



# Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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## Military conflict cannot resolve issues

### India, Finland back peace efforts in Ukraine and West Asia, says PM Modi

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India and Finland agree that military conflict alone cannot resolve global disputes and reiterated their support for efforts aimed at bringing peace to regions affected by war, including Ukraine and West Asia.

Addressing a joint press meet with Finnish President Alexander Stubb during his visit to India, Modi said both countries shared a commitment to dialogue, diplomacy and the rule of law while calling for an early end to ongoing conflicts.

"India and Finland both believe in the rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy. We agree that military conflict alone cannot resolve any issue," Modi said. "Whether it is Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support every effort aimed at bringing a swift end to the conflict and achieving peace."

Welcoming Stubb on his first

visit to India as Finland's President, Modi described him as "a well-known global leader" and "a respected thinker and author," adding that it was an honour for India that the Finnish leader was the chief guest at this year's Raisina Dialogue.

The Prime Minister said the world was currently passing through a period of instability and uncertainty, with conflicts continuing in several regions. "From Ukraine to West Asia, many parts of the world are witnessing conflict. In such a global environment, India and Europe, two major diplomatic powers, are entering a golden phase of their relationship," he said, adding that growing cooperation between the two sides was strengthening global stability, development and shared prosperity.

Highlighting economic ties, Modi referred to the recently concluded India-European union Free Trade Agreement earlier this

year, calling it a historic development that would further strengthen trade, investment and technology collaboration between India and Finland.

"At the beginning of 2026, a historic India-European union Free Trade Agreement was concluded. This agreement will further strengthen trade, investment and technology cooperation between India and Finland," he said.

The Prime Minister said the two countries were working to elevate bilateral ties into a future-oriented partnership focused on emerging technologies and sustainability. "We are shaping India-Finland relations into a strategic partnership in digitalisation and sustainability," Modi said. "This partnership will accelerate and energise our cooperation in several high-tech sectors, ranging from AI to 6G telecom, and from clean energy to quantum computing."

He also highlighted existing cooperation between the two countries in technology and infrastructure. Modi noted that



telecom equipment and mobile devices produced by Finnish company Nokia had connected millions of Indians, while Finnish architects had contributed to the construction of the world's highest railway bridge over the Chenab River. He added that Finland had partnered with India

in setting up the world's largest bamboo-to-bioethanol refinery at Numaligarh.

According to Modi,



cooperation between the two countries will also deepen in sectors such as defence, space, semiconductors and critical minerals. He said the partnership between two democratic and responsible countries would contribute to building trustworthy technology ecosystems and

resilient global supply chains.

The Prime Minister also announced a comprehensive Migration and Mobility Agreement aimed at strengthening links between the innovation ecosystems of the two countries and facilitating opportunities for students and skilled professionals. Finland, he said, was increasingly becoming a preferred destination for Indian students and talent.

"Finland is a role model in the field of education. Today we also agreed to expand cooperation in teacher training, school-to-school partnerships and research on the future of education," Modi said, adding that collaboration would span from schools to industry to strengthen human development.

Modi described Finland as an important partner for India in the Nordic region and said the two countries were expanding cooperation in Arctic and polar research. He also announced that India would host the World

Circular Economy Forum this year in partnership with Finland, which he said would generate new ideas and momentum for sustainability initiatives.

Referring to the growing global challenges, Modi emphasised the need for reforms in international institutions and collective efforts to address threats such as terrorism. "We also agree that reform of global institutions is not only necessary but urgent to address growing global challenges. Eliminating terrorism in all its forms is our shared commitment," he said.

In a lighter remark, Modi referred to Stubb's participation in the Ironman Triathlon and said the two countries could achieve a new "triathlon" of innovation, digitalisation and sustainability through their partnership.

"Let us begin a new golden chapter in this futuristic partnership between India and Finland," the Prime Minister said.

## Tenure of Nitish as Bihar CM will always be remembered : Amit Shah

**Patna:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah today said that tenure of Nitish Kumar as Bihar Chief Minister will always be remembered for his historic achievements in all sectors to accelerate pace of development of the state.

Shah, after Kumar filed his nomination paper for Rajya Sabha, said that he had historic achievements as Bihar Chief Minister during the last 20 years. Kumar had the credit to pull out Bihar from dark age of "Jungle Raj" that had prevailed during the RJD regime till 2005, he added.

"When Kumar had taken reins of the state, there were complete chaos in all sectors including road, electricity and law and order", the union Minister said adding that Kumar due to his sincere efforts and commitment to the interest of people of Bihar, succeeded in providing power

supply to all villages of the state. His government had also immensely improved in condition of roads both in urban and rural areas of Bihar, he pointed out.

Shah said that Kumar was the product of J movement and he had been true follower of ideology of veteran leader Jaiprakash Narayan. Throughout his long political career, he never compromised with his principles and remained committed to the ideology of Jaiprakash Narayan, he maintained.

"Image of Chief Minister Kumar has always been clean and no one raised any doubt over high integrity and honesty in his long political career", union Minister said adding that he had immensely contributed to Bihar and also the country while serving as CM of the state and union Minister.

Shah said it was heartening to note that Kumar had decided to shift his political activities to New Delhi again after a long period by becoming member of Rajya Sabha. BJP president Nitin Navin had also filed nomination paper for Rajya Sabha along with Kumar, and both would be welcomed for beginning the new responsibilities, he remarked.

As it is, after a high voltage drama, speculations and uncertainties since last evening on his going to Rajya Sabha, Chief Minister Kumar himself announced on social media X that he was going to Rajya Sabha.

Kumar along with four other NDA candidates including Nitin Naveen, Shivesh Kumar, Upendra Kushwaha and Ramnath Thakur had filed nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha elections in presence of Shah.

## Air India rejects claims of flying over restricted West Asia airspace, clarifies safety protocols

**New Delhi:** Amid heightened tensions in West Asia and discussions on social media, Air India has issued a clarification dismissing claims that its flights operated over restricted airspace in the region.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, the airline termed the circulating reports as "incorrect" and described them as fake news, stating that they do not reflect the airline's actual flight operations or safety procedures.

Air India said it does not operate flights over any restricted airspace. The

airline explained that all flight routes are planned using real-time intelligence, global aviation advisories and continuous monitoring to ensure every journey remains safe, compliant and reliable.

According to the airline, these operational decisions underline its commitment to prioritising the safety and security of passengers and crew above everything else.

Earlier, Air India had said it was closely monitoring the evolving situation in West Asia and had started operating a few flights to and from Dubai

and Jeddah to bring back stranded passengers, giving highest priority to their safety and wellbeing.

The airline said most of

However, Air India plans to resume scheduled operations to and from Jeddah from March 5.

These include flights



its operations to West Asia would remain suspended till 11:59 pm IST on March 5, 2026, after careful assessment of the situation.

AI2255/2256 on the Delhi-Jeddah-Delhi route, AI2251/2252 on the Mumbai-Jeddah-Mumbai route, and AI2245/2246 on

the Mumbai-Jeddah-Mumbai route.

In addition, Air India has planned to operate an extra service, flight AI1909D/996D, early on March 5 on the Mumbai-Dubai-Delhi route using a larger capacity Boeing 777 aircraft to bring back stranded passengers.

Air India expressed regret for the inconvenience caused to passengers due to the suspension of flights to West Asia and said it remains committed to assisting affected travellers with alternative arrangements, full refunds or complimentary rescheduling options.



## Amid speculation, Nitish Kumar expresses desire to enter Rajya Sabha

**Patna:** Amid growing political speculation about his possible move to the Rajya Sabha, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday expressed his desire to become a member of the Rajya Sabha in the upcoming election.

In a message shared on social media account X, Kumar said that for more than two decades, people have consistently placed their trust and

support in him, which enabled him to serve Bihar with dedication. He said that the faith of the people has been the driving force behind the state's progress and growing sense of dignity.

The Chief Minister said in the message that it had been his long-standing wish since the beginning of his parliamentary career to become a member of both Houses of the Bihar

Legislature as well as both Houses of Parliament. In this context, he indicated that he now wishes to enter Rajya Sabha in the election being held this time.

Kumar also reassured the people that his relationship with them would remain strong in the future as well. He said he would continue to work with them towards the goal of building a developed Bihar.

He further stated that the new government that will be formed in the state will receive his full cooperation and guidance.

As it is, Kumar's statement comes at a time when political circles in Bihar are abuzz with speculation about a possible shift in his political role, particularly in connection with the forthcoming Rajya Sabha elections.

## Nepal holds high-stakes poll after Gen-Z protests ousted Oli

**Kathmandu / New Delhi:** Polling for Nepal's parliament which began at 7 am Thursday, the first since a Gen-Z revolt last September that unseated the government of former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, ended after a "largely peaceful, and enthusiastic" round of voting this evening.

Election officers estimated that more than 60 per cent of the 18 million strong electorate had voted in the elections. Those still in queues at polling centres by the deadline hour of 5 pm, will be allowed to cast their votes, Ram Prasad Bhandari, acting Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal said.

"From preliminary reports around 60 per cent voter turnout has been recorded, which could increase a little after final reports come in," officials said. Polling stations opened early across the Himalayan nation, with voters lining up in several districts amid high expectations of political change and heavy deployment of security personnel.

Authorities said nearly 1.5 lakh personnel drawn from Nepal's Army, Police and Armed Police Force units were stationed

across sensitive constituencies to ensure peaceful voting.

Besides trucks, and porters, Nepal has used helicopters to send out voting materials to the Himalayan state's mountainous regions, home to eight of the world's ten highest peaks, including Mount Everest, and these "choppers are now being used to retrieve ballot boxes from remote areas," said officials.

Election officials say vote counting should be completed within 24 hours. "I see this as one of the best managed elections in Nepal," said Kuvera Chalise, Consulting Editor of Nepalkhabar.

"There was normal polling in most places, barring the odd incident ... however two remote villages Dang in western Nepal and Okhaldhuna near Tatapani boycotted the elections because they felt no party had acknowledged their demands for connectivity and other welfare facilities," Chalise, a prominent political analyst told UNI.

Voters are directly electing 165 members to the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of Parliament. The remaining 110 seats in the 275-member body will be

allocated through a proportional representation system under which political parties nominate lawmakers based on their share of the vote.



The elections are widely seen as a three-way contest between the newly formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by former rapper Balendra Shah, and established political forces including KP Sharma Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML), the Nepali Communist Party and the centrist Nepali Congress, led by 49-year-old Gagan Thapa.

All three prime-ministerial hopefuls are interestingly

contesting seats in Nepal's flatland Terai region which borders India, marking a shift from past elections where Prime Ministerial fights centred on the

political moment for Nepal following the September revolt led largely by Gen-Z protesters and student groups, which triggered weeks of demonstrations and eventually forced Oli's government from power.

"At the heart of last year's protests was widespread frustration over chronic economic stagnation and a growing army of jobless youths," pointed out KC Sunil, President of NICCI, a chamber of commerce.

Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries, struggles with the South Asian region's lowest per capita income and an unemployment rate approaching 13 per cent, according to official estimates.

The economic hardship has been compounded by deep-seated corruption among political elites and a heavy reliance on remittances from a large segment of the population who have been forced to work abroad in search of opportunities.

The Himalayan nation has a fairly young population with the male median age at 22 years and with 34 per cent of population still aged below 14. Much of the campaigning for all parties was

done by young workers, with the older generation taking a backseat. However, this did not result in the kind of political clashes that some analysts had feared may come up.

"Polling may have been lower than expected as some people feared violence, but luckily that did not happen," said Chalise. Added a young researcher at a Kathmandu based think tank, Shreyasi Rana, "People have been enthusiastic ... (but) The polling has gone very smoothly."

Nepal's youth will be looking for answers to their problems of few jobs at home, compounded by corruption and political drift in Thursday's elections. "We see RSP doing well as also the Nepal Congress with both emerging as two big pillars in the next parliament. Who will be the largest party will of course be clear by tomorrow afternoon," said Chalise.

The polls were overseen by the interim government led by former chief justice Sushila Kharki, which most analysts give credit for conducting a successful election and running the country smoothly, without any breakdown in law and order or major mishaps for six months.

Shah, who is believed popular among younger voters, particularly after anti-corruption protests last September that targeted Oli's administration and eventually toppled the government, was among those voted early. His campaign has featured his own rap music, often sharply critical of Nepal's political elite.

Now a member of the Rashtriya Swatantra Party, Shah is widely seen as a leading contender for the prime minister's post. His race against Oli in Jhapa 5 symbolises a broader clash between Nepal's entrenched political establishment and a rising generation of leaders.

A man who usually avoids the press, after voting today, Shah again declined to answer questions from the press. Analysts say the RSP could have an advantage in the elections just concluded, given Nepal's youthful demographic profile and the momentum generated by last year's protest movement. However, many also expect the elections to produce a fractured mandate, making it likely that a coalition government will have to be formed once results are declared.



## KTR alleges 'conspiracy' behind Musi project, warns against demolition of poor people's houses

**Hyderabad:** Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao on Thursday inspected areas along the Musi River that were developed during the previous BRS government and interacted with families who claim they may lose their homes under the Congress government's proposed Musi development plan.

Speaking to the media after the visit, KTR said the Musi river could be beautified without demolishing houses or displacing poor families.

He stated that during the BRS regime the riverfront was developed in areas such as Nagole without damaging a single house.

Alleging that the present government was plan-



ning large-scale demolitions, KTR claimed that nearly 1.5 lakh houses were under threat in the name of the Musi project. He accused the Congress govern-

ment of marking houses with red signs and creating fear among residents living along the river.

KTR further alleged that the project cost was be-

ing inflated from Rs 16,000 crore to around Rs 1.5 lakh crore and warned of a possible large-scale corruption attempt in the name of river development. "Musi is not

beautification... it is turning into lutefication," he remarked.

The BRS leader said his party supports the development of the Musi but strongly opposes the demolition of houses belonging to the poor. He warned that the party would resist any attempt to use bulldozers on people's homes and said the issue would be raised in the Assembly.

KTR also alleged that the government was preparing to proceed with demolitions without a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and criticised the Congress for failing to reassure affected families. "If corruption is carried out by demolishing the houses of the poor, we will definitely stop it," he said.

## Mamata assures Matua community of protection amid voter list concerns on Boroma's death anniversary

**Kolkata:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday, on the death anniversary of Binapa-

ni Devi, popularly known as Boroma, assured the Matua community that her government would not allow any

injustice against them.

and would fight attempts to deprive them of their rights.

