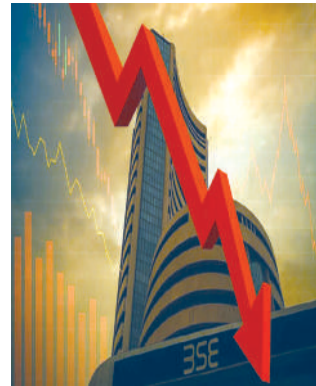




# Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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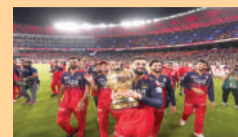
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Sensex down nearly 1,900pts, Nifty below 22,500



## PM Modi flags 'worrisome' West Asia crisis, calls for Unified National Response in LS

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday described the escalating conflict in West Asia as "worrisome" and warned that the prolonged hostilities are posing serious economic, security and humanitarian challenges for India, even as the government moves to safeguard supplies and citizens abroad.

Addressing the Lok Sabha, Modi said the crisis now stretching beyond three weeks amid tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran is already having a "very adverse impact on the global economy and people's lives," while creating "unprecedented challenges" for India.

"The current situation in West Asia is worrying," Modi told the Lower House, noting that External Affairs Minister S

Jaishankar and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri had briefed Parliament in recent weeks. "This crisis has now lasted for more than three weeks. It is affecting the entire world."

The Prime Minister's address came a day after he chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to assess the fast-evolving situation and formulate a strategy to shield India from supply disruptions and economic shocks. With key maritime routes under strain, Modi said India is closely monitoring shipping lanes, particularly the crucial Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the country's crude oil, gas and fertiliser imports pass.

"Attacks on commercial shipping and disruption of the Hormuz Strait are not

acceptable," he said, adding that the government is ensuring that shipments of essential commodities continue to reach Indian shores safely. Despite the turmoil, he stressed that supplies of petrol, diesel and cooking gas have remained stable, with efforts focused on minimizing the burden on ordinary households.

Highlighting the human dimension of the crisis, Modi said the safety of nearly 10 million Indians living and working in Gulf nations remains the government's "top priority." He informed the House that around 1,000 Indians have already returned safely from Iran, including over 700 medical students, while others continue to be assisted through diplomatic channels.

"I have spoken to leaders in West Asia

in two rounds of phone calls. All of them have assured the safety of Indian nationals," Modi said, even as he acknowledged casualties among Indian citizens and confirmed that the injured are receiving treatment.

Calling for political unity, the Prime Minister urged all parties to present a collective stance on the crisis. "It is essential that a unified and unanimous voice from India's Parliament reaches the world," he said, underscoring India's extensive trade ties with the conflict-hit region and its reliance on these routes for global commerce.

Modi also sought to reassure farmers and industry, stating that India has sufficient stocks of fertilisers and food grains. "In the past, even during disruptions

like the COVID pandemic, we ensured that farmers did not suffer. I want to assure them that the government will continue to make every effort," he said. He added that the country currently holds 5.3 million metric tonnes of strategic petroleum reserves and has diversified energy imports from 27 countries a decade ago to 41 today.

On energy security, the Prime Minister said coal stocks are adequate to meet rising summer demand and emphasized ongoing efforts to boost renewable and alternative energy capacity. He also warned against black-marketing and urged state governments to closely monitor the supply of essential commodities.

Framing India's response within a broader diplomatic approach, Modi reiterated that dialogue remains the only

viable path forward. "India has always raised its voice for peace in the interest of humanity. Dialogue and diplomacy are the solutions," he said. "Our efforts are aimed at reducing tensions and ending this conflict."

"The whole world is affected, and we are making efforts to ensure that India feels the impact the least," he added, pointing to the country's strong economic fundamentals as a buffer against global shocks.

As the conflict continues to unsettle global markets and strategic corridors, Modi's address signaled a dual-track approach—urgent domestic preparedness alongside sustained diplomatic engagement—while positioning India as a voice for de-escalation on the world stage.

### West Asia war poses unprecedented challenges for India: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the ongoing conflict in West Asia has posed "unprecedented challenges" for India, with significant economic, national security and humanitarian implications.

Addressing the Lok Sabha, Modi said, "The situation in West Asia is worrisome. This conflict has been going on for more than 3 weeks. It has a severe impact on the global economy and the lives of the people, and that is why the world is urging all sides for an early resolution to this conflict."

He noted that the government has been closely monitoring the situation, with S. Jaishankar and union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri regularly briefing Parliament on developments.

Highlighting India's response

to the situation and stressing that government remains committed to assisting Indians in Gulf nations, the Prime Minister said all necessary assistance has been extended to Indian nationals in affected regions. "Since this war began, every Indian in the affected countries has been provided assistance. I have spoken over the phone with the heads of state of most West Asian countries for two rounds. All have assured the safety of Indians," he said.

Modi added that while some Indians have lost their lives and others have been injured during the conflict, efforts are ongoing to ensure their safety and well-being.

He underscored that the crisis has wide-ranging consequences, affecting global markets as well as human lives, and reiterated the

need for an early resolution through collective international efforts.

He pointed out the Indian missions in the affected countries are continuously engaged in helping Indians.

"Whether it's Indians working there or tourists who have gone there, everyone is being provided with all possible assistance. Our missions are regularly issuing advisories. 24/7 outreach rooms and emergency helplines have been established in India and other affected countries. Through these, all affected people are being provided with the latest information. In times of crisis, the safety of Indians in India and abroad is crucial," PM Modi said.

### Jairam Ramesh slams PM Modi's Lok Sabha speech, raises concerns on foreign policy and economy

**New Delhi, Mar 23 (UNI)** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Monday launched a sharp critique of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address in the Lok Sabha, accusing him of avoiding key national and international issues while focusing on self-praise.

In a post on X, Ramesh described the Prime Minister's speech as "uncharacteristically short" and alleged that it was "a master class in self-boasts, cowardice and partisan dialogue-baazi." He expressed particular concern over what he called the Prime Minister's silence on the escalating tensions in West Asia, especially the ongoing conflict involving Iran.

"Not a single word was uttered in condemnation of the continued US-Israeli air assaults on Iran," Ramesh said, adding that while Iran's actions in targeting Gulf countries and the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz were "completely unacceptable," so too was "the relentless bombing of Iran with the objective of regime change and state collapse."

The Congress leader also took aim at the government's economic narrative, challenging the Prime Minister's claims about India's growth performance. He pointed to recent remarks made by a former Chief Economic Advisor, who reportedly warned that economic growth

figures during Modi's tenure may have been significantly overestimated. "The PM seems to believe that if he doesn't engage with this very credible and disturbing report, he can wish it away," Ramesh said.

Ramesh further criticised the Prime Minister's reference to the COVID-19 pandemic during his speech, calling the government's handling of the crisis "uniquely catastrophic." He invoked images of widespread distress during that period, including migrant workers walking long distances to return home, deaths linked to oxygen shortages, and large-scale unemployment.

"The nation cannot forget the deeply depressing scenes



which became all too normal then," he said, adding that the country must ensure better preparedness in the future.

The remarks come amid heightened political exchanges between the government and the opposition, with debates in Parliament increasingly reflecting broader disagreements over foreign policy, economic management, and the legacy of the pandemic response.

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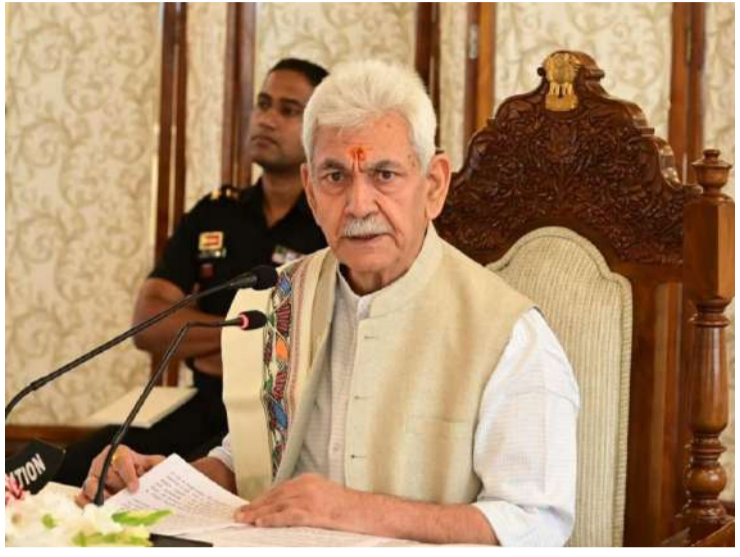
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## Shield protecting terror elements crumbling in J&K: LG Sinha

**Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday issued a stern warning to the remaining elements of the terror ecosystem, saying their "era of terror is over" and that there is no longer any safe haven for terrorists or their supporters in the union Territory.



"The people of Jammu Kashmir know fully well who shielded such terror elements, but that shield is now crumbling. I warn them that there is no longer any safe haven in Jammu Kashmir for terrorists or the networks that support them," he said while addressing a function at the Convention Centre, where he handed over appointment letters to 37 Next of Kins (NoKs) to families of terror victims.

Appointment letters were also handed over to 29 NoKs of government employees who lost their lives in service, and beneficiaries in Age relaxation cases, under Jammu and Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022 and SRO 43.

Paying tribute to the victims of terrorism, the Lieutenant Governor vowed the strongest action against terror ecosystem and terrorist supporters.

"I pledge to the families of terror victims that we will work with full commitment to secure their dignified and honourable lives. We will discharge every duty towards them with utmost seriousness, and we will not rest until justice reaches every family," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that justice to terror victim families is not limited to only punish-

ments but also healing the wounds and restoring dignity.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that it is his commitment to ensure that every terror victim's family receive the justice, jobs, recognition and support they deserve after years of suffering.

"Terror victim families remained erased from society's memory for decades. Among all these stories, the most painful and bitter truth is that these families were let down by the very system whose duty and primary obligation was to protect them.

"I do not see this merely as an administrative lapse but it was a civilizational failure of that time," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the terror victim families were harassed by elements of terror ecosystem and the situation was not sim-

ply injustice but it was the complete collapse of social morality.

"The elders of the society must ask themselves some tough questions- what kind of society we had become a few decades ago? How did Jammu Kashmir evolve into a system where the victim became a burden that time and those linked to terror were turned into beneficiaries?"

"I am confident that these questions will shake our conscience, because such practices hollowed out every value that makes a society just. Such darkness had extinguished the very spirit of law, trust, and coexistence," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said those who were part of this terror ecosystem and managed to infiltrate government machinery in the past will face the law and they will be systematically removed from government jobs and punished as per the law.

"Those directly linked to terrorism are being dismissed from service, while decades-long neglected terror-victim families are being given government jobs to secure their economic and social dignity. I see this not merely as a policy correction, but as a new moral declaration for a new Jammu Kashmir.

"This is a clear message that a new order has arrived, one that will punish mercilessly those tied to terrorism and will firmly fulfil its duties to restore the dignity of victims. This moral declaration is the announcement of a system that defines justice not only in words, but in deeds," the Lieutenant Governor further said.

## Karnataka HC refuses to intervene in hotel LPG shortage

**Bengaluru:** The Karnataka High Court on Monday declined to entertain a petition seeking uninterrupted supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders to hotels and restaurants across the state, leaving the issue to be handled by the government amid ongoing global supply concerns.



The matter was heard by Justice Sachin Shankar Magadam, who observed that the situation involves complex and evolving factors that are better addressed by the executive rather than the judiciary.

During the hearing, the judge remarked that the government is already making efforts to manage the crisis effectively. He stated that courts should refrain from intervening in such matters, particularly given the "war-like situation" influencing global supply chains.

The petition had been filed by the Bangalore Hotels Association along with several of its members. It highlighted concerns over disruptions in LPG supply that have been affecting hotel and restaurant operations.

The association argued that the shortages were linked to escalating geopolitical tensions involving the United States, Iran, and Israel, which have impacted global energy markets and supply chains.

Petitioners urged the court to keep the matter pending until further clarity emerged from ongoing government-level discussions. They contended that interim judicial oversight could help mitigate the crisis.

They also suggested that Karnataka could adopt supply management practices similar to those followed in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which they claimed were experiencing relatively smoother LPG distribution.

Representing the Union government, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the court that the situation remains fluid and subject to rapid changes due to external factors beyond the government's control. He emphasized that the government is actively working to minimize disruptions and ensure that LPG supplies continue with as little interruption as possible. However, he noted that prioritisation decisions may be necessary depending

on the evolving scenario.

Mehta pointed out that it is difficult to determine whether commercial establishments like hotels should be prioritised over domestic consumers, as multiple variables must be considered in allocation decisions.

Responding to a query from the bench regarding any positive developments for the hospitality sector, Mehta candidly stated that there was no immediate relief in sight for hotels and restaurants. He further clarified that the Union government is in constant coordination with state governments to streamline LPG distribution and address emerging challenges on the ground. Addressing allegations of uneven supply across states, Mehta rejected claims of political bias. He stated that differences in supply between states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala were based on valid and rational considerations.

## Solar capacity increased from 400 MW to 5000 MW in 9 years

**Lucknow:** Over the past 9 years, Uttar Pradesh has made remarkable progress in the field of solar energy, establishing itself as one of the leading green energy states in the country.

