

# Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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## LS passes Finance Bill 2026

Sitharaman says reforms driven by 'Conviction, Not Compulsion'

**New Delhi :** The Lok Sabha successfully passed the Finance Bill, 2026 on Wednesday via a voice vote, marking the conclusion of the Lower House's approval process for the Union Budget 2026-27. This legislative milestone officially operationalizes the tax proposals, duty changes, and structural amendments that will govern the financial year starting this April.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while replying to the two-day debate, emphasized that India's current reform trajectory is driven by conviction and clarity under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, rather than the historical necessity of past decades. She noted that the bill is built upon five guiding principles aimed at fostering a trust-based tax administration and reducing hardships for honest taxpayers through simplified compliance and



transparency.

The Bill introduces significant revisions to income tax rates and customs duties designed to influence disposable income, savings, and long-term investment

patterns across the national economy. Sitharaman underscored the government's commitment to improving the ease of living for common citizens and the ease of doing business by removing excessive permits, quotas, and licenses that hinder legitimate activity. A major thrust of the legislation is the empowerment of MSMEs, farmers, and cooperatives by improving liquidity and reducing their overall compliance burden. Additionally, the Finance Minister highlighted a strategic focus on making India a global business hub, offering specialized taxation clarity for sectors including digital infrastructure, electronics, critical minerals, and nuclear energy. These measures collectively aim to drive growth, generate employment, and enhance India's global competitiveness in the coming year.

### FCRA Amendment Bill Introduced in Lok Sabha to tighten NGO foreign funding rules

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday to tighten oversight of NGO funding. The bill, approved by the Cabinet on March 19, seeks to enhance the 2010 Act by establishing a designated authority to manage assets when an organization's registration is cancelled, surrendered, or lapses. This

authority will have the power to take control of, manage, or dispose of assets created from foreign funds, with proceeds credited to the Consolidated Fund of India. Currently, approximately 16,000 NGOs receive nearly Rs 22,000 crore annually, and the government aims to prevent potential misuse through these stricter monitoring mechanisms and mandatory prior approvals for asset sales.

## UP poll heat rises as Modi, Akhilesh rallies set stage for 2027 battle

**Lucknow :** As weather patterns shift and temperatures rise, the political climate in Uttar Pradesh is also heating up in anticipation of the 2027 Assembly elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a massive public gathering on March 28 during the inauguration of the Noida International Airport in Jewar.

Immediately following this, on March 29, Samajwadi Party National President Akhilesh Yadav will officially launch his party's electoral campaign from Dadri with the Samajwadi Samanta Bhaichara Rally. The Samajwadi Party has strategically chosen Western Uttar Pradesh as its starting point to challenge the current dominance of the Bharatiya Janata Party in



districts like Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Bulandshahr, and Baghpat.

The political analysts observe that while the BJP has strengthened its position through an alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal, there is growing discontent among the Gurjar community regarding a perceived lack of representation. Akhilesh Yadav aims to capitalize on this by balancing Jat and Gurjar equations alongside the party's traditional PDA coalition of backward classes, Dalits, and minorities. This strategy follows the earlier launch of the Gurjar Chaupal initiative led by spokesperson Rajkumar Bhati. By mobilizing organizational units across surrounding districts for the Dadri event, the Samajwadi Party, now the country's third-largest political entity, intends to send a powerful message to the electorate that it is poised to form the next government in the state.

## Debate Sought for Fishermen Stranded in Iran

**New Delhi:** Congress MP Vijay Vasanth has moved an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha to discuss the plight of over 1,000 fishermen from Kanyakumari stranded in Iran. Vasanth reported that these citizens are facing a dire humanitarian crisis, struggling without adequate food or basic necessities on various islands. The MP urged the Centre to initiate emergency evacuations and provide urgent medical assistance on a war footing. These fishermen, who traveled for work, are currently stuck due to regulatory challenges following the West Asia crisis. Their families in India remain increasingly anxious about their safety and survival.

## Congress Ordered to Vacate Historic Headquarters

**New Delhi:** The Congress party has received official notice to vacate its long-standing headquarters at 24 Akbar Road and the Youth Congress office at 5 Raisina Road by March 28. This move follows the party's shift to its new premises, Indira Bhavan. Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Tiwari condemned the government's directive as undemocratic and unfortunate, indicating that the party is exploring both political and legal remedies, including a potential court appeal.

### PM Modi's road show in UT on April 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Puducherry on April 3 to take part in a road show in support of the candidates of the BJP and NDA headed by the ruling AINRC headed by its Founder and Chief Minister N Rangasamy for the April 9 Assembly elections. This was disclosed here on Wednesday by BJP State President V Ramaligam to newsmen at the opening of a Media Centre which was inaugurated by BJP point man and

union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and others. Ramaligam said the NDA has finalized its alliance partners and completed the seat sharing process without any hitch, while claiming that confusion still prevailed in the opposition Congress-DMK INDI alliance. He said the nomination papers of all the ten BJP candidates were accepted by the election commission as they were found in order during scrutiny yesterday.

**MARUTI SUZUKI**

**NEXA**

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# UP CM distribute housing and land leases for 136 families in Bahraich

**Bahraich:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday distributed "Chief Minister's Housing" units, toilets, and land leases for residential purposes to 136 families during a program held in the Mihirpurwa region of Bahraich.



During the event, he digitally transferred funds to the beneficiaries for the construction of their homes. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister highlighted Bahraich's historical and cultural heritage, describing it as the "land of Suheldev's valor." He stated that the bravery of Maharaja Suheldev continues to inspire society to this day. The Chief Minister affirmed the government's commitment to the rehabilitation of approximately 500 families who had been neglected by previous administrations. He remarked, "The 'Double Engine Government' is working for the 25 crore residents of the state—without any discrimination—based on the prin-

principles of service and compassion." Yogi emphasised that the government extends the benefits of its schemes not on the basis of caste, creed, or sect, but by regarding every needy individual as an integral part of its own family. He noted that this rehabilitation initiative encompasses people from diverse sections of society, including Dalits, Backward Classes, and tribal communities. Targeting at previous governments, the Chief Minister observed

that the law-and-order situation in the state was previously abysmal, and deliberate attempts were made to divide society along caste lines. He recalled that prior to 2017, the state was plagued by an atmosphere dominated by the mafia, hooliganism, and communal riots—conditions that severely impeded development. He asserted that the law-and-order situation in the state has now significantly improved, and all festivals are being celebrated with peace and harmony. Citing the ongoing Navratri festivities and the upcoming Ram Navami celebrations, he declared that a fear-free environment has now been established across the state. The Chief Minister reiterated that the government's objective is to provide every family with secure housing, basic amenities, and an improved standard of living, thereby enabling them to build a stronger and more secure future for themselves.

