

Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

Year 13, Issue 295 | Delhi, Thursday 17 April 2025 | 8 PAGES | ₹ 2.00

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SC begins hearing on Waqf Amendment Act: Petitioners call it Parliamentary overreach into religious rights

New Delhi: A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan, is currently hearing over 73 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

Senior Advocates Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, AM Singhvi, and CU Singh are arguing on behalf of the petitioners, while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta is representing the Union of India.

Opening the arguments, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal contended that the Waqf Amendment Act interferes with the essential and integral aspects of the

Muslim faith, invoking Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution.

He submitted that the phrase "in accordance with law" in the amended provisions undermines essential religious practices and opens the door for legislative overreach.

The court directed that challenges be presented point by point.

Sibal began by contesting Section 3(r) proviso: "It allows Waqf by user to remain unless in dispute or claimed by the government", which he argued dilutes the essence of Waqf.

Section 3A(2): This provision, which deals with Waqf-alal-aulad and inheritance to women, was questioned by Sibal—"Who is the State to interfere



in Islamic inheritance that takes effect only after death?"

CJI responded, noting similar laws exist for Hindu communities, and Article 26 is secular and applies to all religions.

Sibal also challenged Section 3C: Declares government-identified properties will no longer be deemed Waqf after the Act comes into force.

Section 3C(2): Allows government to unilaterally declare such properties without a defined timeline, which he claimed is unconstitutional.

Provision on protected monuments: He argued that Waqf properties should not be invalidated merely because they are later declared ancient monuments.

To this, the CJI observed that Waqf status would remain intact if declared before the monument status.

Further, Sibal targeted Section 3E, arguing that the Act improperly lists Muslims as Scheduled Tribes in an

administrative context and criticised the Central Waqf Council's composition.

He compared it with Hindu and Sikh endowments, saying all nominees in their respective councils are from their own faiths.

Justice Viswanathan interjected, saying religious rights should not be mixed with property issues, "Properties can be secular; only the administration may have religious dimensions."

Sibal continued by arguing that Section 9 allegedly restricts Muslim membership disproportionately.

Section 14 is seen as allowing complete takeover of Waqf Boards through nomination.

Section 36, allowing Waqf by user

without formal registration, was defended.

Singhvi added, "Four out of eight lakh Waqf properties exist purely by user. This amendment wipes them out in one stroke."

The CJI acknowledged the sensitivity, remarking, "We're told even Delhi HC may be on Waqf land. We aren't saying user-based Waqf is invalid, but concerns are genuine."

Singhvi referred to the Ayodhya verdict, noting that Waqf by user was recognised historically, and questioned whether Parliament could now delete its foundational basis under Section 2(r)(i).

Arguments remain underway. The hearing continues.

"You can't rewrite past": SC slams State over Waqf Amendment amidst Murshidabad unrest

New Delhi: In a high-stakes constitutional showdown over the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, the Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed deep concern over reports of ongoing violence in West Bengal's Murshidabad district linked to the controversy.

"One thing is very disturbing — the violence that is taking place. If the matter is pending here, it should not happen," remarked Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, reflecting the bench's disapproval of street-level unrest while judicial scrutiny is underway.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, responded: "Yes, they think they can pressurize the system by this."

But senior advocate Kapil Sibal, arguing for the petitioners, shot back sharply, "Who is pressuring whom, we don't know."

The three-judge bench, comprising CJI Sanjiv Khanna, Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan, is currently hearing a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

The bench reiterated that Article 26 of the Constitution does not prohibit the enactment of laws governing waqfs but expressed reservations about certain provisions and their sweeping implications.

Among the major concerns raised was the reclassification of public trusts as waqfs some dating back a century or more.

"You cannot rewrite the past of 100 years," CJI Khanna said firmly, cautioning against attempts to

subsume long-established trusts under waqf control retroactively.

SG Mehta defended the government's stance by citing the JPC (Joint Parliamentary Committee) report, emphasising inclusivity: "Two members will be

not be treated as waqf during a Collector's inquiry into whether it is government land will not be enforced.

On the composition of Board, the bench proposed that all appointed members of the Waqf Boards and

openly." The SG quipped, "Then this bench cannot hear the case!"—prompting the CJI to retort: "When we sit here, we lose our religion. Both sides are the same for us."

The heated exchange in the Courtroom veered into historical territory as the bench questioned the retroactive application of waqf status to properties governed by public trusts acts.

Sibal emphasized the absence of a functioning Central Waqf Council historically, while the SG cited past judgments including one from the Hyderabad Nizam era supporting the coexistence of trusts and waqfs.

However, the CJI was unrelenting: "If a public trust was declared waqf 200 years ago, how can it now be reclaimed or reversed by the Waqf Board?"

The Court then issued a notice and directed all parties to file their responses. The matter will continue on Thursday (tomorrow) at 2 PM, with the bench likely to finalise the interim directions.

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Rakesh Dwivedi, representing the petitioners, emphasised the urgency and significance of the case. "This is a matter of the moment," said Sibal.

The Centre agreed to a day-to-day hearing and committed to submitting its response within two weeks. SG Mehta also requested that the Court record his statement: no more than two non-Muslims will be appointed to the boards, apart from the two ex-officio members.



women. It has become inclusive."

However, he also stated that all members of Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council, except ex-officio ones, must be Muslims, sparking a sharp exchange with the bench.

In a move to maintain status quo and prevent irreversible changes during the pendency of the case, the Court proposed an interim order with the following key elements that no de-notification of Waqf properties.

Properties declared by courts as waqfs, whether by deed or by long-term use shall not be declassified.

The bench also proposed that the clause stating that a property shall

continue on Thursday (tomorrow) at 2 PM, with the bench likely to finalise the interim directions.

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SC questions Muslim-only clause in Waqf Amendment Bill: 'Why not non-Muslims on Waqf Boards?'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today continued its intense hearing on the constitutional challenge to the Waqf Amendment Bill, raising sharp questions over religious inclusivity, historical reinterpretations, and the scope of Waqf board powers.

The hearing will resume tomorrow, but not before a stormy exchange unfolded in the courtroom between Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna.

SG Mehta defended the amendment, stating, "The bill wasn't brought overnight. A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) was formed, all stakeholders were heard, and the report is in the public domain."

He highlighted the amendment's intention to make Waqf boards more inclusive, pointing out that two members on the board will mandatorily be women.

However, Justice Sanjay Kumar raised a critical query: "Why must the members under Clause (c) be specifically Muslims?"

Mehta responded, "Because there is a choice." But Justice Kumar insisted, "We have to go by the wording. If only Clause (c) mentions Muslim members, the rest can be non-Muslims too."

The bench also grilled the



SG on the retrospective impact of the amendment. CJI questioned, "Where a public trust was declared as Waqf 100 or 200 years ago, how can the board now claim it? You cannot rewrite the past!"

SG Mehta tried to clarify: "If a Muslim creates a trust today, it doesn't necessarily have to be a Waqf. There's a five-judge judgment from Hyderabad Nizam's era allowing such trusts."

To this, the CJI shot back, "Then you are undoing that judgment too."

A pivotal moment came when the CJI provocatively asked, "Mr Mehta, are you willing to say that from now on, Muslims can also be members of Hindu endowment boards?"

SG Mehta deflected but offered to file an affidavit stating that apart from two ex-officio members, only two others would be Muslims.

Justice Khanna reacted strongly to a comment by SG comparing judges with religious representatives:

"When we sit here, we lose our religion. Both sides are equal to us. Don't compare this to judges."

Meanwhile, Justice Vishwanathan pointed out practical aspects: "There are issues like ingress/egress in mosques. So, naturally, some members must be able to visit and relate to the premises."

The Bench emphasised that JPC reports cannot override the actual wording of the Act, and insisted that the proviso in Clause (c) doesn't restrict the other members from being non-Muslims.

Finally, the CJI remarked on the broader implications: "When the constitutional validity of a law is pending before us, High Courts cannot decide it. Either we hear it ourselves or take all related cases here."

Both SG Mehta and Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi (appearing for petitioners) urged the SC to hear the matter directly and resolve it in a time-bound manner.

Cong holds protest against ED action in National Herald case

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday held a protest here against the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for filing chargesheets against Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders in connection with the alleged money laundering case related to the National Herald.

Talking to reporters, party general secretary Sachin Pilot said that there was no substance in the National Herald case and called it "politically motivated."

He alleged that the Modi government does not have any

proof and merely attempting to tarnish the image of the Opposition.

Moreover, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete labeled the entire matter a "conspiracy" orchestrated by the BJP. She claimed that the BJP, driven by fear, was engaging in "vindictive and dirty politics," and asserted that the grand old party would "challenge the BJP's propaganda in court."

Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav said that the Modi government cannot

intimidate Rahul Gandhi or the Congress party by filing "false chargesheets." "Every worker will stand strong in this fight. Today the situation in the country is such that anyone who raises voice against the government, attempts are made to suppress him," he said.

Notably, the Congress while condemning the filing of chargesheets against party leadership had announced a protests in front of Enforcement Directorate offices at the state Headquarters and in front of Central Government offices.

New Waqf law against federal structure, INDI should oppose: Bengal CM Mamata

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday urged INDI Alliance constituents to unitedly oppose the Waqf Amendment Act passed by the Centre's BJP-led dispensation, alleging the legislation "undermines" the country's federal structure.

"They have snatched away the fundamental rights. This law is anti-federal. Through you, I will appeal to the INDI Alliance, let us be united

and let us fight together boldly. This is not an individual matter; it will affect each and everybody. Today, they are targeting one group. Tomorrow, they will target another. They are talking about the Uniform Civil Code after this..." said Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool Congress supremo.

The Chief Minister who was speaking at a conference of the Imams, Muazzims and intellectuals at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here,

accused the BJP of "destroying" the basic fabric of India's federal structure.

"Dr. B. R. Ambedkar drafted this Constitution for the entire nation. The BJP must understand that it belongs to India, not to any one party. You may be forcibly taking away my rights, but this cannot go on forever," she said.

The CM said according to Article 26 of Indian constitution every religious institution has the right to manage its own affairs in matters of religion and the state has no right to interfere in these matters unless it is affecting the public order, morality and health of the citizens.

"Now they are trying to snatch the legitimate rights of the Muslims. If I don't have the right to acquire any other property then you also have no right to claim ownership over others or religious property but they are trying to snatch it forcibly," Banerjee said.

Dulat's claim on Farooq privately backing Art 370 abrogation sparks political storm



Srinagar: National Conference (NC) patron and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah had privately endorsed abrogation of Article 370 and even expressed readiness to "help" in the process if taken into "confidence", former head of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) A.S. Dulat has reportedly claimed in his latest book, triggering sharp reactions from the political opponents.

Dulat, who enjoys very close relations with Farooq Abdullah, quotes the NC leader in the book 'The Chief Minister and the Spy' as

saying, "We would have helped (pass the proposal). Why were we not taken into confidence?"

Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was suddenly revoked by the Modi government on August 4, 2019, surprising everyone. Hours before that, Farooq Abdullah and other top political and other leaders were put under house arrest in the Valley and the detention continued for several months.

Interestingly, days before the abrogation, Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

how Farooq sahab agreed with Delhi's illegal move of abrogating Article 370. There were already doubts about what transpired between the Abdullahs & PM days before J&Ks special status was revoked.

With this it's clear that Farooq sahab chose to stay in Kashmir instead of the Parliament to help normalise gutting of J&Ks constitution & subsequent betrayal.

Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference chairman Sajad Lone said he was not surprised by the disclosure.

Taking to social media, Lone described Dulat as the "closest ally" and "virtually the alter ego" of Farooq Abdullah, thereby lending significant weight to the former spymaster's assertion.

"Coming from Dulat sahib makes this revelation very credible," Lone wrote on X.

He suggested that the National Conference would predictably dismiss the revelation, terming it "yet another conspiracy" and accused the party of consistently playing the "victim card."

The PC Chief went further to suggest that the National Conference may have been rewarded in the 2024 electoral cycle for its cooperation in 2019.

"...I can visualise Farooq sahib saying — Humey roney deejyee—Aap apna kaam karein— hum aap kay Saath hain— It now seems 2024 was a prize for services rendered in 2019. Of course in national interest," he wrote.

PDP legislator Wahed Parra accused the NC of staging outrage

and fiery rhetoric while quietly facilitating the disempowerment of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is the same NC that watched silently for decades as Article 370 was gradually hollowed out - posing as protectors while doing nothing to actually protect. Their legacy is not one of resistance but of convenient silence dressed up as statesmanship," he said.

"This well-rehearsed charade has only one purpose: to normalise the abrogation of 370 and 35A, and the climate of fear and intimidation unleashed post-August 5, 2019 - under the convenient label of a 'popular government'."

Former NC leader and ex-Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Mattu also took a dig at the NC.

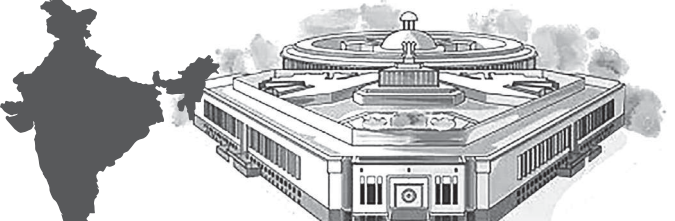
"Something seems to have fallen out of NC's bag YET AGAIN

and it does seem to be a cat. Commiserations to the vulnerable, gullible people of Kashmir!", Mattu said.

Under fire from the Opposition, Abdullah dismissed Dulat's claim as a "cheap stunt" aimed at boosting book sales. He rejected the assertion that the National Conference would have supported the abrogation of Article 370, terming it a "figment of imagination."