Before 2017, solar capacity in state was limited to around 400 MW, but today it has increased to more than 5000 MW. With effective policies, large-scale solar projects and public participation, over 4 lakh rooftop solar installations have been completed, promoting clean and affordable energy.

Initiatives like "PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana" have accelerated this transformation by bringing solar energy to the masses.

Additionally, by entering emerging sectors like green hydrogen, state is progressing strongly toward energy self-reliance and its goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy.

Officials here on Monday said before 2017, development of solar energy in UP was limited. Total installed solar capacity was around 400 MW. Due to lack of policy clarity, limited investment and absence of large projects, the sector struggled to gain momentum. Rooftop solar programs were in their early stages and public awareness was low, resulting

in minimal participation in clean energy.

After 2017, implementation of solar energy policies completely transformed the state's energy landscape. With effective execution of Uttar Pradesh Solar Energy Policies of 2017 and 2022, solar capacity has now exceeded 5000 MW.

Large solar parks, ground-mounted projects and especially rooftop solar programs have been key drivers of this transformation. Over 4 lakh rooftop solar systems have been installed, placing Uttar Pradesh among leading states in the country.

"PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana" has played a significant role in turning this sector into a mass movement. With attractive subsidies under the scheme, lakhs of consumers have installed solar systems on their rooftops.

These systems are helping consumers save approximately ₹1500 to ₹3000 per month and through net metering, they can also earn additional income by selling surplus electricity.

Under the Solar Energy Policy-2022, state government has set an ambitious target of developing 22,000 MW solar capacity. To achieve this, focus is being

given to large solar parks, ultra-mega projects and solarization of government buildings. At the same time, innovation in green energy is being encouraged, with work already underway on green hydrogen projects.

A 0.5 MW green hydrogen pilot project is being set up in Gorakhpur by Torrent Power, with a production capacity of approximately 9 kg per hour.

Similarly, Zero Footprint Industries Pvt. Ltd. is establishing a 22.5 kg per hour capacity green hydrogen plant in Rampur.

The expansion of solar energy has led to a reduction in carbon emissions and promoted clean energy production in the state. It has also generated employment opportunities for thousands of youth in installation, operation and maintenance of solar systems.

At the household level, solar energy has transformed lifestyles. Its use is no longer limited to lighting and appliances but has expanded to induction cooking, charging electric scooters and electric cars, reducing dependence on petrol, diesel and gas. With advancements like green hydrogen, Uttar Pradesh is steadily moving forward to meet future energy demands.

## Telangana Govt committed to employees' welfare, says Dy CM Bhatti Vikramarka

**Hyderabad:** Telangana Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday informed the assembly that the present government is committed to the welfare of government employees and is taking concrete steps to address long-pending issues. Replying to questions raised by the members of the house during the question hours, he said that unlike the previous BRS regime—when salaries were often credited after the 15th of every month—the current government has ensured that employees receive their salaries on the 1st of every month without delay. Highlighting key measures, the Deputy Chief

Minister stated that three pending Dearness Allowances (DAs) left unpaid by the previous government have been cleared. He also noted that the earlier regime had increased the retirement age—from 58 to 61 years, and from 60 to 65 years for Class IV employees—to defer the burden of retirement benefits. As a result, the financial liability of providing retirement benefits to around 17,000 employees has now fallen on the present government. Vikramarka informed the House that all pending medical bills of employees have been cleared. He further revealed that the previous government had left

behind arrears amounting to Rs 40,150 crore, including Rs 4,575 crore related to employee dues, as detailed in a White Paper presented in the Assembly. The government is currently paying ₹700 crore every month to clear these pending dues and is considering increasing this amount to Rs 1,000 crore to expedite the process. Since assuming office, the government has cleared approximately ₹6,146 crore towards employee-related liabilities, he added. Emphasising a "humane approach," he said the government is introducing cashless medical treatment cards for employees—an issue for which unions had

been agitating for nearly a decade. Additionally, an accident insurance scheme providing

Rs 1.25 crore to the family of a deceased government employee is being implemented.

## BJP Telangana chief Ramchander Rao arrested during 'assembly siege' protest

**Hyderabad:** Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao was arrested on Monday while staging a protest against the Congress government, accusing it of failing to fulfil its election promises and betraying public trust. Rao, along with party leaders and workers, participated in the BJP's "Assembly Siege" programme aimed at highlighting what the party described as unfulfilled assurances made by the ruling Congress. The

protest sought to draw attention to alleged lapses in delivering welfare measures and guarantees promised to various sections, including farmers, women, youth, employees and pensioners.

The BJP alleged that the Congress came to power on the promise of "Praja Palana" (people's governance), but claimed that, over the past two years, governance had instead reflected "Praja Mosam" (deception of the people). Ac-

cording to the party, key commitments remain unimplemented, leading to growing dissatisfaction among the public.

Condemning the arrest, BJP leaders termed the action as undemocratic, alleging misuse of state machinery to curb dissent. They said the protest was intended to represent public anger against what they called the government's "failures and broken promises." Police intervened during the demonstration.

## Siddaramaiah assures minorities, confident of Davangere South win

**Davangere:** Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday sought to calm rising resentment among minority communities after the Congress party's decision to nominate Samarth Mallikarjun Shamanur for the upcoming Davangere South by-election to the Assembly sparked widespread protests.

Addressing the media here, Siddaramaiah said the party will work to mitigate the discontent among minorities and expressed full confidence in winning the by-election.

"We will try to dispel the discontent among the minorities.

We are confident of winning 100 per cent in both by-elections" he said, asserting that the poor, minorities and other sections of society remain with the Congress. He also took a swipe at the BJP's claim on the polls being a referendum, saying past predictions by the Opposition had failed to materialise.

The ticket for Davangere South, a seat long held by the Shamanur family, was allotted to Samarth, grandson of the late veteran Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the candidates for both Davangere South and Bagalkot were selected by consensus after discussions with party leaders, including minority representatives. He said the high command communicated the decision late at night and emphasised unity in contesting the by-elections.

Despite assurances, the decision triggered anger among sections of the minority community, with protesters gathering at Akhtar Raza Circle carrying black flags and placards accusing the Congress of snubbing community aspirations and treating them as a vote bank. Some participated in the protests despite being Congress members.

## CM Reddy hands over Rs 1 cr insurance cheques to families of deceased power staff

**Hyderabad:** Revanth Reddy on Monday handed over accident insurance cheques of ₹1 crore each to the families of two Electricity Department employees who lost their lives while on duty, reaffirming the government's focus on employee welfare and financial security.

The cheques were presented at the Assembly premises to the families of Orsu Suresh and Mukhtar Beg, in a gesture aimed at supporting them during a time of immense loss and hardship.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the initiative reflects the government's commitment to standing by employees and their families, particularly in times of crisis. He noted that such measures are essential to instill confidence among government workers.

Reddy emphasized that ensuring financial protection for employees is not just a policy decision but a moral responsibility. He added that the government is determined to create a support system that safeguards families against un-

foreseen tragedies.

He also highlighted that such initiatives help boost the morale of employees working in critical sectors like electricity, where risks are often part of the job. Providing security to their families, he said, allows workers to perform their duties with greater confidence.

The Chief Minister lauded Electricity Minister Bhatti Vikramarka for taking proactive steps to support the families of the deceased employees. He appreciated the minister's efforts in ensuring timely assistance and compassionate outreach.

Reddy further stated that the government has been consistently working to strengthen welfare measures across sectors, particularly for employees engaged in essential and high-risk services. Highlighting healthcare initiatives, he said that coverage under the Rajiv Aarogyasri scheme has been significantly enhanced. The insurance limit has been increased from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, expanding access to quality medical care.

In addition to this, the government is extending insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh to all families identified through the Comprehensive People's Entitlement and Census Survey (CPECS), ensuring broader social security coverage.

The Chief Minister explained that the family insurance scheme was introduced with the aim of preventing families from falling into financial distress following the loss of their primary breadwinner.

He noted that under this initiative, families receive timely financial assistance, enabling them to manage immediate expenses and maintain a basic standard of living during difficult times.

Reddy also pointed out that accident insurance coverage exceeding ₹1 crore has been extended to workers in the Electricity Department as well as those employed with Singareni Collieries Company Limited, recognizing the risks associated with their work.

He said that such comprehensive insurance coverage reflects the government's understanding of the

challenges faced by workers in hazardous occupations.

## Briefs :

**AAP criticizes Centre's handling of economic impact of West Asia conflict**

**New Delhi :** vAIIMS-Delhi old OPD canteen trims menu amid gas cylinder crisis

**New Delhi :** For two weeks now, old OPD canteen at the country's largest Central Government tertiary hospital, AIIMS, New Delhi, has been battling an acute commercial LPG supply crunch amid the West Asia crisis. Though the canteen manager wrote to Indian Oil Corporation for LPG supplies with due recommendations from AIIMS officials, the facility has not been getting its pre-war-time supply of four cylinders a day. The facility, widely known as old OPD canteen, is run privately by JS Hospitality. The government has prioritised hospitals for commercial LPG supplies, but the canteen has not received its regular LPG supply for a week now. During a visit to the canteen, which serves around 500-600 people daily, including patients, attendants and hospital staff, manager Puran Shah said the canteen doesn't have an LNG pipeline. It is dependent on commercial cylinders for cooking. The canteen needs four cylinders daily to meet cooking needs. "There was no LPG supply last week, affecting operations severely," Shah said. The canteen has a commercial connection from Indian Oil distributor, Guruji Indian Gas Service, in Mundka. Shah said they tried to contact delivery person, but to no avail. Continue operations, the canteen earlier procured cylinders through informal channels at inflated prices ranging between Rs 3,000 and Rs 5,000 per refill. Now even this channel is closed as there are no cylinders, says Shah.

**Fire breaks out at Hard Rock Cafe kitchen in Delhi, no injuries reported**

**New Delhi:** A fire broke out at the kitchen of Hard Rock Cafe in Connaught Place today afternoon, causing concern among people and adjacent establishments. According to fire brigade officials, a call regarding the incident was received around 12:31 PM, following which four fire engines were rushed to the spot. Firefighters acted swiftly and managed to bring the blaze under control by approximately 12:50 PM. Initially, the caller said that the fire had broken out in the LIC building. However, it was later confirmed that the fire originated in the kitchen of Hard Rock Cafe, located on the third floor of the building. No injuries or casualties have been reported so far. As a precautionary measure, the area was cordoned off, and emergency teams carried out necessary safety checks.

**AAP seeks compensation, jobs for families of two murder victims**

**New Delhi:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday said that the Delhi government should provide Rs 1 crore compensation and a job to the families of two murder victims in separate incidents in Uttam Nagar and Wazirpur. Addressing the issue, AAP's Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj referred to the killing of a Dalit youth, identified as Tarun, in Uttam Nagar and the murder of an electrician in Wazirpur. He said both families were facing financial distress and should receive equal support from the government, including monetary compensation and employment for a family member. Bharadwaj also drew a comparison with a previous case in which a BJP worker's family received compensation and a government job after his death.

## Economic development's pace in Delhi high under BJP govt: Ashish Sood

**New Delhi:** Delhi's Education Minister Ashish Sood on Monday stated that the latest Economic Survey of Delhi 2025-26 clearly reflects that the national capital's economy is now moving towards a more robust, dynamic and high-growth trajectory.

The minister said that during 2025-26, Delhi's economic growth rate (GDP Growth Rate) has been recorded at 8.53 per cent, as compared to 7.4 per cent in 2023-24 and 6.21 per cent in 2024-25, during the previous government.

He said this simply demonstrates a significant acceleration in the pace of development under the current leadership.

Sood added that this growth rate of 8.53 per cent



is higher than the national average of 7.4 per cent and in contrast, during 2023-24 and 2024-25, national capital's growth rates of 7.4 per cent and 6.21 per cent were lower than the national growth rates of 9.2 per cent

and 6.5 per cent, respectively.

He also highlighted that per capita income has increased by 7.09 per cent in 2025-26, indicating an improvement in the standard of living of citizens.

The minister added that the rise in tax collection by 15.5 per cent, reflected strong economic activity.

Additionally, he said that the capital expenditure has also seen an increase, which showcases government's intent and also its commitment towards development.

According to Sood, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leadership of CM Rekha Gupta, the Delhi government is working in line with the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas."

He affirmed that the CM Gupta led Delhi government remains fully committed to further accelerating this momentum of economic growth.

## CM promises a shift in Delhi's direction & condition with govt's second budget

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Assembly's budget session commenced on Monday with the 'Kheer Ceremony,' marking the formal beginning of the House's proceedings.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta reiterated her government's commitment to the vision of a 'Developed Delhi, Green Delhi,' and stated that the upcoming budget would be an important step towards meeting the aspirations of around three crore people in the national capital.

Gupta mentioned that the "Kheer Ceremony" is not just a customary start to the budget process, but also a symbol of prosperity, good fortune, and a commitment to public welfare.

Various segments of society, including farmers,

students, teachers, doctors, media persons, women drivers and members from the transgender community were present on the occasion. Farmers from Delhi's rural belt honoured CM Gupta by presenting her with a traditional turban.

