewat, and Sonapat have reported the lowest registration, raising concerns about farmers in these areas potentially missing out on procurement.

# Missing at 6, found at 23: Police reunite Delhi man with family

**Chandigarh :** In a heartwarming reunion, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of Haryana Police has reunited a 23-year-old man with his family after 17 years. The man, Arif Khan, had gone missing from Delhi when he was just six years old.



Through persistent efforts by the State Crime Branch’s Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in Panchkula, Arif was traced and brought back to his family.

The unit received information about Arif’s case and discovered that he had been found abandoned in Gurugram in 2008. Since then, he had been living at the Balgram Rai institution, where he completed an ITI (Industrial Training Institute) course and is now in the final year of his Bachelor of Arts degree. With no recollection of his home, tracing his origins was a challenge. However, during the investigation, officials found a missing person report for Arif at Kapashera Police Station, Delhi, dated June 12, 2008. Using this lead, the team conduct-

ed inquiries at multiple locations and eventually located his family in Sangam Vihar, Delhi.

To confirm his identity, the police verified all documents and arranged a video call with his family. Arif’s mother immediately recognised him, pointing out a scar on his forehead as proof. After completing formalities, Arif was finally reunited with his parents on March 24, 2025. His father, Ehsan, said, “My son had gone out to buy a candy in 2008 but never returned. We searched everywhere but had lost all hope.” The emotional reunion took place in the presence of Additional Director General of Police, State Crime Branch, Mamta Singh. Overwhelmed with joy, Arif’s family expressed their gratitude to the Haryana Police for their relentless efforts. Commending the team’s dedication, ADGP Mamta Singh urged parents to ensure their children have Aadhaar cards and to update them regularly to help prevent such incidents.

# PM to unveil two mega projects for state on April 14: Saini

**Chandigarh :** Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, addressing a press conference here today, said PM Narendra Modi would visit Haryana on April 14 and gift two major projects to people of the state. These include a new 800 MW unit at Deenbandhu Chaudhary Chhotu Ram Thermal Power Plant in Yamunanagar, to be built at a cost of over Rs 7,000 crore, and the inauguration of air services from Maha-

raja Agrasen Airport, Hisar. Saini said a state-level event would be held to mark the birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar.

The Union Ministry of Power had granted approval to Haryana Power Generation Corporation Limited (HPGCL) for setting up a third unit at the Yamunanagar-based thermal plant, he said.

The project is an expansion of the existing 2×300

MW units at the facility, and has a completion deadline of 52 months, with commercial operations expected to commence within 48 months.

He said with the addition of the 800 MW unit, Haryana’s domestic power generation capacity would reach 3,382 MW.

Currently, the state had an installed power capacity of about 14,000 MW, of which 2,582 MW was generated by HPGCL, Saini

said. The project had already received clearance from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, and the Haryana State Pollution Control Board. Saini said an integrated aviation hub was being developed over 7,200 acres in Hisar, with 4,200 acres allocated for the airport and 3,000 acres for an integrated manufacturing cluster. The airport’s development was divided into

three phases, with the first phase already completed, including a terminal building, at a cost of Rs 50 crore. In the second phase, a 3,000-metre runway had been constructed, enabling operations of Airbus aircraft with up to 180 passengers, he said. 800 MW unit at Deenbandhu Chaudhary Chhotu Ram Thermal Power Plant in Yamunanagar, to be built at a cost of over Rs 7,000 crore.

# Demolition drive lands planning dept in hot water with residents

**Karnal :** In a crackdown on “illegal” colonies, the District Town Planning Department carried out a demolition drive on Monday at the New Bahadur Chand Colony on the Hansi road.

It razed eight fully constructed and two under-construction houses, a road network, four damp proof courses (DPCs), sewer network and electricity poles, and halted ongoing works.

Four houses were sealed as part

of the drive. The action sparked anger among affected residents, who expressed their frustration, calling the drive unfair. They questioned why authorities did not intervene earlier, when construction had just begun.

“Why were we not informed about this earlier? Now that houses have been constructed, the administration suddenly decides to take action. Where will poor people go if they cannot even dream of building a house?” said an affected person.

“The team members came and started demolishing houses immediately. We pleaded with them, but they did not listen,” another resident said.

Locals alleged selective action — as only a few structures were demolished while many fully built houses were left untouched. “If this was an illegal colony, then why weren’t all houses here demolished? There are at least 120 houses here. If action had to be taken, why not issue notices earlier and stop work in the

beginning itself?” questioned another resident.