## Nitish files nomination for Rajya Sabha, ending speculation

**Patna:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday filed his nomination papers for the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha, putting an end to speculation about whether he would step down from the chief minister's post to enter Parliament as a member of the Upper House. The development had sparked political discussion in recent days, with several observers speculating that Kumar might shift to national politics. However, his decision to file the nomination while continuing as chief minister clarified that he would remain actively involved in the state's governance. Along with Kumar, several leaders from the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) also submitted their nominations for the Rajya Sabha elections from Bihar. The candidates included JD(U) leader and sitting Rajya Sabha member Ramnath Thakur, Bihar BJP president Nitin Nabin, BJP leader Shivesh Kumar and Upendra Kushwaha. The NDA leaders arrived together at the Bihar Legislative Assembly complex in Patna to complete the nomination process. The event was marked by the presence of several senior leaders from the alliance, reflecting the importance the coalition attaches to the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also accompanied the candidates during the filing of nominations. His presence underscored the BJP's strong support for the NDA candidates in Bihar and highlighted the coordination within the alliance. After reaching the assembly premises, Kumar and the other candidates completed the required procedural formalities before submitting their nomination papers to the returning officer. Following the completion of documentation and verification steps, Kumar and the four other NDA nominees officially filed their papers to contest the Rajya Sabha elections from the state. The biennial Rajya Sabha elections are being held as the terms of several sitting members from Bihar are set to expire next month.

## Karnataka heading for bankruptcy due to Congress guarantees: Vijayendra

**Hubballi:** Karnataka BJP president B. Y. Vijayendra on Thursday alleged that the Congress government in the state was facing a severe financial crisis and struggling to mobilise adequate resources to fulfil its poll promises, particularly the five guarantee schemes announced ahead of the assembly elections. He claimed that the financial burden of these schemes had pushed the state government into a difficult fiscal position. Targeting the government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Vi-



jayendra said the repeated increase in the prices of fuel, essential commodities and electricity reflected the financial strain faced by the administration. According to him, the government's inability to generate addition-

al revenue had forced it to resort to price hikes affecting the common public. Speaking to reporters in Hubballi-Dharwad, Vijayendra said the Congress government was finding it increasingly difficult to

meet the commitments it had made to the people during the election campaign. He argued that the ruling party had made ambitious promises without clearly outlining sustainable financial plans to support them.

"The Congress government headed by CM Siddaramaiah is unable to raise the resources to fulfil its promises, that is, the five guarantees. Because of this, over the last three years, the chief minister has repeatedly gone back to price hikes," Vijayendra said while addressing the media.

## Partial curbs continue in parts of Kashmir for fourth day over Khamenei killing protests

**Srinagar:** Partial restrictions on the movement of people and public assembly continued in several parts of Kashmir for the fourth consecutive day on Thursday as authorities sought to prevent further protests over the reported killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

The curbs were imposed on Monday, a day after large protests erupted in various areas of the Kashmir Valley following reports that Khamenei had been killed in joint strikes carried out by the United States and Israel. The demonstrations drew hundreds of people in several locations, prompting the administration to impose restrictions to maintain law and order.

Officials said that while the restrictions were not a complete lockdown, movement in sensitive areas was being regulated to prevent large gatherings and possible clashes between protesters and security forces.

Despite these measures, sporadic protests have been reported from different localities over the past three days.

In some places, small groups of demonstrators assembled to express their anger over the developments, raising slogans and calling for protests.

Minor clashes be-

tween protesters and security personnel were also reported during this period. According to officials, several individuals sustained injuries during these confrontations, including a few members of the security forces deployed in the region.

Authorities said that partial restrictions remained in place in certain sensitive areas on Thursday as a precautionary measure. Security officials are closely monitoring the situation to ensure that protests do not escalate into widespread unrest.

Mobile internet services also continue to remain temporarily suspended in parts of the Valley. Officials said the step was taken to prevent the spread of rumours and inflammatory content on social media that could potentially trigger further protests.

A heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces has been maintained in many parts of Kashmir. Personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force have been stationed in several key locations to assist the local police in maintaining order.

In Srinagar, the city's commercial hub at Lal Chowk remained heavily barricaded and largely inaccessible to the public.

## Minor apprehended within 36 hours in birthday party firing case in Lucknow

**Lucknow:** In a swift breakthrough, the Uttar Pradesh Police have solved a firing incident that occurred during a birthday party within 36 hours of the crime by taking a minor into protective custody.

The minor in conflict with the law has been sent to a juvenile reform home today. According to official information, on March 3, a written complaint was filed by Jamir Khan, a resident of Behsa village under Amsausi Airport area in Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow. Based on the complaint, a case (Crime No. 100/2026) was registered at Krishnanagar Police Station under relevant sections 103(1), 351(2), and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Considering the serious-

ness of the incident, two police teams were immediately constituted under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) and the supervision of senior officers including the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police and the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Krishnanagar.

The teams conducted a thorough inspection of the crime scene with the assistance of forensic experts. Electronic evidence and other physical clues were carefully collected and preserved.

Based on electronic evidence, detailed investigation, and technical analysis, the police identified and apprehended a minor involved in the incident to-

day. After completing the necessary legal formalities, the minor was produced before the competent authority and subsequently sent to a juvenile reform home for further proceedings. Further investigation in the matter is ongoing. It may be mentioned that a 13-year-old boy died after being shot during a birthday gathering in Lucknow on Monday. Police have registered a case in connection with the incident on Tuesday. The accused is reportedly a minor and said to be related to Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brijesh Pathak. The accused minor went to pick up his friend, identified as Unaiz, from his home around 3:30 pm to celebrate his birthday.

## Briefs :

**Delhi Traffic Police issues 4,929 challans in Holi Special Drive; CP reviewed security arrangements**

**New Delhi :** Delhi Traffic Police carried out a strict special drive during the Holi festival to ensure road safety in the national capital. A total of 4,929 challans were issued, including 1,204 for drunk driving and 3,725 for other traffic rule violations. Range-wise, Western Range recorded 969 challans, Northern Range 760, Eastern Range 854, Southern Range 857, and Central Range 884 during the enforcement drive. Satish Golchha, the Delhi Police Commissioner, also reviewed security and law and order arrangements across the city. He interacted with police personnel and distributed sweets, boosting morale and the festive spirit. A senior police official said the Delhi Police remains committed to ensuring a safe, secure, and joyful Holi for all residents of the capital.

**Triple-vehicle collision kills scooty rider**

**New Delhi :** A 30-year-old scooty rider lost his life in a tragic road accident involving a car and a bus near Uttam Nagar West Metro Station in west Delhi, police said on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Daksh (30), a resident of Uttam Nagar. According to police, a PCR call was received reporting a fatal accident near the metro station, under the jurisdiction of Uttam Nagar police station. Based on the information, a team rushed to the spot and found three vehicles – a car, a bus, and a scooty – in accidental condition, an official said. Initial investigation revealed that a car had been stopped on the left side of the road after a passenger requested the driver to halt, as he was feeling unwell and needed to use a washroom.

**ED arrests 2 CAs including one who 'assaulted' its search team in 2024**

**New Delhi:** Two chartered accountants (CAs), including one who is alleged to have assaulted Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials during a raid here in 2024, have been arrested by the federal probe agency after they surrendered before a court. Ashok Kumar Sharma and Bhaskar Yadav were taken into custody on February 28, the Enforcement Directorate said in a statement on Thursday. The two were "absconding" in a money laundering case linked to an alleged cyber fraud. The alleged fraud was perpetrated against innocent people across the country who were induced to transfer funds on the pretext of investment opportunities, part-time job schemes, QR code-based scams and phishing operations. The ED had raided the premises of Sharma in Bijwasan area of Delhi apart from that of Yadav on November 28, 2024. During the raid, Sharma fled from the premises after allegedly assaulting ED officials, the agency said. The ED had registered an assault case with the local police station at Kapashera. Yadav too "absconded" from his residence after he learnt that ED officials had reached his premises to conduct a search, the agency said. The anticipatory bail pleas of the two were rejected by a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court and the Delhi High Court. The Supreme Court, on February 18, dismissed a special leave petition filed by Yadav and directed him to surrender before the concerned court. The ED said it arrested the two after they surrendered. The agency has quantified the alleged proceeds of crime in this case at Rs 641 crore.

## Delhi to get country's first 'Ring Metro'; PM Modi to launch new corridors on March 8

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several important projects in Delhi on March 8. As part of the programme, two new corridors of the Delhi Metro - Majlis Park to Maujpur-Babarpur (Pink Line) and Deepali Chowk to Majlis Park (Magenta Line) will be inaugurated.

In addition, the foundation stone for three new corridors under Delhi Metro Phase V(A) will also be laid. The total cost of these metro projects exceeds Rs 18,300 crore and they are expected to further strengthen public transport in Delhi.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, while providing detailed information about the projects, said that these initiatives will play an important role in transforming the national capital into a truly Viksit Delhi.

"The expansion of the metro network will improve public transport, make daily travel easier for citizens, reduce the number of vehicles on the roads and help control pollution," she said.

She informed that the programme will be held at DDA Utsav Sthal-3 (in front of Nirankari Mandir). Gupta said that the Majlis Park to Maujpur-Babarpur section is 12.3 kilometres long and includes eight elevated stations. This corridor forms part of the already operational Majlis Park-Shiv Vihar Pink Line. With the addition of this section, the total length of the Pink Line will



increase to approximately 71.56 kilometres, making Delhi home to the country's first fully operational Ring Metro.

Stations on this corridor will include Majlis Park, Burari, Jharoda Majra, Jagatpur-Wazirabad, Soorghat, Nanaksar-Sonia Vihar, Khajuri Khas, Bhajanpura, Yamuna Vihar and Maujpur-Babarpur.

CM further stated that the Deepali Chowk to Majlis Park corridor forms part of the Magenta Line, with a length of 9.92 kilometres and seven elevated stations.

This corridor is an extension of the already operational Botanical Garden-Krishna Park Extension Magenta Line. With its addition, the total length of the Magenta Line will increase to around 49 kilometres.

Stations on this section will include Deepali Chowk, Madhuban Chowk, Uttar Pitampura-Prashant Vihar, Haiderpur Village, Haiderpur Badli Mor, Bhalswa and Majlis Park. Gupta added that these metro corridors are also significant achievements from an engineering perspective. A portion of the

Deepali Chowk-Majlis Park corridor reaches a height of approximately 28.36 metres, making it one of the highest elevated sections in the Delhi Metro network.

Construction of the Majlis Park-Maujpur-Babarpur corridor required the building of a new bridge over the Yamuna River and a double-decker viaduct, integrating both a metro track and a road flyover. This bridge will be the fifth Delhi Metro bridge across the Yamuna River.

CM Gupta stated that the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for three new corridors under Delhi Metro Phase-V (A), which will further ease travel for residents of the capital.

These include the Central Vista Corridor from Ramakrishna Ashram Marg to Indraprastha, the Golden Line extension from Aerocity to Indira Gandhi Domestic Airport Terminal-1, and the Golden Line extension from Tughlakabad to Kalindi Kunj. The Central Vista Corridor, from Ramakrishna Ashram Marg to Indraprastha, will be 9.913 kilometres long and constructed underground.

It will include nine new stations: R.K. Ashram Marg (under construction), Shivaji Stadium, Yuge-Yugeen Bharat, Central Secretariat, Kartavya Bhavan, India Gate, War Memorial-High Court, Baroda House, Bharat Mandapam and Indraprastha.

This corridor will provide metro connectivity to important locations such as Kartavya Bhavans, Bharat Mandapam and the Yuge-Yugeen Bharat Museum.

The Golden Line extension from Aerocity to IGD Airport Terminal-1 will be 2.263 kilometres long and constructed underground. It will include one new station and connect two already operational stations.

The Golden Line extension from Tughlakabad to Kalindi Kunj will be 3.9 kilometres long and will be an elevated corridor. Stations on this route will include Sarita Vihar Depot, Madanpur Khadar and Kalindi Kunj.

CM added that these projects will also benefit cities across the National Capital Region (NCR). Residents of Faridabad and Ballabhgarh will be able to reach Tughlakabad via the Violet Line and then travel directly to IGD Airport Terminal-1 through the Golden Line.

Similarly, passengers from Noida will be able to reach Kalindi Kunj through the Magenta Line and then travel conveniently to the airport and various parts of South Delhi through the Golden Line.

## AAP challenges BJP to live-stream Kejriwal's appearance before Delhi Assembly Privileges Committee

**New Delhi:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday said the BJP-led Delhi government should live-stream the proceedings when former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appears before the Delhi Assembly's Privileges Committee on Friday, saying the public should be able to see the hearing.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Atishi, said that if the BJP government has nothing to hide, it should broadcast the entire hearing publicly. According to her, such a move would allow people to see the issues being discussed and the government's approach.

The Privileges Committee has summoned Kejriwal in connection with remarks related to an alleged British-era gallows in the Delhi Assembly complex.

The issue relates to a chamber that was discovered during renovation work in the Assembly building during the previous AAP government.

Speaking at a press conference along with AAP MLA Sanjeev Jha, Atishi said that during the renovation of the Assembly complex, when Ram Niwas Goel was Speaker, certain sealed rooms were opened.

She said a passage and a chamber were discovered where ropes, glass pellets, and some old clothes and shoes were found.

Atishi said that the Assembly building had func-



tioned as a magistrate's court during British rule and that the items discovered led to speculation that the site might have been used for executions of freedom fighters. The previous AAP government had opened the location to the public and described it as a gallows site linked to the freedom struggle.

However, the BJP government has disputed this claim, saying available records and building plans describe the chamber as a "tiffin room".

Atishi criticised the government's position and questioned why the chamber would have been sealed and connected by a tunnel if it was only a dining area.

She also accused the BJP of focusing political attention on the issue instead of addressing civic concerns such

as pollution, water supply, roads, and school fees.

Atishi said that if the hearing before the Privileges Committee is broadcast live, the public will be able to see how the discussion unfolds and what issues were being raised.

AAP MLA Sanjeev Jha also criticised the BJP government and said that historical events from the colonial period are not always fully recorded in official documents.

He cited examples of locations linked to the freedom movement whose histories are known through testimonies or later research rather than formal British records.

Jha said the chamber discovered in the Assembly complex had been locked for years and was opened during an inspection in 2022.

## Delhi Police ensures smooth Holi celebrations; Commissioner Golchha visits duty points

**New Delhi :** Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golchha personally visited several duty points across the city during the Holi festival to review police deployment and interact with officers and personnel on duty, an official said on Thursday.