Cabinet Ministers Parvesh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Sirsa, Ravindra Indraj Singh, and Kapil Mishra, along with MLAs and others were also present on the occasion.

CM Gupta has said that the second budget of this government would further accelerate Delhi's development, noting that it would not only strengthen infrastructure, but also improve the overall quality of life for the residents of the national capital.

The budget aims to move Delhi towards be-

coming a city where citizens have access to better healthcare, quality education, robust infrastructure, and a clean and green environment, she said, adding that priority would be given to improving facilities for students, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, ensuring cleanliness, controlling pollution, and overall promoting a greener ecosystem.

Gupta emphasised that 'Developed Delhi, Green Delhi' is not just a slogan, but a clear vision of the government, adding that the goal is to create a positive, safe, and prosperous environment to ensure that people live with dignity and comfort. She said that the upcoming budget would focus on taking concrete steps to improve the city's condition in totality.

## Delhi plans to integrate medical institutions to boost healthcare services: CM

**New Delhi:** In a step towards further strengthening healthcare services in the national capital, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday said that the integration of key medical institutions in the city will benefit the sector while significantly improving medical education.

The move is also expected to pave the way for a substantial increase in MBBS and postgraduate (PG) seats in the city.

Moving ahead in this direction, the Delhi government plans to merge Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital (GTB), Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI), and Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) to create an autonomous institution on the lines of the AIIMS model.

In addition, efforts are underway to develop the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IH-BAS) into a second National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS-2).



With this, the CM said that a key objective of the project is to significantly increase post graduate seats so that more doctors can receive specialist training and the quality of healthcare can be enhanced.

Similar departments and disciplines currently operating separately across GTB Hospital, DSCI, and RGSSH will be integrated as part of the plan, as it is being said that presently, resources and manpower are fragmented, which results in under-utilization. It is expected that once integrated, faculty members, including

brought on board, which will pave way for PG seats in some specialised departments, that currently do not offer them like the radiation oncology, nuclear medicine, cancer research, and intensive care.

According to the CM, an increase in bed strength, patient load, and faculty numbers will also create strong prospects for expanding MBBS seats in the future.

The government also plans to develop hostels, modern laboratories, lecture theatres, and other academic infrastructure to ensure a better learning environment for students.

Gupta has said that the initiative is not limited to improving healthcare delivery, but also move in the direction towards expanding medical education and promoting research.

The CM said the plan will help position Delhi as a leading national centre for medical education, research, and advanced healthcare services.

## Two illegal suppliers held for kidnapping, threatening Delhi excise constable at gunpoint

**New Delhi:** Two men who were allegedly involved in an illegal liquor supply syndicate, have been arrested by police for kidnapping and threatening an excise department constable and his driver at gunpoint last month, an officer said on Monday.

A police officer said that the alleged mastermind was apprehended after an interstate chase that extended up to the Indo-Nepal border while he was attempting to flee the country.

According to the officer, the accused individuals have been identified as Rahul Nain, a resident of Rohtak, and Vinod Kumar, from Jhajjar in Haryana.

"Kumar is a habitual offender and has previously been found involved in five criminal cases," said Akanksha Yadav, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northwest).

The incident occurred in the early hours of February 23 when constable Naresh Sharma of the Delhi Excise Department and his driver, Rahul, were gathering intelligence on illegal liquor supply near Aggarwal Auto Mall.

"A group of armed men approached the duo and began questioning them. Upon discovering their identity, the assailants turned hostile and allegedly beat them with sticks, injuring them, before abducting them in their own car," the DCP said.

The victims were driven

## AAP flags concerns over removal of airfare caps, calls for regulation

**New Delhi:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday expressed concern over the Centre's decision to remove the cap on domestic airfares, warning that the move could make air travel less affordable for middle-class passengers and lead to a rise in ticket prices.

The party's reaction came after the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced that fare restrictions on domestic flights would be lifted with effect from March 23, allowing airlines greater flexibility in pricing tickets.

The fare caps, which had been introduced earlier to regulate ticket prices, will no longer apply, effectively giving airlines the freedom to deter-

mine fares based on market conditions.

Arvind Kejriwal, National Convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party, raised concerns over the potential impact of the decision, stating that air travel is gradually moving out of reach for many middle-class passengers.

In a post on the social media platform X, he said that removing fare caps could trigger an increase in ticket prices and urged the government to consider more effective regulation of airfares.

He emphasized that air travel is no longer a luxury but has become a necessity for many people, especially those who rely on it for work, business,

and personal commitments.

There was no immediate response from the Government of India regarding the concerns raised by the party.

The government has previously maintained that deregulation allows market competition among airlines. Experts noted that ticket prices are influenced by several factors, including fuel costs, passenger demand, seasonal trends, and the level of competition in the market. They pointed out that while deregulation may lead to short-term price fluctuations, competitive pressures among airlines could prevent sustained steep increases in fares.

## Devender Yadav slams BJP govt over 'Unspent Budget' ahead of Delhi Budget session

**New Delhi:** Devender Yadav, president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC), on Monday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Delhi government, accusing Chief Minister Rekha Gupta of "governance failure and administrative incompetence" ahead of the Budget Session.

Yadav alleged that nearly 43 per cent of the revised outlay of ₹57,850 crore for schemes, projects, and programmes in the 2025-26 Budget remained unspent, raising serious concerns over the government's implementation capacity.

He pointed out that the original allocation for development works stood at ₹59,300 crore but was later revised downward, indicating that even planned expenditures were not fully utilised.

Citing official expenditure data from April 2025 to February 2026, Yadav claimed that only ₹33,234



crore—about 57.45 per cent—had been spent on development schemes. He said this reflected a gap between policy announcements and execution.

"The government has failed to translate its own budget announcements into action on the ground," Devender Yadav said, criticising what he described as inefficiencies in governance.

He further targeted the BJP's "triple-engine government" narrative, alleging that despite claims of better coordination with the Centre, Delhi had not received adequate financial or policy support.

remained largely unimplemented.

On public utilities, he raised concerns over the financial condition of the Delhi Jal Board, stating that its debt had crossed ₹75,000 crore.

He added that residents continue to face persistent issues such as contaminated water supply and inadequate infrastructure despite significant budget allocations.

Yadav further alleged that the government is facing financial strain, claiming that funds earmarked for subsidies, including electricity support, were exhausted before the end of the financial year.

He also pointed to borrowing through bonds as an indication of fiscal stress within the administration.

Calling for greater accountability, Devender Yadav stressed that the upcoming budget must focus on effective execution rather than making fresh announcements.


**Editorial**

## The Frenzy of Power and the Wildfire of Rage

When the allure of power, the intoxication of ego, and the fury of personal vengeance converge, the resulting human chemistry stands poised on the very brink of destruction. If one turns the pages of history, the horrific riots of 1984—which Delhi witnessed in the aftermath of the 1947 Partition—emerged precisely from this interplay of rage and the game of power. Amidst the power vacuum created by the assassination of the then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and fueled by a spirit of retribution, the very air of Delhi hung heavy for three days with the acrid stench of burning human flesh. Today, a similarly horrific and spine-chilling situation has arisen in the Middle East, where the conflict between Iran and the United States is no longer confined merely to the realm of military strategy. This conflict has now reached an extreme and critical juncture, characterized by personal vengeance, familial trauma, and a global economic blockade. Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, lost four of his closest kin—his parents, his wife, and his own son—in the very first day of the American offensive. Khamenei—a leader who now possesses nothing left to call his own, and who senses the looming sword of his own mortality at every step—is today driving the entire world into the abyss of a Third World War through his reckless decisions.

The epicenter of this conflict has now shifted away from Iran's nuclear facilities and settled instead upon the 'Strait of Hormuz'—a vital global waterway. With Iran having blockaded this crucial strait, global trade—and the fuel supply chain in particular—has completely collapsed. The American administration's assertion that "we did not anticipate Iran closing this strait" serves as a stark indicator of either their strategic ignorance or their sheer political naivety. In reality, any strategic expert should have anticipated that when a country like Iran faces an existential crisis—specifically a direct military attack—it would leverage its geographical advantage to attempt an economic blockade of the world. However, President Donald Trump's actions suggest that he had not even contemplated this possibility. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton has raised precisely this critical and incisive point. According to Clinton, during his tenure—when military action against Iran was under consideration—the CIA issued a clear warning that, in the event of any conflict, Iran would first and foremost block the Strait of Hormuz. Consequently, the question of why the current Trump administration entered this conflict—without a concrete strategy, without taking its allies into confidence, and without obtaining formal approval from the U.S. Congress—is a matter of grave concern for global peace.

The United States surmised that launching airstrikes against Iran would prompt the country's beleaguered populace to take to the streets in opposition to their government, thereby facilitating a regime change. However, the U.S. appears to have learned nothing, even from its past experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iran, the reality presents a starkly different picture; the people have indeed taken to the streets—not to oppose their government, but to condemn the United States and to rally in support of their wounded nation and administration. Compounding this situation, a single, heart-wrenching tragedy has added fuel to the fire. Mistaking a building in Iran for a military installation, the U.S. obliterated it with a Tomahawk missile; in reality, however, it was a school, and the attack resulted in the deaths of 170 innocent female students. This horrific blunder occurred due to outdated military records maintained by the U.S. armed forces. The structure—which had once served as a military facility—had subsequently been converted into a school, yet this change had not been updated within the U.S. intelligence systems. This single incident has turned the entirety of Iranian public opinion, as well as the sympathies of the wider Muslim world, firmly against the United States. Now, not content with mere airstrikes, the U.S. is preparing to land thousands of American troops on Iranian soil, deploying massive warships such as the USS Tripoli for the operation. This move is widely perceived as a suicidal attempt to directly invade Iran and seize power—a strategy that is highly likely to intensify local resistance and render it even more violent.

In an effort to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, President Trump has now appealed to China, Britain, and France, urging them to dispatch their respective warships to join this mission. However, the most significant complication in this scenario is the strong possibility that Iran closed the strait in the first place precisely because of China's covert backing. China's long-term strategy may be to leverage any potential turmoil in the global economy to bolster its own economic recovery while simultaneously destabilizing the United States. Rather than seeking global peace, China desires economic chaos to facilitate its own hegemonic ambitions. Iran is currently targeting the U.S. banking system—as well as critical infrastructure belonging to America's allies—through both cyber and military means; a development that indirectly works to the advantage of Russia and China. Although the Russia-Ukraine war impacted global markets, its effects were relatively contained, as the primary cost was borne almost exclusively by the two nations directly involved. However, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has caused crude oil prices in the international market to skyrocket from \$73 to well over \$110 per barrel. This has dealt a direct blow to every developing nation across the globe—including India—triggering a massive surge in inflation.

For India, this crisis presents a particularly complex and dual-pronged challenge. Yielding to U.S. pressure and insistence, India ceased purchasing oil from its long-standing ally—Iran; a decision that has now led Russia to refuse to supply oil to India at concessional rates. Capitalizing on the global supply crunch and surging demand, Russia, too, has drastically inflated its oil prices. Russia is displeased with India for having aligned itself with the U.S. stance, and this diplomatic fallout is now directly impacting India's energy security.

The current conflict appears to be completely upending long-standing global geopolitical equations. The very United States that once tacitly supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq War is now bent on wiping that same nation off the map, while Russia and China—driven by their own global ambitions—are actively fanning the flames of this conflict. Even the most seasoned experts today are unable to envision precisely how the world of tomorrow will emerge from the smoldering flames of this war, or where the new centers of power will ultimately reside. The ultimate conclusion to be drawn from this cataclysmic conflict is that whenever the intoxication of power and the impulse for personal vengeance take precedence over strategic decision-making, it is humanity that is forced to pay the price. The ordinary citizen is being crushed between the fury of Khamenei's personal loss and Trump's battle for prestige. The bloodshed unfolding in Iran and the disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are not merely a crisis confined to the Middle East; rather, they serve as a harbinger of an economic blockade facing the modern world. Peace is no longer merely a necessity; it has become an indispensable condition for the very survival of the world.

The steady buzz of conversations, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and the sight of innovative food displays filled the halls of Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, as the 40th edition of AAHAR - The International Food & Hospitality Fair took place from 10-14 March 2026. Jointly organized by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) and the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), AAHAR has emerged as one of South Asia's most prominent B2B platforms for the food and hospitality sector. What makes the exhibition stand out is not just the scale of participation, but the way it has evolved into a trusted name and source for businesses in the food and hospitality industry to grow, scale, and expand.

AAHAR brings together hotels, restaurants, catering institutions, importers, distributors, and suppliers, creating a platform where interactions frequently develop into business partnerships. Over the years, the exhibition has witnessed an interesting trend: several entrepreneurs who once attended as visitors or buyers now return as exhibitors with their own brands. Their journeys illustrate how continued participation in the fair can yield business insights, build market connections, and ultimately drive entrepreneurial growth.