# Odisha Vigilance nabs education auditor in bribery case, unaccounted cash seized

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha Vigilance has arrested Ambika Prasad Rath, an auditor working in the office of the Regional Director of Education (RDE), Bhubaneswar, on charges of accepting a bribe of Rs 4,000 from a college staff member. According to officials, the bribe was allegedly demanded to facilitate the release of salary benefits under the Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) scheme. The scheme is aimed at ensuring timely financial upgradation for government employees. The arrest followed a carefully planned trap operation conducted by Vigilance officials. The complainant reportedly approached authorities after being asked to pay the bribe, leading to the operation being set in motion. Rath was apprehended

while allegedly accepting the bribe amount, confirming the complaint lodged against him. Officials stated that the entire operation was executed following due legal procedures. After his arrest, Rath was taken into custody and is being produced before the Court of the Special Judge, Vigilance, in Bhubaneswar for further legal proceedings. Authorities are expected to seek necessary judicial action in the matter. Following the trap, Vigilance teams carried out simultaneous searches at multiple locations linked to Rath. These included his residence in Madhusudan Nagar and his office chamber in Bhubaneswar. During the searches, officials recovered a substantial amount of unaccounted cash. A total of Rs 28,70,900 was seized during the opera-

tion, raising serious concerns regarding disproportionate assets. Out of the total seized amount, Rs 27,42,900 was recovered from Rath's residence. The remaining Rs 1,28,000 was found in his office drawer during the search operation. Officials stated that Rath failed to provide a satisfactory explanation regarding the source of the seized cash. This has further strengthened suspicions of financial irregularities and corruption. Investigators are now examining the recovered cash and related documents to determine whether the assets are disproportionate to his known sources of income. The probe may expand based on findings. Rath had joined government service in June 2000 as an auditor in the RDE office in Bhubaneswar.

# No petrol, diesel shortage; don't fall for rumours: Bandi Sanjay

**Hyderabad:** Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, called upon people on Wednesday not to believe rumours on social media about an alleged shortage of petrol and diesel in Telangana, assuring that adequate stocks are available and supply remains uninterrupted. In a statement he said the Telangana Petroleum Dealers Association has already clarified that public sector oil companies, includ-

ing Indian Oil, HPCL, and BPCL, have sufficient reserves of fuel. He stressed that the Central Government is monitoring oil stocks to ensure there is no disruption in supply. Dismissing claims linking fuel shortages to the ongoing geopolitical tensions involving the US, Israel, and Iran, the Minister said there is "absolutely no truth" in such propaganda. He noted that the steady supply of petrol and diesel is continu-

# TMC flags Bhabanipur RO appointment, writes to EC alleging bias

**Kolkata:** A fresh political controversy has erupted over the appointment of a Returning Officer (RO) in the high-profile Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is set to face leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) has raised objections to the appointment of Surajit Roy, Block Development Officer (BDO) of Nandigram, as the RO for Bhabanipur. The party formally wrote to the Chief Election Officer in Delhi, with a copy marked to West Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal on Tuesday, questioning the neutrality of the officer.



The issue gained traction after Banerjee herself criticised the Election Commission saying that Bhabanipur is a politically sensitive constituency and the role of the RO is crucial to ensuring free and fair elections. The party expressed serious concerns over Roy's past conduct and alleged lack of neutrality. The letter pointed out that Roy had previously served as BDO of Nandigram-II block, where his role and his alleged political biases had come under scrutiny. The ruling party further claimed that there were allegations of his proximity to Adhikari, who is now contesting from Bhabanipur, making the appointment even more contentious. The party argued that retaining such an officer as RO could erode public confidence in the electoral process. The Trinamool Con-

gress asked the Election Commission of India to remove Roy immediately from the post and appoint a neutral and acceptable officer in his place. In addition to this the letter also pointed out that, as per convention, officers of the rank of Joint Secretary are usually appointed to such posts but in this case, that norm was not followed. TMC placed three specific demands before the Commission. First, immediate removal of Surajit Roy as RO, fresh appointment of a neutral officer for Bhabanipur, and ensuring complete transparency in such appointments in the future. The controversy has triggered political reactions ahead of the polls, with the Bhabanipur contest already drawing statewide attention. However, the Election Commission has not yet issued any official response, though political observers believe the matter is being closely examined.

# Who is Aasiya Andrabi? Separatist leader gets life imprisonment in NIA case

**Srinagar:** A special court of the National Investigation Agency in Delhi on Tuesday sentenced separatist leader Aasiya Andrabi to life imprisonment in connection with a 2018 Kashmir secession conspiracy case, while her associates Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen were awarded 30 years in jail along with fines. The three women, linked to the banned organisation Dukhtaran-e-Millat, were arrested by the NIA in July 2018 after the agency registered a suo moto case in the same year related to a secession conspiracy. The arrests were made in the run-up to the scrapping of the J&K's special status in 2019. Andrabi, 63, a prominent separatist leader from Kashmir, is the founder and chairperson of Dukhtaran-e-Millat, an organisation initially formed as a socio-religious reform group, later came to be associated with pro-Pakistan and separatist ideology and was banned by the Government of India in 2018 and was declared a terrorist organisation. Born in 1963 in Srinagar in an educated family, Andrabi completed her graduation in Home Science and later pursued Islamic studies, which reportedly influenced her ideological and political outlook. She founded Dukhtaran-e-Millat in the late 1980s, and the group gained prominence in the early 1990s during its campaign advocating the veil in Kashmir. Andrabi married Ashiq Hussain



Fakto, also known as Mohammad Qasim, a militant commander associated with Hizbul Mujahideen, who is serving life imprisonment in connection with the killing of Kashmiri Pandit rights activist Hriday Nath Wanchoo. She was first arrested in 1993 and subsequently detained multiple times under the Public Safety Act before her arrest by the NIA in 2018. Authorities had attached Andrabi's Srinagar residence in 2019 as part of a broader crackdown on separatist networks. In January 2026, a Delhi court convicted Andrabi, Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code related to conspiracy, promoting enmity, and unlawful activities. Andrabi was sentenced by the Court concurrently under various sections of IPC and UA(P) Act to the maximum sentence of Life Imprisonment and a total fine of Rs. 8 lakh. She is additionally named in 32 other FIRs registered at various police stations in Jammu & Kashmir. Following the arrests of its leadership and the crackdown on separatist organisations by security agencies after 2019, Dukhtaran-e-Millat like other separatist groups has largely become defunct.