During his rounds, Golchha extended Holi greetings to the staff, exchanged pleasantries, and appreciated their dedication to maintaining public safety while performing duties away from their families.

He also motivated personnel, boosting morale as they ensured smooth celebrations across the capital.

Adequate security arrangements were put in place to ensure that Holi festivities were conducted peacefully.

Intensive patrolling and multiple checking pickets were established across the city, with personnel from District Police, Traffic Police, and PCR deployed to curb unruly behavior and prevent dangerous driving.

Special emphasis was placed on public safety, with a significant number of women police officers deployed at key locations.

CP Golchha visited personnel at Connaught Place, Lajpat Nagar Market, South Extension, Pankha Road,

Dabri, Vikasपुरi, Peera Garhi Chowk, Prashant Vihar, Rohini Mukarba Chowk, Kingsway Camp, ISBT Kashmere Gate, Welcome Metro Station, Shyamal College, Laxmi Nagar, and W-Point ITO.

During these visits, he distributed sweets among staff and acknowledged their efforts in ensuring law and order during the festival.

The Commissioner was accompanied by Spl CsP Law & Order, Jt CsP Ranges, Addl CsP.

And DCsP Districts, who joined him in visiting duty points within their respective jurisdictions.

## AAP questions PM's silence on US-Iran conflict, raises concerns over India's energy security

**New Delhi:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran, expressing concern over its potential implications for India's energy security and foreign policy priorities.

Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia said the Prime Minister should clearly outline the government's position at a time when escalating global tensions could disrupt oil supplies and impact regional stability.

In a statement shared on

social media, Sisodia said India had recently entered into a trade understanding with the United States under which, he claimed, New Delhi agreed to restrict imports of crude oil from Russia.

He noted that India remains heavily dependent on imported energy resources, and any decision affecting supply diversification could influence fuel prices, availability, and long-term energy security.

Sisodia further stated that hostilities between the United States and Iran intensified soon after these developments.

## Present evidence before committee, not media: Delhi Speaker writes to Atishi

**New Delhi:** Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta has written to Leader of Opposition and AAP leader Atishi cautioning her over remarks made in the media regarding the alleged "Faansi Ghar" issue related to the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

In a formal letter issued by the Delhi Legislative Assembly Secretariat on Thursday, the Speaker said statements made by Atishi during a recent press briefing questioning the summons issued to certain leaders by the Assembly's Committee of Privileges were "unwarranted" and could undermine the independent functioning of the committee. Referring to Atishi's claim that a "Faansi Ghar" existed inside the Assembly premises, Gupta said that if any such evidence ex-



ists, it should be presented before the Committee of Privileges rather than being raised in the media.

He asked her to advise Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Ram Niwas Goel and Rakesh Birla to submit proof of the allegation during their appearance before the committee.

The Speaker noted that the leaders had been sum-

moned precisely for this purpose so that the committee could examine the matter in accordance with legislative procedures.

Gupta also said that as a responsible member of the Assembly and the Leader of Opposition, Atishi should avoid making remarks or casting aspersions on an issue that is currently under consideration by a House

committee.

He stressed that the Assembly and its committees function independently and should not be influenced by political statements made outside the House.

Expressing disappointment over the remarks, the Speaker advised the Leader of Opposition to refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations that could defame the Assembly committees for political gains.

He said it was his duty as Speaker to safeguard the dignity and integrity of the House. The development comes ahead of the scheduled appearance of the Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and others before the Privileges Committee on March 6 as part of the ongoing inquiry into the matter.

## Man arrested, 7 juveniles taken into custody for murder of teen

**New Delhi:** A 28-year-old man was arrested by police along with seven juveniles who were apprehended for their alleged involvement in the murder case of a teenager in Delhi's Model Town, an official said on Thursday.

According to the police, the accused, Mohit Pal, a resident of Jahangirpuri, is believed to be the key conspirator behind the murder of 18-year-old Is-hant.

"The matter came to light on February 22 after police were informed about an injured man near the main gate of MCD Colony in Azadpur," a senior officer said.

A police team found the youth lying in a pool of blood with gunshot wounds.

A scooter and a motorcycle without a number plate were also found abandoned at the spot.

Pal was rushed to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial (BJRM) Hospital, where the attending doctors declared him brought dead.

While examining the crime scene, the forensic teams found seven empty cartridges, four live cartridges, blood-stained exhibits, and a metallic fragment, which were confiscated.

"The two vehicles were also seized for further investigation," the officer added.

## Delhi Health Minister directs DGHS to ensure priority treatment for EWS patients in private hospitals

**New Delhi :** Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh has directed the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to ensure strict compliance with provisions related to free treatment for patients belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in identified private hospitals across the capital.

Singh instructed the DGHS to maintain close monitoring of hospitals to ensure that eligible EWS patients are receiving timely and appropriate treatment.

He emphasised that hos-

pitals must adhere to the mandated norms and that any lapse in providing treatment to EWS patients will lead to strict action.

Health minister further stated that he will personally inspect hospitals, if required, to review records and verify that EWS patients are receiving timely and appropriate medical care.

"We will ensure strict monitoring of hospitals to verify that EWS patients are receiving timely treatment as mandated. If required, I will personally inspect hospitals and review their records to

ensure full compliance," Singh said.

An official data shows that during February 2025 to January 2026 a total of 8,74,867 patients received OPD treatment and 57,102 patients received IPD treatment free of cost under the EWS category in identified private hospitals in Delhi.

Earlier, in April 2024 to January 2025 7,23,271 patients received OPD treatment while 41,900 patients received IPD treatments under the EWS category.

Currently, 56 identified private hospitals in Delhi are

mandated to provide 25 per cent of OPD services and 10 per cent of IPD beds free of cost to patients belonging to the EWS category. The income eligibility criteria to avail free treatment under the EWS category has also been enhanced from Rs 2.2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh annually, enabling more economically vulnerable families to benefit from the scheme. To strengthen transparency and accessibility, an online portal has been made live to check the real-time bed occupancy status for EWS patients in identified private hospitals.

## Editorial

### Gulf War and the 'ordeal' of the economy

The horrific repercussions of the war that has broken out across West Asia after the US and Israel's brutal military attack on Iran are no longer limited to the borders. While missiles are raining down on the battlefield, the global economy and trade have been disrupted. Iran's retaliatory attacks on the Gulf countries that have American military bases for its defense and resistance have cast a shadow of instability over the entire region. The restrictions on air travel and threats to waterways have completely disrupted the global supply chain. The current era is one of globalization, where every country depends on each other for fuel, food, technology and raw materials. In such a situation, when the scope of the war increases, it is inevitable that an emerging economy like India will be hit hard. This is not just a war between two countries, it is a blow to the economic pulse of the modern world, the consequences of which have now reached the doorsteps of the common citizen and the farmers.

This war has come as a major crisis for an agricultural state like Maharashtra. The condition of onion and grape farmers, who contribute a large share of exports to the state's economy, has become very miserable. Onions, which are exported in large quantities to Dubai and other Gulf countries, are now stuck in the JNPT port. With more than 150 containers lying at the port and water transport being disrupted, export routes have been closed. As the month of Ramadan is currently underway in the Gulf countries, there is a huge demand for fruits like pomegranates, bananas, dragon fruit and watermelon during this period. However, this opportunity seems to be slipping away due to the war. Sangli's world-famous grapes are capturing the Gulf markets via Dubai, but shocking information has come to light that 3900 tons of grapes are currently lying at the port. The goods picked for export are now rotting in cold storage or are being sold at a low price in the local market. The financial risk taken by farmers and traders has now paid off, and they are suffering huge financial losses due to the fall in market prices. Not only fruits, but also exports of basmati rice, sugar, tea and coffee have been hit hard. Iran is a major customer of India's basmati rice, but the trade chain has been disrupted due to the closure of air and sea transport. According to the Maharashtra State Cooperative Sugar Association, exporting sugar to the Gulf countries has become impossible at present. A situation has arisen in global politics where 'Trump's mind is in order, no one can do anything there'. The attempt by US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to subdue Iran seems to be failing. Although Iran's military capabilities are inferior to those of the US or Israel, the covert support it receives from countries like North Korea and its geographical location make the possibility of a quick end to this war slim. The grim truth is that as long as this conflict continues, this dark shadow on global trade will not disappear.

The biggest and most direct consequence of this war is the fuel crisis. West Asia or the Gulf countries are the world's energy hubs. OPEC member countries like Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar control the global oil prices. If oil wells and oil tankers are targeted due to the war, it is inevitable that the prices of petrol and diesel will increase sharply. Although Indian oil companies are currently said to have enough reserves to last a few months, if the war lasts longer, India will have to turn to new and expensive alternatives for fuel. The Trump administration has already imposed tariffs and conditions on the supply of cheap oil from Russia. Since India is not self-sufficient in fuel even today, instability in the Gulf countries will directly feed into its domestic inflation. It will not be easy for the Indian economy, which runs on fuel, to absorb these shocks, so it has become a matter of order for the government to make alternative sources of energy and long-term provisions from now on.

Along with trade, domestic industries are also likely to be hit hard by the war. Pune, the industrial hub of Maharashtra, is in the shadow of this war. A survey conducted by the 'Maratha Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture' has revealed that as many as 47 percent of industries in Pune will be directly affected by this war. Of these, 21 percent will face a severe economic impact, while 25 percent will be mildly affected. Although these figures are only for Pune, this will have an adverse impact on industrial production and exports across the country. Due to shortage of raw materials and obstacles in the export of finished goods, production costs will increase, hitting the profits of industries. To survive in such a difficult situation, the Indian industry will now have to be flexible in its policies and explore new markets. One of the great strengths of the Indian economy is its inherent flexibility. We have successfully faced global recessions, regional wars and the aggressive policies of superpowers in the past. Even during the Russia-Ukraine war, India maintained its economic momentum. However, this war in the Gulf is closer to India's geographical and economic interests. The trade cycle, which was already disrupted by Trump's tariff policies, has been further disrupted by this war. This crisis is not only India's but also global, but for India, the challenge is twofold because we have to fight on both the fronts of farmers and entrepreneurs. Even though the clouds of this war have darkened the atmosphere, we will have to find a way out of this crisis by following strategic diplomacy and economic discipline. After all, victory in a war is not only determined on the battlefield, but also depends on the country's economic resilience. As much as peace in the Gulf is necessary for the global economy, it is also necessary for the Indian farmers to get the price of their hard work. In such difficult times, the big challenge for the government will be to provide not only fuel, but also alternative markets for agricultural products. I am confident that India, which has survived the waves of the global recession, will overcome this war-like situation; But for that, meticulous planning and tough economic decisions will have to be made from now on. This war has once again demonstrated that peace is not just a humanitarian issue, but the backbone of the world's economy and its core.

## Advancing Self-Reliance and Export Resilience: India's Growing Global Footprint

In the post-pandemic period, India has emerged as a fast-growing major economy, leveraging domestic strengths to navigate global uncertainties. The Economic Survey 2025-26 notes that India's growth rates are "the envy of the world," backed by healthy banking system, credit intermediation, ample foreign reserves and a comfortable current account balance.

The global trade landscape has been undergoing adjustments as reflected in UNCTAD Trade Policy Uncertainty (TPU) Index and the Global Economic Policy Uncertainty (GPEU) Index in April 2025. At the same time, these developments have accelerated India's efforts to strengthen resilient supply chains, expand diversified trade and investment partnerships worldwide.

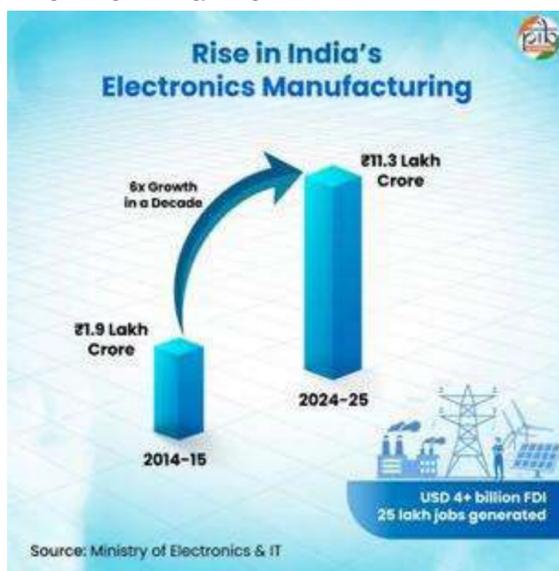
Against this backdrop, India has been able to pursue targeted import substitution in critical sectors, pairing it with an export-oriented approach to stay competitive over the long run.

**Manufacturing Renaissance: Building Domestic Capabilities**

India's quest for import substitution is powered by themes of swadeshi and atmanirbharta and has translated into targeted policies across industries. The government has focused on sector-specific incentives, investments, and reforms in scaling domestic manufacturing capabilities. Over the past decade, bold reforms and visionary policies like Make in India initiative and Production-Linked Initiatives have transformed the country into a global manufacturing hub. The Union Budget 2026-27 places a sharp focus on scaling domestic manufacturing in strategic and labour-intensive sectors, thereby strengthening export competitiveness and reducing critical import dependence. The Government announced a wide range of measures spanning the services sector, manufacturing, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), infrastructure, ease of doing business, and sector-specific reforms.

Flagship initiatives include Bipharma SHAKTI, the launch of India Semiconductor Mission 2.0, expansion of the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme, development of Rare Earth Corridors, establishment of Chemical Parks, and targeted support for capital goods and container manufacturing.

It proposes facilitation measures to enable customs duty reductions on aviation parts, lithium-ion cell manufacturing, and parts for defence and civil aviation that will help to lower manufacturing costs for engineering sub-segments such as aerospace components, electronics engineering, and energy storage



hardware. A direct outcome of the import substitution efforts is clearly visible in the striking performance of India's electronics manufacturing. With a target of building a \$500 billion domestic electronics ecosystem by 2030-31, India is now firmly on track to become a global leader in electronic design, manufacturing, and exports. Electronics production in India rose from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ₹11.3 lakh crore in 2024-25, nearly a six-fold increase. India has attracted over USD 4 billion in FDI in electronics manufacturing since 2020-21, reflecting rising global investor confidence. The electronics manufacturing sector has generated around 25 lakh jobs in India over the last ten years. Today, India is one of the world's fastest-growing electronics manufacturers, particularly in mobile phones. India has now achieved near self-reliance in mobile production, moving from importing most of its requirements a decade ago to manufacturing almost all devices domestically.



Production in the mobile manufacturing segment has increased from ₹18,000 crore in 2014-15 to ₹5.45 lakh crore in 2024-25, a 28-fold rise.