Abdullah's daughter Safia Abdullah posted on X: "I have never trusted Dulat as far as I could throw him. He was always a spy whose loyalty was only to himself. He never cared who he threw under the bus with his previous books."

She goes on to add: "I have read this book and he has played a fast and loose with the truth once again."



Karnataka: Kharge, DKS slam ED chargesheet against Gandhis

Kalaburagi : Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has fiercely criticised the Enforcement Directorate's chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case, labeling the charges as politically motivated and baseless.

emphasised that there was no wrongdoing in the actions of the Gandhi family regarding the revival of the National Herald newspaper, which was founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. The Congress President explained, "We borrowed money from one organisation to run another, what is wrong with it? The paper started by Pundit Nehru was stopped when we went out of power. We just tried to revive it... Now they (BJP) are expanding their organisations, where did all this money come from in the last 8-9 years?"

the Gandhi family had not personally benefitted from the revival of the National Herald and that the paper was a property of the Congress party. He said, "In no way has the Gandhi family benefited from this. It is the property of the Congress party, and they are the head of the party, so stakes have been in their name. What is wrong with it? It is only a political vendetta."



PM's textile waste call sparks fabric card campaign

Bengaluru: In response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' address spotlighting a mounting textile waste crisis, BBC Media Action on Wednesday launched a sustainability campaign in Bengaluru placing waste pickers at the heart of the city's circular economy. As part of the 'Got Old Clothes?' campaign under the ongoing Invaluable initiative, the organisation unveiled a fabric business card handcrafted by waste picker families using discarded clothes. The symbolic card not only serves as a contact tool but also reframes waste pickers as 'Invaluable Recyclers', professionals equipped with the skills to recover and recycle textiles that would otherwise clog landfills.



SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav demands abolition of ED, says it is used to harass BJP opponents

Bhubaneswar: Samajwadi Party (SP) Chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday demanded the abolition of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), stating that the Income Tax Department already exists to tackle economic offences. Yadav, who arrived in Bhubaneswar to visit the Sri Jagannath Temple in Puri and offer prayers, told reporters here that there is no need for the ED and it should be abolished, as the BJP has been using it as a tool to harass opposition leaders and silence their voices.

kind of delimitation the Bharatiya Janata Party will implement and claimed that it may be manipulated to benefit the BJP. Yadav further accused the party of ignoring geographical aspects in delimitation, citing the example of Jammu and Kashmir. The former UP Chief Minister also criticized the BJP, accusing it of attempting to weaken the Constitution and democracy in the country. He blamed the BJP for fomenting communal tension and riots, and urged all political parties to refrain from making statements related to religion or caste. Commenting on the "double-engine government" model promoted by the BJP as a means for state development, Yadav said that in Uttar Pradesh, internal conflicts within the BJP have rendered the model ineffective, with the "engines" and "compartments" colliding rather than working together.



J&K: 4 of a family rescued after shikara capsizes in Dal Lake

Srinagar: A family of four had a narrow escape on Wednesday after their shikara overturned here in Kashmir's Dal Lake due to strong gusty winds, officials said. A family of tourists were onboard when the boat capsized due to the gusty winds. Fortunately, rescue teams acted swiftly, managing to pull everyone out safely. "All the four individuals were rescued," an official said. In a separate incident, around the same time, the Quick Response Team (QRT) of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) stationed at Nehru Park rescued a group of students who had been stranded in the middle of Dal Lake due to the strong gusty winds. Officials said the students were returning home in a shikara when sudden strong winds disrupted their journey around 3:15 PM. The Meteorological Department has predicted fresh spell of rain and thunderstorms over the next few days.



Kishan Reddy slams Cong over National Herald case, alleges massive corruption

Hyderabad: Minister of Coal and Mines and Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress party, accusing it of deep-rooted corruption and a blatant disregard for environmental norms. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Reddy highlighted the alleged misuse of the National Herald's assets. He stated that what was once a newspaper established by freedom fighters has now been reduced to a "sleazy real estate venture" under the control of Sonia and Rahul Gandhi.

He pointed to the diversion of Rs 90 crore of Congress funds to the National Herald, which were then transferred to a private company linked to the Gandhis for a mere Rs 50 lakh. "This is not a new issue," he said, referencing the 2012 case filed by Subramanian Swamy during the UPA government, which was upheld for investigation by both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court. He called Congress' ongoing nationwide protests a "shameful cover-up" and questioned their respect for the rule of law. "If the Congress believes in the judiciary, why the dharnas?" he asked, stating that the party's actions amount to nothing more than an attempt to protect its leadership from corruption charges. Turning his attention to Telangana, Reddy condemned the state government's controversial actions in Kancha Gachibowli, where he alleged trees were illegally felled under police protection during the night. "Such destruction, masked as development, has never been witnessed before," he said, demanding accountability under the Volta Act. He criticised the environmental impact of the move, claiming it endangers wildlife and depletes green cover in an already urbanised region.



Bihar lags behind on all development parameters : alleges RJD

Patna: RJD on Wednesday alleged that Bihar lagged behind on all development parameters under the tenure of NDA government despite tall claims of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of providing good governance to people of the state. RJD Chief spokesman Shakti Singh Yadav said here that despite tall claims of Chief Minister of good governance, no qualitative change was visible in any sector of Bihar. As per reports of NITI

Aayog, Bihar lagged behind on all development parameters even after so called good governance of NDA government for the last twenty years, he added. "MNREGA labourers have not been paid wages since December 24 and a total amount of Rs 3588 crores is due against arrears of their wages in the state", the RJD leader said, adding that host of Union Ministers often visited Bihar during election year but none of them had ever uttered even a single word regarding wages arrears of MNREGA labourers. How could labourers work without getting their wages, he questioned. Yadav said that incidents of crime had increased in Bihar alarmingly. No one was feeling safe and secured as even relatives of MPs and MLAs were being attacked by criminals while police remained mute spectators, the RJD leader pointed out.

Man with links to Pak-based smugglers held with 3 kg heroin

Chandigarh: The Punjab Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) has arrested a man from a village in Tarn Taran district who was allegedly linked to Pakistan-based smugglers, said state DGP Gaurav Yadav on Wednesday. The DGP said the police recovered 3.105 kg heroin, two country-made pistols, cartridges of various bores and a digital scale from the accused identified as Jobanjit Singh. Yadav said the investigation revealed that Jobanjit Singh received narcotic consignments from across the border. He also had a criminal history, Yadav added. The police have registered an FIR at SAS Nagar. Further investigation is underway to dismantle the network of smugglers and their contacts.

Siddaramaiah using caste survey report to consolidate his position: BJP MP

Bengaluru: Former Karnataka Minister and BJP MP Dr K Sudhakar on Wednesday alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is using the caste survey report as a political manoeuvre to consolidate his position and send a message to the Congress high command against any move to unseat him. Addressing the media here, Dr Sudhakar said Siddaramaiah's sudden push to implement the long-shelved caste survey report is aimed at projecting himself as the undisputed leader of the Congress party's traditional support base. "He wants to show the high command that numerically strong communities are behind him, and any attempt to destabilise him could cost the party politically. It is not about social justice; it is about political survival," Dr Sudhakar claimed. The BJP MP pointed out



and animosity between communities. Earlier they gave reservations based on religion, in violation of constitutional principles. Now they are attempting the same using caste," he said. The Congress government in Karnataka has recently revived discussions around the controversial caste survey report amid growing demands from various communities and rising political temperature within the ruling party.

Deport Rohingyas to save Jammu: J&K BJP MLA

Jammu: Raising a concern on the uncontrolled mushrooming and the security and demographic change threats, BJP MLA Choudhary Vikram Randhawa on Wednesday called for the complete deportation of Rohingyas, Bangladeshis to save Jammu. Randhawa accompanied by BJP District President Naresh Singh, senior leader Amrik Singh, Mandal President Surjit Singh, and Mandal General Secretary Ajay Sharma, addressing a press conference here at party headquarters while comparing Bangladeshis and Rohingyas to the termites, said that this infestation has engulfed entire Jammu region and the Bahu Assembly Constituency region is facing heat of this infestation. He questioned the settling down of this community specifically into the Jammu city which suggests a conspiracy to change the demography of Jammu region. He noted that just a few families of Rohingyas have grown into thousands in these years. Many of them, now born in Jammu, have gained admissions into the schools, he said. "The mushrooming in their population and gaining access to the vital services raises many concerns in the

local populace like posing a security threat and demographic change in Jammu," said Randhawa adding, "we protested against this menace at every forum, on the roads and through the 'Jammu Bachao Andolan' movement. Many of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas were arrested but still multiplying, which suggests that they should be deported from India, back to their original habitat." He cautioned against those persons, who provide safe heavens for these Bangladeshis and Rohingyas on their plots. He pointed out that some persons have even settled these Rohingyas in the

'Jhuggis' raised on the State Lands and collecting rent from these illegal settlers. He called for the cutting of electricity and water supplies from these illegal settlements. The persons giving shelter to these persons should be identified and dealt with by the iron hands, he



stressing that Bangladeshis and Rohingyas are found involved in the drugs, thefts and sex trafficking in the region. He pointed that these can be found working with the Garbage collection Autos being used by JMC in Trikuta Nagar, Channi Himmat, areas touching Sainik Colony, Channi Rama, Gandhi Nagar, and others areas of the city. He accused them of doing Reiki of these areas and then doing thefts in the houses identified. He called for the increase of manpower in the local Police Posts to check these untoward incidents in the region. "I shared this security threat with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who expressed concern and assured measures", said Randhawa adding that they are posing a threat to our children. He even shared the people's suspicion of stealing and eating their pets by these Rohingyas and Bangladeshis. He called for strict and swift action on the grave issue by the LG, CM, Civil Administration and the Police Administration. He also called for cooperation from the local people by not employing these Rohingyas and Bangladeshis in their homes and commercial establishments.



OUR CITY

Briefs :

Delhi's Dwarka court receives bomb threat via email

New Delhi : A bomb threat email led to the evacuation of the Dwarka court complex in Delhi on Wednesday morning, prompting an extensive search by security teams. According to police, a PCR call reporting the threat was received at around 10:45 a.m., indicating that the court had been sent a bomb threat via email. The message was reportedly received the previous night around 9 p.m., but court authorities only notified law enforcement the following morning. In response, bomb disposal units and sniffer dog squads were deployed to the location. "We are conducting a comprehensive search of the premises, and so far, no suspicious items have been found," said a senior police official.

4 held, including two minors for stabbing Delhi SI police

New Delhi : Delhi Police have taken four individuals into custody, including two minors, in connection with the stabbing of a 53-year-old sub-inspector in the Azadpur area of Northwest Delhi. The victim, Premal Diwakar, who lives with his family in Azadpur, is attached to the Police Control Room unit under the North East Zone in Wazirabad. Authorities received an emergency call about the stabbing around 7:20 p.m. last Friday. Responding officers arrived at the scene to find Diwakar near his home with multiple stab injuries to his abdomen. He was immediately given medical assistance. During a preliminary inquiry, Diwakar reportedly named one of the individuals involved, which allowed investigators to quickly launch a search operation. Multiple police teams were formed, leading to the arrest of four suspects after coordinated raids across various locations. A senior police official stated that, according to the accused, the confrontation began near a railway track close to the sub-inspector's residence. They claimed that Diwakar allegedly threw something at them, triggering a heated argument that spiraled into a violent altercation and ended with the stabbing. The investigation is still underway as police work to piece together the exact circumstances that led to the assault.

Rajasthan man who duped 150 people in Rs 19 lakh ponzi fraud held

New Delhi : A man from Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, identified as Vinod Kumar, has been arrested for allegedly duping around 150 individuals through a fraudulent investment scheme named Dollar Win Exchange. The scam was exposed after an online complaint was lodged at the cyber police station in Delhi's central district by a man who claimed he lost ₹19 lakh. The complainant told police he had joined a WhatsApp group promoting an investment opportunity that guaranteed up to 28% returns per month. He and his wife initially earned modest profits after investing as little as ₹1,000, but were later persuaded to deposit larger amounts. Eventually, the returns stopped coming. Following the complaint, a case was filed and Kumar was tracked down and arrested. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) M Harsha Vardhan, Kumar disclosed during interrogation that he had previously worked for six years in the marketing division of a cooperative society. After the company shut down in 2016, he ventured into cryptocurrency trading, where he suffered financial setbacks.

"Will Muslims Be On Hindu Boards? Say It Openly" Supreme Court To Centre

New Delhi : Hearing the bunch of petitions challenging the Waqf Amendment Act, the Supreme Court today asked the Centre tough questions on multiple provisions of the new law, especially its provisions for 'Waqf by user' properties. The court also flagged the provision to include non-Muslims on the Central Waqf Council and asked the government if it would allow Muslims to be part of Hindu endowment boards.

The bench, led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice KV Vishwanathan, was hearing 73 petitions challenging the new Waqf Act, which has sparked protests in several parts of the country.

At the outset, the Chief Justice told the petitioners that two questions needed to be addressed. The first was whether the Supreme Court would send the petitions to a high court and what points the petitioners intend to argue.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the petitioners, said many provisions in the new law violate Article 26 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom to manage religious affairs. Mr Sibal also flagged the pow-



ers the new law gives to the Collector. He argued that the Collector is a part of the government and if he plays the role of a judge, it is unconstitutional.