# 2 million LPG connections deactivated in UP; 110,000 affected in Lucknow

**Lucknow:** Amidst rising uncertainties in the global energy market driven by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, oil companies have launched a major drive to streamline the LPG distribution system in Uttar Pradesh. The KYC (Know Your Customer) verification process is being strictly enforced, resulting in the temporary deactivation of over 110,000 LPG connections in Lucknow and approximately 2 million connections across the entire state. The state is home to a total of nearly 48.7 million domestic LPG consumers. Gas company officials are currently identifying consumers who have not booked a cylinder for nine months or longer.

According to officials here on Wednesday, in many instances, consumers have either switched to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections or have changed their residential addresses; however, it is imperative to ensure that subsidies and gas supplies reach only genuine consumers. The oil companies have identified these consumers and have temporarily suspended their connections. Re-submission of KYC details has now been made mandatory to reactivate these connections. As a result of this process, gas agencies in Lucknow are witnessing increased crowds of consumers, with large numbers of people arriving to update their documentation.

Anand Chaturvedi, a resident of Alambagh, faced a similar predicament. He recounted that upon attempting to book a cylinder, he discovered that his connection had been deactivated and that a fresh KYC verification was now required, as the connection was registered in the name of his late father. According to sources, each gas agency in the city has between 1,200 and 1,500 deactivated connections. However, agency operators maintain that this exercise is instrumental in purging irregular and dormant connections from the system. A senior official from the Indian Oil Corporation stated that this decision was taken to ensure that both subsidies and gas supplies are directed to the rightful consumers.

# Opposition stalls Odisha Assembly for last eight days over SCB hospital fire tragedy

**Bhubaneswar:** Wearing black T-shirts, members of the Opposition BJD and Congress staged a novel protest inside the Odisha Assembly on Wednesday, stalling proceedings and demanding the resignation of State Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling over the SCB Medical College and Hospital fire tragedy on March 16, which claimed the lives of twelve patients. Since March 17, the Assembly has witnessed continuous uproar from the Opposition over the incident, disrupting proceedings during the pre-lunch session and forcing Speaker Surama Padhy to adjourn the House daily until 4 PM, with little business being conducted. Holding placards and posters, BJD and Congress members shouted anti-government slogans inside the well of the House, insisting on the Health Minister's resignation. Several attempts by the Speaker—including at least four all-party meetings in her chamber—have failed to break the deadlock.

As the Assembly convened at 10:30 AM on Wednesday for Question Hour, Opposition members, wearing black T-shirts bearing slogans such as "Weak Chief Minister" and "Strong Health Minister," rushed into the well and continued their protest, demanding the minister's resignation. Despite repeated appeals by the Speaker urging members to return to their seats, maintain discipline, and allow proceedings to continue, the protests persisted. Unable to restore order, the Speaker adjourned the House at 10:33 AM until 11:30 AM. When the House reconvened, the Opposition renewed its protests, disrupting Zero Hour. Meanwhile, some treasury bench members raised concerns over the Biju Naveen Inspirational Trust, alleging it had been formed to divert party funds for other purposes. Amid continued disruptions, Zero Hour proceeded until 12:22 PM, after which the House was adjourned briefly and then again until 1 PM. An all-party meeting was convened by the Speaker to resolve the impasse. However, Opposition members boycotted the House when it reconvened at 1 PM. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi then initiated the debate on demands for grants under the Home and General Administration departments. Some treasury members participated before the House was adjourned again at 1:32 PM until 4 PM. Outside the Assembly, BJD leader Arun Sahu stated that protests would continue until their demand was met, asserting that either the Health Minister must resign or be dismissed by the Chief Minister. Congress Legislature Party leader Ramachandra Kadam echoed the same demand. On the other hand, BJD member Ashok Mohanty criticized the Opposition for deliberately disrupting proceedings. He alleged that the BJD was internally divided over the Biju Naveen Inspirational Trust issue and was staging protests to divert public attention from the controversy.

# Telangana Assembly budget session enters seventh day; key bills, grant demands on agenda

**Hyderabad:** The budget session of the Telangana Legislative Assembly entered its seventh day on Wednesday, with proceedings commencing at 10:00 hours amid a packed legislative agenda. According to the schedule released by Assembly Secretary Rendla Thirupathi, the day's proceedings began with the Question Hour, allowing legislators to raise queries on governance and administrative matters. Following the Question Hour, the House moved on to the introduction and consideration of several important government bills, reflecting the legislative priorities of the state government. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is slated to introduce the Telangana Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2026. The proposed amendment is expected to address key aspects of tax administration and compliance in the state. In addition, Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha will present the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (Repeal) Bill, 2026 for consideration and passage in the Assembly. The legislative business of the



day also includes the commencement of voting on Demands for Grants for the financial year 2026-27, marking a crucial phase in the budget approval process. As part of this exercise, the Chief Minister will seek approval for an allocation of Rs 3,76,70,82,000 under the Commercial Taxes Administration, highlighting the importance of revenue mobilisation for the state. Among the major allocations proposed, a substantial amount of Rs 1,73,24,49,15,000 has been earmarked for the Agriculture sector, underscoring the government's focus on rural development and farmer welfare. The Co-operation sector is set to receive Rs 1,58,81,66,000, aimed at strengthening cooperative institutions and improving access to financial and institutional support for various stakeholders. The government has also proposed Rs 4,72,50,07,000 for Excise Administration, along with Rs 14,17,73,40,000 for Tourism, Art and Culture, indicating a balanced approach towards revenue generation

and cultural promotion. Significant allocations have been earmarked for welfare sectors, including Rs 3,16,18,51,03,000 for Social Welfare and Rs 1,60,35,40,50,000 for Tribal Welfare, reflecting a continued emphasis on inclusive development. Additional budgetary provisions include Rs 15,03,57,47,000 for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Rs 7,09,45,89,000 for Sports and Youth Services, and Rs 37,68,52,83,000 for Minority Welfare. These allocations highlight the government's commitment to supporting diverse sectors ranging from agriculture and livelihoods to youth development and minority empowerment. The ongoing session is expected to witness detailed deliberations on both legislative proposals and financial allocations, with members likely to engage in extensive debates. Overall, the seventh day of the session reflects the state government's focus on policy reforms, fiscal planning, and sectoral development as part of its broader governance agenda.