District Town Planner Satish Kumar, along with the Duty-Magistrate Naib Tehsildar, a City Police team and staff from his office, carried out the drive using earthmoving machines. Kumar refuted the allegations and said notices had already been served to these people. Also, an FIR had been registered against the builder for developing the colony, he added.





# RR face tough test against KKR after record bowling collapse

**Guwahati** : Rajasthan Royals will be under immense pressure to revive their campaign as they take on Kolkata Knight Riders in a crucial sixth Indian Premier League (IPL) encounter at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium here on Wednesday.

Rajasthan suffered a crushing defeat in their opening match against Hyderabad, conceding a staggering 286 runs, the second-highest total in IPL history. Their bowling attack, led by Jofra Archer and Maheesh Theekshana, looked out of depth, raising serious concerns ahead of their clash with KKR.

The team will need an improved performance to stand a chance against a side boasting one of the strongest spin attacks in the tournament.



Kolkata Knight Riders, led by Ajinkya Rahane, also started their campaign with a loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru. However, they enter this contest with a significant advantage, thanks to their spin duo of Sunil

Narine and Varun Chakravarthy. The Guwahati pitch has traditionally offered assistance to quality spinners, which could work in KKR's favour.

With both teams yet to open their account in this

IPL season, the pressure is mounting. The outcome of this match could set the tone for the rest of the season for them.

RR will look to captain Sanju Samson for a solid start, especially after his

strong performance in the last game. Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel will be key contributors with the bat, while Riyan Parag will be under scrutiny after failing to deliver in the previous match.

For KKR, opener Quinton de Kock will aim to provide an explosive start, with Ajinkya Rahane anchoring the innings. The middle order, comprising Venkatesh Iyer, Rinku Singh, and Andre Russell, will need to fire after their underwhelming performance in the last match. The toss could play a decisive role in the contest, with teams preferring to chase at this venue. Given the batting-friendly conditions, a high-scoring encounter is expected, with bowlers needing to be at their best to contain the opposition.

## Australia's Queensland unveils venue plan for Brisbane Olympics

**Sydney** : Australia's Queensland unveiled the finalized venue plan for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games on Tuesday, following approval from the state cabinet late Monday night.

The plan announced by Queensland Premier David Crisafulli includes a new stadium, an upgraded aquatic center, and a revitalized tennis precinct, ensuring Brisbane is ready to host the global event.

"We're not Paris, we're not LA [Los Angeles]. This will be better, and it'll be the Queensland way," Crisafulli told a press conference.

"A number of Olympic and Paralympic sports move their headquarters up to Brisbane, permanently, a real world-class legacy which will serve these sports for decades to come," the premier said.

A brand-new 63,000-seat stadium will be built at the Victoria Park near Brisbane's city center, serving as a key venue for the Games, which marks a significant investment in the city's sports infrastructure, Crisafulli said.

The cost for the stadium, which will host the opening and closing ceremonies and the athletics, is yet to be announced, although a 100-day review said it would come in at an

estimated 3.785 billion Australian dollars (2.38 billion U.S. dollars).

The Centenary Pool in nearby the Spring Hill will be transformed into a national aquatic center, featuring a 25,000-seat capacity and multiple pools, which has been welcomed by Swimming Australia, as well as governing bodies for Diving, Artistic Swimming, and Water Polo, he said.

The Brisbane Showgrounds, owned and operated by the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA), will serve as the home for the athletes' village. Additionally, a 20,000-seat arena will be constructed at the site to host key events during the Games, he added. The Queensland Tennis Center will undergo a significant upgrade, including the addition of a new 3,000-seat show court arena and 12 new match courts. This expansion ensures Brisbane retains its tennis events, amid speculation that Melbourne could take over, according to the venue plan.

The plan is built on the findings of an independent 100-day review into infrastructure, transport, and facilities, Crisafulli said, expressing confidence that the strategy would leave a lasting impact beyond 2032.



## Klusener calls for youngsters to step up amid injury woes

**Visakhapatnam** : Despite the disappointment of a tough loss, LSG Assistant Coach Lance Klusener remains optimistic. The seasoned coach is not one to dwell on excuses, but as he dissected his team's performance, one point stood out, the need for young players to step up in an injury-ridden squad.

"We don't have a lot of reserves with the ball at the moment," Klusener admitted, acknowledging the struggles of his bowling attack in a post-match press conference here on late Monday night. "We have to mix and match until we get players back, but that's an opportunity for youngsters."