Mr Sibal then mentioned 'Waqf by user' - a provision under which a property is treated as Waqf based on its long-term use for religious or charitable purposes, even without formal documentation. The new law adds an exemption: this won't apply to properties that are in dispute or are government land. Mr Sibal said that 'Waqf by user' is an integral part of Islam. "The problem is, if a waqf was created 3,000 years ago, they will ask for the deed,"

he said. Senior Advocate Abhishek Singhvi, also appearing for a petitioner, said that 4 lakh Waqf properties out of the total 8 lakh properties in the country are 'Waqf by user'. At this point, the Chief Justice intervened, "We are told Delhi High Court is built on Waqf land. We are not saying all waqf by user is wrong, but there is genuine concern," he said.

Mr Singhvi then said they are seeking a stay on some provisions and not the entire Act.

Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the law was passed after detailed and elaborate debates in Parliament. He said a joint

parliamentary committee examined it and it was passed by both Houses again.

The Chief Justice then asked Mr Mehta to focus on the 'Waqf by user' provisions in the new law. "Are you saying that if a 'Waqf by user' was established by a (court) judgment or otherwise, today it stands void?" The Chief Justice mentioned that many mosques part of Waqf were built in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries and it is impossible to present documents for them. The bench then said that "there will be an issue" if the government is going to deny 'Waqf by user'. "The legislature cannot de-

clare a court's judgment would not be binding," it said, adding that while there are instances of "misuse", "there are genuine Waqf too".

"How will you register such 'Waqfs by user' who have been there for long? What documents will they have? It will lead to undoing something. Yes, there is some misuse. But there are genuine ones too. I have gone through the Privy Council judgments. 'Waqf by user' is recognised. If you undo it, then it will be a problem," the Chief Justice said.

The court then moved to the composition of the Central Waqf Council under the new law. The Chief Justice then asked a significant question. "Mr Mehta, are you saying you will allow Muslims to be part of Hindu endowment boards? Say it openly".

The Chief Justice also noted that it was "very disturbing" that violence was taking place over the new law. Mr Mehta then said "they think they can pressurise the system". To this, Mr Sibal replied that it is not known "who is pressuring". The Chief Justice noted that the positive points in the law must be highlighted. The matter will be heard again tomorrow.

Supreme Court Considers Interim Stay On Parts Of Waqf Act, Centre Pushes Back

The Supreme Court's intention to issue an interim order on the amended Waqf law was put on hold at the last minute today after the Centre and the states requested more time to marshal their arguments on the three points the court raised.

The three-judge bench led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna will hear the matter again tomorrow.

The top court, hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the amended law, had expressed concern about the violence sparked during protests. It also questioned if Muslims would be included in Hindu religious boards.

At the end, the judges raised three points, indicating their intention to pass an interim order, putting some provisions of the amended

law on hold. For all three procedures -- on which the rules have been amended -- the court expressed its intention to maintain status quo.

Whatever property has been declared as Waqf by the user, or declared by the court, will not be notified, the judges said. Secondly, the Collector can continue the proceedings, but the provision will not be applicable. Third -- while ex-officio

members can be appointed regardless of religion, others should be Muslims, the judges said.

"Normally we don't pass such interim orders, but this is an exception," said Justice Khanna, pointing out that the hearing can go on for six to eight months.

At this point, the centre and the states objected against an interim order and sought more time.

Desperate For Child After 7 Years Of Marriage, Delhi Woman Steals Newborn

The one-day-old girl was stolen from Safdarjung Hospital

New Delhi : After seven years of marriage without being able to conceive, a woman from South Delhi pretended to be pregnant, went to Safdarjung Hospital, abducted a one-day-old baby girl, and took her home. The infant's parents immediately notified the authorities, leading to the woman's arrest within four hours.

According to officials, a man from Yashwant Place in Chanakyaपुरi called the police control room around 4 PM on Tuesday, reporting that an unidentified woman had taken his newborn daughter from Safdarjung

Hospital. He explained that his wife had delivered the baby at the hospital just a day earlier.

Police reviewed surveillance footage from the hospital and nearby areas, eventually spotting a woman behaving suspiciously—speaking to several patients and later leaving the premises with a baby in her arms. The CCTV clips revealed that she boarded a train at the AIIMS metro station and made several route changes, likely in an attempt to mislead investigators. The suspect was seen getting off at Hauz Khas metro station and taking an

auto-rickshaw. By tracking down multiple auto drivers, the police found one who confirmed he had driven her to Gullak Wali Gali in Malviya Nagar, South Delhi. Police then located the suspect's residence and took her into custody. She was identified as Puja Patni. During questioning, Patni confessed that she had told her husband she was pregnant and left home on Monday under the pretense of getting hospitalized. She returned the next day with the abducted newborn.

The baby has since been safely returned to her family.

ED conducts multi-state searches in Mahadev betting case

New Delhi : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday launched a new round of searches in connection with the ongoing money laundering probe tied to the Mahadev online betting app, with locations across several states being raided, including properties linked to EaseMyTrip founder Nishant Pitti, officials confirmed. The raids spanned multiple cities—Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Indore, Jaipur, Chennai, and Sambalpur—targeting various individuals and premises allegedly associated with the case.

The ED officially ac-

knowledged that sites connected to Pitti, who also serves as chairman of the travel booking portal EaseMyTrip, were among those examined during this latest operation.

The Mahadev betting app investigation has previously drawn national attention due to claims that influential politicians and senior bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh were implicated in illicit activities and financial dealings related to the platform. This isn't the first time the ED has conducted such searches; multiple operations have taken place earlier as part of the broader probe.

Woman, 20, shot dead in east Delhi, kin suspect 'social media friend'

New Delhi : A 20-year-old woman was fatally shot on Monday night in East Delhi's GTB Enclave, in what police believe may involve a man she had recently befriended through social media. Authorities have identified a suspect and are working to apprehend him.

They are also examining the possibility that the victim may have been a witness in a murder case from the previous year.

The deceased, identified as Sayra Parveen, lived in Sunder Nagri's Kaudi Colony. Around 9:55 p.m., a PCR call alerted the GTB Enclave police station to a shooting.

Responding officers found her body in a service lane near the MIG flats in Sunder Nagri. "She sustained two gunshot wounds—one to the left side of her head

and another just below the back of her neck," a senior officer reported. A used cartridge was also recovered from the scene. Police have registered a case under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deals with murder.

CCTV footage from the area reportedly shows Parveen walking alongside a man shortly before the shooting. According to investigators, the two appeared familiar and were seen conversing. However, an argument seems to have broken out, followed by a brief chase between the two.

They eventually entered a poorly lit service lane, where the fatal shots were fired.

Parveen lived with her siblings. Her sister, Shahida, said Parveen left that evening, saying she was meeting friends—a common oc-

currence. When she hadn't returned by 11 p.m., the family grew concerned and began searching for her, only to receive a call from police to come identify her body.

Shahida added that



Parveen had been emotionally distressed following the recent loss of their mother to cancer just a month earlier. "Going out and spending time with friends seemed to help her cope," she said.

A cousin mentioned that Parveen enjoyed creating social media reels and had told them she was planning to meet someone she'd connected with online that day.

Her body was dis-

covered near a gated housing complex, in an area that residents say is notoriously dark at night.

While the streetlights along the main road were functioning, those near gates 3 and 4—where the shooting took place—were not.

A security guard at the complex commented on the poor lighting: "It's pitch dark there. Even we feel uneasy stepping outside the gate at night."

Rajneesh Kumar Pathak, general secretary of the GTB Enclave MIG Flats Residents' Welfare Association, confirmed the area's long-standing lighting and surveillance issues. "We've asked officials multiple times to fix the lights and install or repair CCTV cameras. Apart from the Delhi Police cameras, this place is practically a blind spot," he said.

Pathak was also the person who discovered Parveen's body during a post-dinner walk and alerted the police. "It was terrifying. I didn't know if the attacker was still nearby. It could have easily been me or someone else. People walk here at night. Without immediate action, this place remains a serious safety hazard," he said.

Notably, two schools are located just a short distance from the scene of the crime.

SC rejects plea to make Section 498A gender neutral, Says law must protect women from matrimonial cruelty

New Delhi : The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to entertain a plea seeking to make Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (now Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) gender neutral, stating that isolated instances of misuse cannot justify changes to a law enacted to safeguard women from cruelty in matrimonial homes. A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh observed, "Just because of certain instances of misuse of Section 498A of IPC and Section 85 of BNS, can a sweeping statement be made that women are harassing their husbands and in-laws? Nothing can be further from the truth."

The court then moved to the composition of the Central Waqf Council under the new law. The Chief Justice then asked a significant question. "Mr Mehta, are you saying you will allow Muslims to be part of Hindu endowment boards? Say it openly".

The Chief Justice also noted that it was "very disturbing" that violence was taking place over the new law. Mr Mehta then said "they think they can pressurise the system". To this, Mr Sibal replied that it is not known "who is pressuring". The Chief Justice noted that the positive points in the law must be highlighted. The matter will be heard again tomorrow.

Editorial

Those who support Rana, Choksi should also be tracked down!

After India succeeded in extraditing Pakistani terrorist Tahawwur Rana, an accused in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the arrest of notorious diamond merchant Mehul Choksi in Belgium, who defrauded Punjab National Bank of Rs 13,500 crore, is a hopeful and heartening piece of news. The arrest was made at the request of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and India has initiated the formal process for his extradition. This is the same Mehul Choksi, who took loans from foreign banks on the basis of fake letters of undertaking and, along with Nirav Modi, defrauded Punjab National Bank of thousands of crores. Some employees of the bank were also complicit in this entire case. Choksi fled India as soon as the scam was exposed. He obtained citizenship of that country by investing in the small island of Antigua and Barbuda. He was constantly accused of political patronage and legal evasion. The Indian government has been pursuing his extradition with Dominica, Antigua, and now Belgium at both the diplomatic and legal levels. Choksi was currently living in Antwerp, Belgium with his wife Preeti Choksi. It has been revealed that he used fake documents to obtain an 'F residency card' there. Citing this, the Indian government has formally sought his extradition from Belgium. At the same time, Choksi has filed an application for bail in a Belgian court on health grounds. This is the same stance he took while in Dominica. Refusing to return to India on the pretext of ill health. But now the Indian government has gathered evidence against Choksi and coordinated through the CBI, ED and the Ministry of External Affairs. The ongoing efforts to bring him back to India show the strength of Indian diplomacy and the coordination of law enforcement agencies. However, a major and neglected aspect of this entire case is the 'Shukracharya in Zari' who contributed to Choksi's crime. What about the officials who helped him by sitting in the banking system? They should also be dealt with with equal force. Because this is not just a financial crime, but a serious form of betrayal of the country. Bringing Mehul Choksi back to India and taking legal action against him is no longer just a formality, but an opportunity to prove the competence of the country's judicial system. The will shown by the government and this campaign conducted at the international level are remarkable. But the real responsibility begins now. To bring Choksi to court, present evidence against him, and bring his supporters to justice. Because Mehul Choksi is a face, but behind him there are many hidden faces, who are even today preparing the ground for the emergence of new Choksis in some institutions, chairs, and ministers. Only if all such people are found and held accountable, will Mehul Choksi's arrest truly make sense.

One of the biggest financial scams in the history of Indian banking is the Punjab National Bank scam of Mehul Choksi. This scam raised serious questions about the credibility of the country's financial and legal system. The main accused in this case, Mehul Choksi, had been hiding abroad for many years. This scam was not a simple one. It was an attack on the financial discipline and vigilance in the Indian banking system. Mehul Choksi, in collusion with some employees of the bank, defrauded the bank of Rs 13,500 crore and fled India. His escape posed a major challenge to the Indian system and the government as a whole. Mehul Choksi was trying to evade all the charges against him and avoid legal action by staying abroad. However, the Indian government continued its efforts at all levels. An Interpol Red Corner Notice was issued. Efforts were made at the judicial and diplomatic levels. This arrest has been decisive for India in the backdrop of Mehul Choksi's suspicious movements out of Antigua in the last few months. The arrest should be seen as a major achievement in India's fight against financial crimes. Various agencies of the Indian government - especially the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate and the Ministry of External Affairs - coordinated and used international law and diplomacy to present evidence against Mehul Choksi. While India's success in arresting Mehul Choksi is commendable, many high-profile accused are still at large. Mehul Choksi's relative Nirav Modi is one of them. He is currently in jail in the UK. Efforts are underway to extradite him. Many criminals like international smuggler and underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, one-time liquor baron Vijay Malia should be brought to India. All Indians feel that they should be tried and punished. Common people look at such criminals and the crimes they have committed in a very different light. They feel that if a small installment of a bank loan is missed or missed, the bankers come to the doorstep of the common man. They harass people by calling them on the phone and scam people worth ten, twenty, thirty thousand crore rupees, but such people are not arrested or even taken action against them. They flee abroad and live happily ever after. It is not for nothing that the common man feels that justice is equal for all, but in reality it is not like that. Even in the context of the judiciary, the common man does not have a very good feeling in his heart. The reason for this atmosphere is the free rein given to many criminals in the past. In such a situation, the common man feels satisfied that whether it is Tahawwur Rana or Mehul Choksi, they will be shown the whip of the law. The Narendra Modi government at the Center, his cabinet colleagues and the central machinery have all created a sense of hope in the minds of Indians. All the investigating agencies should take care that this hope does not turn into despair. There have also been reports that Mehul Choksi has revealed the cause of some serious illness and has informed that he is undergoing treatment for it. Whatever the illness may be. But, that is not the reason to show mercy to such criminals. We cannot forget that the Punjab National Bank scam also happened with the connivance of some employees there. Therefore, all such sukhracharyas in the Zari should also be found and crushed. Ultimately, this issue is not limited to this one bank. It is a question of the nation's illusion and the aspirations and expectations of the common people. Therefore, they should be brought to India as soon as possible and the case against them should be tried in a fast-track court. Only if they are given birth rights, can such incidents be stopped.