## Briefs :

House can't be deterred by any threats, will keep functioning to serve people: Speaker

**New Delhi :** Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Tuesday said that prior to the commencement of the House's proceedings, certain threatening emails were received on his official email ID, as well as on the Delhi Legislative Assembly's email account. Gupta, while speaking in the House stated that the matter was of a sensitive nature and had direct implications concerning security, assuring the members that the concerned security agencies responded with utmost alertness and promptitude. He said that the matter was immediately examined, and all necessary measures were undertaken, keeping in view the safety and security of everyone in the complex. He expressed that despite such attempts, the proceedings of the House were conducted without any delay or disruption. Meanwhile, it is for the second time that the Delhi Vidhan Sabha and its Speaker have again received such a threatening email. Sources say that a threat email was received on an email id of the Assembly, and also of the Speaker in the early morning hours.

**2 dead, 23 injured in Delhi bus accident; swift police action saves lives**

**New Delhi:** A sleeper tourist bus overturned near Hanuman Mandir, Karol Bagh, New Delhi, at around 1:05 AM on Wednesday, triggering a major rescue operation by Delhi Police. A senior police official said that the Jaipur-Delhi bus, carrying around 30 passengers, flipped, leaving many trapped inside. Acting swiftly, a team of Karol Bagh Police Station, along with locals, used a JCB to lift and stabilise the bus and rescue passengers. A total of 23 injured were shifted to hospitals -- 12 to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, where 2 men succumbed, 10 to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, and 1 to Lady Hardinge Medical College. One deceased has been identified as Shehbaz Alam (30), while the other remains unidentified. Driver Panjaj Kumar (26) has been detained and is under treatment. Police investigation into the matter is ongoing.

**Supreme Court sets up SIT to probe Gurugram minor's rape case**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday set up an SIT consisting of three women IPS officers to probe the Gurugram minor's rape case. A three-judge Bench led by CJI Surya Kant issued show-cause notices to Gurugram Police officers involved in the probe to explain why disciplinary action should not be taken against them. The Bench asked the Child Welfare Committee members to explain why they should not be removed for their insensitive handling of the case. The top court asked the Gurugram Police to hand over the entire case file to the SIT by Thursday. It posted the matter for April 6. The Bench --- which also included Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul M Pancholi --- asked a Max Hospital doctor to explain why she changed her report in the case after the top court took cognisance of the matter. The order came on a petition filed by the victim's parents seeking a CBI/SIT probe into the case. Expressing shock over the alleged insensitive handling of the rape of a four-year-old girl in Gurugram, the Supreme Court had on March 23 issued notices to the Haryana Police and others on the petition.

## Sachdeva slams opposition over LPG remarks, says India ensured steady supply amid global crisis

**New Delhi:** Virendra Sachdeva on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on opposition parties over their remarks regarding cooking gas supply, describing their statements as "irresponsible" and potentially harmful to national interest. His comments come amid an ongoing debate around LPG availability in the country.

Addressing the media, Sachdeva specifically targeted leaders from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Indian National Congress, accusing them of amplifying concerns at a time when global energy markets are facing significant disruptions. He suggested that such narratives could create unnecessary alarm among the public.

He pointed out that the ongoing Gulf conflict has strained oil and gas supplies across multiple regions, affecting both developed and developing economies. According to him, India is not isolated from these global challenges.

"In such a situation, instead of supporting efforts to manage the crisis, opposition leaders are engaging in political opportunism," Sachdeva stated, emphasising the need for collective responsibility during international crises. He argued that unity in communication is essential to prevent misinformation.

Sachdeva further alleged that protests and repeated public claims



about shortages could inadvertently encourage black marketing. He warned that such actions might lead to panic buying, which could worsen the situation for ordinary consumers.

Highlighting the government's response, he said the Government of India acted proactively from the beginning of the crisis. Measures were put in place early to ensure that domestic consumers would not face severe disruptions in LPG supply.

According to him, the majority of households across the country continue to receive their LPG cylinders on time after booking. He maintained that distribution systems are functioning efficiently de-

spite global pressures.

Sachdeva also underlined the government's efforts to maintain uninterrupted supply during key festive occasions. He cited events such as Eid and Navratri, noting that community kitchens and households did not face significant shortages during these periods.

He added that similar arrangements are being ensured for the upcoming Ram Navami celebrations. According to him, the focus remains on ensuring that citizens can observe festivals without inconvenience.

Responding to concerns from commercial sectors, Sachdeva acknowledged that there was a brief disruption in supply chains lasting

about a week. However, he stressed that the situation has since improved considerably.

He noted that businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and roadside eateries—especially in Delhi—are now operating normally. Adequate gas availability has allowed them to resume regular services without major hurdles.

The BJP leader reiterated that while global conditions remain challenging, India's internal management of resources has helped avoid a crisis-like situation. He credited policy interventions and coordination among agencies for maintaining stability.

Sachdeva urged opposition leaders to act responsibly and avoid statements that could create confusion among the public. He stressed that constructive dialogue is essential during times of global uncertainty. He also called for public cooperation, advising citizens not to panic and to rely on official channels for accurate information regarding LPG supply. According to him, responsible communication can play a crucial role in maintaining order. As the global energy situation continues to evolve, the political discourse around fuel supply is expected to remain intense. However, Sachdeva maintained that ensuring uninterrupted access for citizens remains the government's top priority.

## Delhi CM meets affected families of Palam fire tragedy, says govt stands with them

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday met with the grieving families of those who died in the tragic fire incident in Palam area of Delhi on March 18.

CM said that the untimely death of innocent people including children in the fire is extremely distressing and heart wrenching. She expressed her deepest condolences to the families, assuring that the government stands in full solidarity with them during the tough times.