One such bright spot was Shardul Thakur, who struck twice in the first over, repaying the faith shown in him. "He has spent time with us, got an opportunity in this year's IPL, and he gave us a great start," Klusener said, hinting at the



potential brewing in the squad despite their struggles. Looking ahead, Klusener was keen to turn the page quickly, especially with just three days before their next match. His focus is now on keeping the youngsters mentally strong. "It's important to keep them positive and believing in their ability. The opposition is allowed to play well too, and some nights they will," he said, urging his team to stay fresh and back themselves in the coming games.

Despite the setback, Klusener found a silver lin-

ing in his experience of playing in a new city. Having traveled extensively across India for nearly 30 years, he was struck by the vibrant atmosphere. "The spectators were fantastic, the sound system was great, it reminded me of Durban," he said, visibly impressed. "It's beautiful, and I'll be back."

With Hyderabad on the horizon, Klusener's message was clear, score more runs, stand tall under pressure, and trust in the youngsters who will shape the team's future.

## Ashutosh's fiery knock seals last-over win for DC

**Visakhapatnam** : Ashutosh Sharma played a scintillating knock under pressure, smashing an unbeaten 66 off just 31 balls, as Delhi Capitals (DC) edged past Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) by one wicket in a nail-biting encounter of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at Dr YSR ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium on Monday.

Chasing a daunting target of 210, DC were in deep trouble at 7 for 3 inside the second over after losing Jake Fraser-McGurk (1), Abishek Porel (0), and Sameer Rizvi (4) cheaply. However, Ashutosh's fearless approach and power-packed strokes revived the chase.

He found an able partner in Vipraj Nigam (39 off 15), and together they stitched a 55-run stand that turned the tide in DC's favour.

Vipraj was in blazing form, smashing boundaries at will. In the 15th over, he took on Prince Yadav with back-to-back fours, first slicing a full delivery past short third.

And then carving a yorker through extra cover. His stroke play electrified the Vizag spectators and gave DC much-needed momentum.



With 42 needed off the final three overs, Ashutosh launched a brutal assault on LSG's bowlers, hammering consecutive sixes off Ravi Bishnoi in the 18th over. In the same over.

He miscued a low full toss over midwicket, scrambling back for two to bring up his half-century – though at that stage, milestones were secondary to the chase.

The 19th over saw high drama as Shahbaz Ahmed delivered

a stunning ball to Mohit Sharma, turning.

It sharply past his bat. Rishabh Pant failed to complete the stumping, adding to LSG's frustration.

The review for LBW only confirmed that the ball was missing off stump, leading to a roar from the DC dugout.

Despite losing wickets at the other end, Ashutosh remained unfazed, showing remarkable composure in the final over

bowled by Shahbaz Ahmed. With 5 runs required off 3 balls, he carved a six, sending the DC camp into jubilation.

Faf du Plessis contributed a steady 29 off 18, while Tristan Stubbs' 34 off 22 played a crucial role in the middle overs. DC finished at 211 for 9 in 19.3 overs, sealing their first win of the season.

For LSG, Shardul Thakur (2/19) and M Siddharth (2/39) bowled well in patches, but their efforts went in vain.

Ravi Bishnoi also claimed two wickets but was expensive, conceding 52 runs in his 4 overs.

Earlier, LSG posted a formidable 209 for 8 in 20 overs, thanks to a blistering 75 off 30 balls by Nicholas Pooran. The left-hander's innings, featuring six fours.

And seven sixes, laid a strong foundation. Mitchell Marsh played a fiery knock of 72 off 36 balls, while David Miller's unbeaten 27 ensured a strong finish.

However, DC's bowlers staged a comeback in the latter half, with Mitchell Starc (3/42) and Kuldeep Yadav (2/20) restricting LSG from crossing the 220-run mark.

## Chaubey's contradictory AIFF stance triggers resignation calls

**New Delhi** : All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaubey is facing fresh controversy over allegations of contradicting his own stance on politicians in football administration.

Despite filing multiple affidavits in the Supreme Court (2020-21) opposing the involvement of elected leaders in AIFF governance, Chaubey himself assumed the AIFF presidency in 2022 and worked alongside Vice President NA Harris, a sitting legislator. His continued electoral ambitions, having contested elections in 2019, 2021, and 2024, have raised concerns over conflict of interest and credibility.

In a formal complaint submitted to BJP president JP Nadda, Andhra Pradesh Football Association Founder President Gopala Krishna Kosaraju on Tuesday urged immediate action against Chaubey, accusing him of misusing his position for personal and political gains.