Work Plan exchanged between India and Israel in Horticulture Sector

To enhance cooperation in the field of agriculture and food security, a high-level meeting was held today at the International Guest House, National Agricultural Science Complex, New Delhi, between the Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Avi Dicter. The meeting marks the first official visit of Mr. Avi Dicter to India in his capacity as Agriculture and Food Security Minister of Israel.

Both countries have taken a significant step forward in strengthening their agricultural partnership with the signing of Agriculture Cooperation Agreement and Work Plan during the high-level meeting held in New Delhi today. This Agreement will strengthen the cooperation in the fields of soil and water management, horticultural & agricultural production, post-harvest and processing technology, agriculture mechanization, animal husbandry and research & development.

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan highlighted that India believes in the ideals of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah" (May all be happy, may all be free from illness)



and "Parhit Saris Dharma Nahi Bhai" (There is no religion greater than serving others). He further emphasized that under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is emerging as the fastest-growing major economy in the world.

He praised the role of MASHAV in the success of India-Israel Agricultural Work Plans, particularly through the network of 43 Centers of Excellence (CoEs) of which 35 fully functional CoEs across India. He noted that Israel's concept of Villages of Excellence (VoE), aiming to connect 30 villages to each CoE, is a transformative step towards rural outreach. The Hon'ble Minister extended a cordial invitation to Israel delegation for World Food India 2025.

Mr. Avi Dicter, the Minister of Agriculture and Food

Security of Israel, highlighted that Israel and India share a deep bond and both countries can work together in the development of high yielding seed varieties and technology among other areas. He also added that given the challenges of climate change innovation in the agriculture sector is required to ensure food security in future.

The two sides agreed on the need to work together on several key areas, including food security, technology transfer, the development of high-quality seeds, the expansion of Centers of Excellence (CoE), research and development, pest management, capacity building, and the advancement of post-harvest technologies. Additionally, they agreed to explore to a Five-Year Seed Improvement Plan (FYSIP) to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Considering the challenges of increasing population and decreasing landholdings, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan emphasized the need to enhance agricultural productivity. He underlined the importance of collaborative efforts between Indian and Israeli scientists to ensure that improved seeds reach farmers. The meeting also saw discussions on various innovations and other important issues related to agriculture.

Israeli side also showed keen interest in India's digital agriculture mission and the way it is empowering

commitment to global welfare, highlighting how India and Israel can contribute significantly to resolving the global food security crisis. A Joint Working Group is being established to ensure continuous dialogue and the development of a clear roadmap with defined goals and timelines. Both sides shared challenges & priorities in their agriculture sector and also reviewed the ongoing collaborations in the horticulture sector. They also exchanged views on the issues related to market access.

Besides the Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security

General Foreign Trade and International Cooperation also participated as part of members of the Israeli delegation. From the Indian side, Secretary DA&FW and DARE Sh. Devesh Chaturvedi along with Joint Secretaries of International Cooperation Division (IC), Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), Natural Resource Management (NRM), Plant Protection (PP) and Joint Secretary (WANA) from Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) participated in the meeting.

The meeting concluded



farmers in India. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan reiterated India's

ity of Israel, Ambassador Mr Reuven Azar and Yakov Poleg, Deputy Director

with warm wishes for a successful and productive visit to India.

NSO, India Unveils Digital Innovations to Strengthen Statistical System

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) launched a revamped Microdata Portal during the recently held Conference of State Government Ministers, marking a significant step in enhancing data accessibility, user experience, and the integration of advanced technologies in the Official Statistical System. The new portal, which serves as a centralized repository for extensive statistical data collected from national surveys and economic census



overcomes technological limitations faced by the previous portal. In collaboration with the World Bank Technology Team, MOSPI has adopted a modern, scalable technology stack that not only ensures compliance with the latest security standards but also supports a responsive design and data access mechanism. The portal can be accessed at <https://microdata.gov.in/>.

On this occasion the website of National Statistical System Training Academy was also launched. It will facilitate ease of access of information regarding capacity building initiative of the ministry by making them available at one place. The website can be accessed at www.nssta.gov.in. The portal & the website have been de-

veloped in-house by Data Informatics & Innovation Division of the ministry.

MoSPI also presented a Proof of Concept (PoC) for an AI/ML-based classification tool designed to ease the use of the National Industrial Classification (NIC) in production of official statistics. The tool leverages natural language processing to allow stakeholders to enter text queries, subsequently suggesting the top five relevant NIC codes. This innovation not only reduces manual ef-

fort but also increases the productivity of enumerators, leading to more accurate data collection and ultimately better planning and policymaking. This has been the outcome of the recently concluded Hackathon organized by the ministry.

The launch of these portals and website along with innovative AI-driven tools underscores commitment of the ministry to leverage the latest technological advancements for data management leading to strengthening of the statistical system. These initiatives are set to foster a more data-driven approach to policymaking, ensuring that government interventions are both precise and context-specific, ultimately contributing to goal of Viksit Bharat.

Lighting Up Kashi - PM Narendra Modi



Kashi isn't just a city—it's a living soul. It breathes through the ripples of the Ganga and the quiet strength of its people. Here, ancient stones whisper stories of the past while glass-fronted buildings reflect the promise of tomorrow. The city where life and death meet at Manikarnika Ghat, now welcomes wide roads, smart lighting and modern corridors. This is Kashi's journey—where the sacred and the smart co-exist, not in conflict, but in harmony. A place where every street holds a story and every step leads to a blend of soul and structure.

On April 11, the ancient city of Kashi witnessed a moment of progress. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone and inaugurated development projects worth over ₹3,880 crore in Varanasi. It was a celebration of growth—what PM Modi called a true "festival of development."

Ten years ago, a trip through Varanasi meant endless traffic and dusty detours. Today, the city is rewriting that story. Projects like the Phulwari flyover and the Ring Road are easing traffic woes, saving precious time for daily commuters and lakhs of pilgrims. Travel

between districts like Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Ballia and Mau has become faster and more connected than ever before.

PM Modi also laid foundation stone for—a road bridge connecting Varanasi Ring Road and Saranath, long-awaited flyovers at Bhikharipur and Manduadih, and a highway underpass road tunnel on NH-31 at the Varanasi International Airport worth over Rs 980 crore. These projects aren't just concrete and steel; they're the backbone of a growing city opening up to the world. To brighten up lives and lighten up the city, Prime Minister Modi gave a major push to Kashi's power network. He inaugurated two 400 KV and one 220 KV substations—projects worth over ₹1,045 crore. Add to that a ₹775 crore boost with new substations in Chaukaghat and Ghazipur.

But real power lies not just in wires, but in wisdom. Staying true to his vision of "education for all," the Prime Minister opened new doors of learning. Rural education got a lift with 356 libraries and 100 Anganwadi centres. He also laid the foundation for revamping 77 primary schools under the Smart City

Mission.

One of the most heartwarming transformations in Purvanchal has come through Banas Dairy. It has helped turn thousands of small dairy farmers into confident entrepreneurs. Over ₹105 crore in bonuses were distributed to livestock-rearing families—most of them women. These women, now proudly known as "Lakshmi Didis", are a shining symbol of real empowerment.

PM Modi also highlighted how schemes like the Kisan Credit Card, free vaccinations for livestock, and the Rashtriya Gokul Mission are helping farmers. They're raising healthier animals and finding better markets for their produce.

Once, people from Purvanchal had to travel far for good medical care. Through the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, lakhs of families in Uttar Pradesh have received free treatment and saving lives. PM Modi personally handed out Ayushman Vay Vandana cards to elderly citizens—ensuring free medical care for all above 70, regardless of income.

Development in Kashi is not just about roads and hospitals—it's about dreams too. With new stadiums and a

world-class sports complex, young athletes from Varanasi are now getting the platform they need to shine. PM Modi reminded everyone that if India wants to host the 2036 Olympics, our youth need to begin their journey now—and Kashi is making sure they're ready.

From the rhythmic beats of the tabla to the intricate designs of zardozi, Varanasi's rich culture is gaining international fame. Over 30 local products from Varanasi and surrounding districts now carry the prestigious GI (Geographical Indication) tag, including the famous thandai, red stuffed chilli, ranga barfi and even Jaunpur's imarti and Pilibhit's flute. PM Modi also announced the creation of an Ekta Mall, a space where the diverse crafts and products from across India will be showcased under one roof—right here in Kashi.

As Varanasi stands at the crossroads of tradition and transformation, the city proves one simple truth: development is most meaningful when it touches lives and preserves the soul of a place. With folded hands and firm resolve, Kashi moves forward—proud of its past, and prepared for its future.



The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities, Dehradun, in collaboration with the National Association for the Blind (NAB), New Delhi, inaugurated 'Antar Drishti' - a unique sensory dark room - on April 7, 2025. The facili-

ty was formally inaugurated by Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, (DEPwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The occasion was graced by Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Joint Secretary, DEPwD, and Shri Pradeep Anirudhan, Director, NIEPVD.

'Antar Drishti'

'Antar Drishti' is a specially designed sensory experience space aimed at raising awareness and sensitizing society towards the challenges faced by persons with visual impairments. In this dark room, individuals experience complete darkness and engage in activities that help simulate the everyday experiences of persons who are blind or have low vision. This initiative seeks to foster empathy, understanding, and inclusion by bridging the gap between perception and lived reality.

In addition to the inauguration, the NIEPVD Dehradun signed an MoU with Amar Seva Sangam, a pioneering organization in the field of disability rehabilitation and inclusive development. The MoU was signed in the esteemed presence of Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD, and Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Joint Secretary, DEPwD.

Through this collaboration, NIEPVD will implement the 'Enable Inclusion' App—a digital platform developed by Amar Seva Sangam for early identification, intervention, and tracking of children with developmental disabilities. The app has been successfully used across various communities to support intellectual and developmental needs. Under the agreement, NIEPVD will integrate its expertise in visual disabilities to help expand the app's scope, making it more accessible and responsive to the needs of individuals with visual impairments.

This initiative will facilitate personalized support and services through digital means, thereby enhancing the reach and effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions. The expanded 'Enable Inclusion' App, with NIEPVD's contributions, is expected to revolutionize early intervention, tele-counseling, tracking, and rehabilitation planning—setting a benchmark for inclusive practices across India and beyond.



HARYANA

Briefs :

Three die in two road accidents in Sirsa's Rania

Sirsa : Three people lost their lives in two separate road accidents in Rania of Sirsa district on Monday night. The bodies of the deceased were sent to the Civil Hospital in Sirsa for a post-mortem examination. Based on the statements of the victims' families, the Rania police have registered separate cases and started investigations. In the first incident, Vijay Singh, a resident of Kussar village, died at around 9 pm in a road mishap. Vijay was married and had two children. He owned a grocery shop. According to a police report filed by his cousin, Rajroop, Vijay was returning home from his shop on a motorcycle. While he was near Mahawat Seeds, a speeding car hit his bike from behind. He suffered serious injuries and was taken to Civil Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. In the second incident, two youngsters from Naiwala village, Sahil and his cousin Vijay, died after being hit by an unidentified vehicle. They were returning home after attending a wedding. Sahil's father, Mahender Singh, told the police that his son was riding a motorcycle with his cousin Vijay. Around 10.30 pm near Ranipur Thehri, an unidentified vehicle coming from Sirsa towards Jiwan Nagar collided with them.

Live-in partner held for murder in Gurugram

Gurugram : The police have arrested the live-in partner of a woman whose body was found wrapped in a blanket in a field in Naharpur village on March 11. The breakthrough came while investigating the blind murder case, which had initially left no clear leads. The arrested man has been identified as Shivshankar Sharma, also known as Kalicharan, a native of Ballia in Uttar Pradesh. He was arrested from Naharpur village on Monday. During interrogation, the accused reportedly admitted to murdering the woman, suspecting she was having an affair with another man. The woman's body, wrapped in a blanket, was discovered in a wheat field in Naharpur village. The police placed the unidentified body in the mortuary and it was only on March 31 that the woman was identified as Rita, a resident of Bihar, by her father. Following this, an FIR for murder was registered at the Manesar police station. In his complaint, Rita's father stated she was married 11 years ago and had moved to Naharpur village in Gurugram about five years back with her husband. However, due to a dispute, her husband left her and she began living with Shivshankar Sharma in a live-in relationship. "I last spoke to Rita on 23 February. I later came to Naharpur to meet her and heard that a woman's body had recently been found in the fields. When I saw the photograph of the body, I recognised it as my daughter," he said in the complaint. Live-in partner held for murder in Gurugram. The police have arrested the live-in partner of a woman whose body was found wrapped in a blanket in a field in Naharpur village on March 11.

Teachers rue updating diary on MIS portal

Kurukshetra : The Directorate of School Education's direction to government school teachers to update the teacher diary on MIS (Management Information System) portal of the Education Department has not gone well with the teachers. Government school teachers in Kurukshetra have given a call of holding a protest against the department's direction on April 17 at the district headquarters. Earlier, the teachers used to fill their diaries manually but from April 9, the department had implemented the decision of filing diary on the MIS portal online. In a letter issued, the directorate had mentioned that the teachers' diary was being made available through the MIS portal and the teachers must update their diaries regularly even if they were on election duty, exam duty, training or attending workshop. The school heads were directed to issue completion certificate every month stating that all teachers had submitted their diaries online. The district-level officials were provided dashboards to check the progress. Dr Tirshem Kaushik, district president of the Haryana School Lecturers Association (HSLA), said, "The government school teachers are already updating the diaries



manually and the teachers never raised any objection. But the directions regarding updating the diary online on the MIS portal is not acceptable. The teachers are already overburdened and such directions will waste a lot of time. Moreover, this is not possible at all in practical terms. "A teacher teaching different classes will not be able to update the diaries of all subjects on the MIS portal daily. The teachers share all details with the school heads and the department can take all required information from the school heads. The department should withdraw the orders. The Education Department should understand the ground realities and make policies by communicating with the teachers," he added. Kaushik said it had been decided to hold a protest on April 17 at the district headquarters to mark our resentment. All teacher unions would jointly hold the protest. During the demonstration, a memorandum would be submitted to the Director of Secondary Education through the District Education Officer. It had also been decided that a joint meeting of all the unions would be held to decide the future course of action. Haryana Vidyalyaya Adhyapak Sangh (HVAS) district president Virender Singh said, "The department has been trying to keep the teachers engaged in non-educational work in the name of digitisation. Systems like teacher diary on MIS portal will affect the quality of teaching work. We want teachers to be able to focus on their main work of teaching and not get entangled in unnecessary technical formalities."