"The pain of losing loved ones is unbearable, something that cannot be expressed in words," the CM stated taking to social media platform X.

She has assured that the government is fully committed to providing the affected fami-

lies every possible assistance, relief, and support. Earlier, the government had ordered a Magisterial Inquiry to probe the cause of the fire and determine how commercial goods, such as cosmetics and clothes, were being stored in a residential building. The inquiry will be examining potential safety violations and the legality of using the premises for commercial storage, which contributed to the rapid spread of the blaze. CM had earlier announced a financial assistance to the next of kin of those lives lost, which include Rs 10 lakh each to the families of deceased adults, Rs 5 lakh each to the families of deceased minors, and Rs 2 lakh each to those who got seriously injured in the incident.

## India's first passive euthanasia case: Harish Rana cremated in Delhi

**New Delhi:** Harish Rana, 31, who became India's first citizen to be granted passive euthanasia, was laid to rest on Wednesday morning at the Green Park Cremation Ground, his final journey marked with full religious rites and a silence heavy with grief.

After spending more than 13 years in a coma, Harish breathed his last on Tuesday at AIIMS Delhi. His family had shifted him to the palliative care unit of the Dr BR Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital on March 14, hoping to give him as much comfort as possible in his final days.

Before that, their home in Ghaziabad had been his world, one filled with quiet care, constant vigil, and unspoken sorrow. At the cremation ground, emotions ran high. Hundreds gathered, neighbours, friends, distant relatives, and even strangers who had followed his story. Some wept openly, others folded their hands in prayer, but all had come with one purpose: to say a final goodbye to Harish Rana, a young man whose long, silent struggle had moved an entire nation.

On March 11, the Supreme Court of India made a heartbreaking yet humane

decision: it allowed the withdrawal of medical treatment for Harish, acknowledging that after years in a prolonged vegetative state, there was almost no hope of recovery.

Harish's father, Ashok Rana, spoke with the quiet pain of a parent who had fought a long, impossible battle. "We have been fighting for this. No parents would ever want such a situation for their son," he said, his voice breaking under the weight of 13 years of helplessness.

"We have been pursuing this case for the past three years. He will be taken to AIIMS. He was a topper at Punjab University."

Behind those few words lay a lifetime of dreams halted by tragedy.

Passive euthanasia, allowing a terminally ill patient to die naturally by withdrawing life-sustaining treatment, became the only path left for Harish, whose life had been suspended since a devastating fall in 2013.

Acting on the court's direction, AIIMS was instructed to admit Harish and oversee the process of withdrawing life support under complete medical supervision. The bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and KV

Viswanathan permitted the removal of clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH), a step taken only after years of medical certainties and legal scrutiny.

Following the verdict, Advocate Manish Jain said that under Article 21 of the Constitution, the court had affirmed Harish's right to die with dignity. He outlined the next steps, within a week, Harish would be moved to AIIMS, where the tubes sustaining his body would be gently removed, allowing him to pass away naturally and peacefully.

He further noted that the judgment flowed from the landmark 2018 Common Cause vs union of India ruling, which set the framework for how individuals in irreversible, palliative states should be cared for.

While passive euthanasia is widely recognized around the world, this ruling marks a small but significant step forward for India. The Supreme Court has also directed all state chief medical officers to establish primary and secondary euthanasia review boards and submit regular reports, a move aimed at ensuring dignity, oversight, and compassion for those facing the most difficult of human circumstances.

## Delhi Ministers laud "green & inclusive" budget presented by CM

**New Delhi, March 24 (UNI)** Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Tuesday termed the Delhi Budget 2026-27 as historic, stating that it will prove to be a milestone for the city's development and environmental protection. He lauded the budget presented by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, which has a total outlay of approximately Rs 1,03,700 crore.

Sirsa, who is Delhi's Environment Minister, said, "When we presented a Rs 1 lakh crore budget last year, several questions were raised, where would the funds come from, how would they be mobilized etc. However, the experience and leadership of CM Rekha Gupta have proven that a Rs 1 lakh crore budget can be successfully implemented," the minister added.

Highlighting the environmental commitment, the Minister said, "This is a green budget. Whether it is e-waste, road transport, infrastructure, or metro projects, every effort has been made to integrate environmental considerations, including plantation, into each initiative." He noted

that 21 per cent of the total budget has been allocated to green initiatives, adding that the government will also issue licenses for 1,000 new e-auto permits exclusively for women, enabling safe and dignified livelihood opportunities. Meanwhile, Health and Transport Minister Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh expressed his gratitude to CM Gupta for a comprehensive and welfare-oriented budget, with significant allocations of Rs 13,034 crore for the Health Department and Rs 12,613 crore for the Transport. He mentioned that these allocations reflect the government's firm commitment to ensuring accessible, affordable healthcare and building a sustainable, efficient and future-ready transport ecosystem. He also noted that the government is addressing legacy gaps by completing long-pending infrastructure projects and strengthening service delivery across both sectors. Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra expressed gratitude to CM Gupta for the inclusive Budget, which he said will run the city's growth at a high speed on the tracks of de-

velopment, adding that the "Green budget is a Green Signal."

## Delhi Crime Branch bust major international arms racket; 10 arrested

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police said on Wednesday it has dismantled an international arms trafficking syndicate, arresting 10 suspects having links to Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

The police described the accused as key operatives, saying a large cache of high-end foreign weapons has been confiscated from their possession.

"The operation was led by the Anti-Robbery and Snatching Cell (ARSC), which uncovered a network operating in Old Delhi," said Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch).

Police have recovered 21 sophisticated firearms, including a Czech-made submachine gun, semi-automatic pistols of various international makes, and over 200 live cartridges.

Investigators said the racket was led by kingpin Shahbaz Ansari, a native of UP's Bulandshahr, believed to be operating from Bangladesh after jumping interim bail in 2025. "Ansari is previously linked to the killing of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala in 2022 and is suspected to have supplied weapons to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang," the DCP said.

Police said the module sourced weapons from Pakistan, routed them

through Nepal using dismantled shipments disguised as scrap, and reassembled them before smuggling into India via the porous Indo-Nepal border.

"The arms were then distributed across Delhi-NCR and other states to criminal gangs," the officer said.

The first breakthrough came on March 13 when three accused were apprehended near Dariya Ganj with pistols and ammunition.