India is now the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer, with more than 300 manufacturing units operating today compared to just two units in 2014.

A similar thrust is visible in other high-value sectors. Semiconductors and electronics components are critical areas where import substitution is strategically important, as seen during global chip shortages. Acknowledging this, Budget 2026-27 announced the launch of India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 to produce equipment and materials, design full stack Indian IP, and fortify supply chains, alongside expanding the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme with an increased outlay of ₹40,000 crore.

In August 2025, India inaugurated one of its first end-to-end OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) facilities in Sanaad, Gujarat, strengthening the Atmanirbhar Bharat push in semiconductors. Earlier, in May 2025, two state-of-the-art semiconductor design facilities were inaugurated to focus on advanced 3-nanometer chip design, marking a significant milestone in the nation's semiconductor innovation journey.

India has also approved 10 semiconductor projects across six states, including its first commercial Silicon Carbide fab in Odisha on the anvil and an advanced packaging unit, with total investments of about ₹1.6 lakh crore, further strengthening the country's position in the global semiconductor value chain. Recognising that electronics manufacturing requires large capital investments, economies of scale, long gestation periods, access to advanced technologies, and a highly skilled workforce, the Government has undertaken a series of strategic interventions to

strengthen domestic capabilities and enable domestic firms to integrate more effectively into Global Value Chains (GVCs). To support this objective, several targeted schemes have been launched to strengthen domestic manufacturing and attract investments. Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS): Notified in 2025 with an outlay of ₹22,919 crore, the scheme aims to strengthen component manufacturing and integrate India's electronics industry with global value chains through turn-over-linked, capex, and hybrid incentives. With investment commitments already nearly double the initial target, the Union Budget 2026-27 increased the outlay to ₹40,000 crore to capitalise on this momentum. India Semiconductor Mission: Approved in 2021 with an outlay of ₹76,000 crore, the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 1.0 provides up to 50% fiscal support for semiconductor fabrication, assembly, testing, and chip design. Building on this, the Union Budget

components, continues to be a key pillar of the economy owing to its significant contribution to economic growth, employment generation, and strong linkages with multiple sectors. India has emerged as the world's largest market for two-wheelers and three-wheelers, and the third-largest globally for passenger and commercial vehicles. Supported by a vast manufacturing and auto component ecosystem, the sector provides direct and indirect employment to over 30 million people. Performance trends also reflect sustained growth: total production increased from 22,652 thousand units in FY21 to 31,028 thousand units in FY25, while domestic sales rose from 18,620 thousand units to 25,607 thousand units during the same period, reflecting strong growth and rising domestic demand. Overall, the industry has recorded nearly 33% growth in production over the last decade (FY15-FY25), accompanied by greater innovation and technology adoption, along with increased localisation and value addition. Over the past decade, policy reforms, targeted fiscal incentives, and infrastructure development have strengthened India's position as a global automotive hub. PLI Scheme for Automobile & Auto Components Industry: Approved in September 2021 with an outlay of ₹25,938 crore, the PLI-Auto Scheme promotes high-value Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) vehicles and products and has attracted cumulative investments of ₹35,657 crore as of September 2025. PM E-DRIVE Scheme: Launched in September 2024 with an outlay of ₹10,900 crore, the scheme offers demand incentives for e-2W and e-3W while extending support to new categories such as e-trucks and e-ambulances, along with funding for charging infrastructure and upgrades to testing facilities. Other key policy initiatives supporting this transformation include the PLI Scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage, the PM e-Bus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) Scheme, and the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SMECI). India's pharmaceutical industry is widely recognised for large-scale manufacturing of affordable medicines. Often referred to as the "Pharmacy of the

World," India plays a crucial role in ensuring access to cost-effective generic drugs while building strong domestic manufacturing capabilities. Today, India ranks as the world's third-largest pharmaceutical producer by volume and the eleventh largest by value, with the sector recording an annual turnover of ₹4.72 lakh crore in FY25.

In this context, given their critical vulnerability and high strategic importance, strengthening domestic manufacturing of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) has become a priority. India is already the world's third-largest producer of APIs, and domestic production has increasingly begun substituting imports. This momentum is now being reinforced through initiatives aimed at strengthening supply chain resilience and domestic production. PLI for Bulk Drugs: To mitigate reliance on imported Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Key Starting Materials (KSMs), and Drug Intermediates, the PLI scheme for Bulk Drugs has mobilised investments of ₹4,763 crore as of September 2025 and created an annual manufacturing capacity of 55,000 MT for 26 critical products, with focus on fermentation-based synthesis for KSMs like Penicillin G Potassium.

PLI for Medical Devices: The Government launched the PLI Scheme for Promoting Domestic Manufacturing of Medical Devices



in 2020, to promote indigenous manufacturing of medical devices. As of September 2025, the scheme has attracted ₹1,093.69 crore in actual investment, and manufacturing of 57 high-end medical devices has started in the country.

Global Integration of AYUSH: Efforts are underway to integrate India's AYUSH systems into the global health intervention framework. The WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre established in Jamnagar serves as an international hub for research, innovation, and policy dialogue on traditional medicine. In May 2025, a MoU was also signed with WHO to develop the International Classification of Health Interventions module, aimed at improving global acceptance and facilitating gradual integration of traditional medicine into public health systems.

Other key initiatives include the Strengthening of Pharmaceutical Industry (SPI) Scheme, the Scheme for Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks, the Scheme for Promotion of Medical Devices Parks, and the Strengthening of Medical Device Industry (SMDI) Scheme. As these schemes progress and production units become operational, India is expected to achieve greater self-reliance and improved resilience in the supply of bulk drugs. India's defence sector has witnessed a major shift towards self-reliance, ensuring that every procurement strengthens national industry, reduces import dependency, and enhances operational preparedness. At least 65% of India's defence equipment is now manufactured domestically, marking a significant shift from the earlier import dependence of nearly 65-70%.

Indigenous defence production rose from ₹46,429 crore in FY 2014-15 to ₹1,27,434 crore in FY 2023-24, and further reached a record ₹1.54 lakh crore in FY 2024-25. Reforms under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 and Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2025 have ensured speed, transparency, innovation, and self-reliance across both capital and revenue procurements. The government now targets defence manufacturing worth ₹3 lakh crore and defence exports of ₹50,000 crore by 2029, positioning India as a growing global defence manufacturing hub. To realise this vision, the Government has undertaken several measures, including: Development of the Uttar

Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) and Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor (TNDIC), which together have attracted investments exceeding ₹9,145 crore, with 289 MoUs signed and potential investment opportunities worth ₹66,423 crore as of October 2025.

Strengthening defence innovation through DRDO-led initiatives, including a ₹500 crore corpus approved under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) for deep-tech and cutting-edge projects, along with Technology Transfer programmes and 15 Defence Industry-Academia Centres of Excellence (DIA-CoEs) linking academia, start-ups, and industry.

Expanding private sector and MSME participation, with nearly 16,000 MSMEs now contributing across areas such as drones and avionics, strengthening the defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Supporting domestic manufacturing through liberalised FDI norms, PLI schemes, and defence industrial corridors, creating opportunities for both domestic manufacturers and global investors. Accelerating procurement momentum, with the Ministry of Defence signing a record 193 contracts worth ₹2,09,050 crore in FY 2024-25, the highest ever in a single financial year.

Together, these developments signal India's steady transition from a major defence importer to an emerging global hub for defence manufacturing and innovation.

While strengthening domestic production, India has simultaneously worked to ensure that its exports remain robust and diversified. Recent data highlights this resilience: cumulative exports (merchandise & services) during April-January 2025-26 is estimated at USD 720.76 billion, up from USD 679.02 billion in April-January 2024-25, implying an estimated 6.15% growth. In a period marked by global uncertainties, this growth reflects India's resilience, with high-value commodities, widening global partnerships, and policy reforms supporting a more balanced and globally integrated trade trajectory.

A key aspect of resilience is export diversification. It helps navigate uncertain global trade environments, demand volatility, and supply chain disruptions. By expanding across products and markets, countries reduce overdependence on limited partners and build resilience against external shocks. Under UNCTAD's trade diversity indices for the Global South, India ranks among the top five economies for the diversity of its traded products and among the top three for the diversity of its trade partners, reflecting a broad export basket and an increasingly wide range of trading relationships.

India's continued efforts to negotiate trade agreements have helped diversify trade partnerships and bolster the economy amid external challenges. Over the last three years, India concluded nine FTAs covering 38 countries, expanding market access to an estimated ~70% of global GDP, at mostly zero duty.

These agreements are widening opportunities for Indian goods and services, with more deals currently under negotiation. The objective is to spread trade ties across regions and reduce overdependence on any single market.

To further strengthen export competitiveness, especially for MSMEs, first-time exporters and labour-intensive sectors, the Government approved the Export Promotion Mission (EPM). With a total outlay of ₹25,060 crore for FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31, EPM aims to strengthen India's export ecosystem, improve access to affordable trade finance and enhance global market readiness and competitiveness across sectors and regions. It operates via two integrated sub-schemes- Niryat Protsahan and Niryat Disha. Services exports, India's core strength, have remained a steady growth engine even amid global uncertainty. In FY25, services exports reached an all-time high of USD 387.5 billion, registering 13.6% (YoY) growth, and reinforcing India's position as a global hub for technology, business, and professional services. During this period, the services trade surplus also widened to an all-time high of USD 188.8 billion. This strength has carried into FY26. During April-January 2025-26, services exports are estimated at USD 354.13 billion, up from USD 320.28 billion a year earlier (+10.57%). Market diversification is also improving: while the US remains the largest export destination for India, Europe's share rose from 30.8% to 32.8% between FY24 and FY25.

Development of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) and Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor (TNDIC), which together have attracted investments exceeding ₹9,145 crore, with 289 MoUs signed and potential investment opportunities worth ₹66,423 crore as of October 2025.

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**Briefs :**

**Agri University VC Receives Memorial Oration Award**

**Karnal :** Dr Manmohan Singh Chauhan, Vice-Chancellor of Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, was honoured with the Dr D Sundaresan Memorial Oration Award 2025 during an academic programme at the ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) in Karnal.

The event was part of the institute's academic fortnight leading up to its 22nd convocation. NDRI Director Dr Dheer Singh presided over the ceremony and welcomed the distinguished guest.

Dr Singh highlighted Dr Chauhan's contributions as a renowned animal scientist and noted that he previously served as director of the ICAR-Central Institute for Research on Goats in Mathura as well as director of NDRI, Karnal. Over the years, he has received several international fellowships and scientific honours.

He is also credited with pioneering work in advanced reproductive technologies such as sexed semen, embryo transfer and in vitro fertilisation in livestock research.

Dr Manmohan Singh Chauhan, Vice-Chancellor of Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, was honoured with the prestigious Dr D Sundaresan Memorial Oration Award 2025 during an academic programme organised at the ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute

**IMT Project to Spur Development in Tosham**

**Hisar :** Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Chaudhary has welcomed the decision to establish an Industrial Model Township in the Tosham region of Bhiwani district, saying the project will boost economic growth and create employment opportunities.

She said the initiative would open new avenues of development not only for Bhiwani but also for nearby areas such as Charkhi Dadri, Hisar and Hansi. According to Chaudhary, the project will particularly benefit educated and skilled youth by generating new job prospects.

Expressing gratitude to Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, she also credited Haryana minister Shruti Chaudhary for raising the issue of development and employment in the region. She noted that the proposed IMT would be the first to be set up in a rural area like Tosham. Farmers whose land is acquired for the project will receive compensation at twice the collector rate. Chaudhary added that Shruti Chaudhary, the BJP MLA from Tosham, has consistently worked for the development of the region and has taken up issues concerning farmers and youth. She also highlighted that canals and watercourses constructed during the tenure of former Chief Minister Chaudhary Bansilal are being renovated, which will help modernise agriculture in the area. Kiran Chaudhary, a Rajya Sabha MP, has welcomed the decision to set up an Industrial Model Township (IMT) in the Tosham area of Bhiwani district, saying the project will accelerate economic development and generate.

## Holi Celebrations at National Law University

**Sonepat :** Students, faculty and staff at Dr B R Ambedkar National Law University celebrated Holi with enthusiasm during a colourful cultural programme held on campus.

The event was organised under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof Devinder Singh and witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the university community. Students began the celebrations by applying colours to the Vice-Chancellor and the registrar.

In his address, Prof Singh extended Holi greetings and said the festival symbolises love, harmony and togetherness. He encouraged everyone to forget minor differences and strengthen bonds of respect and friendship.

Registrar Prof Ashutosh Mishra highlighted the cultural and spiritual meaning of the festival, explaining that Holika Dahan represents the destruction of negativity and evil, while the celebration of colours symbolises renewed happiness and a fresh start. He urged students to celebrate the festival with dignity while preserving its traditional values.



Students, faculty members and staff of Dr B R Ambedkar National Law University celebrated the festival of Holi with great enthusiasm during a vibrant cultural programme organised on the university campus. The celebrations brought together members of the university community, who participated wholeheartedly in the festivities and shared the spirit of joy and unity associated with the festival.

The event was organised under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Devinder Singh, whose guidance helped

make the programme a lively and memorable occasion for everyone present. The atmosphere on the campus turned festive as students gathered in large numbers to take part in the Holi celebrations and cultural activities arranged for the day.

Students began the celebrations by warmly greeting the Vice-Chancellor and applying colours to him as a gesture of respect and affection, marking the start of the festivities.

The registrar of the university, Ashutosh Mishra, also joined the celebrations and interacted with students

during the colourful event.

Faculty members and administrative staff also took part in the celebration, adding to the sense of unity and shared joy across the campus.

During the programme, students exchanged greetings and colours with their teachers and friends, creating a lively and cheerful environment.

The cultural gathering provided an opportunity for students and staff to come together outside their academic schedules and celebrate a festival that promotes harmony and togetherness.

## Holi Market Buzz Draws Crowds in Ambala

**Ambala :** Markets in Ambala have come alive ahead of Holi, with colourful products, water guns and festive accessories drawing large numbers of shoppers.

Besides traditional pichkaris in various shapes such as animals, pistols, cricket bats, pencils, axes and hammers, electric water guns and colour dispensers designed like fire extinguishers and oxygen cylinders are among the major attractions this year.

Shoppers can be seen thronging the busy markets of Ambala Cantonment to buy colours, masks, caps and wigs for the festival.

Traders say the range of products has expanded significantly, offering options for every budget.

Water guns are available from ₹50 to ₹5,500, while gular packets start at ₹20. Special gular-dispensing cylinders capable of spraying powdered colour can cost as much as ₹7,200.