Atal Kisan-Mazdoor Canteen inaugurated in Ambala

Kurukshetra : Haryana Transport, Energy And Labour Minister Anil Vij on Tuesday inaugurated 'Atal Kisan-Mazdoor' canteen at the New Grain Market in Ambala Cantonment. Operated by women from self-help groups (SHGs), the canteens will serve nutritious meals to farmers, labourers and needy at just Rs 10 per plate, from 11 am to 3 pm daily. As per the information, the canteen will be operated by four women belonging to Khatauli village. Cabinet Minister Anil Vij said, "Atal Kisan-Mazdoor canteen has been inaugurated for the farmers and labourers at the grain market. While the canteen will charge Rs 10 per plate from the farmers and labourers, the remaining balance of Rs 15 per plate will be borne by the market committee. Similar canteens are being opened in other grain markets too." While addressing the people present on the occasion, Anil Vij said, "The shifting of grain market in Ambala Cantonment was one of our major and initial projects. Earlier, there used to be a small grain market in the congested area of Sadar Bazar in Ambala Cantonment due to which the residents used to face inconvenience. Due to the shortage of space, very little quantity



of produce used to arrive. But after the BJP formed its government, the grain market was shifted and established along the national highway. "The grain market is doing well and a huge quantity of produce reaches here in every season, and it is beneficial for the farmers, labourers and the commission agents working in the grain market. It already has the facility of a rest house for the farmers and now, the canteen facility has also been started. At present, the canteen is being run from the hall of the rest house, but the marketing board has identified a location to establish a permanent canteen in the grain market", the Cabinet Minister said. Neeraj Bhardwaj, secretary of the New Grain Market, Ambala Cantonment, said, "Atal Kisan-Mazdoor Canteen has been started in the grain market to provide good quality food at affordable prices to the farmers and labourers. A large number of farmers and labourers reach here during the season. At present, the canteen is being run from the hall of the rest house and a budget of Rs 7 lakh has been spent on setting up the canteen. Soon a new building of the canteen will be established. All efforts are being made to get the new building before the paddy procurement season." "For the existing setup, furniture, utensils, deep freezer and other required equipment have been purchased. The same will be shifted to the new building. During the season, we are expecting that about 200 persons will get the benefit of the canteen daily and it will be ensured that people get hygienic food," he added. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Ambala Cantonment Vinesh Kumar, District Marketing Enforcement Officer Rajiv Choudhary, GM Roadways Ashwini Dogra were among those present at the event.

Kurukshetra cops warn people to stay away from canals

Kurukshetra : The Kurukshetra police have started an awareness drive to avoid untoward incidents in rivers and canals during the summer season in the district. With the rising temperature, youngsters can be spotted taking dips in canals, rivers and village ponds to beat the heat, but it is a risky practice. Kurukshetra police spokesman Naresh Kumar said, "There have been incidents of young boys losing their lives while swimming in Kurukshetra. The locations where such incidents have been reported in the past have been identified and directions have been issued by the Superintendent of Police to keep a close watch along the canals. Patrolling has been increased. Though warning boards are installed asking people not to swim in canals and rivers, youngsters and children continue to swim in the rivers and some end up losing their lives."



"To avoid any untoward incident, a special campaign is being run and the police officials have been asking people not to swim in the rivers, canals and village ponds, else action will be taken against them. The department has also asked the village panchayats to make announcements in the villages in this regard", he added. In his directions to the Station House Officers, Superintendent of Police Varun Singla has asked them to keep a close watch on the canals in their respective areas. As per the directions, the youth

come to the banks of the canal to have fun with their friends and it has often been seen that they also consume alcohol. While swimming in intoxicated condition, people often die by drowning in the canal. The police department is making every effort to prevent such incidents. People are requested not to use canals, rivers and village ponds for bathing. As per the Kurukshetra police, warning boards are installed at major locations along the canals passing through the jurisdictions of Jhansa Police Station, Jyotisar police post, and Third Gate police post. People living in the villages along the canals are also appealed to cooperate with the police to prevent such incidents. If any youth is found bathing in the canal, then people should inform the nearest police station or dial 112 so that legal action can be taken against such people and lives can also be saved.

Get addicted to God, not drugs: MP to youngsters

Rohtak : BJP Rajya Sabha MP Ram Chander Jangra flagged off a cyclothon event on Tuesday. The event aimed to promote the message of a drug-free Haryana. Rohtak Deputy Commissioner Dharendra Khadgata was among those present at the ceremony. Rohtak Additional Deputy Commissioner Narendra Kumar and City Magistrate Ankit Kumar promoted the message of a drug-free Haryana by riding bicycles at the event. At the farewell ceremony, Haryanvi singer Amit Saini Rohtakiya exhorted youngsters to stay away from drugs through a performance on the MDU campus in Rohtak. Jangra exhorted youngsters to get "addicted" to the name of God and the service of their parents instead of falling prey to intoxicants. "Guru Nanak Dev had stated that there was no greater intoxication than the name of the al-



mighty," the MP said, adding that youngsters should include yoga and pranayama in their lives. He said, in view of the increasing reports of drug-addiction in the state, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini had started Cyclothon 2.0 to save the youth of the state from the evil of drug addiction. "The youth of Punjab have fallen prey to drug addiction, and keeping the youth of our state away from the menace is the need of the hour," he said. Rohtak Mayor Ram Avtar Valmiki also flagged off the cyclothon. Additional Deputy Commissioner Narendra Kumar thanked the participants of the cyclothon, and said, with the cooperation of people, the cycle 'yatra' would be successful in achieving its objective. He appealed to parents to ensure that their children stayed away from all kinds of addiction. Dr Ashok Kumar, a participant of the cyclothon, administered an oath against drug abuse to the attendees. He said information about the sale of drugs should be given to the NCB through helpline number 9050891508.

Chawla flags 'irregularities' in Kamri road flyover work

Hisar : Nand Kishore Chawla, national president of the Sarvajan Samaj Party, has raised serious concerns over the "poor construction work" of the Kamri road flyover in Hisar. He alleged that officials of the Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings Branch), Hisar, made serious errors during the construction of the flyover, which had led to persistent problems for commuters. Chawla alleged, "During the construction of the flyover, officials buried a 6-inch water pipeline under the bridge. Due to a leakage in the pipeline, the underpass remains filled with water, causing immense trouble to people using the route," he alleged. He claimed that, although the original design of the underpass had a width of 16 feet, it was reduced to 12 feet by officials without any justification. As a result, the road was riddled with large potholes, making travel extremely difficult for the public, he added. Despite repeated complaints and even informing the Public Works Minister, the issue remained unresolved, he alleged.

"Even PWD Minister Ranbir Gangwa, who is resident of Hisar, passes through the underpass, yet no action has been taken to fix the problem," he said. Chawla criticised the incomplete state of the flyover, even after nearly four years of its inauguration. He highlighted that rainwater from the flyover, nearby roads and the canal flowed in to the underpass due to the lack of a proper stormwater drain or rainwater outlet adjoining a banquet hall. He said the pedestrian path alongside the flyover was also in poor condition, adding to the public's woes. "Some land near the flyover, which was meant to be developed into a park, is now being used as a dumping ground due to the absence of block fencing. This has led to an atmosphere of filth and negligence in the area," Chawla added. "If such is the state of governance near the PWD Minister's own house, one can only imagine the condition in the rest of Haryana," he said.

Karnal residents demand stoppage of Vande Bharat at city railway station

Karnal : Residents of Karnal are eagerly waiting for the stoppage of the Vande Bharat Express (Chandigarh-Ajmer) at the Karnal railway station, which is one of the oldest stations in the region, established by the British in 1892. They have urged the government to take necessary steps for a stoppage, so that the passengers can take a fast and overnight journey to Mata Vaishno Devi in Katra, Jammu and Kashmir. They said that six to seven Vande Bharat Express train run on the Delhi-Ambala route on a daily basis, but even after being an important station, Karnal does not get the facility of a stoppage of even a single Vande Bharat train. The locals alleged that after the extension of Jammu Mail to Subedarganj in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, the passengers from Karnal and nearby districts are facing difficulty in securing reservation, as a majority of the seat quota has been allocated to Subedarganj. "It has become a tough job to book a seat to Katra on the Jammu Mail, as most of the seats are taken by the passengers boarding from Subedarganj. In such a situation, the stop-



page of the Vande Bharat Express in Karnal is necessary for a speedy journey to Mata Vaishno Devi Darbar," said Anshul Narang, a social activist. The issue of train stoppage has been raised on multiple platforms by the residents of the district, but to no avail so far, causing growing resentment. The locals said they had been waiting for long for the stoppages of important trains such as Shri Shakti and Vande Bharat, as a significant number of devotees from Karnal travelled to Vaishno Devi in Katra. However, due to the lack of stoppages, they are forced to travel to Ambala first to board the train, which wastes both time and fuel and causes inconvenience. Vijay Khetarwal, a resi-

dent and social activist, said they had repeatedly raised the demand for the stoppage of these trains at the Karnal railway station, which was part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme announced by the Union Government. Recently, Karnal MLA Jagmohan Anand wrote a letter to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, requesting stoppages for the Vande Bharat and Shri Shakti trains. The minister responded with an assurance that the department concerned would conduct a detailed assessment of the demand. "I have raised the genuine demand of the people of my constituency with Railway Minister Vaishnaw and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. We are hopeful that the stoppage of these trains will soon be approved," said Jagmohan Anand. As per the residents, the Karnal station is a Class "A" station and a national heritage site, but it still lacks basic passenger amenities such as lifts and escalators, particularly needed by senior citizens and women. Locals also alleged that despite being one of the most profitable railway stations in the region, Karnal station was yet to be granted the junction status, which had been announced multiple times in previous railway Budgets. Rajiv Kumar, another social activist, emphasised that lifts and escalators should be installed at the Karnal railway station at the earliest. He also demanded the stoppage of other important trains including Kalka-Shirdi Superfast, Hirakud Superfast Express, and Amritsar Shatabdi Express. They also sought the extension of the Bhiwani-Kalka Ekta Express up to Ajmer via Ringus for better connectivity to Khatu Shyam and the extension of Delhi-Bandra Garib Rath up to Chandigarh with stoppages at Karnal, Panipat and Ambala Cantt.

Illegal colony razed during drive in Rohtak

Rohtak : Rohtak Deputy Commissioner Dharendra Khadgata has stated that the district administration is continuously running a campaign against illegal constructions/colonies in the controlled and urban areas of the district, under which an illegal colony being developed on about 11.25 acres at Sunaria Kalan village was demolished on Tuesday. Khadgata said a road network, 13 foundations, an illegal construction and a

boundary wall were demolished during Tuesday's operation. He asserted that illegal colonies and constructions would not be allowed in the district. "Do not buy or sell property in the illegal colo-



Hisar airport a milestone in state's civil aviation sector, says MP Kiran

Bhiwani : Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Chaudhry stated that the inauguration of the Hisar Airport by Prime Minister Narendra Modi marks a significant step in the growth of the civil aviation sector in Haryana.

Addressing a press conference in Bhiwani on Tuesday, Chaudhry said the airport would connect Haryana with the rest of the country through air connectivity. She also called the Yamunanagar thermal plant project a strong step toward energy self-reliance. Chaudhry recently participated in the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Tashkent in Uzbekistan, which includes members from 180 countries. She had presented six papers, including one on India's nuclear weapons' policy. The BJP MP said India would never be the first to use nuclear weapons, adhering to its 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' philosophy, promoting peace and mediation. She also represented India's stance on women empowerment and women's health, emphasising that India was a secular country where the rule of law prevailed.



She credited PM Modi's leadership for earning India global respect. Chaudhry praised Modi's recent remarks in Hisar regarding the welfare of Muslims, referring to amendments made in the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024. "The new Section 40 amendment ensures that Backward Classes, women, and children from the Muslim community will now have access to waqf property benefits, which were previously limited. These properties can now be leased out for educational and welfare institutions, which was not feasible earlier. Until now, only 3 per cent of the waqf property was being used effectively, but the reform aims to maximise its benefit for the community," she said. Chaudhry attacked the Congress stating that the Congress had held two top-level meetings but still was not able to finalise the Leader of Opposition (LoP). Without naming him, she criticised former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, saying one person doesn't allow others to rise and holds control over the Central leadership.

Rs 4,680-cr industrial cluster to come up near Hisar Airport

Chandigarh : To boost development in Haryana, an industrial manufacturing cluster (IMC) will be established near Maharaja Agrasen Airport in Hisar over about 3,000 acres at an estimated cost of Rs 4,680 crore. The cluster will be developed jointly by the Haryana Government and the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC).