Kosaraju alleged that Chaubey had manipulated AIFF governance structures and engaged in financial irregularities. The letter highlights that despite his previous objec-

tions to political involvement in AIFF, Chaubey contested multiple elections and allegedly misused AIFF resources for personal benefits. A report by retired Supreme Court Justice LN Rao had also recommended the exclusion of politicians from AIFF leadership roles, yet Chaubey continued in his position.

Kosaraju further alleged financial mismanagement within AIFF since Chaubey's tenure began, claiming that substantial funds were misused for election-related activities. The



state football associations' electoral processes were also reportedly manipulated under his leadership.

Emphasising that India's FIFA ranking remains at a dismal 130, the complainant attributed the stagnation to administrative failures under Chaubey. The letter called for his immediate resignation from AIFF, warning that if he does not step down voluntarily, the BJP leadership should take disciplinary action against him.

There has been no official response from Chaubey or AIFF regarding these allegations. The BJP leadership is yet to make a statement on the matter.

## KSLTA to host first-ever SM Krishna Memorial Tournament

**Bengaluru** : The Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA), under the leadership of its President and Leader of Opposition in Karnataka, R Ashoka, is set to host the inaugural SM Krishna Memorial Tournament – an ITF Men's M25 event with a prize purse of 30,000 USD. The tournament will take place from March 31 to April 6 at the KSLTA Stadium.

The prestigious tournament is a joint initiative by KSLTA and the Karnataka State Government, conceptualised as a tribute to the late former Chief Minister of Karnataka, SM Krishna. A passionate tennis enthusiast, Krishna helmed KSLTA as its President from 1999 to 2020 and also served as Life President of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) from 2015 to 2023.

Krishna played a pivotal role in upgrading KSLTA's facilities, transforming it from a neglected clay court into a state-of-the-art tennis stadium in the heart of Bengaluru. Under his leadership, world-class tournaments such as the Legends Tour, World Doubles Championships, and WTA Indian Open—featuring stars like Serena and Venus Williams—were brought to the city.

Beyond Bengaluru, Krishna spearheaded initiatives to expand tennis infrastructure to tier-2 cities and districts across Karnataka, making it the only state in India to host ITF and ATP Challenger events in over 12 districts.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stated, "Krishna was an avid tennis lover who played the sport regularly even as Chief

Minister. His legacy will be carried forward by young administrators like Priyank Kharge and his team at KSLTA. The Government of Karnataka will extend all necessary support for the smooth conduct of this tournament."

KSLTA's Senior Vice President and Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge, added, "Under Krishna's leadership, KSLTA has grown from strength to strength. As a tribute to him, we have decided to host the SM Krishna Memorial Tournament as an annual event, with the support of the Karnataka government."

The tournament's qualifying rounds will be held on March 29-30, followed by the main rounds from March 31. The singles final is scheduled for April 6. Entry will be free for all sports and tennis enthusiasts.

## Ashutosh learning batting secrets from Pietersen

**Visakhapatnam** : Young cricketer Ashutosh Sharma has credited England legend Kevin Pietersen for guiding him in the dressing room, saying he frequently discusses batting techniques and experiences with the former great.

Speaking to reporters in post-match press conference on late Monday night, Ashutosh expressed his admiration for Pietersen's presence in the team's camp. "It is great for us to have a legend like him. We get the opportunity to share the dressing room with him, and I always talk to him about batting and his experiences from his playing days," he said.

In a sensational display of batting prowess, Ashutosh led the Delhi Capitals (DC) to a nail-biting one-wicket victory over the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their opening match of IPL 2025. His unbeaten 66 off 31 balls, including a match-winning six, earned him the Player of the Match award.

Chasing a formidable target of 210, Delhi found themselves in deep trouble at 65 for 5. However, Ashutosh, coming in as

an impact substitute, showcased remarkable composure and aggression. Initially scoring 20 runs off 20 balls, he accelerated dramatically, adding 46 runs in the next 11 deliveries. His innings featured a series of powerful strokes that left the opposition stunned.

Replying to a query, Ashutosh said, "Having played this year, I understand how the wicket behaves in different innings. I know how the situation evolves, and Vizag has been good for me," he explained.

Ashutosh also reflected on his overall improvement this season, stating that he has made conscious efforts to correct past mistakes. "I have applied myself better this season and implemented what I learned in domestic cricket. I am ensuring that I do not repeat my errors from last year," he said.

Thanking supporters for their encouragement, he added, "I just want to thank the fans for their support." With Pietersen's mentorship and his own domestic experience, the young cricketer is confident of making a stronger impact this season.