Subsequent raids across Delhi and Uttar Pradesh led to the arrest of seven more operatives, including key suppliers, receivers, and a SIM card vendor who facilitated communication using fake documents.

"A suspect attempted to open fire on the police but was overpowered," police said, adding that in another operation in Sikandrabad, a suspect with a firearm tried to flee but was apprehended after a brief scuffle.

The team also got their hands on a rare Skorpio submachine gun during follow-up interrogations.

The probe revealed the network used encrypted apps, disposable SIM cards, and hawala channels to avoid detection, while investigators relied on human intelligence and call data analysis to trace and map the syndicate.

## Editorial

### The Woes of the Common People!

In Indian democracy, Parliament is regarded as the platform for the hopes and aspirations of the people; however, for many years, a sentiment had emerged that the issues concerning the middle class were being relegated to a secondary position on this very platform. Entrapped by inflation, mobile phone expenses, banking charges, the rising cost of education, and the mounting financial strain of daily life, the voice of this class has often gone unheard. The Indian Parliament is revered as the supreme temple of democracy—the place where laws shaping the nation's future are forged and where the rights of 1.4 billion citizens are deliberated upon. Yet, for several decades, a widespread perception has taken root that parliamentary debates tend to revolve either around the interests of the ultra-wealthy capitalists or around welfare schemes designed for the destitute. Consequently, fears began to mount that the vast 'middle class'—situated between these two extremes—had perhaps been permanently banished from the political agenda of the nation's politicians. Although the character of this class has evolved in the wake of economic liberalization, its problems have become far more complex. While established political parties remain entrenched in the age-old equations of temple-mosque politics or caste-based identities, Raghav Chadha—a young Member of Parliament from the Aam Aadmi Party—has set a new precedent by giving direct voice, within the Upper House of Parliament, to the very conversations that take place in the 'living rooms' of middle-class households. The issues raised by Raghav Chadha during the Budget Session are not merely political rhetoric; rather, they serve as a vivid portrayal of the financial squeeze currently being felt in the pockets of every middle-class Indian. In today's digital age, a mobile phone is no longer merely a luxury item; it has evolved into an individual's very digital identity. However, the profiteering tactics employed by mobile companies are truly infuriating. According to our standard calendar, a month consists of 30 or 31 days; yet, mobile companies deliberately structure their billing cycle to last only 28 days. Due to this "theft" of two or three days, customers are compelled to recharge their phones 13 times a year instead of the standard 12. This constitutes a direct robbery of the customer's wallet; Chadha has raised a pointed question: if utility bills—such as electricity, water, or home loan installments—operate on a 30-day cycle, why should mobile companies be subject to a different set of rules? While the suspension of outgoing call services is understandable, cutting off incoming calls—thereby holding the customer hostage and forcing them to recharge immediately—constitutes a violation of an individual's fundamental right to communicate. His demand—that incoming call facilities should remain active for at least one year and that this service should be made available at a nominal cost—echoes the sentiments of millions of prepaid mobile subscribers across the country. Mr. Chadha presented before the House, backed by concrete evidence, the "data scam" being perpetrated by telecom companies regarding mobile data services. These companies provide a daily allowance of 1.5 to 2 GB of data; however, if this entire quota is not consumed, the remaining data is not carried forward to the following day. By the end of the day, this data "lapses"—meaning that companies reclaim a commodity for which the customer has already paid, without allowing them the opportunity to utilize it. This constitutes an act of consumer exploitation and serves as a prime example of how customers in the Indian market are being defrauded. Beyond just technology, he also took to task the companies manufacturing "health drinks," accusing them of playing fast and loose with the health of the middle class. These companies—which peddle sugary concoctions under the guise of promoting health—are directly contributing to the rising prevalence of obesity and diabetes across the country. At a time when the health of the common citizen is being jeopardized by the profiteering motives of large corporate entities, it is immensely reassuring to witness such issues being raised and voiced within the hallowed halls of Parliament. For the middle class, air travel remains—even today—either a cherished dream or a matter of sheer necessity. While the Prime Minister may have painted a vision wherein "a citizen wearing \*Hawai chappals\* (flip-flops) should be able to fly in a \*Hawai jahaz\* (airplane)," the reality of the situation at airports is starkly different. The prices charged at airports for items as simple as tea, coffee, or a humble \*samosa\* often exceed the cost of a full, elaborate meal (\*Thali\*) at a luxury hotel. In such a prohibitively expensive environment, is the "man in flip-flops" expected to travel on an empty stomach? By asserting that the Airport Authority must put an end to this systematic fleecing of the common man, Mr. Chadha has effectively addressed the financial burden weighing upon the middle class. Furthermore, he touched upon several other highly practical and pertinent issues, such as the penalties levied by banks for failing to maintain a "minimum balance," and the proposal regarding the filing of joint income tax returns by married couples. He has put forward revolutionary ideas, asserting that in Indian democracy, the right to merely elect a leader is insufficient; citizens must also be granted the 'Right to Recall'—the authority to remove an incompetent elected representative. Democracy truly becomes meaningful when young Members of Parliament, such as Raghav Chadha, bring the struggles of the common person's daily life to the floor of Parliament. Consumer rights organizations, too, need to become more assertive in opposing the systematic exploitation of the middle class that is currently taking place at various levels. The middle class can hope to receive justice only if there are more representatives in Parliament capable of effectively articulating such wide-ranging issues affecting the common people—even within a brief window of just one or two minutes. It is now the need of the hour for politicians to look beyond the divisive politics of temples and mosques, and instead focus their attention on issues of daily relevance—such as mobile data tariffs, the cost of tea at airports, it is precisely this kind of advocacy—where an elected representative acts as an attorney for their constituents to champion their cause—that is expected. What is now required is for the government to move beyond mere silence on these matters and take decisive action to rein in mobile service providers and airport operators. The middle class constitutes the backbone of the nation's economy; if the assaults currently being inflicted upon this backbone are not halted in time, the country's economic progress will remain confined solely to paper. The middle class's eroded faith in the political system can be restored only if all political parties take these 'reminders'—issued by Raghav Chadha—with the utmost seriousness. Democracy gains true strength only when it transcends the realm of grand policies to deliver justice and resolution for the daily struggles faced by the common people. The middle class constitutes the backbone of the nation's economy, and the persistent neglect of its concerns is something we simply cannot afford. What is needed now is not merely discussion, but concrete policy changes. Only if Parliament truly becomes the voice of the people will the confidence of the middle class be restored, and democracy be strengthened. It is only when Parliament genuinely connects with the lives of ordinary citizens that democracy will become more robust and credible.