This information was shared during a meeting held under the chairmanship of CM Nayab Singh Saini today. Civil Aviation Minister Vipul Goel was also present.

The CM apprised that the Government of India, in partnership with state governments, was developing integrated industrial corridors based on multi-modal connectivity to accelerate manufacturing



growth and ensure planned urbanisation. Under the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor, industrial townships would be developed in six cities across seven states, with the IMC in Hisar being the largest project. The project was expected

to attract investments of around Rs 32,000 crore and generate over 10,000 employment opportunities. The IMC would have modern infrastructure, including roads and a water treatment and solid waste management plants. A memoran-

dum of understanding (MoU) between the NICDC and the state government would be signed soon for the successful execution of the project.

The CM said of the 7,200 acres demarcated in Hisar, around 4,211 acres were occupied by the airport. The IMC would be established on the remaining land. Proximity to the airport would provide a significant advantage to industries, he said. It was further said that under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, an Integrated Multi-Modal Logistics Hub was being set up on approximately 886 acres in Nangal Chaudhary. Thus, Haryana stood to gain from the presence of two major industrial corridors, which would boost investment and generate employment.

Health Department to seek police cells in all districts to curb PNDT violations

Chandigarh : In a decisive move to strengthen enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act and check the declining sex ratio, the Haryana Health Department will soon write to the Director General of Police (DGP) to seek dedicated police cells in every district headed by DSP-rank officers. These special units will be trained to conduct raids, file FIRs, and send decoy customers to expose illegal sex determination and female foeticide networks. The decision was taken during a State Task Force (STF) meeting chaired by Sudhir Rajpal,

Additional Chief Secretary (Health). While a police department representative attended the meeting, health officials stressed the need for specialised and consistent support during operations.

"The idea is to have a team which can be specifically trained to carry out the raids. At present, we rely on the district police to provide support whenever we go for the raids. Since the teams keep changing, it becomes a bit of a challenge," said a senior official. To increase vigilance, random verification of Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) cases will be conducted. Ultra-

sound has now been made mandatory at 12 weeks for any MTP. Reports justifying MTPs will first be verified at the district level and then randomly rechecked by the headquarters.

Cracking down on unregulated fertility services, the department will close all unregistered IVF centres. As many as 18 such centres have already been identified. Utility services — electricity, water, and municipal services — will be snapped in such cases in collaboration with Urban Local Bodies, Power, and Public Health Departments. The STF also reviewed 'suspicious' MTP cases from 27 centres. Fi-

nal reports from district committees are expected soon. Meanwhile, data on village-level sex ratio over the past five years will be compiled to identify consistent low-performing areas.

Officials have sent notices to 12 Senior Medical Officers (SMOs) asking them to explain the low sex ratio in their jurisdictions. "We have asked for data for five years since there can be fluctuation in the short-term data," a source said. The NHM Managing Director will personally hear the SMOs, and the Director, Prosecution has also joined the Task Force for coordinated legal action.

Haryana moots police cell in each district to curb illegal sex determination

Chandigarh : To check violations of pre-natal diagnostic techniques (PNDT), the Haryana health department will write to the state police to set up a dedicated police cell in every district headed by a DSP-rank officer, officials said. The health department, which seeks to strengthen the enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, will write to the DGP for setting up these cells with dedicated teams to facilitate raids and filing of FIRs in case violations are found.

The decision was taken on Tuesday at a meeting of the State Task Force (STF) set up to take action against people involved in female foeticide.

Officials said the health department currently relies on the district police for support when raids are to be conducted, and having a dedicated team for this purpose will be of help. Taking an ultra-

sound test has been made mandatory at 12 weeks for any medical termination of pregnancy cases while verification of medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) cases will be conducted randomly, the officials said. The health department has given directions that all non-registered IVF (in-vitro fertilisation) centres should be closed, and those with skewed sex ratio should be checked thoroughly and shut down if any malpractice was found. To identify the consistently low-performing areas, data on village-level sex ratio over the past five years will be compiled. Notably, the health department recently issued show-cause notices to senior medical officers of 12 community health centres from areas reporting low sex ratio. The move was part of the government's efforts to crack down on female foeticide in the state, officials said. The director of National Health Mission in Haryana,

Virender Yadav, who's also the convener of the STF, said recently, "We have been strictly implementing the PCPNDT Act in the state. As a result, registrations of 300 erring MTP centres have been cancelled or voluntarily withdrawn." The other members of the STF include the mission director of National Health Mission; director generals of health services, women and child development, AYUSH and PCPNDT; health and police departments; and the state drug controller. The STF conducts reviews and makes field visits every Tuesday. Last week, Yadav said that the PNDT nodal officer in Hisar district was suspended and show-cause notices were issued to senior medical officers (SMOs) in-charge of 12 community health centres in Rewari, Bhiwani, Jind, Karnal, Nuh, Faridabad, Fatehabad, Mahendergarh, Hisar, Fatehabad, Karnal and Kurukshetra over low sex ratio.

Bhiwani cracks down on gambling, drug trafficking; 108 arrested in 3 months

Bhiwani : The Bhiwani police conducted major operations against illegal arms, narcotics, illicit liquor trade and gambling activities in the last three months, leading to the arrest of 108 individuals.

Bhiwani SP Nitish Agrawal said in cases related to the Arms Act, 17 FIRs were registered and 33 accused were arrested. The police recovered 22 illegal pistols, one revolver, one shotgun and 33 cartridges from the arrested persons, he said.

Similarly, action taken under the NDPS Act led to registration of 15 cases and arrest of 25 persons in the cases of drug trafficking. The recovered narcotics included 73 kg 626 grams of cannabis, 52 grams and 310 milligrams of heroin, 9 grams of smack, and 3 kg 380 grams of charas, he said.



The SP said as part of the crackdown under the Excise Act (Amendment 2020), 27 cases were registered and 32 accused were arrested for involvement in the illegal liquor trade. The police recovered 1,133 bottles of country-made liquor, 178 bottles of Indian made foreign liquor (IMFL), 992 beer bottles and additionally seized 263 kg of lahan and 40 bottles of illicit hooch. Three illegal liquor distill-

eries were also dismantled during the operation, he said. Besides, under the Gambling Act, seven cases were registered and 18 accused were arrested while an amount of Rs 91,840 was recovered from the gambling sites.

The SP stated that strict action would be taken against individuals involved in illegal arms, drugs, alcohol, or gambling in the district.

15 buffaloes die after 'consuming' contaminated water from factory

Karnal : As many as 15 buffaloes died after allegedly consuming poisonous and contaminated water discharged from a factory near Nagla village on the Karnal-Meerut road. The incident occurred on Monday afternoon and their post-mortem examination were conducted on Tuesday. A panel of three veterinary surgeons was deployed to conduct the post-mortem examinations and viscera samples had been sent to the forensic science laboratory (FSL) for further analysis. As per the officials of the Animal Husbandry Department, the post-mortem of the animals indicates signs of poisoning. "We conducted the post-mortem of the animals, which indicated that they consumed poisonous water. We have sent viscera

samples to the FSL to confirm the cause," said Dr Sanjay Antil, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry.

The buffaloes belonged to a livestock farmer from Uttar Pradesh who had brought them to the Nagla village area for grazing. It is suspected that the animals drank water discharged from a nearby factory. A joint inspection was carried out by officials from the Animal Husbandry and Agriculture Departments. "We inspected the site and submitted our report to the police. The initial findings suggest that a poisonous substance might have been present in the water consumed by the buffaloes," said Dr Tarsem Rana, a senior veterinarian, involved in the investigation. Dr Wazir Singh, Deputy Director Agriculture

(DDA), who is among the team to inspect the factory, said it was a tragic incident and investigation was underway to determine the lapses. As per the sources, the Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Karnal office, has been asked by the higher authorities to conduct inspection and seal the unit if lapses are there. The incident has triggered anger among local farmers and livestock owners. "The factory owner should have taken precautions and covered the discharge area. One buffalo costs at least Rs 1 lakh," said one of the affected livestock farmers. Tarsem Chand, SHO, Sadar Police Station, said they had registered a case against the factory owner under the relevant sections of the BNS.

Air hostess 'raped' by staff member at pvt hospital in Gurugram

Gurugram : In a shocking incident, a 46-year-old air hostess was allegedly raped in a well-known private hospital by a staff member while she was on a ventilator in the ICU. An FIR has been registered at Sadar police station.

According to a complaint filed by the air hostess, in the presence of a legal adviser, she was staying in a Gurugram hotel for training, when she nearly drowned in its swimming pool and was rushed to a private hospital. On April 5, her husband admitted her to another private hospital in Gurugram, from where she was discharged on April 13. "On April 6, I was on a ventilator, and was sexually assaulted by a staff member. I was in an unconscious state at the time of the incident. Two nurses were also there. I

was too scared to speak. After being discharged, I told my husband about the assault, and approached the police," she stated in her complaint. An FIR was registered against unidentified staff members of the hospital today. "Taking further action in the case, the victim's statement has been recorded before a magistrate. The police team is examining the footage of the hospital's CCTV cameras and will soon identify the accused. A probe is underway and the accused will be arrested soon," said the spokesperson for the Gurugram police.

This is not the first such incident in Gurugram's private hospitals. In July last year, a 51-year-old woman from Kazakhstan was raped by an attendant in a private hospital. The accused was later arrested.

Left on the tarmac: Karnal's wait for airport continues

Karnal : While Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Haryana's first official airport in Hisar on Monday, the occasion brought mixed emotions for Karnal. The city, home to one of the oldest aviation clubs in the region, continues to wait for its long-promised upgrade into a domestic airport. Since 1967, Karnal has hosted the Haryana Institute of Civil Aviation, training countless pilots. Despite its legacy and strategic location along NH-44, with easy access to Delhi and Chandigarh, the city's aspirations for an airport remain unfulfilled. Meanwhile, construction of a new airport in Am-

bala Cantt — just 70 km away — is nearing completion. This has triggered frustration among Karnal's residents, who feel sidelined despite the city's potential. "It should not just be developed as a domestic airport but can also be upgraded into a cargo and aircraft maintenance hub, as it has the oldest aviation club in the region," said Col Manbeer Choudhary (retired), president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Haryana and former president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India.

He emphasised that Karnal's airport could serve nearby Panipat — one of In-

dia's top exporters — and Kurukshetra, a key religious tourism hub, thus boosting both trade and tourism.

The dream of converting Karnal's airstrip into a full-fledged airport dates back to 2012 when the Congress-led state government first floated the idea. After the BJP came to power in 2014, then Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar rekindled hopes by announcing the upgrade of the Civil Aviation Club into a domestic airport on November 8 that year. However, progress was limited to renovation and runway expansion. In 2021, the High Powered Purchase Committee, chaired by the CM, approved

further plans for development. Yet, substantial ground activity remains minimal. A visit by then Civil Aviation Minister Dr Kamal Gupta in June 2024 raised public hope again with a renewed promise, but since then, only a boundary wall has come up.

Authorities state that the area of the facility has expanded from 107 to 171 acres, and the runway is being extended from 3,000 to 5,000 feet to accommodate small and medium-sized aircraft. Congress MP Deepender Hooda criticised the lack of action, reminding that the Congress had announced upgrades for both Hisar and Karnal airstrips in

2012. "No work has been done on the Karnal airport in the past 11 years during the BJP regime," he alleged.

Responding to the criticism, Union Power Minister and former CM Khattar recently said land acquisition is complete and further expansion is in the pipeline, though more land is still needed. Political analysts attribute the delay to shifting political priorities. Hisar, which gained prominence during the BJP-JJP coalition (2019-2024), benefited from the influence of JJP leader and former Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala, who strongly advocated for the Hisar airport.

Newly built road damaged in a month, Hisar residents demand action

Hisar : The newly constructed road in Sector 1 between house numbers 2,060 and 2,147 has severely damaged within just a month of its completion, sparking anger among residents. The patch of road was built by the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) between February 12 and 16, the road now shows extensive damage, including large cracks and an uneven surface, causing major inconvenience to commuters. The residents, along with the Sectors 1-4 Welfare Association, have demanded an immediate inquiry into the poor quality of construction and called for complete reconstruction of the road. "The road has become uneven and broken at multiple places. It has affected our daily lives and shows lack of quality control," said Salauddin Kagadana, general secretary of the RWA. In fact, the residents had raised concerns over the use of poor materials when the work was being carried out at the site. Though the HSVP official visited the site on getting the complaint but nothing was done to improve the construction work as substandard material was used which was damaged now.



The residents have now sent a formal complaint to the HSVP Executive Engineer and Superintending Engineer, demanding an investigation and appropriate action against those responsible. However, the HSVP's Subdivisional Engineer (Sub Division No. III, Hisar) had issued a notice to a house owner in the same street alleging that the construction work done by the houseowner had resulted in the damage to the road. The HSVP noted that while most of the roads in the area were in good condition, the section near the house had been "severely damaged." The cause, according to the HSVP, was ongoing construction work at the site where water was reportedly being poured directly onto the road surface to prepare building materials, resulting in accelerated damage. The HSVP notice directed the plot owner to repair the damaged road portion or face departmental repair at the owner's cost. The notice stated, "Causing damage to public property in this manner is highly irresponsible."

The notice had resulted in a confrontation between the residents and the HSVP. While the locals blame poor construction work, the HSVP is pointing fingers at nearby construction activity for damaging the newly built road.

Green belt turns into illegal parking zone in Sirsa colony

Sirsa : In Sirsa's Housing Board Colony on Barnala Road, residents have illegally converted the green belt area into private parking zones. Originally reserved for trees and open space, the land is now enclosed with walls and gates, and used for parking personal vehicles.