## Uncapped NZ duo earn call-ups in Latham-led squad for Pak ODIs

**Dubai** : Having gained an unassailable lead in the ongoing five-T20I series against Pakistan, the hosts New Zealand have named their squad for the upcoming ODIs.

Tom Latham will take over as skipper in the upcoming three-match ODI series against Pakistan, with white-ball skipper Mitchell Santner missing out, according to an ICC media release.

While eight of the 13 players named in the squad featured in New Zealand's ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 squad, multiple fresh faces also earned call-ups for the home side.

Top-order batter Nick Kelly and left-arm pacer Muhammad Abbas, both of whom play for Wellington Firebirds in New Zealand's first-class circuit, have earned their maiden call-ups to the national side.



Rachin Ravindra, Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips and Santner all missed out, given their IPL commitments, while veteran Kane Williamson was unavailable for selection.

Will Young, who forged a century in the opening game of the Champions Trophy against Pakistan, will join Kelly at the top of the order while Daryl Mitchell, Michael Bracewell and Nathan Smith

will form the middle order.

In the bowling department, Will O'Rourke, Jacob Duffy, Nathan Smith and Ben Sears will feature in a four-prong pace attack with both Matt Henry and Kyle Jamieson missing out. Henry is undergoing rehabilitation from a right shoulder injury, which led to him missing out on featuring in the Champions Trophy Final earlier this month. Jamieson, meanwhile, has been rested with the selectors managing his workload.

In the spin department, all-rounder Bracewell will be joined by 22-year-old Auckland Aces leg spinner Adi Ashok, who has received his second call-up to the ODI squad, having made his debut against Bangladesh in 2023.

New Zealand will play the first ODI against Pakistan on Saturday, 29 March in Napier.





# MARKET

BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change
78,017.19	0.042%	23,668.65	0.044%	21,437.75	0.47%	62,703.75	1.47%	24,159.90	-0.22%	51,607.95	-0.19%	51,969.75	-1.06%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
77,984.38	78,296.28	23,658.35	23,751.50	21,538.10	21,652.85	63,638.40	64,133.30	24,214.20	24,326.00	51,704.95	51,874.20	52,524.05	52,882.60
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
78,741.69	77,745.63	23,869.60	23,601.40	21,674.05	21,385.80	64,141.30	62,589.80	24,409.75	24,097.15	52,063.95	51,429.60	52,926.85	51,714.95

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
UltraTechCement	11,421.20	3.35
Bajaj Finserv	1,945.05	2.69
Trent	5,185.05	2.58
Infosys	1,628.45	2.24
Grasim	2,569.45	2.24

Top Losers

Company	Current	%Loss
IndusInd Bank	637.05	-4.84
Dr Reddys Labs	1,177.90	-2.68
Adani Enterpris	2,320.35	-2.04
Coal India	398.30	-1.90
Adani Ports	1,182.45	-1.53

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Apr 04	87,835.00	557.00 0.64
Silver May 05	99,465.00	1,972.00 2.02
Crudeoil Apr 21	5,990.00	59.00 0.99
Naturalgas Mar 26	336.30	-1.60 -0.47

## BSE Sensex ends flat; Nifty50 above 23,650

**Mumbai** : Indian equity benchmark indices, BSE Sensex and Nifty50, ended nearly unchanged on Tuesday after rising 1% during intraday trade. The BSE Sensex reached a high of 78,741.69 before closing at 78,017.19, gaining 33 points or 0.042%. Meanwhile, Nifty50 touched 23,850 before settling at 23,668.65, up 10 points or 0.044%.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, noted that after a six-day rally, the broader market saw profit booking, particularly in small and mid-cap stocks, where valuations remain high. However, the IT sector gained due to positive global cues linked to expectations of lower tariffs and a correction in valuations. In the short term, market sentiment is likely to remain cautious as investors await clarity on US-India trade policy. Additionally, focus is shifting towards quarterly earnings reports, which will provide insights into earnings recovery. Factors such as anticipated rate cuts and rupee movements continue to support market senti-



ment. Globally, markets had a mixed session. Chinese indices declined after Wall Street rallied on hopes of a more measured approach to upcoming US import tariffs. Among European markets, Germany's DAX rose 0.5% to 22,964.34, France's CAC 40 gained 0.7% to 8,078.73, and the UK's FTSE 100 advanced 0.4% to 8,673.19. In the US,

S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average futures fell 0.2%. Asian markets saw varied trends. Japan's Nikkei 225 climbed 0.5% to 37,780.54, while South Korea's Kospi declined 0.6% to 2,615.81. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index dropped 2.4% to 23,344.25, primarily due to a sell-off in technology stocks. Xiaomi shares plunged 6.3%, Meituan lost 4.4%, and Alibaba fell 3.8%.