Among the vibrant state pavilions at AAHAR 2026, the Kerala pavilion showcased how regional businesses are using the platform to expand their product reach. One of the participating companies, RG Foods, traces its origins back to 1940 in Calicut, Kerala. Known for its diverse product line, including edible oils (gingelly oil, mustard oil, coconut oil), rice varieties (Palakkadan Vadi Matta rice), breakfast powders, traditional Kerala snacks (such as frozen foods), and Ready-to-use cooking pastes (ginger paste, ginger-garlic paste, garlic paste), the company has gradually expanded its presence beyond regional markets. At this year's exhibition, the company showcased authentic Kerala snacks, including banana chips, spicy mixtures, murukku, and other traditional delicacies. Mr. Swagath, a representative of RG Foods at the fair, spoke vividly about how participation



in AAHAR has helped the company connect with both national and international clients. Today, our products are available in more than 31 countries, including markets in Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and Qatar. Through interactions at the fair, it has strengthened distribution channels in Delhi and initiated discussions to expand into three new international markets. Mr. Swagath mentioned that the company holds approximately 65 percent market share in the edible oil sector across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regions and operates an extensive distribution network, reaching about 1.5 lakh retail outlets across Kerala, supported by over 450 distributors. Their participation was supported through the state government's state pavilion initiative, which provides free exhibition space to well-performing enterprises from the state. According to Mr. Swagath, extensive preparation, such as targeted digital outreach and pre-scheduled meetings with potential distributors before the event, helps the company maximise the business opportunities at AAHAR.

A similar story of growth

was shared by Mr. Dhyaan Mehta from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. His company, TGR Foods, produces cake and bread mixes used as raw materials by bakeries, confectioneries, and dairy industries. For nearly ten years, Mehta attended AAHAR as a customer, exploring suppliers and learning about industry trends. This year marked a milestone for him as he participated for the first time as an exhibitor, showcasing his own products. His journey shows how entrepreneurs often learn from the AAHAR ecosystem before launching their own ventures. Another entrepreneur who shared a similar journey is Mr. Soberpreet Singh, founder of Packmold, a company that manufactures beverage cups for hot and cold drinks. His business primarily supports small and emerging beverage brands that often struggle to meet the high minimum order requirements of large packaging manufacturers. Packmold produces cups with an aqua coating rather than a conventional plastic coating, offering a more environmentally responsible, government-compliant alternative. Within just six months of operations, the company has secured orders

from major clients such as Reliance Retail's Wild Bean Cafés and Adani Airports, while also supplying packaging to growing beverage brands like Slay Coffee.

Mr. Singh shared that years of visiting AAHAR as a buyer helped him understand the industry and identify market gaps. These experiences eventually inspired him to launch Packmold. This year marks his first participation in the exhibition as an exhibitor.

The exhibition floor at AAHAR witnessed a vibrant mix of innovation, enterprise, and global participation, bringing together emerging entrepreneurs alongside some of the most recognized names in the food and hospitality industry. The presence of both new entrants and established brands created a dynamic environment that reflected the evolving landscape of the sector. Among the major highlights were stalls by globally renowned and Indian brands such as Nescafé, Barry Callebaut, Go Cheese, Morde, Haldiram's, Cremica, and MTR. These well-known names drew significant attention from visitors throughout the event.

The stalls of these brands

became major crowd-pullers, offering engaging live demonstrations that showcased the versatility and application of their products. Visitors were not only able to witness culinary techniques firsthand but also participate in tasting sessions that enhanced their overall experience.

One of the standout attractions at the exhibition was the stall of Barry Callebaut, where chocolatier Chef Ghosh captivated audiences with his creativity and expertise. His live sessions featured intricate chocolate preparations and artistic designs that highlighted both technical skill and innovation.

Chef Ghosh's demonstrations quickly became a focal point for attendees, especially those with a keen interest in confectionery and chocolate artistry. His ability to blend technique with creativity left a lasting impression on the audience.

Students from various culinary institutes and hospitality colleges gathered in large numbers around the demonstration area. They were particularly enthusiastic about observing professional techniques and gaining insights directly from an

industry expert. The interactive nature of the sessions allowed students to engage with Chef Ghosh, ask questions, and understand the finer nuances of chocolate-making. For many, it was an opportunity to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Beyond individual brand stalls, AAHAR continued to establish itself as a significant learning platform for aspiring chefs and hospitality professionals. The event provided exposure that goes far beyond traditional classroom education.

Students attending the exhibition had the chance to interact with a wide range of industry stakeholders, including chefs, business owners, and brand representatives. These interactions offered valuable perspectives on career opportunities and industry expectations.

From sourcing ingredients to understanding advanced equipment, the exhibition covered multiple aspects of the food and hospitality ecosystem. It also shed light on crucial areas such as packaging, branding, and distribution strategies.

Such comprehensive exposure helped students gain a holistic understanding of how the industry operates in real-world settings. It also allowed them to appreciate the complexities involved in running successful food businesses.

As AAHAR celebrates its 40th edition, it stands as a testament to its long-standing contribution to the industry. Over the years, it has evolved into a trusted platform for networking, innovation, and growth.

The stories emerging from the exhibition floor reflect its continued relevance. For many participants, the event serves as a space to connect with new suppliers, distributors, and potential collaborators.

For others, it opens doors to new markets and business opportunities, enabling brands to expand their reach both domestically and internationally. The platform plays a crucial role in fostering business development.

Interestingly, several entrepreneurs who once attended AAHAR as visitors or buyers have now returned as exhibitors. This transition marks a significant milestone in their entrepreneurial journey.

## “A Strategic Framework for Doubling Cotton Productivity and Augmenting Quality Fibre”

The Ministry of Textiles organised a Chintan Shivir titled “A Strategic Framework for Doubling Cotton Productivity and Augmenting Quality Fibre” in Nagpur, bringing together key stakeholders from across the cotton ecosystem. The event aimed to chart a roadmap for enhancing productivity, improving fibre quality, and strengthening India's standing in the global cotton value chain.

The forum witnessed participation from policymakers, scientists, industry leaders, and agricultural experts, all of whom engaged in detailed discussions on strategic interventions. The collaborative platform enabled cross-sector dialogue, fostering a shared vision for the future of India's cotton industry.

Addressing the gathering, Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary of the Ministry of Textiles, stressed the importance of converting discussions into tangible and actionable outcomes. She underlined that policy intent must translate into on-ground impact for farmers and industry stakeholders alike.

She highlighted that the future of India's cotton sector depends on a holistic transformation driven by the guiding principles of Reform, Perform, Transform, and Inform. These pillars, she noted, are essential to building a resilient and globally competitive cotton ecosystem.

The Secretary further pointed out that significant improvements in cotton productivity can be achieved through the expansion of drip irrigation systems. She also



emphasized the importance of strengthening agricultural extension networks to ensure that farmers receive timely and relevant guidance.

Improved farmer advisories and district-level soil mapping were identified as critical tools in helping farmers select the most suitable cotton varieties. Such targeted interventions can lead to better yields and more efficient use of resources.

Highlighting another key area, she underscored the need for greater innovation and healthy competition in the cotton seed ecosystem. This, she said, would encourage the development of high-quality seeds tailored to diverse agro-climatic conditions.

She also called for the creation of region-specific Cotton Calendars to guide farmers on best agronomic practices. These calendars would provide structured timelines

for sowing, irrigation, pest control, and harvesting, thereby improving overall farm management.

Speaking at the event, Padmini Singla, Joint Secretary (Fibre) at the Ministry of Textiles, emphasized the need for a coordinated and integrated approach across the cotton value chain. She noted that isolated efforts would not be sufficient to address the sector's challenges.

She highlighted that improving productivity, enhancing fibre qual-

ity, and increasing farmer incomes must go hand in hand. According to her, a unified strategy involving all stakeholders is essential to achieve sustainable growth in the sector.

The Chintan Shivir featured four thematic sessions, each focusing on critical dimensions of the cotton value chain. These sessions provided a structured platform for in-depth discussions and knowledge exchange.

The first session, titled “Prosperous Farmers – Doubling Productivity, Doubling Income,” explored strategies such as soil-based crop planning and High Density Planting Systems (HDPS). It also highlighted the role of farm mechanization in improving efficiency and reducing labour costs.

In addition, the session discussed the use of AI-based pest monitoring systems and strengthened digital advisory platforms. These technological interventions are expected to help farmers make informed decisions and minimize crop losses.

The second session focused on “Precision Ginning and Quality Assurance,” emphasizing the adoption of modern ginning technologies. Discussions also covered contamination control measures and improved fibre testing systems to ensure high-quality output.

Participants highlighted the importance of robust traceability mechanisms, which can enhance transparency and boost the credibility of Indian cotton in global markets.



**Briefs :**

**INLD Holds "Shaheedi Sammelan" to Honor Martyrs**

**Narwana :** The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) is set to host a massive "Shaheedi Sammelan" at the Narwana grain market to mark the death anniversary of India's revolutionary martyrs. Thousands of youth from across the state are expected to gather as National President Abhay Singh Chautala leads the tributes.

Beyond the commemorative ceremony, the event is expected to serve as a platform for political critique. INLD leaders have already slammed the BJP government for failing to deliver on employment promises, labeling current job schemes as "scams" that offer low wages to highly qualified youth. The party has pledged that if voted to power, it will implement a merit-based hiring system and provide a monthly employment allowance of ₹21,000 to eligible youth who are currently struggling in the state's stagnant job market.

The historic grain market of Narwana has been transformed into a sea of white caps and flags as the Indian National Lok Dal prepares to host its highly anticipated Shaheedi Sammelan. This massive gathering is meticulously timed to coincide with the death anniversary of India's most revered revolutionary icons, aiming to weave the spirit of historical sacrifice into the fabric of modern political discourse. As the sun rises over the venue, the atmosphere is thick with a sense of solemnity and purpose, marking a significant moment for the party to consolidate its base among the rural and urban youth of Haryana.

**Kaithal Man Arrested for Strangling Wife to Death**

**Kaithal :** Police have apprehended a man named Arun for the brutal murder of his wife, Shalu, who was found strangled in their residence on March 20. The couple, married since 2018, reportedly had a volatile relationship fueled by the husband's alleged addiction to narcotics and involvement in illegal activities.

According to the victim's family, Arun had lured Shalu back to Kaithal from her parental home in Punjab just a week before the incident. On the day of the murder, Arun reportedly called the family to confess his crime after returning home in an intoxicated state and engaging in a heated argument with his wife. A joint police team led by CIA-1 arrested the suspect, who has since confessed to the strangulation during preliminary interrogation. A somber atmosphere has gripped the local community following the arrest of a resident named Arun, who stands accused of the targeted killing of his wife, Shalu. The investigation reached a critical juncture when a joint enforcement team, spearheaded by the CIA-1 and the local city police, successfully tracked down and apprehended the suspect. Authorities moved in after a gruesome discovery at the couple's residence, where the victim was found to have been fatally strangled on March 20. Preliminary reports suggest that the act was the culmination of a deeply troubled domestic environment that had been deteriorating for several years.

## Haryana Clinches National Para Athletics Championship

**Bhubaneswar :** Haryana has reaffirmed its status as India's sporting powerhouse by emerging as the overall champion at the 24th National Para Athletics Championship. Competing at the Kalinga Stadium, the state's para-athletes delivered a stellar performance, hauling in a massive total of 95 medals, including 39 gold, 31 silver, and 25 bronze.

The 24th National Para Athletics Championship concluded with a resounding victory for Haryana, as the state officially reclaimed its title as the premier sporting destination in India. Over the course of the five-day event held at the iconic Kalinga Stadium, the Haryana contingent demonstrated an overwhelming display of skill and physical dominance, ultimately emerging as the overall champions. The state's athletes managed to secure a staggering total of 95 medals, a haul that included 39 gold, 31 silver, and 25 bronze, placing them comfortably ahead of their nearest competitors in the final points table.

This achievement has drawn widespread praise from the highest levels of state leadership, with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini



extending his heartfelt congratulations to the entire delegation. The Chief Minister highlighted that the victory was a testament to the unparalleled resilience and determination of the para-athletes, who have consistently overcome personal and physical challenges to reach the pinnacle of their respective disciplines. He noted that the state's success is not accidental but is the result of a long-term commitment to fostering a culture of sportsmanship and excellence among all citizens, regard-

less of their physical abilities.

A key factor in this sustained success, according to the administration, is the state's robust sports infrastructure and its progressive policy framework. Haryana has been a pioneer in establishing modern training facilities and high-performance centers specifically tailored to the needs of para-athletes. These resources, combined with attractive financial incentive schemes and job security for medal winners, have created a sus-

tainable ecosystem where athletes can focus entirely on their training.

The government believes that these structured support systems are the reason Haryana athletes are able to consistently outperform rivals from across the country on the national stage.

Beyond the immediate glory of the medals, this victory is being hailed as a significant cultural milestone that will inspire the next generation of differently-abled sportspeople. The Chief Minister emphasized that

seeing such high-level performance from their peers would give young, aspiring athletes the confidence to pursue their dreams and break through societal barriers. By prioritizing inclusivity in sports, the state is sending a powerful message about the capabilities and potential of all its residents. The victory in Bhubaneswar is seen as a source of immense pride for the people of Haryana, further cementing its legacy as the "sports nursery" of the nation.

The championship, which ran from March 17 to 21, saw participation from some of the best para-talent in India, making Haryana's top-place finish even more impressive. Coaches and support staff were also recognized for their vital roles in preparing the athletes for the high-pressure environment of a national championship.