The colony was developed mainly for government employees, with proper planning for greenery, parks and a green belt between the road and the residential area. However, over the years, officials stopped monitoring the area, leading to widespread encroachment.

In many cases, the residents have built permanent structures such as boundary walls and locked gates, treating the public land as their own. Some have planted decorative trees, but the area no longer serves its original purpose of promoting greenery. Illegal parking and encroachment have also spread to the market area of the colony. The space meant for customers to park in front of shops has been occupied by street



vendors. Temporary food stalls have turned into permanent sheds and kiosks, housing tea, juice and food outlets. Nirmal Singh, a resident, said the colony's parks were in poor condition, lacking basic maintenance, cleaning and irrigation.

Many plants have dried up due to neglect. He further said no strict action had been taken so far to reclaim

the green belt or remove illegal parking structures. According to sources, Rs 20 lakh was approved by the municipal council for the green belt development and encroachment removal. Although the work began, it was halted midway and the funds were reportedly used elsewhere.

In this matter, Housing Board Estate Manager Surya Pratap said he had not received any complaints so far. He added that if anyone filed a complaint, action would be taken. Surya Pratap also mentioned that checking for encroachments was the responsibility of the SDO.



Both Coach & Captain reflect on Hockey Punjab's National Championship 2025 title win

Jhansi : Hockey Punjab lifted the coveted 15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025 title as they defeated Hockey Madhya Pradesh 4-1 in the final here in Uttar Pradesh.



Hockey Punjab won the tournament in 2023, however, in the last edition, they were knocked out in the Quarter-Finals by Hockey Maharashtra. This time, led by Captain Hardik Singh and Coach Rajinder Singh, Hockey Punjab have claimed the championship again.

Hockey Punjab finished their Division 1, Pool A second in the standings, three points behind Hockey Madhya Pradesh, who dealt them their only defeat in the tournament.

Hockey Punjab ensured they learnt from their mistakes and defeated Hockey Madhya Pradesh comfortably in the final.

Jugraj Singh was in top form for Hockey Punjab having finished the tournament as the second-highest goalscorer with five goals and even recorded a crucial brace in the final. Young sensation Arajiet Singh Hundal also played a crucial role in the attack and claimed three goals to his name.

All players are confident & experienced to handle any situation: Rahane

Chandigarh : The Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), defending champions of the TATA IPL, suffered a narrow 16-run loss in a low-scoring thriller against Punjab Kings, here at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday night.



Harshit Rana's three-fer, alongside braces from Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy went in vain as hosts defended the target in an engaging contest.

Reflecting on the match, KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane said, "The wicket was a good one, even though the ball was stopping a bit. Our bowlers bundled them out for 111 and did half the job. Chasing 112 on this wicket was comparatively easy, especially after the start we got. It wasn't like Punjab Kings bowled exceptionally, we just didn't bat as well."

the game, backing his team to respond going into their next match. "We're halfway through the tournament and there are seven matches to go in the league stage. It's always about coming back with good intent, while still looking to learn and improve as a batter and take it on in the next game," he said.

With seven matches remaining in the league stage for KKR, the captain is confident that there is no room for complacency in this experienced setup.

"All the players are confident and experienced enough to handle any situation. I wouldn't say we were complacent or are taking things for granted. I don't think we're doing that. We didn't bat well and didn't have the awareness to play according to what the situation demanded, but we learn from it," he concluded.

ICC welcomes announcement of cricket venue for LA28

Dubai : The International Cricket Council (ICC) has welcomed the announcement of Fairgrounds in Pomona, Southern California, as the venue for cricket at the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 (LA28).



The cricket competition at LA28 will feature six teams each in the men's and women's competition as the sport makes a return to the Games after 128 years.

ICC Chair, Jay Shah, has welcomed the confirmation of the venue and is looking forward to working in partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to ensure cricket's success at the Games.

step towards the preparation for our sport's return to the Olympics. "Although cricket is a hugely popular sport, it will be a fantastic opportunity to expand traditional boundaries when it features in the Olympics in the fast-paced, exciting T20 format that should appeal to new audiences," he said. "On behalf of the ICC, I want to express my gratitude to LA28 and the International Olympic Committee for their support and look forward to collaborating with them and ICC Members in preparing for LA28 and making cricket a huge success there," Shah added. Cricket, which made its only appearance in the Olympics at the Paris Games in 1900, was included in the Los Angeles Olympics after an IOC meeting in Mumbai in October 2023, an ICC media statement said.

Bumrah's form in spotlight as Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad search for consistency

Mumbai : An inconsistent Mumbai Indians will hope that ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah returns to his menacing best, which is essential for them to stop an explosive Sunrisers Hyderabad batting unit in its tracks in a potentially high-scoring IPL match here on Thursday.



Coming off a three-month long injury layoff, Bumrah is yet to find the accuracy which makes him a tough customer to deal with. After a rather tidy outing against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Bumrah struggled to nail his yorkers and was taken apart by Delhi Capitals' Karun Nair as he leaked 44 runs in that game. The 31-year-old will face a stern test against a fearsome Sunrisers line-up comprising Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen.

Rohit, who has persisted with his ultra-aggressive approach, has struggled against left-arm pace but there could be some respite given SRH don't have any frontline left-arm seamer unless they bring in Jaydev Unadkat. While Suryakumar has still not been at his brutal best, being retired out against Lucknow Super Giants served as a wake-up call for Tilak.

them languishing at the seventh place in the points table with just two wins, and those results were largely built around the contributions of Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma. Rohit, who has persisted with his ultra-aggressive approach, has struggled against left-arm pace but there could be some respite given SRH don't have any frontline left-arm seamer unless they bring in Jaydev Unadkat. While Suryakumar has still not been at his brutal best, being retired out against Lucknow Super Giants served as a wake-up call for Tilak.

Real Madrid looks for another Bernabeu miracle to overturn Champions League deficit

Madrid : Real Madrid needs another Santiago Bernabeu miracle on Wednesday to overturn its Champions League first-leg defeat to Arsenal and progress to the semi-finals of the competition.

Last week saw Declan Rice's two stunning free kicks and a smart finish from Mikel Merino give Arsenal a 3-0 win in London and leave Real Madrid with a mountain to climb if the club wants to retain the title.

However, the Santiago Bernabeu has seen plenty of miracle comebacks from Madrid in recent seasons, with two goals in the closing minutes last season against Bayern Munich seeing it to the final, while the previous year saw Rodrygo score two goals in two minutes to force extra-time against Manchester City, when Madrid had again looked dead and buried.

There is no doubt that Real Madrid has the talent and the firepower to overturn the result, with players such as Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr. and Jude Bellingham, but it is also true that the team needs to improve on recent performances.

Apart from the defeat to Arsenal last week, Madrid was poor in Saturday's narrow 1-0 win away to struggling Alaves, while the previous weekend saw a 2-1 defeat at home to Valencia. Midfielder Dan Ceballos could be available after injury, while Aurelien Tchouameni should also return after missing last week's defeat

Norrie beaten in Barcelona, Alcaraz edges out Quinn

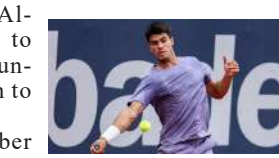
Madrid : British number three Cameron Norrie has suffered a first-round exit at the Barcelona Open as he prepares for the start of the French Open this month.

Norrie, now ranked 88 in the world rankings and who came through qualifying in Barcelona, was beaten 6-7 (3-7) 6-4 6-3 by 27th-ranked Karen Khachanov of Russia.

Former Wimbledon semi-finalist Norrie, 29, saved a set point on his way to winning the first set on a tie-break, and led 4-3 with a break in the second, the BBC reported.

But Khachanov came back to progress in two hours and 18 minutes and will face Jaume Munar of Spain in the next round. Earlier, Carlos Alcaraz was forced to work hard to beat underdog Ethan Quinn to reach the last 16.

The world number two was a break down in the second set against Quinn, ranked 126th in the world, before fighting back to win 6-2 7-6 (8-6). After saving five break points and breaking Quinn twice in the opening set, Alcaraz was pushed much harder by the 21-year-old American in the second.



The players exchanged breaks on three occasions and Alcaraz, 21, had to save a set point in the tie-break before finally winning through. "I made some mistakes, I found it hard to maintain my level, but I am happy to have solved the problems that came in the second set, and to end up winning in two sets," Alcaraz told TVE.

Bangladesh taking nothing for granted ahead of tough Qualifier contests

Lahore : Having won their first three games at the tournament, Bangladesh are just a solitary victory away from finishing in the top two places in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2025.

This will ensure their participation at the global megaevent later this year. However, the side will be coming up against two quality opponents in West Indies and Pakistan and will need to be at their very best to overcome the challenge.

Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana Joty, speaking after her side's win over Scotland on Tuesday, wanted her teammates to keep themselves grounded and go about the grind before these big match-ups. "We plan to go match-by-match. Yes, we're looking forward to the game, but we play this game as a team," Joty stated.



After starting with a massive 178-run win over Thailand, Bangladesh secured a nailbiter against Ireland by two wickets, before overcoming the fight from Scotland's tail to win their third encounter by 34 runs, an ICC report said.

Joty has been thrilled with the efforts from the batting group at the Qualifier so far. "Batting was our visible problem for the last few years. Our bowlers have done well but some of our batting couldn't click (in the past)," she noted. "But this tournament our batters have played wonderfully well. They've been getting runs in the top-order especially, and they've been pretty consistent," Joty said. "It was the only unit where we needed to work on, but those improvements are actually showing now," she said.



Mumbai : The Wankhede Stadium will host a mouth-watering encounter on Thursday as five-time champions Mumbai Indians take on the resurgent Sunrisers Hyderabad in the 33rd match of the IPL 2025 season. At the heart of this clash lies a fascinating sub-plot — the most explosive top order in the league going up against one of the sharpest death bowling units in the tournament.

Hyderabad arrive in Mumbai buoyed by a record run-chase against Punjab, headlined by Abhishek Sharma's sensational 141 off just 55 balls — the third-highest score in IPL history. The left-hander, alongside Travis Head (66 off 37), tore into the Punjab attack as SRH chased down 246 with ease, underlining their potential to dismantle any bowling line-up on their day.

SRH batting lineup waiting, Mumbai will hope for more collective contributions. MI's bowling has shown flashes of brilliance, though. Vignesh Puthur and Karn Sharma have chipped in with key middle-over breakthroughs, while Mitchell Santner's control has allowed others to attack around him.

SRH's campaign has been as volatile as their batting. After losing four matches on the trot, they turned up in style at home, rewriting the record books with a fearless batting display. Abhishek's assault was backed by Head's aggression and Klaasen's finishing, giving the team a much-needed boost.

Aniket Verma has also emerged as a surprise package, scoring quickly in the lower middle-order. However, their bowling remains a worry. Mohammed Shami has looked off-colour, while Pat Cummins has leaked runs at crucial junctures. Harshal Patel, with his variations, has managed to pick wickets, but the overall economy rates have been alarming.

SRH's batting lineup waiting, Mumbai will hope for more collective contributions. MI's bowling has shown flashes of brilliance, though. Vignesh Puthur and Karn Sharma have chipped in with key middle-over breakthroughs, while Mitchell Santner's control has allowed others to attack around him. Bolt and Bumrah, despite a few expensive overs in their last outing, remain the key to Mumbai's strategy — particularly in the last five overs.

Eshan Malinga has shown promise, and Zeeshan Ansari has provided control with the ball. But at a venue like Wankhede, containment alone won't be enough — wickets will be the currency.

The Wankhede strip is expected to be hard and true, offering bounce and pace for the batsmen. While seamers might get some early movement under lights, the surface tends to flatten out quickly, making chasing a preferred option. Scores over 200 have been breached several times at this ground, and both teams will be wary of setting a below-par target. Weather is expected to be hot and humid, with no rain forecast during the match hours.

Mumbai have had the upper hand in recent encounters, winning three of their last four meetings with SRH, including a 7-wicket victory in May 2024. At Wankhede, MI have traditionally dominated SRH, thanks in part to the familiarity with conditions and fans support.

Both teams currently hover in the mid-table zone, and a win here could be crucial in the jostle for playoff spots. MI, with momentum and home support, start as slight favourites, but if SRH's top order fires like it did last game, anything is possible.



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
77,044.29	0.40%	23,437.20	0.47%	21,404.35	0.59%	63,798.55	0.67%	24,037.25	0.50%	53,117.75	1.41%	52,345.55	0.71%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
76,734.89	76,996.78	23,328.55	23,344.10	21,279.40	21,302.75	63,374.30	63,454.80	23,917.40	23,935.85	52,379.50	52,690.90	51,974.45	52,090.05
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
77,110.23	76,543.77	23,452.20	23,273.05	21,414.85	21,246.40	63,843.40	63,231.75	24,052.40	23,865.00	53,164.45	52,471.35	52,371.75	51,946.65

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
IndusInd Bank	788.25	7.11
Axis Bank	1,161.30	4.36
ONGC	241.22	3.67
Trent	5,035.50	3.25
Asian Paints	2,459.90	1.83

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Maruti Suzuki	11,664.00	-1.61
Hindalco	609.90	-1.25
Tata Motors	616.05	-0.99
Bajaj Finance	9,056.50	-0.92
Larsen	3,227.70	-0.92

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Jun 05	95,147.00	1,696.00 1.81
Silver May 05	96,030.00	1,256.00 1.33
Crudeoil Apr 21	5,326.00	60.00 1.14
Naturalgas Apr 25	279.90	-5.40 -1.89

Sensex up 309.40 pts

Mumbai : Extending rally for the third straight session on Wednesday, the BSE Sensex rallied 309.40 pts to close high at 77,044.29 following gains in Telecommunications, Oil and Gas, Energy and Bank stocks despite weak global cues.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) rose 108.65 pts at 23,437.20.