Meanwhile, the Shanghai Composite Index remained stable at 3,369.98. Taiwan's Taiex rose 0.8%, whereas Thailand's SET dipped 0.5%. Market movements have been influenced by uncertainty surrounding President Donald Trump's tariff policies. New tariffs are set to take effect on April 2, though Trump has remained noncommittal, suggesting a possibility of more lenient measures.

## SMFG India Credit raises USD 175 mln via ECB; to expand lending portfolio



**Mumbai** : Non-banking Finance Company SMFG India Credit (SMICC), on Tuesday said it has successfully raised USD 175 million via External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) for expanding its lending portfolio and supporting customers across various segments. The facility has been jointly arranged by Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) and CTBC Bank. SMFG India Credit has fully hedged the facility to mitigate risks associated with foreign exchange and interest rate fluctuations, it said in a statement. Mr. Pankaj Malik, Chief Financial Officer, SMFG In-

dia Credit, said, "This syndicated loan facility is a testament to SMFG India Credit's strong financial standing and robust growth outlook. The successful closure of this transaction demonstrates the confidence of global banking partners in our business fundamentals and long-term vision. With this funding, we aim to strengthen our lending capabilities, ensuring greater access to credit for individuals and businesses while maintaining a prudent risk management framework." This transaction further solidifies SMFG India Credit's position as a financially resilient.

## Vi Signs MoU with Bengal Govt to offer digital advisory to MSMEs under ReadyForNext program

**Kolkata** : India's leading telco Vi on Tuesday announced signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the West Bengal State Export Promotion Society (WBSEPS). Through this MoU, Vi will work with WBSEPS for digital transformation of MSMEs in the State. By assessing and evaluating the digital needs and identifying opportunities of digitalization in this sector, this initiative aims to bridge the digital divide and enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs of West Bengal through "Ready for next" program of VIL.



Assessing the digital maturity of their businesses, till Feb 2025. Vi Business will provide digital assessment tools, educational material and trainings in local language to ensure maximum accessibility. Additionally, to provide knowledge on new technologies, Vi Business will participate in webinars and events across the state. "MSMEs today contribute approximately 30% to India's GDP and give the Indian economy a big boost. At Vi Business, we endeavor

to power the future of entrepreneurship with MSMEs, accelerate their business growth and build a better future for them. We are excited about this partnership with the West Bengal State Export Promotion Society to offer our Ready For Next digital assessment, one of India's largest digital advisory services for MSMEs. This will enable MSMEs to leverage the power of technology to grow and take their products to a global audience," said Rajeev Mehta, Execu-

tive Vice President & Segment Head, Vi Business. "WBSEPS is committed to enhancing the growth and competitiveness of MSMEs and artisans in West Bengal. Our partnership with Vi Business is a crucial step toward equipping businesses in the state with digital tools and knowledge, that will help them thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world. By bridging the digital divide and fostering innovation, we aim to create new opportunities, particularly for rural artisans and women entrepreneurs, ensuring they are ready for the future," said Rajesh Pandey, Principal Secretary, MSME & Textiles department, West Bengal. The initiative will be implemented through a structured approach, starting with digital assessment and awareness-building, where WBSEPS will gauge the digital maturity of MSMEs in the State.

## Mega steel plant will curb migration in North Karnataka: Baldota

**Bengaluru** : Weather unpredictability has exacerbated economic challenges in North Karnataka, leading to significant migration for employment. The region has suffered from recurrent droughts, with 16 drought years recorded between 2001 and 2023, resulting in acute water shortages. Consequently, many landowners and residents, due to limited opportunities and education, migrate to cities like Goa and Mumbai for construction and labour jobs. A significant boost to employment and regional prosperity is on the horizon as the Baldota Group plans to set up a Rs 54,000 crore steel plant in Koppal. The move is expected to catalyse economic growth in the Kalyana Karnataka region, long considered backward in multiple socio-economic aspects. A company spokesperson confirmed that discussions regarding the project