As the athletes return to their home districts, the state government has hinted at organizing a formal felicitation ceremony to honor their contributions to Haryana's sporting history. The momentum from this victory is expected to carry forward into upcoming international competitions, where many of these champions will rep-

## Factionalism and Cross-Voting Turmoil Grips Congress

**Ambala :** The internal rift within the Haryana Congress has widened following the recent Rajya Sabha elections, with Naraingarh MLA Shalley Chaudhary alleging a targeted conspiracy against her family. Her husband, former HPCC working president Ram Kishan Gujjar, recently resigned citing a culture of disrespect and infighting, while Shalley herself faces a show-cause notice for alleged cross-voting—a charge she vehemently denies.

Meanwhile, the political temperature rose in Rohtak and Karnal as local leaders and grassroots workers expressed deep resentment over the perceived "betrayal" by several party MLAs. While BJP leaders like Manish Grover have mocked the situation by suggesting the opposition deliberately fielded independent candidates due to internal dislikes, Congress workers are demanding immediate disciplinary action.

High-ranking leaders, including Bhupinder Singh Hooda and state president Rao Narendra Singh, are facing intense pressure to purge the party of "insiders" who allegedly sabotaged the official candidate to settle personal scores.

The internal stability of

the Haryana Congress has been severely compromised following the fallout of the recent Rajya Sabha elections, as accusations of betrayal and strategic sabotage surface within the party ranks. Naraingarh MLA Shalley Chaudhary has publicly claimed that a deliberate conspiracy is being orchestrated against her family, further deepening the existing rifts among state leadership. This comes shortly after her husband, Ram Kishan Gujjar, stepped down from his position as the HPCC working president, citing an environment of persistent infighting and a lack of professional respect.

The controversy has intensified as Shalley Chaudhary faces a formal show-cause notice regarding allegations of cross-voting during the high-stakes election. While she has firmly denied these charges, the friction has spread to political hotspots like Rohtak and Karnal, where grassroots workers are expressing open resentment toward several party legislators.

The rank and file of the party are now demanding swift disciplinary measures against those perceived to have undermined the official candidate to settle internal vendettas.

## Minister Reprimands Official Over Property ID Grievance

**Hisar :** A meeting of the District Public Relations and Grievances Redressal Committee turned tense as Development and Panchayats Minister Krishan Lal Panwar lost his cool over bureaucratic negligence. The Minister was reportedly incensed when a female municipal official admitted that an inquiry into a property ID error—ordered during a previous session—remained incomplete, leaving a resident of Barwala facing ongoing harassment.

Panwar reprimanded the official for failing to act on his direct instructions, stating that he was granting a final extension only because of her gender. The complainant had alleged that municipal staff were responsible for

errors on his property records but were penalizing him instead of fixing the mistake. The incident has highlighted growing frustration within the state leadership regarding the slow pace of grievance redressal at the local municipal level.

The atmosphere during the recent assembly of the District Public Relations and Grievances Redressal Committee became notably strained as Development and Panchayats Minister Krishan Lal Panwar expressed his deep dissatisfaction with the current state of bureaucratic efficiency. The Minister's visible frustration stemmed from what he characterized as a blatant disregard for administrative directives and a lack of

empathy toward the common citizen. This specific confrontation arose during a review of pending cases where the Minister found that his previous orders had been ignored by the local municipal staff.

The crux of the tension involved a female municipal official who was tasked with investigating a persistent property ID error that had been causing significant distress to a resident from the Barwala region. When questioned about the progress of the inquiry, the official admitted that the investigation remained unfinished despite being mandated in a previous session. This admission triggered a stern reaction from Minister Panwar, who viewed the delay not just as a

professional lapse but as a systemic failure to serve the public interest.

The Minister emphasized that the primary purpose of these committee meetings is to provide swift justice to those entangled in red tape, and any delay in these proceedings defeats the very objective of the grievance redressal mechanism.

He noted that the resident in question had been subjected to unnecessary harassment due to the clerical errors made by the department itself. By failing to rectify these mistakes in a timely manner, the department was effectively victimizing a citizen for a blunder they did not commit.

During the reprimand,

Minister Panwar pointed out that his instructions were clear and the timeline provided during the last meeting should have been more than sufficient to resolve such a straightforward matter. He expressed that the slow pace of work within the municipal ranks is becoming a significant hurdle for the state government's broader mission of providing transparent and hassle-free governance. The Minister's sharp words were intended to serve as a wake-up call for all officials present at the meeting.

The complainant had approached the committee with a grievance stating that the municipal staff were responsible for the inaccuracies found within his property records. Instead of

taking ownership of the mistake and correcting the digital entries, the authorities were reportedly penalizing the owner through various administrative hurdles. This circular logic of the bureaucracy, where the victim is blamed for the system's own inefficiency, was a major point of contention for the Minister.

In a moment that captured the attention of all attendees, the Minister stated that he was granting a final extension for the completion of the inquiry. He noted that his decision to show a degree of leniency in this specific instance was influenced by the gender of the official involved, though he maintained that professional standards must be upheld

regardless of the individual. This remark highlighted the gravity of the situation and the fact that his patience regarding the matter had reached its absolute limit.

The incident has resonated through the local administration, highlighting a growing disconnect between the expectations of state leadership and the ground-level execution of policies. Minister Panwar reiterated that the government would not tolerate any form of negligence that leads to the harassment of the general public.

He demanded that a comprehensive report be submitted within the new timeframe, ensuring that the property ID error is fixed once and for all.

## Japanese Giant TDK to Invest ₹4,000 Crore in Haryana

**Chandigarh :** Haryana's industrial landscape is set for a major boost as Japanese electronics leader TDK Corporation announced plans to pump approximately ₹4,000 crore into a new manufacturing facility.

The proposal was discussed during a meeting between a company delegation, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar at the Bharat Electricity Summit-2026.

The new unit will focus on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), aligning with India's push toward a clean energy infrastructure. TDK, which already holds a massive 180-acre footprint in Sohna, cited the state's investor-friendly industrial policies as a primary factor for its expansion.

This massive capital in-



vestment is expected to further cement Haryana's reputation as a top-tier global destination for high-tech manufacturing and international investment.

The industrial sector of Haryana is poised for a sig-

nificant transformation following the announcement by Japanese electronics giant TDK Corporation to invest approximately ₹4,000 crore into a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant.

This massive financial

commitment was solidified during high-level discussions at the Bharat Electricity Summit-2026, where a company delegation met with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

## High Court Orders Withholding of Finance Secretary's Salary

**Chandigarh :** In a rare and stinging rebuke of bureaucratic lethargy, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has ordered the state to withhold the salary of the Finance Secretary for the Department of Education for three months. Justice Sandeep Moudgil issued the directive following an unconscionable delay in releasing compassionate financial assistance to a bereaved family, rejecting the state's plea of budgetary constraints as a valid excuse for withholding legitimate dues.

The court observed that administrative delays often defeat the entire purpose of ex-gratia relief, which is intended to provide immediate support after an employee's death. To ensure institutional accountability, the bench also directed that the pending dues be released with interest within two weeks. The ruling emphasized that the public exchequer should not be bur-

dened by the inefficiency of officials and that the grant of interest is necessary to prevent authorities from benefiting from their own inaction.

Taking a firm stand against administrative delays, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has issued a significant directive to withhold the salary of the Finance Secretary for the Department of Education. Justice Sandeep Moudgil ordered this punitive measure to remain in effect for a period of three months. The court's decision follows a notable failure by the department to provide timely compassionate financial aid to a family in need, with the bench dismissing the state's arguments regarding budget limitations as an unacceptable justification for withholding legal dues.

The court noted that the very essence of ex-gratia assistance is to offer urgent financial stability to the fami-

lies of deceased employees, and bureaucratic stalling effectively nullifies this purpose. To ensure immediate relief, the bench has mandated that all outstanding payments, including accumulated interest, must be settled within a two-week window. The ruling serves as a stern reminder that the public treasury should not suffer due to the personal negligence of government officials.

This judicial intervention emphasizes that institutional accountability is paramount when dealing with the rights of citizens. By requiring the payment of interest, the High Court aimed to ensure that government authorities do not gain any advantage from their own lack of action. The verdict is being viewed as a landmark move to push for faster processing of welfare claims and to discourage the culture of perpetual delays within state departments.

## Private Schools Face Deadline for Fee Hike Filings

**Ambala :** Over 9,200 private schools in Haryana have been served a final ultimatum to submit "Form VI" by March 31 or lose their right to revise fee structures for the upcoming session. The Directorate of School Education made it clear that failure to comply will result in the immediate closure of the school's Management Information System (MIS) account, effectively freezing their administrative operations.

The form requires comprehensive disclosures regarding school infrastructure, staff strength, and existing salary scales. While school associations have pointed out that the government delayed releasing the form

until March this year—a task usually completed by January—education officials maintain that the deadline is non-negotiable. District Education Officer Sudhir Kalra emphasized that no fee hikes will be legally recognized without the mandatory digital upload of these records.

The Directorate of School Education in Haryana has issued a definitive and final ultimatum to more than 9,200 private educational institutions across the state regarding their administrative compliance for the upcoming academic session. This directive mandates the submission of the critical "Form VI" documentation by the hard deadline of March 31,

a requirement that serves as a prerequisite for any proposed adjustments to student fee structures. Failure to meet this specific time-

line will result in the immediate and automatic suspension of the institution's access to the state's Management Information Sys-

tem, effectively bringing their digital administrative functions to a complete standstill.

The submission of Form VI is not merely a procedural formality but a comprehensive regulatory tool designed to ensure transparency within the private education sector. By filling out this form, schools are required to provide an exhaustive disclosure of their internal operations, including detailed reports on their existing physical infrastructure and the current strength of their teaching and non-teaching staff. This data allows the education department to monitor whether the facilities provided by these institutions justify the costs being passed on to

parents and guardians.

Furthermore, the documentation demands a clear breakdown of the salary scales currently being paid to employees, ensuring that schools are adhering to established labor norms and fair compensation practices. Education officials have underscored that the primary objective of this exercise is to prevent the arbitrary or exploitative hiking of fees, which has historically been a point of significant contention between school managements and the general public. By digitizing this process, the state aims to create a verifiable record that can be audited to protect the interests of students and their families.



## Farmers Rally in Kurukshetra Against Trade Pact

**Kurukshetra** : High tension gripped the Pipli Grain Market on Monday as hundreds of agriculturalists convened to express their fierce opposition to the India-US Trade Deal. Organized by the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni), the "Kisan Mazdoor Jan Kranti Rally" saw a massive influx of participants from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, all united against what they termed a betrayal of local interests.

The protestors utilized the occasion of Martyrs Day to honor Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru, drawing parallels between the historical freedom struggle and their current fight for economic survival. Union leaders slammed the central government, alleging that the BJP has succumbed to American pressure at the expense of Indian farmers. Beyond the trade pact, the demonstrators reiterated a long list of grievances, including the demand for a legal guarantee on Minimum Support Price (MSP), total loan waivers, and the withdrawal of police cases filed during previous agitations. With the agriculture sector allegedly at risk of corporate takeover, the union has threatened a full-scale movement if the government remains unresponsive. To prevent a



blockade of the Delhi-Ambala National Highway, authorities have deployed a heavy police presence in the area.

The Pipli Grain Market became a focal point of intense political activity on Monday as a massive gathering of agriculturalists voiced their vehement opposition to the proposed India-US Trade Deal. Under the banner of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni), the "Kisan Mazdoor Jan Kranti Rally" attracted hundreds of participants from across northern India, including Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. The demonstrators characterized the international agreement as a direct threat to the sover-

eignty of Indian farmers and a betrayal of the country's local agrarian interests.

The protest was intentionally scheduled to coincide with Martyrs' Day, allowing the union to draw powerful historical parallels between the sacrifices of freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru and the modern struggle for economic rights. Union leaders delivered fiery speeches, accusing the central government of prioritizing diplomatic relations with the United States over the welfare of its own citizens. They alleged that the current administration has buckled under international pressure, potentially opening the door for a corporate takeover of

the domestic food market.

Beyond the specific grievances regarding the trade pact, the rally served as a platform for the farmers to reiterate their long-standing demands. Central to these is the call for a comprehensive legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) across all crops, which the unions believe is essential for financial stability. Additionally, the protestors demanded total loan waivers for struggling farmers and the immediate withdrawal of all police cases registered during previous agitations. The atmosphere remained charged as leaders warned of a nationwide movement if their concerns were not addressed.

Due to the strategic location of the rally, local authorities were on high alert to prevent any disruption to major transit routes. A significant police contingent was deployed in and around the Pipli area to ensure that the Delhi-Ambala National Highway remained open to traffic. While the protest remained within the grain market premises, the heavy security presence underscored the government's concern regarding the potential for a blockade. The union has made it clear that this rally is merely the beginning of a larger campaign to protect the interests of the labor and farming classes.

The "Kisan Mazdoor Jan Kranti Rally" highlights the persistent friction between global trade ambitions and the local agricultural economy. As the central government navigates complex international negotiations, the domestic backlash in the heartland of India's farming belt presents a significant political challenge. The demonstrators emphasized that they would not settle for verbal assurances and are looking for concrete legislative action to protect their livelihoods from foreign competition. The event concluded with a vow to continue the agitation until the trade deal is reconsidered.