Shopkeeper Deepak Gupta said electric pichkaris have become especially popular and new designs every year help attract customers. He added that most buyers now prefer herbal gular to avoid skin problems.

Another trader, Ashok

Kumar, noted that demand for dry colours has increased significantly, while water-based colours have become less popular as they are harder to remove.

Colourful wigs, masks, caps and white kurtas printed with Holi slogans are also witnessing strong demand. Parents, however, say it can be difficult to stop children from buying large and expensive items due to the wide variety available.

Ambala is currently undergoing a vibrant metamorphosis as the festival of Holi approaches, turning its usually busy streets into a kaleidoscope of anticipation and colour.

The local markets are not just places of commerce right now; they are the beating heart of a community preparing to celebrate one of India's most cherished traditions.

From the early hours of the morning until late into the night, the air is thick with the scent of festive treats and the sound of excited negotiations between shopkeepers and families looking for the perfect supplies for their celebrations.

The visual spectacle in the markets of Ambala Cantonment is truly something

to behold, with every available inch of shelf space occupied by a dizzying array of festive merchandise.

Bright piles of powdered gular sit alongside rows of shiny plastic water guns, creating a rainbow that seems to stretch as far as the eye can see.

This annual transformation highlights the cultural significance of the festival in the region, drawing in massive crowds that fill the narrow lanes with a sense of shared joy and a palpable buzz of excitement that is unique to this time of year.

At the center of this seasonal frenzy are the pichkaris, which have evolved far beyond the simple brass or plastic cylinders of previous generations.

Today's market offers traditional water guns in an astonishing variety of shapes that appeal to the vivid imaginations of children and the nostalgia of adults alike.

One can find pichkaris shaped like various animals, mimicking the natural world in neon plastic, alongside models that look like pistols, allowing for a more tactical approach to the water wars that are a hallmark of the Holi festivities.

## Two Convicted in 2021 Rape and Theft Case

**Sirsa :** A fast-track court in Sirsa has sentenced two men to prison for raping a woman and stealing her jewellery in July 2021. The verdict was delivered by special court Judge Dr Naresh Kumar Singhal.

The main accused, Rajesh Kumar of Rattakhera village, was sentenced to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment and fined ₹1.27 lakh for rape and theft. He also received additional sentences of two years for criminal breach of trust, seven years for house trespass and one year under another relevant provision, along with further fines.

His accomplice, Ranveer Singh from Munnawasi village, was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined ₹27,000, along with additional penalties under related charges.

In her statement recorded in December 2021, the victim said

Rajesh worked with her at a private company. On July 4 that year, Rajesh and Ranveer visited her home and borrowed her gold jewellery citing financial difficulties. Later the same day, both allegedly raped her. When she asked for the jewellery back, Rajesh refused and continued to sexually assault her by promising marriage, which he later denied.

Police registered the case under several sections of the Indian Penal Code and arrested both accused on December 23, 2021. The investigation involved 23 witnesses, and the chargesheet was filed in court on February 28, 2022. The court also directed that ₹1.25 lakh from the fine be given to the victim as compensation.

A fast-track court in Sirsa has sentenced two men to prison in connection with a case of rape and theft reported in July 2021, bringing



ing the long legal proceedings to a close with its final verdict.

The judgment was delivered

by special court Judge Dr Naresh Kumar Singhal after examining the evidence, witness testimonies

and details presented during the course of the trial.

The court held the main accused, Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Rattakhera village, guilty of committing rape and stealing the victim's jewellery.

As part of the sentence, Rajesh Kumar was awarded 14 years of rigorous imprisonment for the offences of rape and theft.

Sirsa : In addition to the prison term, the court imposed a fine of ₹1.27 lakh on him in connection with the charges proved during the trial.

The court also awarded further sentences for other offences established in the case, including two years of imprisonment for criminal breach of trust.

Rajesh Kumar was also sentenced to seven years of imprisonment for the offence of house trespass after the charge was proven

before the court.

Apart from these punishments, the court ordered another one-year prison term under an additional relevant provision of law, along with further financial penalties.

The second accused in the case, Ranveer Singh, a resident of Munnawasi village, was also convicted for his involvement in the crime.

The court sentenced Ranveer Singh to seven years of imprisonment for the offences proved against him during the trial proceedings.

Along with the jail term, the court imposed a fine of ₹27,000 on Ranveer Singh as part of the punishment.

Additional penalties were also imposed on him under related charges framed during the investigation.

## Digvijay Chautala Attends Ramadan Iftar



**Sirsa :** Jannayak Janta Party youth wing president Digvijay Singh Chautala attended a Ramadan iftar hosted by members of the Muslim community in Sirsa.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Chautala spoke about the significance of Ramadan as a period of sacrifice, discipline and spiritual reflection that also strengthens bonds of love and brotherhood in society.

He thanked the Muslim community for their continued support and said the relationship between the family of Chaudhary Devi Lal and the community was based on longstanding personal ties rather than politics.

Chautala emphasised that preserving brotherhood is essential for the progress of society, the state and the country.

Several leaders, including JJP district president Ashok Verma, SC Cell state president advocate Surender Bhagirath, Haji Yusuf Khan and other local figures, were present at the event.

The city of Sirsa recently

bore witness to a profound display of communal harmony and cultural synthesis as Digvijay Singh Chautala, the president of the Jannayak Janta Party's youth wing, joined the local Muslim community for a traditional Ramadan Iftar.

This gathering was not merely a scheduled event on a political calendar but served as a vibrant tableau of the pluralistic traditions that define the region. As the sun began to set over the horizon, the atmosphere in Sirsa shifted from the bustle of daily commerce to a serene space of shared faith and mutual respect, setting the stage for an evening centered on the values of unity and spiritual introspection.

Digvijay Singh Chautala arrived at the venue to a warm and enthusiastic reception, stepping into his role as the chief guest with a sense of gravity that matched the occasion. His presence underscored the Jannayak Janta Party's ongoing efforts to maintain a direct and personal dialogue with diverse

demographic groups within Haryana. By participating in the breaking of the fast, Chautala aimed to bridge the gap between administrative leadership and the grassroots community, reinforcing the idea that leadership is most effective when it is physically present and emotionally invested in the traditions of the people it serves.

During his address to the gathered assembly, Chautala delved deeply into the spiritual architecture of Ramadan, describing it as a season that transcends simple ritual. He spoke eloquently about the period of sacrifice and discipline that characterizes the holy month, suggesting that these virtues are universal requirements for a healthy and functioning society. By highlighting the rigors of fasting, he pointed out that such self-imposed discipline fosters a unique sense of empathy for the less fortunate, ultimately refining the character of the individual and, by extension, the strength of the community at large.

## Man Arrested for Canada Visa Fraud

**Kurukshetra :** Police in Kurukshetra have arrested a man for allegedly cheating another person by promising to send him abroad. According to police, the accused, identified as Sunny, was a relative of the complainant Sanjeev Kumar.

Sunny allegedly assured him that he would arrange for his travel to Canada and demanded ₹8 lakh for the process. After taking the money and necessary documents, the accused neither arranged the trip nor returned the amount.

Following the complaint, police registered a case and arrested the suspect. Further investigation is underway.

The historical city of Kurukshetra, often associated with ancient battles for jus-

tice, recently became the backdrop for a very modern conflict: a battle against the rising tide of visa fraud. In a region where the "foreign dream" is woven into the very fabric of daily life, the promise of a life in Canada carries immense weight.

For many, it represents the ultimate goal of upward mobility, better wages, and a secure future. However, this collective aspiration has also created a fertile ground for unscrupulous individuals to exploit the hopes of their own neighbors and, in this tragic instance, even their own kin. The Kurukshetra police recently announced the arrest of a man named Sunny, who is now facing serious allegations of cheating and financial fraud.

The case is a stark reminder that the journey to a new life abroad can often end before it even begins, stalled by the very people who claim to be facilitating it.

In this specific incident, the suspect didn't just target a stranger; he allegedly targeted the trust of someone within his own social and familial circle, making the sting of the deception even more profound for the victim involved. The complainant, identified as Sanjeev Kumar, found himself at the center of this unfortunate ordeal after harboring a long-held desire to migrate to Canada.

Like many young men in Haryana, Sanjeev saw the North American nation as a land of opportunity.

When Sunny, a relative he believed he could trust,

stepped forward with an offer to arrange the necessary travel and work permits, it likely felt like a fortuitous alignment of stars.

The involvement of a family member usually provides a false sense of security, bypassing the skepticism one might normally apply to a third-party immigration agent. According to the police report, the "deal" was struck on the basis of a significant financial transaction. Sunny reportedly assured Sanjeev that he possessed the connections and expertise to navigate the complex Canadian immigration system.

For this service, he demanded a sum of ₹8 lakh. To an average family in Kurukshetra, this is not just a number.

## Congress Picks Dalit Leader Baudh for RS Seat

**Chandigarh :** The Congress surprised many by selecting Dalit activist Karamvir Singh Baudh as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha seat from Haryana, opting for a relatively low-profile but respected grassroots leader.

The party had been considering several aspirants, including former state chiefs Uday Bhan and Ashok Tanwar, former MLA Jaiveer Balmiki, and Ahir leaders Rao Narendra Singh, Rao Dan Singh and Capt Ajay Yadav. However, the leadership eventually chose Baudh to strengthen caste representation in the state.

Baudh, who belongs to Rohtak, is widely seen as a neutral figure with no strong

alignment to any faction within the Haryana Congress. His name was recommended by the AICC Scheduled Caste cell.

A former government employee, Baudh served in the Haryana Civil Secretariat for 32 years with an unblemished record. During his career, he held several key roles including Administrative Officer and handled responsibilities in departments such as Home and Industries and Commerce. He also worked on governance coordination, vigilance matters and policy implementation.

He has long been associated with Scheduled Caste employees and has advocated for service justice and reservation in promotions in

line with the 85th Constitutional Amendment. Since 1998, he has been actively involved in grassroots mobilisation for Dalit rights and has served as president of the Confederation of SC/ST/OBCs Haryana. Originally from Bhaini Maharajpur village in the Meham Assembly segment of Rohtak district, he later moved to Ambala after joining government service.

The political corridors of Chandigarh were recently set abuzz with the Congress party's unexpected announcement regarding their Rajya Sabha candidate from Haryana. In a move that caught many veteran analysts off guard, the party bypassed several high-profile

heavyweights to nominate Karamvir Singh Baudh, a dedicated Dalit activist. This decision signals a significant departure from traditional political playbooks, favoring grassroots depth over purely name-driven popularity. The selection of a relatively low-profile figure suggests that the Congress leadership is looking to redefine its identity in the state by prioritizing genuine representation and long-term social connectivity over immediate headlines or factional appeasement.

Karamvir Singh Baudh hails from the politically significant district of Rohtak, a region often considered the epicenter of Haryana's power dynamics.

## BJP Weighs Options for Second RS Candidate

**Chandigarh** : Suspense continues over the second candidate the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may back for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections for two seats from Haryana that will fall vacant in April.

While Haryana Lokhit Party leader Gopal Kanda has remained in discussion since the beginning, party sources say the BJP has also been considering names such as Satish Nandal, Archana Gupta and a real estate developer. The final day for filing nominations has intensified political activity, and clarity on the party's decision is expected by the afternoon. Independent leaders and party members have reportedly been lobbying actively to secure BJP support, with Kanda said to have prepared his nomination papers and waiting for the party's approval before proceeding to Chandigarh.

Sources indicate that the party leadership in the state



remains divided over whether to field one of its office-bearers or extend support to an Independent. A senior party leader said that if the BJP backs an Independent candidate, the responsibility of arranging additional votes would lie with that candidate. The party would offer support only after its official nominee is elected and

would not interfere in securing the remaining votes. The final call is expected to be taken by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini. Party insiders suggest that the BJP will support an Independent only if the chances of victory appear realistic. The party is also keeping a close watch on the Congress strategy, especially after it announced

Dalit activist Karamvir Singh Baudh as its candidate. Since Baudh is considered neutral within Congress factions, BJP leaders believe a second candidate could still have a chance, though the required number of votes would be much higher compared to previous elections.

The suspense surrounding the Bharatiya Janata

Party's (BJP) strategy for the Haryana Rajya Sabha seats concluded today, March 5, 2026—the final day for filing nominations. The party has officially fielded former Karnal MP Sanjay Bhatia for one of the two seats falling vacant on April 9.

While there was intense speculation regarding a second candidate or support for an Independent, the BJP appears to have prioritized a safe and consolidated organizational pick for its primary seat. Official BJP Nominee: Sanjay Bhatia filed his nomination papers in Chandigarh, accompanied by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and State President Mohan Lal Badoli. Bhatia is a close confidant of Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and previously won his Lok Sabha seat in 2019 by a record margin.

The Independent Factor: Despite earlier discussions about Gopal Kanda (Haryana Lokhit Party leader) or

Satish Nandal, the BJP's central leadership focused on securing the victory of its official candidate. However, Satish Nandal has filed his nomination as an Independent, adding an element of contest to the proceedings.

Congress Counterpart: The Congress party officially nominated Dalit activist Karamvir Singh Baudh. Baudh, a retired government employee and a neutral figure within the party's state factions, also filed his papers today.

The election is for two seats currently held by BJP's Kiran Choudhry and Ram Chander Jangra. In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the current party positions are:

With a requirement of 31 votes per candidate, both Sanjay Bhatia and Karamvir Singh Baudh are positioned for a comfortable victory unless the entry of Independent candidates triggers a secondary voting preference battle.

## Doctor–Police Dispute Triggers Strike in Karnal

**Karnal** : A dispute between a doctor and police personnel at the Community Health Centre in Gharanda has sparked an indefinite strike by doctors across government hospitals in Karnal district.

Dr Parshant Chauhan alleged that the station house officer of Gharanda police station, Deepak, along with four other policemen, misbehaved with him and forcibly took him from the hospital to the police station after a heated phone conversation. The incident occurred on Wednesday evening and caused strong resentment among the medical community.

Following intervention by the Haryana Civil Medical Services Association, Dr Chauhan was later released by the police. The doctor claimed that the SHO had obstructed him from performing his duties and manhandled him in front of hospital

staff. SHO Deepak, however, denied the allegations and stated that Dr Chauhan had used abusive language during a phone call. He said the doctor was released after expressing regret over the incident.

Dr Chauhan said the situation began when several medico-legal cases arrived at the hospital during Holi celebrations, leading to chaos. A police vehicle had reportedly been deployed at the hospital for maintaining order, but when it was not present during the rush, the doctor called the SHO repeatedly seeking assistance. Instead of sending personnel, the SHO allegedly arrived with officers and took him to the police station.