# RBI Strengthens Framework on Unauthorised Electronic Banking Transactions

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had issued the extant instructions on limiting liability of customers in unauthorised electronic banking transactions in 2017. However, in view of the rapid adoption of technology in the banking sector and payments systems, RBI reviewed its existing instructions. The revised instructions, including a compensation mechanism in case of small value fraudulent electronic banking transactions, have been issued for public / stakeholders' consultation on March 06, 2026. The same is available at: [https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS\\_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=62340](https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=62340)

Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC) has been incorporated as section 8 company, under the Companies Act, 2013 on 16/10/2025. Its primary mandate is to detect, prevent, and analyse fraud in India's rapidly expanding digital payments ecosystem in real time by leveraging cutting-edge technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Big Data Analytics.

The Government has been constantly engaging with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and other concerned Regulators/ stakeholders.



To curb the misuse of mule accounts for diversion and layering of funds in cyber frauds across the country, RBI has rolled out "Mule-Hunter.AI" an artificial intelligence/machine learning-based solution for mule account detection. The solution is currently live in 26 banks and is being scaled up further. RBI has also issued advisories

delineating specific actions to be taken by the banks in mitigating the misuse of banking channel through robust systems and controls for the prevention and detection of cyber enabled frauds & suspected money

Further, the banks have been advised to ensure deployment and adoption of robust software for re-

al-time transaction monitoring and use of AI / ML tools in detecting suspicious and fraudulent transaction patterns as well as use of network analytics in identifying mule networks.

Several initiatives have been taken to disseminate cybersecurity awareness among citizens, including senior citizens. These, inter

alia, include: The Centre for Financial Literacy (CFL) project has been initiated by RBI since 2017 with an objective to adopt community-led innovative and participatory approaches to financial literacy. A total of 2,421 CFLs have been set up across the country, as on March 31, 2025, with one CFL covering three blocks;

Financial Literacy Week (FLW) has been conducted every year since 2016 to propagate the message of financial education among citizens across the country; RBI's multi-media and multilingual public awareness campaign, titled "RBI Kehta Hai" promotes financial literacy to create awareness among citizens on safe banking practices.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) runs the "SEBI vs SCAM" Campaign, which generates an ongoing fraud awareness campaign via TV, print, radio, and social media in partnership with Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs). SEBI has also launched the Saaṛthi Mobile App, offering educational resources and investment information to protect citizens. This information was given by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary in Rajya Sabha.

# Illegal Intrusion by Fishermen

The Coastal State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations are responsible for regulating fishing activities within Territorial Waters extending up to 12 nautical miles, as this subject falls under Entry 21 of the State List. The Union Government regulates fishing in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) beyond 12 nautical miles under Entry 57 of the Union List. Accordingly, the coastal States/UTs enforce their respective Marine Fishing Regulation Acts (MFRAs) to govern fishing within territorial waters. Several States/UTs have also designated exclusive zones for traditional fishers operating non-motorized and motorized craft, where mechanized vessels are prohibited.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported occasional incidents of illegal fishing by mechanized vessels from Tamil Nadu

and Puducherry within its territorial waters, including in traditional fishing zones and the Pulicat Lake area. To address such, inter-state fishing issues, and in line with the advice of the Inter-State Council, the Department of Fisheries, Government of India vide Order dated 29 March 2023 had constituted three Regional Fisheries Management Councils (RFMCs) viz. Western, Eastern, and Southern RFMCs. These RFMCs serve as platforms for States/UTs to collaboratively resolve inter-state fishing disputes and ensure equitable access to marine resources. The Indian Coast Guard is represented in all three RFMCs. Issues raised by States/UTs are placed on the agenda of the relevant RFMC for deliberation.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has indicated that the coordinated action is undertaken with neighbouring coastal States/UTs

through existing institutional mechanisms to prevent recurrence of such incidents and to ensure peaceful, uninterrupted fishing operations. Tamil Nadu has also highlighted proactive measures to strengthen institutional arrangements for safeguarding fishermen's safety and livelihoods.

Following concerns raised by Andhra Pradesh in the Southern RFMC meeting held on 19 August 2023, the Government of Tamil Nadu has issued an Order dated 31 January 2024 constituting a District-Level Committee comprising District Collectors and officials from Thiruvallur, Chennai, and Chengalpattu (Tamil Nadu) and SPSR Nellore, Prakasam, and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh). The Committee is mandated to sensitise fishermen and address fishing-related disputes between the two States. Tamil Nadu has further informed that action is taken against of-

fending fishing vessels under the Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1983, based on evidence, including photographs and videographs, provided by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Similarly, the Government of Andhra Pradesh refers incidents of illegal fishing by vessels from Puducherry to the UT Administration for appropriate action. Andhra Pradesh is also pursuing amendments to the Andhra Pradesh Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1994, to introduce more stringent provisions for effectively addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing within its territorial waters.

This information was given by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh in the Lok Sabha in response to a question asked.

# Deep Sea Fishing Vessels

Considering the scope for harnessing deep-sea fisheries resources in the Indian EEZ and High Seas and the recommendations of the National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017, the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India is providing financial assistance to traditional fishermen for acquisition of (DSFVs) under the 'Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana' (PMMSY) at the rate of 40% subsidy for General Category and 60% subsidy for SC/ST/Women beneficiaries in the country including the State of Andhra Pradesh. Under PMMSY, the DoF, Government of India, has sanctioned 50 DSFVs to the State of Andhra Pradesh. As reported by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, 6 DSFVs are currently operational in the State. (c) Under PMMSY, the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D), Government of India, has approved proposals submitted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh amounting to ₹2,416.92 crore, including a Central share of ₹569.86 crore, for implementation of various fisheries-related activities such as development of fishing harbours, fish landing centres, cold storage facilities, and value-addition units. Approval has been accorded for the construction of three fishing harbours at Budagatlalalem (Srikakulam district), Pudimadaka (Anakapalli district), and Kothapatnam (Prakasam district) at a total cost of ₹1,137.20 crore. Additional activities, including cold storage, processing units, and export-oriented infrastructure, have also been sanctioned under PMMSY; details thereof are provided in the Annexure. (d) Under the Training, Awareness, Exposure and Capacity Building component of the Central Sector scheme of PMMSY, the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)



serves as the Nodal Agency for implementing the training programmes. This component places special emphasis on enhancing the skills, awareness, and capacity of fishers, fish farmers, fish workers/vendors, and fisheries officials across all coastal States and Union Territories, including Andhra Pradesh. As part of this initiative, NFDB, in collaboration with the Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical & Engineering Training (CIFNET), conducts exclusive training programmes for marine fishermen on deep-sea fishing and on-board fish handling. A total of 8,040 fishermen have been trained under these programmes, including 874 fishers from Andhra Pradesh, thereby strengthening India's capacity in deep-sea fishing operations.