## Seven Dead in Gurugram Construction Collapse

**Gurugram** : A catastrophic wall collapse at an under-construction sewage treatment plant in Sidhrawali village has resulted in the deaths of seven laborers. The incident occurred near the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway when a concrete retaining wall gave way, causing a massive soil cave-in that buried several workers beneath the rubble.

The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has taken immediate cognizance of the tragedy, initiating a detailed probe into potential safety violations. Chairperson Justice Lalit Batra emphasized that the right to a safe workplace is a fundamental constitutional right and that this incident may constitute a serious human rights violation rather than a simple accident. Notices have been dispatched to the labor department, police, and municipal authorities demanding a full report on safety compliance and statutory permissions. The commission is also looking into the adequacy of compensation for the victims' families, with a follow-up hearing scheduled for mid-May to ensure accountability for the systemic failure.

A catastrophic structural

failure at a sewage treatment plant currently under construction in Sidhrawali village has claimed the lives of seven laborers. The tragedy occurred in close proximity to the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway when a massive concrete retaining wall suddenly gave way, causing a massive soil cave-in that buried several workers deep beneath the debris and rubble before rescue teams could reach them. The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has moved swiftly to address the incident, taking suo motu cognizance of the deaths to investigate potential lapses in safety protocols. Chairperson Justice Lalit Batra has stated that the right to a secure and safe working environment is a fundamental constitutional protection. He further noted that the scale of this disaster suggests a grave human rights violation rather than a mere industrial accident, prompting a rigorous inquiry into the oversight of the project.

Formal notices have been issued by the commission to the state labor department, local police, and relevant municipal bodies, seeking a comprehensive re-

port on the project's safety compliance and legal permissions. Beyond investigating the cause of the collapse, the HHRC is also scrutinizing the adequacy of the compensation being provided to the families of the deceased. A follow-up hearing has been slated for mid-May to ensure that those responsible for this systemic failure are held strictly accountable under the law.

The recent loss of life at the Sidhrawali construction site has sent shockwaves through the local administration, highlighting the hazardous conditions often faced by manual laborers in the region. Preliminary reports indicate that the retaining wall may not have been reinforced sufficiently to withstand the pressure of the surrounding earth, leading to the fatal breach. Investigators are currently examining whether the construction materials used met the required quality standards and if the site had been subjected to regular safety audits.

In the wake of the collapse, the Haryana Human Rights Commission has emphasized that the lives of workers cannot be compromised for the sake of rapid infrastructure development.

## Police Crackdown on Controversial Song Content

**Chandigarh** : In a major digital sweep, the Haryana Police has intensified its enforcement against the online circulation of rapper Badshah's song "Tateere." Following reports of derogatory language aimed at women and minors, law enforcement agencies have successfully coordinated with social media giants to scrub 857 links from the internet, including over 700 Instagram Reels and 150 YouTube videos.

DGP Ajay Singhal issued a stern message stating that any content undermining the dignity of women will face uncompromising legal consequences. The Panchkula Cyber Police Station is currently spearheading the investigation, having already issued formal notices to platforms to prevent the re-uploading of the banned track.

Officials have warned the public that creating or sharing "Shorts" or "Reels" featuring the song could result in the immediate block-

ing of social media accounts and criminal prosecution. This proactive digital surveillance is part of a broader state initiative to maintain a safe and respectful online environment for all citizens.

In a significant digital enforcement operation, the Haryana Police has moved to purge rapper Badshah's controversial track "Tateere" from major social media platforms.

Following an FIR registered at the Panchkula Cyber Police Station on March 6, 2026, authorities have successfully coordinated with tech intermediaries to remove 857 online links associated with the song. This crackdown includes the deletion of 703 Instagram Reels and 154 YouTube videos that featured the objectionable content.

DGP Ajay Singhal has taken a firm stance on the issue, emphasizing that the state will not tolerate media that undermines the dignity of women or minors. The song faced intense backlash

for lyrics and visuals—specifically scenes depicting girls in school uniforms—that critics argued were vulgar and disrespectful. While the artist, whose real name is Aditya Prateek Singh Sisodia, has joined the police investigation and issued a public apology, the legal process continues under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act.

Law enforcement officials have issued a strict warning to the public against re-uploading the track or creating new "Shorts" or "Reels" using the audio. ADGP and Panchkula Commissioner Sibash Kabiraj stated that individuals found circulating the banned content will face immediate legal consequences, which may include the blocking of their social media accounts. This ongoing monitoring is part of a broader commitment by the Haryana government to ensure a responsible and safe digital environment for its citizens.

## Haryana Leads Region in Fast-Track Judicial Setup

**New Delhi** : Fresh data presented in the Lok Sabha reveals that Haryana has outpaced its neighboring states in Northern India by establishing 18 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs). These specialized judicial bodies, which include 14 exclusive POCSO courts, are designed to accelerate the trial process for victims of sexual offenses, particularly minors. While Haryana is making strides in judicial infrastructure, Punjab lags behind with only 12 such courts, only three of which are dedicated to POCSO cases. This disparity is notable given that Haryana recorded over 2,000 POCSO-related cases in 2023, a significantly higher figure than its neighbors. Nationally, Uttar Pradesh remains the leader with 218 functional fast-track courts. Despite the increase in functional courts across India, a Parliamentary Standing



Committee has raised concerns regarding the underutilization of allocated funds. The committee has urged for more efficient financial management to ensure these courts can effectively tackle the 9.2% rise in crimes against children reported

over the last year. Recent data disclosed during a session of the Lok Sabha has positioned Haryana as a regional leader in the establishment and operation of specialized judicial infrastructure. The state has successfully implemented 18 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), a figure that outpaces its immediate neighbors in Northern India. These courts are specifically designed to address the backlog of sensitive cases, ensuring that justice is delivered with a speed that traditional courts often struggle

to match. By prioritizing these institutions, the state is sending a clear message regarding its commitment to legal efficiency and the protection of its most vulnerable citizens.

A significant portion of this judicial expansion in Haryana is dedicated to the most sensitive cases involving minors, with 14 of the 18 fast-track bodies functioning as exclusive POCSO courts. These specialized environments are tailored to handle the complexities of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, providing a more supportive atmosphere for young victims while accelerating the trial process. The focus on POCSO cases is a direct response to the specific legal needs of the state, where the prompt resolution of such matters is considered a top priority for both the government and the judiciary.

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## Rohtak MC Cracks Down on Illegal Public Posters

**Rohtak** : Despite a consistent enforcement drive and the imposition of ₹2 lakh in fines, illegal advertisements and stickers continue to deface public properties across Rohtak.

The Municipal Corporation has penalized 16 violators under the Haryana Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, noting a surge in illegal hoardings as coaching centers ramp up marketing for the new academic session.

Spokesman Vipin Narwal stated that a dedicated team is now patrolling the city daily, documenting violations through photographs to facilitate the filing of FIRs against repeat offenders who refuse to pay fines. While the situation improved after being highlighted in the Vidhan Sabha last year, high-traffic areas like Mansarovar Park remain frequent targets.

Municipal Commissioner Dr. Anand Kumar Sharma reiterated that publicity material is strictly restricted to designated authorized sites and warned that the cost of removing illegal posters will be recovered from the offenders themselves.

The Municipal Corporation of Rohtak has launched an intensified crackdown on the persistent issue of illegal advertisements and stickers that continue to mar the ap-



pearance of public properties throughout the city. Despite a continuous enforcement campaign and the collection of approximately ₹2 lakh in monetary penalties, the defacement of state-owned structures remains a significant challenge for the local administration.

To date, the corporation has formally penalized 16 individual violators under the stringent provisions of the Haryana Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, signaling a zero-tolerance approach to unauthorized

marketing.

The recent surge in illegal hoardings is largely attributed to the start of the new academic session, during which various private coaching centers and educational institutions ramp up their promotional activities.

These entities often bypass legal advertising channels, choosing instead to plaster walls, electricity poles, and public transit shelters with their marketing materials. This practice not only creates a visual eyesore but also causes physical damage to

public infrastructure, leading to increased maintenance costs for the municipal body.

In response to the recurring nature of these violations, Municipal Spokesman Vipin Narwal announced the formation of a specialized task force dedicated to daily patrols across the city's key sectors. This team is equipped to document every instance of defacement through high-resolution photography, creating a digital trail of evidence that will be used to support the filing of formal First Information Reports (FIRs). This move toward criminal prosecution is specifically aimed at repeat offenders and those who have consistently ignored previous fines and warnings.

While the overall situation in Rohtak saw a measurable improvement after the issue was raised as a point of concern in the Haryana Vidhan Sabha last year, certain high-traffic zones continue to be hotspots for illegal activity.

Mansarovar Park, a central landmark in the city, remains one of the most frequent targets for unauthorized stickers and posters. The high visibility of these locations makes them attractive to illegal advertisers, prompting the Municipal Corporation to increase surveillance in these specific areas.

## Yamuna Border Pillar Project misses deadline

**Karnal** : The critical project to install boundary pillars along the Haryana-Uttar Pradesh border has hit a snag, with authorities failing to meet the February 28 cutoff. Out of the 604 markers planned to settle decades-old land disputes in the Yamuna region, 182 pillars remain uninstalled in Karnal district alone, despite the survey points being identified by the Survey of India.

Deputy Commissioner Uttam Singh has issued a stern warning to the Public Works Department, demanding rapid execution to ensure completion before the upcoming monsoon season. These pillars are seen as a permanent fix for the tensions that flare up between farmers of both states whenever the Yamuna shifts its course.

Although a formal boundary was set in 1979 under the Dixit Award, many original markers were either lost to floods or illegally removed, necessitating this joint reconstruction effort between the two state governments.

A vital infrastructure project aimed at resolving long-standing territorial disputes between Haryana and Uttar Pradesh has hit a significant roadblock after missing its February 28 completion cutoff. The initiative, which involves the installa-

tion of permanent boundary pillars along the Yamuna river, is designed to provide a definitive geographical marker for land ownership in the region. However, latest reports indicate that out of the 604 total pillars planned for the stretch, 182 markers remain uninstalled in the Karnal district alone, despite the fact that the Survey of India has already successfully identified and mapped the precise coordinates for these points.

The delay has prompted a sharp reaction from Deputy Commissioner Uttam Singh, who has issued a stern ultimatum to the Public Works Department to accelerate the construction process. There is a growing sense of urgency to finish the installation before the arrival of the monsoon season, as rising river levels and potential flooding could make the marshy border terrain inaccessible for heavy equipment. These pillars are considered the only permanent solution to the seasonal tensions that frequently erupt between farmers from both states, who often find themselves in conflict over shifting agricultural boundaries whenever the Yamuna changes its natural course.

The history of this border dispute dates back decades, though a formal boundary was technically

established in 1979 under the landmark Dixit Award. Over the years, however, the original stone markers were either washed away by catastrophic floods or intentionally removed by local miscreants, leading to a breakdown in administrative clarity. This current joint reconstruction effort between the Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments represents a multi-crore investment in interstate peace and local security. The Deputy Commissioner has emphasized that any further negligence by the executing agencies will not be tolerated, as the lack of visible markers continues to be a primary trigger for local law and order challenges.

Beyond the logistical hurdles, the project also faces the challenge of working in a dynamic environment where the river's movement can complicate the physical setting of the concrete bases. Engineering teams have been instructed to use reinforced materials that can withstand the high-velocity water flow characteristic of the Yamuna during peak rainy periods. The administration is also coordinating with their counterparts in Uttar Pradesh to ensure that the pillars are recognized and respected by residents on both sides of the border. The goal is to create a "no-man's-

land" clarity that prevents accidental encroachments and reduces the need for frequent police intervention during the harvesting seasons.

The missed deadline is particularly concerning for the farming community, which has been advocating for these markers for years to protect their ancestral holdings. Without the pillars, local revenue officials often struggle to settle land measurement disputes, leading to prolonged litigation in the civil courts. By fast-tracking the remaining 182 pillars, the Karnal administration hopes to provide a sense of permanent closure to these legacy disputes. The Public Works Department has been directed to deploy additional labor and machinery to meet the revised timeline, with daily progress reports now being mandated to ensure that the project does not slip further into the monsoon months.

The success of the Yamuna Border Pillar Project is seen as a benchmark for interstate cooperation in Northern India. If successful, it could serve as a model for other riverine boundaries where shifting waters cause similar administrative headaches. For now, however, the focus remains entirely on the ground in Karnal, where the remaining gaps in the border wall must be filled.



## Kohli relives 18-year journey as RCB end title drought in IPL

**Bengaluru:** "The whole journey for 18 years flashed before my eyes," said Virat Kohli, capturing the emotional peak of Royal Challengers Bengaluru's long-awaited maiden title triumph in the Indian Premier League.

For Kohli, who has been with the franchise since its inception, the victory was more than just a trophy — it was the culmination of nearly two decades of persistence, heart-break, and unwavering loyalty.

Reflecting on the final moments after the win over Punjab Kings, Kohli said the magnitude of the occasion was difficult to put into words as years of memories came rushing back all at once.