are ongoing, while necessary clearances have been secured. The proposed location has been chosen due to its availability of raw materials, and the project is anticipated to generate local employment, reducing the need for migration to metropolitan areas. Additionally, the plant will introduce skill-training initiatives tailored to job aspirants, enhancing employability in the region. Article 371(J) grants special status to seven backward districts in Kalyana Karnataka - Bidar, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Ballari, Kalaburagi, and Vijayanagar. The Karnataka government has reiterated its commitment to industrialisation-led growth in these districts, which could significantly uplift the region's economic standing. Despite state policies to attract private investments to backward areas, regional

disparities remain a challenge. The Economic Survey of Karnataka 2025 highlights the concentration of economic activity in Bengaluru, leading to urban development imbalances. The state capital's advantages in infrastructure and investment opportunities continue to draw businesses and migrants, increasing pressure on its services. Addressing this imbalance without hampering Bengaluru's interests remains a formidable task for policymakers. Baldota Steel and Power Limited (BSPL) spokesperson stated, "Many people from North Karnataka are forced to leave their homes in search of employment due to unpredictable monsoons and lack of industrial opportunities. Our steel plant will not only generate jobs but also create localised prosperity, allowing people to stay in their hometowns and build a

future here. We aim to provide skill training based on available talent so that youth can gain meaningful employment in their own region." Industrial growth in North Karnataka has lagged behind other regions, but the presence of 13 engineering colleges, producing approximately 7,500 graduates annually, presents an untapped talent pool. With targeted industrialisation and infrastructure development, the region has the potential for sustained economic transformation. Emphasising their commitment to regional development, the BSPL spokesperson added, "As an organisation, we are looking forward to working together with the local community for the growth of the region and its people. We believe in overall growth and prosperity, and in the end, we want to see happy faces."

## HDFC Capital partners with Total Environment to form Rs 1,300 cr platform

**Hyderabad** : HDFC Capital, the real estate private equity arm of HDFC Group, on Monday said it has partnered with Total Environment, one of South India's leading real estate developers, to form a Rs 1,300 crore platform for the development of high-quality homes in Bengaluru. This strategic collaboration will add an additional 6.5 million square feet of

new residential projects to the ongoing 16 million square feet of residential projects being developed by Total Environment, a release said here. The new residential projects will have a combined GDV of Rs 10,100 crores, which will be delivered over the next four to five years. The partnership will develop sustainable greenfield residential projects enhancing the city's housing

landscape by providing quality living spaces for its residents. Commenting on the transaction, Vipul Roongta, Managing Director & CEO, HDFC Capital said, "Our collaboration with Total Environment helps address the significant demand for sustainable, high-quality homes for mid-income and upper mid-income households in India." Kamal Sagar, Founder, Total

Environment, Executive said "We are glad to build upon and deepen our long-standing partnership with HDFC Capital. The investment provides long-term and flexible capital to fund and develop large, vibrant residential communities, and includes investment into some of our ongoing projects to help deliver them faster. This collaboration will help further our

mission to continuously improve our products and services through care and craftsmanship." This platform marks the fourth investment by HDFC Capital in Total Environment, highlighting their strategy of partnering with top-rated developers. Two of the three existing investments have resulted in successful exits, creating significant value for all stakeholders.

## KEI Industries Ltd becomes Principal Partner with RCB

**Kolkata** : KEI Industries Ltd has announced its strategic association with Royal Challengers Bengaluru as Principal Partner for the upcoming Men's T20 league 2025, 18th season. The association will help KEI Industries strengthen its growing brand and business presence nationally, according to a media statement here on Monday. The cricketing season has begun on March 22, 2025 at Eden Gardens, Kolkata. Aligned to the association, the players and official members of Royal Challengers Bengaluru franchise will be sporting the KEI logo on the back of their official match jersey. The logo will also be prominently visible during the on-ground matches of the franchise. The brand will have the right to use player images and team logos for internal use and promotional purposes. The association will also be amplified across print, outdoor, television, digital and social media platforms which will run through the entire duration of the tournament. Royal Challengers Bengaluru don green jersey in one of their matches as a symbol of their commitment to supporting sustainability initiatives. This conscious decision aims to raise awareness about environmental protection and the importance of fostering greenery. By leveraging our platform and influence, we seek to inspire fans, partners, and the wider community to join us in championing this noble cause. KEI, a renowned leader in innovative solutions, has unveiled its next generation living eco-friendly solutions designed to promote sustainability. These cutting-edge advancements signify a significant stride towards building a greener and more sustainable future. Speaking on the association, Anil Gupta, Chairman -Cum- Managing Director, KEI Industries Ltd, said, "We are delighted to announce our partnership with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, which is one of the most popular and strongest cricketing brands. KEI is one of the leading wires & cables players serving customers across 65+ countries globally and we see a great synergy between both the brands. The players of international stature and their consistent bold performance give a synergy with the product features of the brand KEI. India is a cricket frenzy nation and with this partnership, we aim to leverage the upcoming cricketing festival to build and strengthen our brand awareness and connect with our target audience across the globe." Speaking on the occasion, Rajesh V Menon, COO of Royal Challengers Bengaluru, said, "We are excited to extend our partnership with KEI Wires & Cables. KEI's commitment to sustainability aligns perfectly with RCB's values, particularly with our annual green match aimed at promoting environmental awareness. This collaboration will provide KEI with a valuable opportunity to connect with our large and engaged fan base, and we are confident that we can deliver significant value to KEI Wires & Cables through this partnership." "Speaking on the association, Manoj Kakkar, Executive Director (Sales & Marketing), KEI Industries Ltd, said, "KEI has been actively involved in promoting regional sports, cricket, and their association with the T20 league goes back to 2016. This partnership with Royal Challengers Bengaluru will help brand KEI to instantly connect with the millions of viewers watching the event across India and abroad. The brand has also planned a series of fan engagement activities and meet & greet sessions for key channel partners with players during the tournament and in multiple cities." Sharing his thoughts on the association, Akshit Divyaji Gupta, Director, KEI Industries Ltd, said, "I am delighted to announce our partnership with Royal Challengers Bengaluru."