Leaders of the Haryana Civil Medical Services Association condemned the incident and demanded the registration of a case against the police officials involved.

## Satish Nandal Enters Rajya Sabha Race

**Chandigarh** : Haryana BJP vice-president Satish Nandal filed his nomination papers on Thursday as the party's third candidate for the Rajya Sabha election, adding a new dimension to the contest.

The BJP had spent the previous evening and the morning deliberating over whether to back another candidate. Nandal was among the leading contenders, along with Haryana Lokhit Party leader Gopal Kanda, BJP office-bearer Archana Gupta and a real estate developer.

A Jat leader from the Garhi-Sampla-Kiloi Assembly constituency in Rohtak district, Nandal is considered a long-time political rival of former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda, who currently represents the seat. Nandal earlier contested three Assembly elections against Hooda from the same constituency — in 2009 and 2014 as an Indian National

Lok Dal candidate and in 2019 as a BJP nominee — but did not succeed.

He is regarded as a close associate of former minister Manish Grover, a supporter of ex-Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. Nandal had played a significant role in mediating with the family of ASI Sandeep Lather after the officer's suicide in Rohtak last October, ensuring that their concerns were addressed and the postmortem was conducted.

His son, Sanchit Nandal, had contested the Rohtak mayoral election in 2018 on an INLD ticket but lost. However, his presence in the contest reportedly helped BJP candidate Manmohan Goyal win by splitting votes, according to Grover.

After this episode, Nandal formally joined the BJP and has since remained active in party politics in Rohtak. The Rajya Sabha election is scheduled for March 16.

The political landscape

of Haryana witnessed a significant shift on Thursday as the Bharatiya Janata Party's vice-president for the state, Satish Nandal, officially entered the race for the Rajya Sabha.

His decision to file nomination papers as the party's third candidate has effectively turned what was expected to be a straightforward election into a multi-dimensional contest.

The move came after a period of intense speculation and high-level meetings within the BJP hierarchy, where various strategies were weighed to maximize the party's influence in the upper house of Parliament.

For several days leading up to the deadline, the BJP leadership had been locked in deep deliberations over whether to extend their reach beyond their primary nominees.

The air was thick with rumors as party insiders and political observers tracked every meeting held between

the state leadership and the central high command. This period of uncertainty saw the names of several prominent figures floated as potential candidates, reflecting the complex internal dynamics of the party and the strategic importance of the seats up for grabs in the March 16 election.

Among the names frequently discussed in the lead-up to the announcement were high-profile individuals from various sectors, including Haryana Lokhit Party leader Gopal Kanda.

The potential backing of Kanda was seen by many as a move to consolidate support from smaller allied factions, while other names like BJP office-bearer Archana Gupta and a prominent real estate developer were also in the mix. Ultimately, the choice of Nandal indicates a preference for a leader with deep-rooted regional ties and a proven track record of loyalty to the party's core mission in Haryana.

## Looted Truck Recovered, Three Arrested

**Ludhiana** : Ludhiana police solved a truck robbery case within 12 hours of the incident and arrested three accused, including the former owner and driver of the vehicle.

The truck had been looted from Guru Vihar in the Basti Jodhwal area on March 2 around 3.30 pm. Acting on the information, police teams began tracking the suspects and eventually arrested them from Haryana's Sonapat after scanning CCTV footage from toll plazas.

The accused have been identified as Lovdeep Singh, Ranjit Singh and Gurtej Singh. Gurtej was the former driver of the truck, while Lovdeep had previously owned the vehicle. Police said Lovdeep already faces a case related to drug smuggling.

According to Additional DCP Sameer Verma, Lovdeep admitted during interrogation that he had conspired with the former driver to steal the truck. The plan was allegedly to use the vehicle for smuggling narcotics from Rajasthan into Punjab. Police recovered the truck from Sonapat and further investigation is under-



way.

The bustling industrial hub of Ludhiana recently became the center of a high-speed criminal investigation that highlighted the impressive efficiency of the local police force. In a remarkable display of tactical coordination, the Ludhiana police managed to crack a complex truck robbery case within a mere 12-hour window. This rapid resolution not only secured the recovery of valuable property but also inter-

cepted a potentially large-scale narcotics smuggling operation before it could even begin. The incident serves as a stark reminder of the evolving nature of crime in the region, where logistics and insider knowledge are increasingly leveraged by criminal elements.

The narrative began on the afternoon of March 2, around 3:30 PM, in the Guru Vihar area of Basti Jodhwal. A heavy-duty truck was forcibly taken under circum-

stances that initially suggested a routine highway robbery. However, as the investigation would soon reveal, this was far from a random act of opportunistic theft. The precision with which the vehicle was targeted and removed from the scene suggested that the perpetrators were intimately familiar with the truck's movements and its mechanical specifics, setting the stage for a deeper look into the individuals involved.

## Holi Dispute Turns Fatal in Panipat

**Panipat** : A 26-year-old man was stabbed to death in Panipat on Holi after a confrontation over reckless driving, with the entire incident captured on CCTV cameras.

The victim, Rohit, originally from Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh, was living in Shakti Nagar in Panipat. According to a complaint filed by his brother Mohit Singh, the two along with their cousin Amit were heading to a relative's house in Hari Nagar to celebrate Holi. Near Kachi Kabri Phatak, four youths riding a motorcycle allegedly drove rashly, prompting the trio to ask them to drive carefully. The argument escalated briefly but was settled at the time, and they continued to their relative's home. However, some time later, five to six youths reportedly arrived on a motorcycle and a scooter and attacked Rohit. One of



them stabbed him with a sharp weapon while another struck his head with a brick, as the others beat him. Hear-

ing the commotion, locals gathered at the spot, prompting the attackers to flee. Rohit was rushed to the civil

hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Police teams from the CIA unit and cyber cell reached the scene and recovered CCTV footage showing the suspects arriving on a motorcycle and a Scooty. A search operation has been launched to arrest the accused. The festive spirit of Holi in Panipat was tragically shattered this year when a minor confrontation over road safety escalated into a fatal act of violence. What began as a routine journey to celebrate the festival of colors ended in the untimely death of a 26-year-old man, leaving a family in mourning and a community in shock. The incident, which highlights the volatile nature of road rage and the devastating consequences of unchecked aggression, has sparked an intensive police manhunt in the industrial

city. The victim has been identified as Rohit, a young man originally hailing from Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh. Seeking better opportunities, Rohit had relocated to Panipat and was residing in the Shakti Nagar area. Like many others on the day of Holi, he had set out with his brother, Mohit Singh, and their cousin, Amit, to visit a relative's home in Hari Nagar. Their intention was simple: to share the joy of the festival with family, unaware that a brief encounter on the road would alter their lives forever. The trouble began near the Kachi Kabri Phatak area when the trio encountered four youths on a motorcycle. According to the complaint filed by Mohit, the youths were driving in an extremely rash and reckless manner, posing a danger to themselves.

## Karamvir Baudh Files Nomination for RS Seat

**Chandigarh** : Congress candidate Karamvir Singh Baudh filed his nomination papers on Thursday for the Rajya Sabha election from Haryana, with senior party leaders and MLAs accompanying him.

Baudh reached the Haryana Vidhan Sabha complex along with Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Earlier in the day, Hooda hosted a breakfast meeting at his residence where Baudh was introduced to all Congress MLAs.

Speaking to reporters after filing his nomination, Baudh said he was not concerned about the possibility of the BJP fielding a third candidate. He praised Rahul

Gandhi for choosing a grassroots worker like him and referred to him as a "Jannayak." Baudh also acknowledged the contribution of Dr B R Ambedkar, stating that without him it would not have been possible for him to reach this position.

Known for mobilising Dalit organisations after the suicide of Dalit IPS officer Y Puran Kumar, Baudh asserted that all Congress MLAs were united and ruled out the possibility of cross-voting. Seen as a neutral figure within the party, he is widely regarded as a committed grassroots leader.

The nomination of Karamvir Singh Baudh for the Rajya Sabha has introduced a significant chapter in Haryana's political history,

marking a deliberate shift by the Congress toward grassroots empowerment. On Thursday, the Haryana Vidhan Sabha complex was a flurry of activity as Baudh arrived to formalize his candidacy, a moment that symbolized the elevation of a dedicated activist into the upper echelons of national legislation. His journey from the administrative corridors of the Civil Secretariat to the doors of the Parliament reflects a narrative of persistence and merit that has resonated deeply with the party's rank and file across the state.

The day began not with political posturing, but with a show of internal solidarity at the residence of the Leader of Opposition, Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

## Monitoring of Parivar Pehchan Patra Complaints Intensified

**Rohtak** : The Haryana government has stepped up monitoring of complaints related to the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) system to ensure quicker grievance redressal and improved transparency.

Dr Satish Khola, coordinator of the Haryana Parivar Pehchan Authority, has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating the monitoring of complaints raised during Samadhan Shivirs.

Arun Gupta, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, has directed deputy commissioners across the state to extend full cooperation and ensure that district-level officers regularly review and resolve pending grievances within the prescribed time limits.

The DCs have also been asked to appoint a nodal officer in each district to maintain close coordination with the authority's office and ensure smooth communication and compliance with instructions.

In a letter to the deputy commissioners, Gupta emphasised that effective monitoring and timely disposal of PPP complaints is essential for improving citizen services and maintaining transparency. Rohtak Deputy Commissioner Sachin Gupta confirmed that necessary directions have already been issued and that all PPP-related grievances are being addressed on priority in a transparent and time-bound manner.

The political corridors of

Chandigarh were recently set abuzz with the Congress party's unexpected announcement regarding their Rajya Sabha candidate from Haryana. In a move that caught many veteran analysts off guard, the party bypassed several high-profile heavyweights to nominate Karamvir Singh Baudh, a dedicated Dalit activist. This decision signals a significant departure from traditional political playbooks, favoring grassroots depth over purely name-driven popularity. The selection of a relatively low-profile figure suggests that the Congress leadership is looking to redefine its identity in the state by prioritizing genuine representation and long-term social connectivity over immediate

headlines or factional appeasement.

Karamvir Singh Baudh hails from the politically significant district of Rohtak, a region often considered the epicenter of Haryana's power dynamics. His journey into the political limelight is unique because it is rooted in decades of quiet, steadfast service rather than a career of public agitation or media posturing. As a member of the Dalit community, his elevation is not just a personal victory but a symbolic gesture toward a demographic that holds immense sway in the socio-political fabric of the state. His roots in Rohtak provide him with a natural understanding of the local pulses, making him a candidate who is both accessible

to the common person and respected by the intellectual elite of the party.

Before entering the fray of active politics, Baudh spent over three decades as a pillar of the Haryana Civil Secretariat. His 32-year career in the government sector is marked by an unblemished record, a feat that is increasingly rare in the high-stakes world of public administration. During this tenure, he navigated the complex corridors of power not as a politician, but as a dedicated servant of the state, gaining an insider's view of how policy is formulated and executed. This deep institutional knowledge is perhaps one of his greatest assets, providing him with a technical proficiency that many career poli-

ticians often lack, which will undoubtedly serve him well in the legislative debates of the Rajya Sabha.

Throughout his career, Baudh held several key administrative positions, including that of an Administrative Officer. These roles required a high degree of organizational skill and the ability to handle sensitive matters across various departments.

His responsibilities often touched upon the very core of state operations, from ensuring administrative efficiency to overseeing the intricacies of government protocol. By choosing a man with this level of procedural expertise, the Congress is effectively sending a message that it values govern-

ance and professional competence as much as it values political loyalty and electoral math.

Baudh's professional portfolio included significant stints in the Home Department as well as the Industries and Commerce sector. The Home Department, in particular, is the nerve center of state administration, dealing with law and order, internal security, and legal frameworks. His experience here would have given him a profound understanding of the legalistic aspects of governance.

Similarly, his work in Industries and Commerce suggests an awareness of the economic levers required to drive state development. This combination of securi-

ty-minded administrative experience and economic oversight makes him a well-rounded candidate capable of contributing to a wide variety of national policy discussions.

A crucial aspect of Baudh's government service involved handling vigilance matters and governance coordination. Vigilance is a particularly sensitive area that requires a person of high integrity to oversee potential misconduct and ensure transparency within the ranks.

His involvement in these matters reinforces the "unblemished" nature of his record, as it is difficult to lead vigilance efforts without maintaining impeccable personal standards.



## Excitement, not sadness, as Healy readies for caareer fina-

**Sydney:** While excitement and gratitude are the overbearing emotions as Alyssa Healy prepares to lead Australia out on the field one final time, the retiring captain has unfinished business to tackle in Perth.

Australia have ensured they will at the very least retain the multi-format series trophy after taking an 8-4 lead over India with a clean sweep in the ODIs, but Healy has made her side's intention to finish with an outright win in the Test match at the WACA Ground clear.

Healy's final walk out for the toss will be in her Baggy Green and matching captain's blazer, and she has vowed to relish every moment of her last outing.

"I've been very aware that not everybody gets to retire on their own terms, and this is kind of just a really cool opportunity to finish here at home and in a Baggy Green," Healy told reports in Perth on Thursday.

"It's not something I would have chosen to have



done, but I guess to have that opportunity is very special, very unique.

"So looking forward to that, and obviously with the series, the way it's placed at the moment, to be able to push for a win and be extra special."

After a fairytale finish to her run in her favourite 50-over format with a rollicking 158 in the final ODI in Hobart on Sunday, the 35-year-old also has one final opportunity to chase down an elusive hundred in the whites.

She is back at the venue where she fell just a run short of the milestone two years back against South Africa but Healy downplayed any questions on the subject, insisting the fixture would be less about her and more about the result.

"I'm not going out there to make a duck," she said. "So, if three figures come up, then so be it."

"But at the end of the day, I just want to contribute to a team success, and what that looks like, we'll wait and see."

## Satwik-Chirag suffer first-round exit at All England Open

**Birmingham:** India's top men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty suffered a first-round exit at the All England Open Badminton Championships after going down in straight games to Malaysia's Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai on Wednesday. Competing at the Utilita Arena Birmingham, the fourth-ranked Indian duo lost 23-21, 21-12 to the world No. 33 Malaysian pair, as per Olympics.com.

Satwik-Chirag started strongly and built an 11-6 lead at the interval of the opening game before the Malaysians fought back to level the scores at 16-all. Kang and Aaron, the 2024 junior world champions, then edged ahead and, despite the Indians saving two match points, eventually sealed the game in a tie-break.