"All in all, it was an amazing night for all of us. It was quite surreal for me honestly, quite unbelievable when it was all unfolding in the end. So many things flashed in front of your eyes — the whole journey for 18 years. All the ups and downs, all the good moments, bad moments,"



he said. The veteran batsman highlighted that the triumph carried special meaning for those who had been part of the RCB setup from the very beginning, recalling his long association with the franchise alongside support staff members like Ramesh Mane. "It was a very special night for all of us at RCB. I have been here

since day one and so has Ramesh Mane. We are probably the oldest members of the RCB group," he noted.

Kohli revealed that despite the enormity of the occasion, the team entered the final with a sense of composure, built on consistent performances throughout the season.

"When we reached the

finals, I felt a sense of calm confidence. But you also understand it's not going to be a cakewalk. It's a Final and there is another team who has played really well to get there," he said, acknowledging the challenge posed by Punjab. He added that the scars of past near misses in the league played a crucial role in shaping the

team's mindset, helping them stay focused under pressure.

"Given the history of the near misses and the almost moments of the past where we reached the finals and we could not win, I think that gave us extra motivation to hold our nerve," Kohli said, stressing that the team had earned its place through strong performances against top sides. As the match drew to a close, Kohli admitted the final over tested his nerves despite the result appearing certain.

"Especially the last over where you know the game is sealed. Hoping that Josh doesn't bowl a no ball which he never does. There was quite confidence but still you are hoping for the perfect result," he said, adding that waiting for the final few deliveries was "probably the toughest part of the night." For Kohli and RCB, the victory was not just about winning a title, but about finally completing a journey that had defined a generation of players and fans alike.

## Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan named ICC Men's player of month for February

**Dubai:** Sahibzada Farhan has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for February 2026 following a remarkable campaign in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 held in Sri Lanka.

The Pakistan opener emerged as the highest run-getter of the tournament, amassing 383 runs in seven matches (six innings) at an impressive average of 76.60. His outstanding tally included two centuries and two half-centuries, underlining his consistency at the top of the order.

Farhan's aggressive batting approach was a key highlight of his performance, as he maintained a striking rate of 160.25 throughout the tournament. His ability to dominate bowlers across conditions made him one of the standout performers of the event. In the process, he surpassed a longstanding record held by Virat Kohli for the most runs scored in a single edition of the T20 World Cup, marking a significant milestone in his career. This is the first time Farhan has received the ICC Player of the Month award, making him the first Pakistani male cricketer to win the honour since Haris Rauf in November 2024.



Reacting to the achievement, Farhan expressed immense and gratitude, calling it an "incredible feeling" to be recognized on the global stage. He emphasized that performing in a World Cup, where fans from around the world are watching, made the award even more special.

He described the tournament as one he would always cherish and said he is determined to carry forward the momentum into future series and competitions. Farhan also credited his teammates for their constant support and belief. The opener also etched his name in the record books by becoming the first batter to score two centuries in a single T20 World Cup edition, with his hundreds coming against Namibia and Sri Lanka.

His performances propelled him to a career-high

rating in the ICC Men's T20I Batting Rankings, where he climbed to the second position following a brilliant century in Pallekele.

Farhan was also part of a historic partnership with Fakhar Zaman, as the duo put together a record 176-run stand—the highest partnership for any wicket in T20 International history.

Despite his individual brilliance and a narrow five-run victory against the co-hosts, Pakistan failed to qualify for the semi-finals due to an inferior net run rate, a disappointing outcome for the team. Nevertheless, Farhan's consistency and impact earned him a place in the ICC Team of the Tournament. His scores across the seven games—47, 73, 0, 100\*, DNB, 63, and 100—highlight his dominance throughout the competition.

## East Bengal push for top four spot as Mohammedan SC look for first ISL points

**Kolkata:** The Indian Super League 2025-26 season continues with a highly anticipated Monday night fixture as East Bengal FC lock horns with local rivals Mohammedan SC in a Kolkata Derby at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here.

The Red and Gold Brigade currently sit sixth in the table with eight points, but will be looking to bounce back from the frustration of their last three matches.

Despite a highly promising start to the season, they were most recently forced to share the spoils in a 1-1 draw against Kerala Blasters FC, after conceding a 92nd-minute stoppage-time goal.

They will face a Mohammedan Sporting side that is searching for a turning point in their season. The Black and White Brigade, navigating their season in the top flight with an all-Indian squad, currently sit at the bottom of the table without a point after suffering four consecutive defeats.

Mehrajuddin Wadoo's men arrive on the back of a narrow 1-2 away defeat to Bengaluru FC, where

a spirited second-half fightback featuring a 51st-minute strike from Mahitosh Roy was ultimately

not enough to overcome first-half goals from Ryan Williams and Ashique Kuruniyan.

While the two iconic clubs share a century-old rivalry in Indian football, clashing countless times in historic domestic tournaments, their recent battles in the Indian Super League have seen East Bengal hold

the upper hand.

In their two previous ISL meetings, the Red and Gold Brigade have secured a victory and a draw. Their last encounter in February 2025 saw East Bengal claim a commanding 3-1 victory at the VYBK, courtesy of strikes from Naorem Mahesh Singh, Saul Crespo, and David Lalhlansanga, which overpowered a lone goal from Mohammedan's Franco.

East Bengal will hope to leverage this recent dominance and their stable form, while Mohammedan SC will look to use the immense emotion of the derby to secure their much-needed first victory of the campaign and avenge their previous defeat.

Speaking ahead of the marquee clash, East Bengal FC head coach Oscar Bruzon addressed the team's recent late setbacks while warning against complacency.

"Probably lack of concentration in the last minutes and in set pieces has made us drop points. But inside the dressing room, inside the team, our determination, our focus, our commitment is there," Bruzon stated.

Refusing to underestimate their local rivals, he added, "Mohammedan will try everything to collect their first point. I have full respect for them." East Bengal goal-keeper Prabhukhan Gill echoed his coach's unwavering confidence, emphasising the team's overarching ambitions despite recent frustrations. "We have dropped some points, but that doesn't mean that we are not aiming for the top spot still," Gill explained.

Pointing to their strong structural foundation, he noted, "This year in the ISL, we are one of the teams that have scored the most goals and conceded one of the fewest. So we are playing some of the best football this season. It's just a matter of time before results start to come."

For Mohammedan Sporting, the objective is to channel their underdog status into a historic performance.

Head coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo demanded fearlessness from his young Indian contingent.

"We have faced challenges this season, but this is the perfect stage to show our character," Wadoo explained.

"East Bengal are a strong team with experienced players, but in a derby, passion and effort can level the playing field. I want my players to go out there without fear, play with their hearts, and fight for our identity in the ISL. We are looking for points as it is a question of our survival in the top tier of Indian football. We will give our absolute best to keep the club alive in the Indian Super League," he said. Mohammedan Sporting forward Md Fardin Ali Molla highlighted the squad's relentless motivation. "Results haven't gone our way, but the morale inside the dressing room is still strong. We are united as a family. A positive result in a match of this magnitude can change our entire season. We are ready to give our 100 per cent, fight until the final whistle, and bring home our first points of the season," he said.

## All-format international Renshaw puts focus on Test recall

**Brisbane:** Matt Renshaw says returning to the Test team remains his top priority despite having a career-best year in the limited-overs formats.

Renshaw, who turns 30 at the end of the week, became an all-format international over the summer, making his ODI debut against India in October and his T20I debut against Pakistan in January.

Those two events bookended his most productive Big Bash season to date in which he scored 444 runs for the Brisbane Heat which included a century against Perth Scorchers.

However, Renshaw is desperate to add to his 14 matches in the Baggy Green, the most recent of which came during Australia's tour to India in 2023.

"When I was going through what

I wanted to achieve in the preseason ... I wouldn't have told you that I would debut in two different formats," Renshaw said to reporters at the announcement of Australia's 2026-27 schedule at Gold Coast's Burleigh Beach. "It's something (I'll be able to) reminisce now having a bit of a break ... to see how successful that year was." Trying to get back in the Test team is a priority of mine, but anytime you play for Australia is pretty special. And now to have played in the T20 World Cup is pretty awesome. The tall left-hander was added to Australia's T20 World Cup squad despite having made his international debut only days earlier in Pakistan, but emerged as his side's best performing batter with 37 against Ireland and 65 against Zimbabwe.

Although controversially left out of the XI for the decisive clash with Sri Lanka, which Australia lost, Renshaw's stocks have risen dramatically in one of the few silver linings from a tournament the Aussies would otherwise prefer to forget. He puts his recent success down to a "mindset shift" that he implemented over the pre-season that helped him enjoy his cricket more. And while his mental clarity, combined with a few "little technical changes" have helped the Queenslander flourish in white-ball cricket, the flow-on effects have been a net positive for his longer-form game too. "With my one-day cricket specifically, I'm able to manipulate the game a bit more," Renshaw said.

"We're seeing it a little bit more around the world, trying to change the way that bowlers are bowling." In

the past in red-ball cricket, (as) the bowlers are locking in for top of off (stump), you've got to try and leave as well as you can. But now, just walking down the wicket changes the angle (and) gets him thinking what you're trying to do. "Renshaw, who became the 63rd man to represent Australia in all three formats, says he feels physically and mentally ready to become a full-time all-format player if the selectors give him the nod. He will have a quiet off-season, opting against an overseas T20 deal or another county contract in the UK. Australia's next assignment is yet-to-be-announced back-to-back ODI and T20I tours of Pakistan and Bangladesh in late-May and early-June while the Test team will return to action in August when they host Bangladesh in Darwin and Mackay.

## Defending champion Sabalenka into Miami Open last 16

**Florida (USA):** Aryna Sabalenka's bid to complete the 'Sunshine Double' continued as she swept past Caty McNally to reach the last 16 of the Miami Open.

World number one Sabalenka is aiming to become only the fifth woman to win at Indian Wells and Miami in the same year. Having lifted the first of those titles in California this month, Belarusian Sabalenka cruised into the last 16 with a 6-3 6-4 victory over Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk. Kazakhstan's Rybakina will play Australian qualifier Talia Gibson, who knocked out another seeded player courtesy of a 6-2 6-2

win over 18th seed Iva Jovic. Gibson, who reached the Indian Wells quarter-finals, beat former world number one Naomi Osaka in the second round in Miami. Fifth-seeded American Jessica Pegula, runner-up to Sabalenka last year, needed only an hour and six minutes to beat Canada's Leylah Fernandez 6-2 6-2. Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko, runner-up in Miami in 2018, fought back to claim a 5-7 6-2 7-5 win over seventh seed Jasmine Paolini of Italy. Ostapenko will next play American world number 45 Hailey Baptiste, who beat Ukrainian ninth seed Elina Svitolina 6-3 7-5.

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## PSL to start without fans as result of Gulf conflict

**Karachi:** Pakistan's T20 league will start without crowds and take place at only two venues because of the fuel crisis that has resulted from the US and Israel's war with Iran.

The eight-team PSL is scheduled to take place between March 26 and May 3.

The US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28 and it has triggered [Pakistan] response that has choked off the Strait of Hormuz, which is used to take oil and gas from the Gulf to Asian countries and the rest of the world, according to BBC sport. "The [Pakistan] Prime Minister [Sheh-

baz Sharif] has requested restricted movements of people because of the fuel crisis so we have decided that the PSL (Pakistan Super League) would continue as per the original schedule but without crowds," said Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi.

"All PSL matches will now take place in Lahore and Karachi and we hope the league could be held with crowds but that would be contingent on the crisis in Iran ending. The decision means Faisalabad, Multan, Rawalpindi and Peshawar will miss out on hosting matches.

## Hockey India announces nominees for 8th Annual Awards 2025

**New Delhi:** Hockey India on Monday revealed the nominees for the Hockey India 8th Annual Awards 2025 which will be held on March 27 here.

The awards will recognise outstanding performances and contributions to Indian hockey during the 2025 season.

Among the most prestigious honours of the evening will be the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year, presented to the top male and female players.

The awards will also highlight emerging talent through the Hockey India Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Men - Under 21) and the Hockey India Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Women - Under 21). 1

Excitement across playing positions will be recognised through the Hockey

India Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year, the Hockey India Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year, the Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year, and the Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year. A total of 32 nominees across these eight categories have made the final shortlist.

In addition to these categories, the ceremony will include special recognitions such as the Hockey India President Award for Outstanding Achievement and the Hockey India Jaman Lal Sharma Award for Invaluable Contribution. Officials will also be recognised at the Hockey India Annual Awards through special honours such as the Hockey India President Award for Umpire/Umpire Manager of the Year, the Hockey India President Award for Technical Offi-

cial of the Year, and the Best Member Unit Award. The ceremony will further celebrate team achievements, including the gold medal-winning Indian Men's Hockey Team from the Asia Cup Rajgir 2025 held in Rajgir, as well as the bronze medal-winning Indian Junior Men's Hockey Team from the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025.

In addition, member units will be acknowledged for their outstanding performances in the 15th Hockey India National Championships, highlighting grassroots and state-level contributions to the sport. Dilip Tirkey, President of Hockey India, emphasised the importance of recognising excellence as Indian hockey enters a crucial phase. He noted that the awards serve as a platform to honour players and officials who have consistently



raised the bar in the sport. He added that the annual awards reflect the dedication, discipline, and achievements of individuals who continue to contribute to the growth and success of Indian hockey, and expressed optimism about the sport's progress. Bhola Nath Singh, Secretary General of Hockey India, highlighted that the awards acknowledge the collective efforts of players, coaches, officials, and

member units. He stated that their commitment has played a significant role in strengthening the hockey ecosystem in India and expressed enthusiasm about bringing the hockey fraternity together to celebrate these accomplishments.