## IOB raises Rs 1,436 crore through QIP

**Chennai** : Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), a public sector lender, has secured ₹1,436 crore through a qualified institutional placement (QIP). Over 62% of the total shares issued under this process were allocated to major institutional investors, including LIC, IIFL, SBI Pension Fund Scheme, and LIC Pension Fund Scheme. In a stock exchange filing, IOB announced that its committee of directors had approved the allotment of 35.4 crore equity shares to qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) at ₹40.57 per share, aggregating to ₹1,436 crore. Following this transaction, the bank's paid-up equity share capital has risen from ₹189 billion to ₹192 billion, consisting of

19,25,65,89,795 shares of ₹10 each. Among the investors, state-run insurer LIC received the largest allotment, acquiring over 12.3 crore shares, which account for 34.8% of the total equity issued. IIFL Finance followed with an allocation of 4.9 crore shares (13.9%), while SBI Pension Fund Scheme and LIC Pension Fund Scheme each secured nearly 2.5 crore shares. The QIP process was initiated by IOB on Thursday to raise ₹2,000 crore, aiming to reduce the Centre's shareholding, which currently stands at 96.4%, in compliance with SEBI's mandate requiring all listed companies to maintain a minimum public shareholding (MPS) of 25%.

## India orders Samsung, its executives to pay \$601 million in back taxes and penalties for telecom imports

**New Delhi** : India's tax authorities have issued a demand for \$601 million in back taxes and penalties from Samsung and its local executives, alleging that the company evaded tariffs when importing crucial telecommunications equipment, according to a Reuters report. This is among the largest tax claims in recent years. The tax demand represents a substantial portion of Samsung's net profit in India, which amounted to \$955 million last year. The company, which has a strong presence in India's consumer electronics and smartphone markets, has the option to challenge the ruling through tax tribunals or legal avenues, the report stated. In 2023, Samsung's network division was warned for allegedly misclassifying imports to bypass tariffs of

10% or 20% on a key transmission component used in mobile tower infrastructure. These components were later supplied to Reliance Jio, owned by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, Reuters reported. Samsung argued that the component qualified for a tariff exemption and pointed out that authorities had previously accepted their classification for years. However, in a private order dated January 8, accessed by Reuters, customs officials dismissed Samsung's claims. Sonal Bajaj, a customs commissioner, stated that the company had "violated" Indian regulations and "deliberately submitted false documents to customs authorities for clearance." Bajaj further noted that the investigation revealed Samsung had disregarded ethical business prac-

tices in pursuit of profit while defrauding the government. As a result, the company has been ordered to pay 44.6 billion rupees (\$520 million), covering unpaid taxes along with a full 100% penalty. Additionally, seven senior executives in India, including Sung Beam Hong (Vice President of the network division), Dong Won Chu (Chief Financial Officer), Sheetal Jain (Finance General Manager), and Nikhil Aggarwal (Indirect Taxes General Manager), face penalties amounting to \$81 million. Samsung issued a statement clarifying that the issue pertains to differences in the interpretation of customs classifications and maintained that it has adhered to Indian regulations. The company added, "We are evaluating legal options to safeguard our rights."