Carrying the momentum



into the second game, the Malaysian duo dominated proceedings, leading 11-7 at the break and conceding

only five more points to wrap up the match comfortably.

The defeat also marked the end of India's men's dou-

bles campaign at the prestigious tournament.

In other results, India's Rohan Kapoor and Rutvikha

Gadde lost 21-12, 21-15 to France's fifth-seeded pair Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue in the mixed doubles event.

Meanwhile, 2025 US Open champion Ayush Shetty bowed out of the men's singles draw after losing 21-19, 9-21, 17-21 to Indonesia's world No. 14 Alwi Farhan.

India's women's singles campaign had already ended earlier after both Malvika Bansod and Unnati Hooda suffered opening-round defeats.

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu had withdrawn from the tournament after being unable to reach Birmingham in time due to travel disruptions in Dubai. However, India had a bright moment on the opening day when Lakshya Sen stunned world No. 1 Shi Yuqi to advance to the second round.

## Labuschagne in rare air to again be crowned One-Day Cup's best

**Sydney:** Marnus Labuschagne was on the outer of both Australia's Test and ODI teams entering the 2025-26 domestic season.

Having been dropped for the three-Test series against West Indies a few months earlier, Labuschagne was soon to be left out of Australia's one-day squad as well to face India last October (he was later recalled following a side injury to Cameron Green but didn't play in the three-match series).

But back-to-back Sheffield Shield hundreds to open the season, as well as two one-day centuries in three knocks for Queensland, had the right-hander swiftly reinstated as Test No.3 for the Ashes.

And his form across the entire One-Day Cup campaign could have him on his way to an ODI recall ahead of a World Cup year in 2027.

Labuschagne produced a career-best 468-run domestic 50-over season this summer and has today been crowned the competition's best player for 2025-26.

The 31-year-old has now won the One-Day Cup player of the season award for a record third time since it was

introduced in 1998-99, and he's only the fourth batter to score four centuries in a single season, sealing his place on the list alongside Phil Jaques (2005-06), Brad Hodge (2009-10) and Daniel Hughes (2022-23) with 126 in Queensland's final game last month.

"Once I get the rhythm and feeling of one-day cricket, I feel like I can compile pretty consistent performances," Labuschagne said following his third 50-over century of the season, 101 against NSW in November.

"When you don't play one-day cricket for a while ... you might be 30 off 50 (balls) ... and you start panicking."

"That's how I sort of felt at the start of pre-season. We played pre-season games and that's exactly how I felt; I felt like I had to go. "I got a few starts and that just got that process rolling and that rhythm and feeling (heading into the season)." Labuschagne earned two player-of-the-match awards in his six one-day appearances for Queensland this season, polling 20 votes to finish one ahead of NSW batter Kurtis



Patterson, who edged the Bulls captain as the tournament's leading run-scorer with 513 at an average of 102 in seven games.

The pair finished well ahead of Tasmania's Beau Webster (12 votes) in third place. Voting was determined by both on field umpires individually awarding a 3-2-1 for each match.

Labuschagne's top score for the tournament came in Queensland's first match when he slammed 130 from 118 balls with 17 fours and a six to power his side to 55-run season-opening win.

He struck his second ton (105 from 91) in their third match, but it went in vain as eventual ladder-leaders Tasmania overhauled Queensland's 311 with five

wickets and 10 balls to spare.

Though his third (101 v NSW) and fourth (126 v South Australia) centuries of the season both came in wins, Queensland missed the final by one point as Patterson's stunning 68-ball hundred helped NSW chase down 275 in 31 overs against Tasmania last month to secure bonus-point victory and a rematch with the Tigers in next Wednesday's decider at Bellerive Oval. Labuschagne's 468 runs at an average of 78 is the most prolific domestic one-day season of his career, eclipsing his 2019-20 tally of 364 at 61, in which he shared the player of the season award with teammate Usman Khawaja.

Notably, he lifted his strike rate from 81 in his preceding 20 List A matches (in-

cluding internationals) since the end of the last ODI World Cup to almost a run-a-ball (96.5) this summer.

Australia are slated to play Pakistan, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, South Africa and England in ODI series later this year where Labuschagne will almost certainly get a chance to push his case to be a factor in the side's World Cup planning ahead of the next 50-over global showpiece in southern Africa late next year.

Labuschagne was instrumental in Australia's 2023 ODI World Cup triumph but lost his middle-order spot to state teammate Matthew Renshaw for the series against India last October, with Matt Short, Cooper Connolly and Mitch Owen also performing strongly in the 2-1 series win.

Australia's 50-over batting line-up is in a period of transition following the ODI retirements of Steve Smith, Glenn Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis last year, with Cameron Green and Alex Carey among the others in the middle-order mix as the competition for spots heats up ahead of the next World Cup.

## Australia wait on Perry to make final call on Test XI

**Perth:** Ellyse Perry is looking promising for the day-night Test at the WACA, captain Alyssa Healy says, revealing the quadriceps injury that's threatening to keep the veteran out of the pink-ball encounter "wasn't exactly straightforward".

The balance of the Australia XI to take on India will rest on Perry's availability, but signs were positive as the 35-year-old got through a second training session in Perth on Thursday afternoon.

"We've got a very rough idea about what it's going to look like," Healy told reporters in Perth of Australia's likely XI. "Obviously, Ellyse Perry is the key one, and we'll just assess her as we go. "She trained really well yesterday, so it's looking really promising." For her to be able to take part in this series again (would be) huge - from all reports, it wasn't exactly a straightforward niggles that she had, so her ability to get back up for this game is pretty remarkable.

"Playing Test cricket for us girls is few and far between at the moment. So I think she'll be champing at the bit to get out there."

If Perry does not get up, Australia could bring in un-



capped Tasmania top-order batter Rachel Trenaman or reshuffle their deep batting line-up to fit in an extra bowling option. If Perry gets the go ahead, Healy said she expected Australia to line up similarly to their last Test, against England at the MCG last January.

That would see Healy slot into the middle-order with Phoebe Litchfield and Georgia Voll opening the batting, a deep batting line-up that could see Tahlija McGrath batting as low as No.8, two frontline quicks and two spinners in Ashleigh Gardner and Alana King. If that was the case, the only change would likely see left-arm quick Lucy Hamilton come into the side to replace the injured Kim Garth, with Darcie Brown retaining her spot in the attack.

If Perry plays, it will be

as a specialist batter, but Healy said she was not concerned about a lack of options with the ball, with all-rounders McGrath and Annabel Sutherland also in the line-up. "I daresay there'll be a debutant, so we'll have to wait and see who that will be," Healy said. "I think the line-up will look pretty similar to what the Ashes Test was last year, so I'll probably slot down in the middle-order, but (that depends) on balance, and probably Pez's is availability." Trenno's has made a bulk of runs in domestic cricket and would be a perfect slide in for Ellyse Perry if she doesn't get up."

"We've got so many options with ball in hand that fill a role there, and then people asking for more opportunities with the ball, so we won't struggle in that department."

## Indian youth team leaves for World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 in Bangkok

**New Delhi:** India's promising young boxing talents are set to compete on the international stage as the Indian Youth boxing team departs tomorrow for the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026, scheduled to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from March 8 to March 15.

The tournament will bring together some of the most talented youth boxers from across the world, offering them a key platform to gain international exposure and test themselves against top competition in their age group.

The Indian team will compete in the Youth Olympic weight categories, making the tournament an important step in the pathway toward qualification and preparation for the Youth Olympic Games. The Futures Cup serves as a key developmental event in the global boxing calendar, providing young athletes valuable international competition experience.

India will field a 10-member squad across both men's and women's divisions. The women's contingent includes Gunjan (48kg), Chandrika Bhoreshi Pujari (51kg), Joyshree Devi Chiram (54kg), Radhamani Longjam (57kg), and Prachi (60kg).

The men's team features Ambekar Meetei Lairenlakpam (50kg), Udhham Singh Raghav (55kg), Sahil Duhan (60kg), Aman Siwach



(65kg), and Priyansh Sehrawat (70kg).

Speaking ahead of the tournament, Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh said, "The World Boxing Futures Cup is an important platform for our young boxers to gain international exposure and compete against top talent from across the world. Competing in the Youth Olympic weight categories makes this tournament even more significant, as it provides our athletes valuable experience and preparation on the pathway to the Youth Olympic Games. We are confident this team will compete with determination and make the most of this opportunity."

The competition will be hosted by the Thailand Boxing Association under the aegis of World Boxing, with bouts scheduled to take place at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in Bangkok.

Preliminary bouts will begin on March 8, followed by quarterfinals and semi-

nals, before the tournament concludes with the finals on March 15.

Indian youth boxers had delivered a historic performance last year at the 3rd Asian Youth Games in Bahrain, clinching seven medals including four gold, two silver and one bronze marking India's best-ever showing in youth boxing at the continental stage.

The Indian contingent will look to gain valuable international experience while showcasing the strength of the country's youth boxing programme on the global stage.

Indian Squad - World Boxing Futures Cup 2026

Women: Gunjan (48kg) Chandrika Bhoreshi Pujari (51kg) Joyshree Devi Chiram (54kg) Radhamani Longjam (57kg) Prachi (60kg) Men: Ambekar Meetei Lairenlakpam (50kg) Udhham Singh Raghav (55kg) Sahil Duhan (60kg) Aman Siwach (65kg) Priyansh Sehrawat (70kg).

## BCCI hails J&K after record-breaking Ranji Trophy win

**Jammu:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday congratulated Jammu and Kashmir after their historic triumph in the Ranji Trophy, describing the achievement as a proud milestone for cricket in the region.

"The historic triumph of Jammu & Kashmir in the Ranji Trophy will remain a proud milestone for cricket in the region.

After their memorable victory, the players expressed a heartfelt desire to meet Hon. ICC Chair Jay

Shah and share this special moment with him, acknowledging the role his leadership played in strengthening cricket in Jammu & Kashmir during his tenure as BCCI Secretary," the BCCI said in a post on X.

"We sincerely thank Mr. Shah for taking the time to meet the team and for sharing his words of encouragement with the players as they celebrate this historic achievement.

Congratulations to the entire J&K team and the cricket fraternity for scripting a remarkable chapter in Indian domestic cricket," it added.

Jammu and Kashmir were crowned champions by 291 runs in the first-innings lead over Karnataka, led by Devdutt Padikkal.

A brilliant 121 from Shubham Pundir led the charge, supported by key contributions from Yawer Hassan (88), captain Paras Dogra (70), Abdul Samad (61), Kanhaiya Wadhawan (70), and Sahil Lotra (72) as J&K piled up a massive first-innings total of 584.

Despite the onslaught, Karnataka pacer Prasad Krishna impressed with figures of 5/98 in 34.1 overs.

Karnataka, featuring international stars such as KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Padikkal, and Karun Nair, struggled under scoreboard pressure. Only Agarwal mounted significant resistance with a valiant 160 as Karnataka were bowled out for 293, conceding a huge 291-run deficit.

Auqib Nabi claimed 5/54 in 23 overs to dismantle Karnataka's middle order

and put the match firmly in J&K's control by Day 4.

In their second innings, J&K were powered by an unbeaten 160 from Qamran Iqbal before captain Dogra declared at 342/4 on Day 5, setting Karnataka a target with a lead of 633 runs. Both captains eventually agreed to shake hands.

Pundir was named Player of the Match, while Nabi was adjudged Player of the Series after taking 55 wickets in eight matches during the 2025-26 Ranji Trophy season.

## Head falls late but SA take day-one honours over NSW in Sheffield Shield

**Sydney:** Travis Head (5) fell late on day one of South Australia's Sheffield Shield clash with New South Wales, but the hosts still hold the advantage thanks to a maiden five-wicket haul from fast bowler, Henry Thornton.

Opening the batting in the competition for the first time this season, Head was dismissed by fellow Australian T20 World Cup squad member Sean Abbott (1-8) in some late drama at Karen Rolton Oval.

The Australian Test opener copped a blow to the finger from Liam Hatcher (0-12) in the over prior to his dismissal, before Abbott found the edge of Head's bat with the first ball he bowled to him.

Lachlan Shaw snaffled the catch at second slip to give the visitors a much-needed breakthrough, as SA ended day one at 1-20 in reply to

NSW's 269.

Returning to Shield cricket for the first time since November, Thornton (5-71) was the star of the show for SA, taking wickets in every session to help his side gain the ascendancy in Adelaide.

Earlier in the day, NSW won the toss and chose to bat before losing four wickets in the first session of play.

In an eventful start to the day, Sam Konstas (37) was dropped by SA skipper Nathan McSweeney at third slip off the fourth ball of the innings.

The 20-year-old and Will Salzmann (6) put on 19 runs for the first wicket, before Jordan Buckingham (1-74) bowled Salzmann with a ball that nipped back sharply and rattled his stumps.

Coming off three hundreds in his

last four outings for NSW in domestic cricket, Kurtis Patterson (12) joined Konstas in the middle and hit his first ball to the rope.

The left-hander looked in ominous touch, but he was caught by Manenti at second slip to give Thornton his first scalp.

Four balls later, Lachlan Shaw (4) found Henry Hunt to give Liam Scott (1-29) his first breakthrough of the match as NSW slipped to 3-72.

Nathan McAndrew (2-55) was then brought back into the attack with immediate success, as Konstas feathered the first delivery of his second spell through to the wicketkeeper, Alex Carey.

Matthew Gilkes (24) and Josh Philippe (29) safely took NSW to the major interval at 4-98. New South Wales' wicketkeeper pushed on after

lunch, but Thornton found a way through his defence

to give SA their fifth wicket of the day.

McAndrew made it 6-126 when he bowled a brutal bouncer that was too quick for Gilkes. The left-hand batter couldn't evade McAndrew's short ball that hit his gloves and spooned up to Manenti who took his second catch of the day.

Buckingham should have picked up the wicket of Charlie Stobo (25) when Manenti put him down at 6-158.

Together with Joel Davies (47), the two produced a vital 63-run partnership to help resuscitate New South Wales' innings, before Thornton struck again. The right-arm speedster had Stobo trapped in front with the last ball of the session, as NSW entered tea at 7-189.