The nominees for the Hockey India 8th Annual Awards 2025 span multiple categories, showcasing top performers across positions and age groups.

For the Hockey India Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year 2025, nominees include Prince Deep Singh, Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Bichu Devi Kharibam, and Suraj Karkera.

In the Hockey India Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year 2025 category, the nominees are Sanjay, Amit Rohidas, Jugraj Singh, and Harmanpreet Singh.

The Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year 2025 features nominees Hardik Singh, Sumit, Raj Kumar Pal, and Nilakanta Sharma.

For the Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year 2025, the shortlisted players are Sukhjeet Singh, Abhishek, Navneet Kaur, and Shilank Lakra.

In the women's junior catIn the women's junior category, the Hockey India

Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year 2025 (Under 21) features promising talents such as Sakshi Rana, Jyoti Singh, Sunelita Toppo, and Kanika Siwah, all of whom have showcased exceptional potential at the junior level.

For the men's junior category, the Hockey India Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year 2025 (Under 21) includes nominees Prince Deep Singh, Manmeet Singh, Anmol Ekka, and Arshdeep Singh, highlighting the depth of young talent emerging in Indian men's hockey.

The prestigious Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2025 (Women) will see top contenders such as Navneet Kaur, Salima Tete, Lalremjam, and Savita competing for the honour, each having delivered standout performances over

the past year. Meanwhile, the men's Player of the Year category features leading names including Hardik Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Sanjay, and Abhishek, all of whom have played pivotal roles in India's recent successes on the international stage.

The Hockey India 8th Annual Awards 2025 will thus serve as a grand celebration of excellence, recognising not only individual brilliance but also the collective contributions of players, officials, and member units who continue to drive Indian hockey forward.

By honouring achievements across categories and levels, the awards underline the sustained progress of the sport in the country and reinforce the commitment of Hockey India to nurturing talent and strengthening the hockey ecosystem in India.



BSE Sensex			Nifty 50			Nifty 500			Nifty Next 50			Nifty 100			Nifty Bank			Nifty Midcap 100		
Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change		Close	Percent change	
72,696.39	-2.46%		22,512.65	-2.60%		20,664.25	-3.11%		61,414.90	-3.83%		23,098.25	-2.81%		51,437.75	-3.72%		52,717.55	-3.9%	
Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open	
74,532.96	73,732.58		23,114.50	22,824.35		21,327.90	21,079.60		63,862.30	63,236.75		23,766.10	23,478.80		53,427.05	52,576.10		54,855.50	54,242.40	
High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low	
73,732.58	72,558.44		22,851.70	22,471.25		21,090.05	20,611.80		63,238.65	61,272.25		23,504.20	23,054.30		52,665.30	51,323.60		54,242.40	52,573.55	

## Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
HCL Tech	1,358.60	1.87
Power Grid Corp	302.10	1.51
Infosys	1,256.80	0.07
ONGC	265.45	0.02
Infosys	1,255.90	2.88

## Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Shriram Finance	877.70	-6.49
Titan Company	3,853.10	-6.17
Trent	3,356.70	-5.70
Jio Financial	226.10	-5.52
UltraTechCement	10,362.00	-5.23

## Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Apr 02	139,815.00	-4,677.00 -3.24
Silver May 05	221,921.00	-4,851.00 -2.14
Crudeoil Apr 20	8,589.00	-669.00 -7.23
Naturalgas Mar 26	277.30	-10.80 -3.75

## Gold, Silver prices fall over 7pc amid West Asia tensions

**New Delhi:** Gold and silver prices in the domestic market witnessed a sharp decline of more than 7pc on Monday, driven by ongoing tensions in West Asia, global economic uncertainty, and a strengthening US dollar that has shifted investor interest away from precious metals.

Gold prices fell steeply during the trading session, dropping from Rs 1,40,158 in early trade to a low of Rs 1,29,595. The metal later recovered slightly and was trading around Rs 1,34,000 levels, still marking a significant decline of over 7pc.

Silver prices mirrored the trend, falling more than 7pc to trade at Rs 2,09,797 per kg, after hitting an intraday low of Rs 1,99,643. The sharp swings highlighted heightened volatility in the bullion market.

Market experts believe the decline was largely due to profit booking after a strong rally in recent weeks. Prices of both metals

had surged significantly during the early phase of the West Asia conflict, as investors rushed to safe-haven assets, leading to elevated price levels and tight physical supply in some markets.

With prices at record highs, investors are now locking in gains, triggering a correction, analysts noted.

Another key factor weighing on gold and silver is the shift in global interest rate expectations. With crude oil prices remaining above USD 110 per barrel, concerns over rising inflation have intensified.

This has reduced the likelihood of interest rate cuts and increased expectations of possible rate hikes by central banks.

Higher interest rates typically dampen demand for gold and silver, as these assets do not offer fixed returns like bonds or interest-bearing instruments, making them less attractive in a high-rate environment.

## Sensex down nearly 1,900pts, Nifty below 22,500

**Mumbai:** The Indian Stock Market on Monday came under renewed pressure with Nifty falling below 22,500, intraday, for the first time since April 9, 2025.

At close, the Sensex was down 1,836.57 points or 2.46 percent at 72,696.39, and the Nifty was down 601.85 points or 2.60 percent at 22,512.65.

Nifty Mid and smallcap indices also slipped nearly 4pc each. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell to Rs 414.75 lakh crore against Friday's Rs 429.11 lakh crore.

Among the sectors, all the indices ended in the red. Sectors like realty, capital goods, consumer durables, metal, telecom, PSU Bank lost 4 to 5pc, while auto, energy, media, private bank, oil & gas down 3pc each.



On Nifty, the key losers were Shriram Finance, Trent, UltraTech Cement, Titan Company, Jio Financial. On the gaining side were HCL Technologies, ONGC, Power Grid Corp, Infosys.

Over 1000 stocks touched their 52-week low on the BSE. These included IDBI Bank, Petronet LNG, Aditya Birla Fashion, Re-

liance Power shares came under renewed selling pressure, falling 7.3% while Paytm shares cracked 6pc.

In the Asian market, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dropped 3.5pc to finish at 51,515.49 while in Taiwan, the Taixex shed 2.5pc to 32,722.50.

Further, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.7pc to 8,365.90, South Korea's Kospi dove 6.5pc to 5,405.75, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 3.5pc to 24,382.47.

Among the banking stocks, HDFC Bank remained the key loser as the stock fell about 2.5pc. Shares of State Bank of India (SBI) also fell 3% after the lender got a Rs 6,337-crore tax demand from the Income Tax Department for the assessment year 2024.

Reliance Power shares came under renewed selling pressure, falling 7.3% while Paytm shares cracked 6pc.

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## AI platform Cognavi enables global placements for Indian engineers with Rs 42 lakh average package

**New Delhi:** Cognavi India Pvt. Ltd. has facilitated international placements for 13 engineering students from premier Indian institutes, with an average annual compensation of Rs 42.15 lakh, highlighting the growing role of artificial intelligence in global talent hiring, according to a company statement on Monday.

The placements were enabled through the company's proprietary AI-based "Skill Tree" technology, which maps candidates' technical capabilities directly to global employer requirements, moving be-

yond traditional resumé-based screening.

Among the top offers, the highest package stood at Rs 56.27 lakh for a data scientist role, while two students from the Indian Institutes of Technology secured pre-placement offers of Rs 46.78 lakh in technical and product development roles.

The selected candidates have been placed across a wide range of high-value roles, including data science, system engineering, electrical development, application engineering, product development, and design engineering.

These opportunities span sectors such as technology, electronics, and advanced manufacturing, reflecting strong global demand for skilled Indian engineers. Out of the 13 candidates, 11 are from institutions ranked among the top 100 in India under the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), while the remaining two are from IITs. The hiring organizations have not been disclosed due to confidentiality agreements, but are said to be leading global enterprises.

Managing Director and

CTO Varun Modgill said the global engineering talent shortage is more about matching skills with demand rather than lack of talent, adding that AI is helping bridge this gap at scale.

The company noted that AI-driven recruitment focuses on real-world technical competencies rather than academic scores or institutional pedigree, improving hiring efficiency and long-term outcomes.

Cognavi, which has a presence across more than 300 engineering colleges in India, is also working closely with institutions to build a

strong pipeline for cross-border recruitment.

The platform aims to expand opportunities beyond traditional IT roles and connect Indian engineers with global careers in core engineering and emerging technologies.

## Polymatech secures land in Tamil Nadu, plans Rs 550 cr in medical devices

**New Delhi:** Polymatech Electronics Limited on Monday announced that it has secured additional land in the SIPCOT Medical Devices Park, located near its existing facility in Oragadam, to accelerate its expansion in the medical devices seg-

ment. The company has executed a 99-year lease for a 4.45-acre land parcel and plans to invest approximately ₹550 crore to develop advanced medical device manufacturing infrastructure at the new site.

This expansion comes at a time when Polymatech's current facility in Oragadam is operating at full capacity, reflecting strong and growing demand for its advanced manufacturing capabilities in high-precision electronics.

## EKA Mobility, GreenCell Win LOA for 915 E-Buses in Hyderabad under PM E-DRIVE

**Hyderabad:** EKA Mobility, a leading electric vehicle and technology company, in consortium with GreenCell Mobility, on Monday said it has secured a Letter of Award (LOA) for the supply and deployment of 915 electric buses in Hyderabad under the Government of India's PM E-DRIVE scheme. The project, to be implemented under the CESL-led PM E-DRIVE (Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement), involves rollout of 100 nine-metre and 815 twelve-metre standard-floor non-AC

electric buses aimed at strengthening urban public transport.

In a release, the companies said the buses are fully electric and zero-emission, designed to deliver efficient, reliable. And commuter-friendly services across the city. The latest LOA builds on earlier contracts secured by EKA Mobility under CESL's PM E-Bus Seva initiative for deployment of electric buses in multiple states, including Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Puducherry and Meghalaya. Commenting on the development, Rohit

Srivastava, Business Head and Chief Growth Officer of EKA Mobility, said the award reflects the company's technological strength and execution capability.

He added that the project will support Hyderabad's transition towards cleaner and smarter mobility in line with the national electric vehicle push.

The PM E-DRIVE scheme is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at accelerating EV adoption, boosting domestic manufacturing and reducing urban pollution.

## Bosch and Tata AutoComp Systems in JV for eAxle systems, electric motors

**Chennai:** Bosch Limited, a leading supplier of technology and services, has announced an equal joint venture with Tata AutoComp Systems Limited (TACO), one of India's largest automotive components manufacturers, to drive innovation in the electric mobility space.

The joint venture will focus on the engineering, manufacturing, and sales of advanced eAxle systems and electric motors in India, marking a significant step toward strengthening the country's electric vehicle ecosystem. Both partners will hold equal stakes in the venture, which is expected to commence operations by mid-2026, subject to the necessary regulatory approvals.

According to Gurusudhakar Mudrapur, President of the Bosch Group in India and Managing Director of Bosch Limited, battery electric technology is emerging as the most viable solution for achieving

low emissions in passenger cars and certain commercial vehicle segments. He noted that the collaboration with Tata AutoComp Systems Limited is aimed at accelerating the adoption of efficient and state-of-the-art e-mobility solutions tailored for the Indian market. The joint venture will be headquartered in Pune and is expected to play a key role in promoting sustainable and future-ready mobility technologies in the region.

By combining their strengths, the two companies aim to expand their footprint in India's rapidly growing e-mobility sector while catering to increasing demand for locally manufactured electric vehicle components.

Sandeep Nelamangala, Joint Managing Director of Bosch Limited and President of Bosch Mobility India, highlighted that the global mobility market is undergoing a major transformation, with India be-

ing no exception. He emphasized that e-mobility is a strategic focus area for the company, and customers are increasingly seeking advanced global technologies that are manufactured locally in India. The joint venture aims to address this demand by delivering cutting-edge solutions while leveraging local engineering and manufacturing capabilities. Globally, Robert Bosch mbH has invested over €6 billion in e-mobility, underscoring its long-term commitment to electrification and sustainable transportation. Through this partnership, Bosch plans to bring its advanced eAxle systems and electric motor technologies to India, further strengthening its presence in the domestic market. Karsten Müller, Executive Vice President, Manufacturing and Quality, Electrified Motion at Robert Bosch GmbH, stated that India's position as the world's third-largest

automotive market presents significant growth opportunities.

He added that the collaboration with TACO will enable Bosch to deliver globally benchmarked solutions tailored to local needs, while enhancing its engineering and manufacturing capabilities in India. The joint venture is expected to contribute significantly to the localisation of advanced EV technologies, reducing dependency on imports and boosting domestic production. It also aligns with India's broader push toward clean energy and sustainable mobility, supporting the transition to electric vehicles across passenger and commercial segments. With this strategic move, Bosch Limited and Tata AutoComp Systems Limited aim to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of mobility in India, driving innovation, efficiency, and sustainability in the automotive sector.

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