An oscillation was seen during the day, as BSE Sensex gained 262 pts to open at 76,996.78. During the day, it was edged up 376 pts at 77,110.23, days high. Later, it slipped 191 pts at 76,543.77, days low. In late trade, it erased earlier losses and finished at 77,044.29, advancing 309.40 pts from its previous close.

The Nifty registered days high at 23,452.20 and low at 23,273.05 pts.

Today, stocks like Oil and Gas, Telecommunications, Energy and Bankex kept the rally intact, as oil and gas went up by 1.78 pc, Bankex by 1.45 pc, Energy



by 1.25 pc and Telecommunications by 1.08 pc.

The Mid cap gained 0.62 pc and Small cap by 0.91 pc.

The gainers were IndusInd Bank by 7.12 pc to Rs 788.25, Axis Bank by 4.26 pc to Rs 1161.30, Adani Ports by 1.81 pc to Rs 1232.75 and Asian paints by 1.75 pc to Rs 2459.90.

The losers were Maruti Suzuki by 1.51 pc to Rs 11673.70, Infosys by 1 pc to

Amid tariff wars Indian engineering goods exports sector shows resilience records 6.74 YoY growth in 2024-25

Kolkata : Indian engineering exports sector has displayed immense resilience despite the global trade order is undergoing a major change ever since US President Donald Trump assumed office early this year and imposed tariffs on dozens of its trade partners, according to EEPIC India chairman Pankaj Chadha.

"The world is facing massive disruption. The overall trade and global economic scenario remains volatile and uncertain. Despite this and other back-to-back challenges stemming from geopolitical tensions, the Indian engineering exports sector has displayed immense resilience," Chadha said on Wednesday.

"It is worth noting that engineering goods shipments have recorded 6.74 percent year-on-year growth in fiscal 2024-25 over the last year," Chadha

quoting a ministerial data as saying. As per data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's engineering exports reached an all-time high of US\$116.67 billion in 2024-25, marking a significant increase from US\$109.3 billion recorded in 2023-24.

As a result of the combined efforts of the exporting community and the support of the government, the engineering exports sector has managed to perform well against all odds, the EEPIC India chief said.

The additional duties imposed by the US on iron and steel and auto components are set to hit the engineering exports sector, he opined. There could be a potential annual drop of US\$4-5 billion in engineering shipments to the US as a consequence of it.

"Besides, we are going to face massive competition from China in

other markets as they vehemently push their products there as they chase new regions to de-risk the US," Xhadha said.

Competition in markets like Latin America, Central America, the Middle East, and Africa is set to heat up as exporters explore new markets and further penetrate the existing ones. This could dent profit margins, leaving little funds for investment. At this juncture, we need constant support from the government, both fiscally and for making inroads in new markets.

"The impact of the ongoing trade tariff war is, however, already visible. In March this year, the value of Indian engineering goods exports declined nearly 4 pc year-on-year to US\$10.82 billion as compared to US\$ 11.27 billion in the same month last year," Chadha concluded.

Made-in-India smartphones capture market share in US, UK as exports surge past Rs 2 lakh crore

Mumbai : India's smartphone manufacturing sector is making significant inroads globally, with Indian-made smartphones now commanding 13.74 per cent of the US market and 14.31 per cent of the UK market, according to the latest trade data. This rise reflects India's growing capability as a global hub for electronics production.

In 2024, smartphone exports from India to the US reached USD 7.03 billion, up from USD 4.7 billion in 2023. Exports to the UK rose to USD 1.5 billion, compared to USD 1.039 billion the previous year.

At a media briefing on Tuesday, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said smartphone exports are a key sector being closely tracked. Last week, Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnav said that total smartphone exports globally crossed Rs 2 lakh crore in FY 2023-24, registering a 54% increase over the previous year.

The exports of Apple's iPhone alone have crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore. It has become a huge force in the country. Nearly 25 lakh people have gained em-



ployment in electronics manufacturing, Vaishnav had said. With strong progress in finished goods production, India is now shifting focus to localising electronics component manufacturing.

India, he said, has achieved success in the production of finished goods in the electronics sector; the next step is to focus on component manufacturing.

In line with this, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on April 8 notified the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme.

SCCL's global expansion begins with virtual inauguration of Naini coal mine in Odisha

Hyderabad : The global expansion of State-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) began with the inauguration of Naini coal mine in Odisha virtually by Telangana Deputy Chief Minister M Bhatti Vikramarka, here on Wednesday.

Bhatti Vikramarka, who handles the portfolios of Energy and Finance, has officially inaugurated the mine from the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan here.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy CM stated that SCCL opening a coal mine in another state for the first time in its 136-year-long history is a 'golden chapter'.

With the inauguration of the Naini coal mine in Odisha, Singareni has em-



barked on its global expansion, he said.

Vikramarka said that starting a mine in Odisha is not only a joyous occasion for Singareni Company but also for the entire state of Telangana.

Although the coal block was allocated to Singareni nine years ago, delay in obtaining various permissions had led to postpone the inauguration until now, he

informed. A year ago, immediately after the people's government came to power in the state, he said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and himself had met Union Coal Minister Kishan Reddy several times and secured full approvals for the Naini coal mine.

The Deputy CM mentioned that the special initiative taken by the Congress government enabled the project to commence within a year, demonstrating the people's government's commitment to the development of Singareni.

He described the Naini coal block, inaugurated today in Odisha, as a first step in Singareni's expansion.

Singareni will expand from here to other states and countries as well and will soon be transformed into a global company, Vikramarka said.

On this occasion, he expressed his gratitude to Kishan Reddy, who supported the inauguration of the Naini coal mine; and also Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan from the Odisha region; Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahji; local MLA Agasthi Behera; and other public representatives.

GRSE commences construction of state-of-the-art Acoustic Research Ship for NPOL, DRDO

Kolkata : It was a red-letter day for Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd on Wednesday when it commenced construction of an Acoustic Research Ship (ARS) being built for the Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Chief Guest at the occasion was Dr Sameer V Kamat, Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) and Chairman, DRDO. Among others present were Cmde P R Hari, IN (Retd), Chairman and Managing Director, GRSE, Dr Chandrika Kaushik, DG (PC & SI), DRDO, Dr D Seshagiri, Director, NPOL, RK Dash, Director (Finance), GRSE, Cdr Shantanu Bose, IN (Retd), Director (Shipbuilding), GRSE, DIG Subrato Ghosh, ICG (Retd), Director (Personnel), GRSE, Abhishek Ranjan, IOFS, CVO, GRSE, and senior officials of GRSE & DRDO.

The contract between GRSE and NPOL for the ARS was signed in October 2024. The 93 m long and 18 m wide ARS will be a very advanced platform, that will have a complement of 120 personnel and will be capable of speeds ranging from 4 knots to 12 knots. At top speed, the ship will have an endurance of 30 days or 4,500 nautical miles in a single mission.

The capabilities of the ARS will include deployment, towing and retrieval of

various equipment such as acoustic modules, carrying out temporal and/or spatial high-resolution surveys of sound velocity profiles and collection of ocean tides/current information to be used for survey optimization, design of underwater moorings and offshore deployments.

The research vessel will also carry out meteorological surveys to understand the influence of atmospheric parameters in sound propagation studies and undertake shallow water acoustic reverberation studies. It will also be capable of launching, mooring and maintaining standalone buoys and collecting data from them. Its wide speed range will allow the ship to operate at multiple speed regimes to carry out acoustic systems trials, while maintaining silence. The ARS will also have a dynamic positioning system that will allow it to maintain position in intact condition up to Sea State 4. The vessel will have diesel-electric propulsion and three (3) deck cranes will be fitted on board to handle research equipment. GRSE has necessary experience in the construction of research and survey ships. It delivered the first series of Sandhyak Class of Survey Vessels to the Navy in the 80's & 90's. In 1994, GRSE delivered the INS Sagardhani. This is a Marine Acoustic Research Vessel that is still in service. In 2023 and 2024, GRSE delivered the INS Sandhyak and INS Nirdeshak to the Navy.

SBI Card and Tata Digital partner to launch Tata Neu SBI Card

Kolkata : SBI Card in partnership with Tata Digital announced the launch of Tata Neu SBI Card on Wednesday.

This one-of-its-kind lifestyle co-branded credit card has been designed to provide a premium and highly rewarding shopping experience for discerning customers across segments.

This co-branded card has been launched in two variants, Tata Neu Infinity SBI Card and Tata Neu Plus SBI Card. Customers earn rewards on all spends, whether online or in-store and across domestic and international merchant outlets in the form of NeuCoins that are redeemable on the Tata Neu app. With this launch, Tata Neu SBI Card customers can now enjoy a range of benefits for an enhanced shopping experience. Cardholders can enjoy up to 10% rewards on spends with Tata Neu Infinity SBI Card and up to 7% rewards on spends with Tata Neu Plus SBI Card in the form of NeuCoins. These are credited monthly to the cardholder's NeuPass account within the Tata Neu app. These NeuCoins can be redeemed across a wide range of products and services, including grocery,



travel bookings, jewelry, fashion, electronics and pharmacy services both online and in-store, addressing varied lifestyle needs of customers.

The co-branded card also offers rewards on everyday payments, providing up to 1.5% back in NeuCoins (with the Rupay variant) on UPI transactions and up to 5% back on bill payments made through Tata Neu. Customers can enroll for the card digitally via SBI Card SPRINT, by visiting the SBI Card website SBI Card.com, and can also opt to enroll offline by visiting SBI Card retail kiosks at select Croma stores.

Speaking on the launch, Salila Pande, MD & CEO, SBI Card, said, "In today's era, with evolving preferences, lifestyle needs of customers have become more diverse. We are delighted to partner with Tata Digital to enhance the lifestyle experiences of our customers. Our partnership is a testament to our commitment to offer customer centric products that deliver the best-in-class value. The Tata Neu SBI Card is designed to offer holistic experience that adds value in each transaction, elevating the shopping experience with a blend of unparalleled benefits and seamless convenience. The card is a significant addition to our robust co-brand card portfolio.

Naveen Tahilyani, MD & CEO, Tata Digital, added, "The Tata Neu Card, in partnership with SBI Card, reflects our vision and reaffirms our commitment to offer seamless, rewarding experiences to the modern Indian consumer. It brings together the power of trusted brands to deliver real value and reimagine how India experiences loyalty and credit."

Tata Neu SBI Card customers earn accelerated rewards on making purchases across Tata Neu mobile App, Tata Neu website, and on platforms of leading partner brands including, Air India & Air India Express, BigBasket, Croma, IHCL (Taj Hotels), Tata CLIQ, Tata IMG, Titan, Tanishq, Westside, and Qmin.

Additionally, the co-branded card enables customers to avail spend-based annual fee reversal upon reaching annual spends of INR 1 lakh on Tata Neu Plus SBI Card and INR 3 lakhs on Tata Neu Infinity SBI Card. The card also provides complimentary access to domestic and international airport lounges, adding to the premium experience.

Amazon India expands Smartchoice prog to tablets, simplifying purchase decisions

Kolkata : Amazon India on Wednesday announced the expansion of its Smartchoice program to tablets, following strong success in the laptop category.

The program simplifies device selection through expert-curated recommendations based on specific customer needs and usage preferences.

Tablets represent a high-growth category for Amazon India, with 26% year-over-year growth in 2024.

"The Smartchoice program, designed by working backward from customer needs, has significantly elevated the purchasing experience, earning exceptional feedback for its clarity and precision," said Zeba Khan, Director, Consumer Electronics, Amazon India.

Matix Group to foray into Industrial and Speciality Chemicals Manufacturing with more than Rs 2600 Cr investment

Kolkata : Nishant Kano-dia-promoted Matix Group is expanding its footprint in the industrial and speciality chemical manufacturing sector. The proposed product portfolio is based on a study initiated along with McKinsey and envisages a total investment of Rs. 2600 crores in this sector.

As part of its strategic initiative, Matix is set to establish Eastern India's first Iso-Propyl Alcohol (IPA) manufacturing plant with an annual planned capacity of 50 KTPA. IPA is a key industrial chemical widely used in pharmaceuticals and personal care products, and the new plant will significantly strengthen domestic supply.

The facility will be located within Matix's existing complex at Panagarh Industrial Park, West Bengal, which also houses its 1.27 MTPA urea plant. Slated for commissioning in FY2027, this investment reinforces Matix's commitment to In-

Poonawalla Fincorp launches Gold Loan business

Mumbai : (PFL), a Cyrus Poonawalla Group promoted NBFC has expanded its portfolio of secured lending products with the launch of its Gold Loan Business. This new offering provides a secure, fast, and transparent financing solution for individuals and businesses, catering to diverse financial needs such as business expansion, agriculture costs, and personal expenses.

With faster approvals in less than 30 minutes, minimal documentation, and multiple repayment options, customers can unlock the value of their gold without selling it - ensuring financial flexibility while preserving long-term wealth.

At launch, Mr. Arvind Kapil, MD & CEO, Poonawalla Fincorp, said, "Our gold loan of-

fering represents a natural progression in our secured lending portfolio, combining traditional value with modern convenience. We have designed this product with the customer journey at its core, respecting both the emotional and financial value of gold. At Poonawalla Fincorp, customer asset safety and transparency remains paramount, while delivering reliable and premium services."

Gold holds significant importance in Indian households as a reliable source of wealth and security, serving as a strategic asset for those needing quick access to funds. The gold loan market in India represents a substantial opportunity, with projections indicating robust growth over the next several years across both urban and rural markets.