BSE Sensex			Nifty 50			Nifty 500			Nifty Next 50			Nifty 100			Nifty Bank			Nifty Midcap 100		
Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change																
80,015.90	1.14%		24,765.90	1.17%		22,697.80	1.29%		67,722.20	1.38%		25,420.10	1.20%		59,055.85	0.51%		57,792.55	1.52%	
Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open	
79,116.19	79,530.48		24,480.50	24,615.95		22,409.80	22,536.75		66,799.40	67,102.85		25,118.25	25,253.10		58,755.25	59,008.25		56,925.15	57,330.60	
High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low	
80,303.83	79,201.69		24,854.20	24,529.40		22,760.85	22,468.20		67,893.40	67,036.70		25,505.10	25,175.20		59,274.35	58,506.40		57,946.45	57,014.70	

## Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Adani Ports	1,499.30	4.52
Larsen	4,038.70	4.02
Hindalco	954.95	3.60
NTPC	378.05	3.35
Reliance	1,389.40	3.30

## Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Tech Mahindra	1,333.30	-1.32
HCL Tech	1,354.10	-0.73
ICICI Bank	1,357.60	-0.57
SBI	1,169.50	-0.43
TCS	2,578.80	-0.35

## Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Apr 02	161,830.00	305.00 0.19
Silver May 05	267,404.00	1,844.00 0.69
Crudeoil Mar 19	7,066.00	129.00 1.86
Naturalgas Mar 26	272.40	0.00 0.00

## CPI new series veritable storehouse for robust data-based policy signals: SBI Report

**New Delhi:** CPI new series is a veritable storehouse for robust data-based policy signals and is important for inflation nowcasting, corporate pricing, scenario analysis, public distribution system (PDS) and changing patterns of urbanisation across states, said the SBI report released here on Thursday.

The report noted that if the CPI 2012 classification system were followed, the share of food and beverages would have declined from 45.86 per cent to 40.10 per cent and not 36.75 per cent as is the current weight for the 2024 series.

The new CPI series reveals disproportional coverage with 90 per cent of the weights covered by 148 items, and it is extremely useful for inflation nowcasting, corporate pricing strategy, and scenario analysis.

"State-wise core CPI reveals that apart from Kerala, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Goa and Mizoram, all other states reveal a higher Core Inflation CPI than headline CPI. In the new series, Telangana is the state with the highest rate of inflation," the report said.

SBI noted that Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries mapped with the state's food inflation rate compared with earlier data reveal that the exclusion of PDS items is likely to have a positive bias on food inflation across states.

"We believe the new CPI series has appropriately incorporated the changing patterns of urbanisation and Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Haryana are the top states in terms of urbanisation trends over the last decade," the report said.

A comparison of heat maps across states in terms of disaggregated level analysis reveal the transformative impact of changing patterns of Indian consumption in both rural and urban areas.

Sectorally, the report noted that housing, water, electricity, gas, and fuels show the maximum drift across states. Small divisions such as Furniture, Information & Communication, Recreation and Personal Care show tight ranges.

The report said that this indicates the importance of digital and discretionary spending across the spectrum of states.

# Stock market ends higher amid strong buying

**Mumbai:** The Indian stock market ended Thursday's trading session on a strong note, with benchmark indices recording significant gains amid broad-based buying across key sectors such as metals, infrastructure, energy and automobiles.

The rally was led by strong investor participation in heavyweight stocks, which pushed the benchmark indices higher by more than one per cent during the day's trade. The BSE Sensex surged 900 points, or 1.14 per cent, to close at 80,015, reflecting renewed investor optimism in several major sectors.

Similarly, the Nifty 50 gained 285 points, or 1.17 per cent, to settle at 24,765 by the end of the session.

Among the top gainers on the Nifty index was Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone, whose shares jumped

4.52 per cent during the day's trading session and construction giant Larsen & Toubro also witnessed strong buying interest, with its

shares rising 4.02 per cent. Shares of Hindalco Industries climbed 3.60 per cent, reflecting positive sentiment in metal stocks.

In the energy sector, NTPC advanced 3.35 per cent, while Reliance Industries gained 3.30 per cent. Other notable gainers in-

cluded Coal India, which rose 3.27 per cent, along with Bharat Electronics, Shriram Finance, JSW Steel and InterGlobe Aviation, all of

which posted gains between roughly 2.7 per cent and 2.9 per cent. On the losing side, IT stocks saw mild selling pressure, with Tech Mahindra emerging as the biggest loser of the day, declining 1.32 per cent. Shares of HCLTech slipped 0.73 per cent, while ICICI Bank fell

0.57 per cent and State Bank of India declined 0.43 per cent. Other stocks such as Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, ONGC, Axis Bank and ITC also ended the session marginally lower.

Sector-wise, metal stocks led the rally, with the Nifty Metal index gaining 2.21 per cent during the session. The Nifty Consumer Durables index also performed strongly, rising around 2 per cent. Other sectoral indices, including Nifty Auto, Nifty Realty, Nifty Oil & Gas, Nifty Pharma, Nifty Chemicals and Nifty Media all ended the day with gains of over one per cent. In the currency market, the Indian Rupee strengthened against the US dollar, ending the session at 91.60 per dollar compared with 92.15 in the previous trading session.



## CCI approves stake hikes in Generali JV, Balaji Wafers Investment, and Bagmane REIT acquisition

**New Delhi:** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved a series of corporate combinations involving the banking, consumer goods and real estate sectors, including stake acquisitions in insurance joint ventures, packaged food company Balaji Wafers, and commercial real estate assets. The regulator cleared the acquisition of additional shareholding in Generali Central Insurance Company Limited (GCICL) and Generali Central Life Insurance Company Limited (GCLICL) by Central Bank of India. The proposed transaction involves the bank acquiring an additional 1.09 per cent equity in GCICL and 0.82 per cent equity in GCLICL. The Central Bank of India provides a range of banking services in the country, including deposit-taking, lending, and other financial services. GCICL operates in the general insurance seg-

ment, while GCLICL offers life insurance products in India.

In a separate approval, the CCI cleared the acquisition of a stake in Balaji Wafers Private Limited by General Atlantic Singapore BWP Pte. Ltd. (GASBWP) from the existing shareholders of the company. GASBWP, an investment holding company incorporated in Singapore, is affiliated with global investment firm General Atlantic and invests in businesses across sectors such as technology, healthcare, financial services, consumer, climate, and infrastructure. Balaji Wafers is an Indian snack food manufacturer engaged in producing and selling packaged food products, including salted and non-salted snacks, biscuits, ready-to-eat foods, and conDIMENTS. The company distributes its products through an extensive network of distributors and retailers, with a

strong presence in western and central India.

The CCI also approved a proposed transaction involving Bagmane Prime Office REIT, which includes the direct acquisition of Bagmane Developers Private Limited (BDPL) and its wholly owned subsidiary Bagmane Green Power LLP (BGPL).

The deal also involves the indirect acquisition of Bagmane Rio Private Limited (BRPL) and the property Luxor @ Bagmane Capital Tech Park from Bagmane Constructions Private Limited. Under the arrangement, the sponsor group of the REIT and certain third-party shareholders of the target entities will receive units of the REIT in exchange for transferring their shareholding. The target entities are engaged in the development and leasing of commercial real estate, hospitality operations, and renewable power generation.

# West Asia tensions raise risks to global energy supply: Goldman Sachs

**New Delhi:** A spike in risks to global energy supply chains is anticipated amid the escalating tensions in West Asia linked to the conflict involving Iran, particularly around the strategic Strait of Hormuz, said a report by Goldman Sachs.

The report noted that the waterway remains one of the most critical chokepoints in global energy trade, with roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply and a significant share of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments passing through the strait, the report noted.

The Goldman Sachs report highlighted that nearly 20 million barrels per day of oil supply and about 19 per cent of global LNG trade typically transit the route, making it vital for energy-importing nations, especially in Asia. Countries such as

China, India, Japan, and South Korea depend heavily on shipments that pass through the strait.

Goldman Sachs said tanker traffic in the region has already shown early signs of disruption, with shipping companies, oil producers, and insurers adopting a cautious stance following reports of damaged vessels. Some ships are also avoiding the route amid rising security concerns.

Markets have already begun factoring in geopolitical risks. According to the report, oil prices currently include an estimated risk premium of around USD 18 per barrel, reflecting the potential impact if flows through the Strait of Hormuz were halted for about a month. This estimate accounts for the limited alter-



native pipeline capacity that could bypass the strait.

Even without direct damage to oil infrastructure, disruptions to maritime shipping alone could significantly affect supply chains. Goldman Sachs estimates that around 16 million barrels per day of oil flows could be exposed in the event of a full closure of the strait.

The risks also extend to natural gas markets. Approx-

imately 80 million tonnes per year of LNG exports, largely from Qatar, pass through the strait. A sustained disruption could tighten global gas supplies and potentially push European benchmark gas prices back to levels seen during the 2022 energy crisis.

Recent developments in the region have already slowed tanker movements and led to sharp increases in

shipping insurance premiums and freight rates. Some vessels have reportedly begun avoiding the region, raising concerns about broader supply disruptions.

While global oil inventories and spare production capacity may provide a short-term buffer, the report warned that prolonged disruptions in the Gulf could trigger significant volatility in global energy markets and push up prices of oil, gas, and refined products.

Market participants and policymakers are now closely monitoring tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz as well as diplomatic and military signals from the United States, Iran, and Gulf nations to assess whether the situation remains temporary or evolves into a broader energy supply shock.

## Women increasingly taking charge of financial decisions independently

**New Delhi:** DSP Mutual Fund on Thursday released its latest report, DSP Investor Pulse 2025-26, highlighting a significant shift in financial behaviour among women investors in India, with more women taking independent control of their investment decisions.

According to the report,

about 56 per cent of women now make their investment decisions independently, marking a notable increase from 44 per cent recorded in 2022.

The findings indicate a steady rise in financial confidence and awareness among women investors over the past few years.

## QBE to become sole owner and shareholder of Raheja QBE General Insurance Company Limited

**Mumbai:** QBE Insurance Group, an international general insurance and reinsurance firm headquartered in Australia, is set to become the sole owner and shareholder of Raheja QBE, subject to regulatory approval.

This move follows 18 years of joint ownership



with Prism Johnson Limited and underscores QBE's commitment to the Indian

insurance market.

Operations and service standards will be maintained as the transaction is reviewed by the Insurance

Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and further details will be provided in due course.

## Petronet issues force majeure after Qatar Energy stops production due to Iran crisis

**Mumbai:** Petronet LNG Limited (PLL), India's largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG), on Thursday informed the stock exchanges that it has issued a force majeure notice to its supplier QatarEnergy amid escalating geopolitical tensions affecting maritime routes in the Gulf region.

The company also notified its downstream supply partners — GAIL (India) Limited, Indian Oil Corporation and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited — that its LNG shipments may be disrupted due to the ongoing conflict-related risks.

A force majeure notice is a formal contractual provision invoked when extraordinary and uncontrollable events — such as wars, natural disasters or major geopolitical crises — prevent a company from fulfilling its contractual obligations.

When such a clause is triggered, the affected company can temporarily suspend its contractual responsibilities without legal liability, provided the disruption is external, unforeseen and makes normal business operations impossible. In a regulatory filing, Petronet LNG said the decision to invoke the clause was taken due to mounting risks to maritime navigation in the Gulf region amid the ongoing conflict involving



Iran.

"Considering the prevailing security situation and the material risks posed to maritime navigation, Petronet LNG Limited has issued a Force Majeure Notice to QatarEnergy in respect of its LNG tankers, namely Disha, Raahi and Aseem," the company stated in its disclosure to the stock exchanges.

The company further explained that its LNG tanker vessels are currently unable to safely transit through the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz.

These tankers typically use the Strait of Hormuz to reach Ras Laffan, which serves as the LNG loading port operated by QatarEnergy. The Strait of Hormuz is considered one of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the world, located between Iran and Oman.

Nearly 30 per cent of global seaborne petroleum and liquefied natural gas trade passes through this narrow waterway, making it

vital for global energy supply chains.

Petronet LNG said the financial implications of the force majeure declaration cannot be assessed immediately, as the situation continues to evolve.

The company also noted that acts of war are generally excluded from business interruption insurance coverage, which limits the possibility of compensation claims arising from the supply disruption.

Meanwhile, QatarEnergy confirmed the development in a statement posted on the social media platform X.

The company said it had suspended production of LNG and associated products due to the deteriorating security situation in the region. "Further to the announcement by QatarEnergy to stop production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and associated products, QatarEnergy has declared Force Majeure to its affected buyers," the company said in its statement.

# South Indian Bank to offer loan against mutual funds to its customers

**Chennai:** Private mortgage lender South Indian Bank (SIB) on Thursday announced the launch of its digitally integrated Loan Against Mutual Funds (LAMF) offering, enabled by smallcase's technology infrastructure.

The partnership allows SIB to extend secured credit against mutual funds at an interest rate of 9.99 percent p.a., in compliance with regulatory guidelines, to both its existing customer base and to customers of digital wealth platforms through its Lending Service Provider (LSP) network. Using smallcase's secured credit stack, SIB has built a native, API-led integration that enables an end-to-end digital journey for the user that includes pledging, disbursal, and release of mutual fund units.

With this launch, SIB becomes among the first banks to offer a fully inte-

grated LAMF solution to its LSP partners, enabling digital ecosystems and fintech apps to embed secured credit seamlessly within their offerings. "At South Indian

more accessible to investors. South Indian Bank has announced a strategic collaboration with fintech investment platform smallcase to strengthen its digital

seamless and fully digital manner, reflecting the growing trend of technology-driven financial services in India. According to the bank, the partnership will allow customers to pledge their mutual fund holdings and obtain instant credit, without the need to liquidate their investments, thereby preserving long-term wealth creation opportunities.

Officials at South Indian Bank said the integration with smallcase forms part of the bank's broader strategy to expand its secured lending portfolio while leveraging digital platforms to enhance accessibility and efficiency.

Sony A, Senior General Manager and Chief Information Officer at South Indian Bank, said the bank is planning to broaden the scope of the offering in the coming months. "We are looking forward to expand-

ing this to demat securities and other financial assets, and are also working with multiple digital platforms to unlock innovative use cases," Sony A said. He added that the bank sees significant potential in technology-led secured lending products that enable investors to access funds quickly while retaining ownership of their investment assets.

Commenting on the integration, Vasanth Kamath, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of smallcase, said the company focuses on building digital infrastructure that helps financial institutions offer investment and wealth management services efficiently.

"At smallcase, we build technology platforms that enable financial institutions to offer investment and wealth products digitally," Kamath said while speaking about the collaboration.



Bank, expanding access to responsible and transparent credit solutions is central to our priorities. Our partnership with smallcase enables us to offer a Loan Against Securities offering on mutual funds in a fully digital workflow, making credit

lending ecosystem through the introduction of loans against mutual funds (LAMF) and other securities.

The initiative is aimed at enabling customers to access liquidity against their existing investments in a