In addition, the Fishery Survey of India (FSI), under the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, has conducted skill-development and capacity-building programmes to promote the adoption of deep-sea fishing technologies, with particular focus on deep-sea tuna longlining and sashimi-grade tuna handling. These programmes provide hands-on training onboard FSI survey vessels, covering monofilament longline operations (setting and hauling), gear configuration, and efficient deck management. Structured modules also in-

clude deep-sea navigation, use of modern navigational aids (GPS, echo sounders, AIS), watch-keeping practices, and safety at sea, including life-saving appliances and firefighting equipment. (c) PMMSY places strong emphasis on value addition and export enhancement through improved post-harvest infrastructure, promotion of fish value-added enterprises, and reduction of post-harvest losses. The Government of India continues to engage closely with the stakeholders to assess evolving global market conditions and is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to expand India's fisheries export footprint. This strategy includes sustained engagement with major markets like the United States towards a mutually beneficial India-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement; immediate support measures such as RBI's trade-related interventions and the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters; enhancement of domestic demand through next-generation GST reforms; and targeted export-promotion initiatives under the newly launched Export Promotion Mission. The Government is also negotiating new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and strengthening the utilisation of existing FTAs to improve market access for Indian seafood products. In parallel, the Department of

Fisheries has undertaken extensive stakeholder consultations and strategic outreach efforts, including Investors' Meets in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, the Coastal States Fisheries Meet, Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Meet, Seafood Exporters Meet, and World Fisheries Day events, with a strong focus on enhancing value addition in seafood exports. A Round Table Conference with Ambassadors and High Commissioners from 39 countries was convened to promote Indian seafood exports, deepen diplomatic engagement, foster collaboration on sustainable fisheries, and advance technological innovation in fisheries and aquaculture. Bilateral engagements with major importing nations are also being actively pursued to further strengthen market access. To enhance global competitiveness, the Government is facilitating ease of doing business through regulatory reforms and streamlined import procedures. Additionally, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), under the Department of Commerce, continues to promote marine product exports through participation in international seafood trade fairs and exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, branding and promotion of Indian shrimp.

## Southern Regional Consultative Workshop on Collaborative Capacity Building and Resource Sharing for Training Institutes

The Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Government of India, organised the Southern Regional Consultative Workshop on Collaborative Capacity Building and Resource Sharing at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) in Hyderabad on March 13, 2026. The workshop served as a significant platform to deliberate on strengthening cooperation among Civil Services Training Institutions (CSTIs) across Southern India.

A total of 47 participants representing 23 CSTIs and other training institutes attended the consultative workshop. The gathering reflected a diverse and experienced pool of professionals committed to improving governance capacity through institutional collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The workshop focused on developing actionable frameworks for faculty exchange, shared learning resources, and optimal utilisation of infrastructure. It aimed to move beyond isolated functioning of institutions and towards a more integrated and efficient training ecosystem.

The initiative was conceptualised under the leadership of S. Radha Chauhan, Chairperson of the Capacity Building Commission. Her vision emphasised the need for collaborative approaches that align with the evolving requirements of public administration in India.

The programme commenced with welcome remarks by Chandralekha Mukherjee, Principal Advisor, CBC. She highlighted that collaboration among CSTIs has largely depended on informal and non-institutional factors so far, limiting its effectiveness and scalability. Mukherjee stressed the importance of transitioning from a supply-driven model of training to a demand-driven approach. She noted that institutions must adapt dy-

namically to governance needs by leveraging expertise available across the broader training ecosystem.

This was followed by an address from Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, Director General of ASCI. He described capacity building as a lifelong covenant between public servants and the government, underscoring its critical role in effective governance.

Ramesh Kumar also highlighted ASCI's Centre for Innovation in Public Policy as a model for fostering continuous improvement in public administration. He pointed out that such institutional initiatives can drive innovation and responsiveness in governance practices.

The anchor session was delivered by Kamal Kapoor, Deputy Director General at the National Communications Academy-Finance and Chair of the Thematic Task Force. His presentation encapsulated weeks of deliberations and consultations undertaken by the Task Force.

Kapoor identified key challenges such as duplication of training content across institutions and the absence of a unified resource-sharing mechanism. He emphasised the need for structured collaboration to address inefficiencies and maximise collective impact.

He proposed three core pillars for collaboration: faculty sharing, content and knowledge sharing, and infrastructure sharing. These pillars were presented as the foundation for building a more cohesive and resource-efficient training network.

Following the anchor session, participants engaged in structured breakout discussions divided into three thematic groups. Each group focused on identifying constraints, exploring practical solutions, and designing collaborative frameworks tailored to institutional needs.



Briefs :

**Sirsa Hydraulic Sector Eyes Global Markets Amid Challenges**

**Sirsa:** Once known primarily for its agriculture, Sirsa is rapidly becoming a national hub for hydraulic machine manufacturing. Local entrepreneurs, many of whom started in small repair shops in the 1980s, are now producing over 200 specialized machines annually for clients ranging from Dubai to Nepal. These locally designed units are prized for being compact and efficient, serving industries like truck repair, electric pole production, and agricultural fabrication.

However, the sector's full potential is being hindered by a critical shortage of skilled labor and regulatory bottlenecks like delayed tax refunds. While local engineers are attempting to bridge the gap with hands-on training programs, manufacturers believe that government-led industrial clusters and common facility centers are needed to triple production. With targeted policy support, the hydraulic industry could become a primary engine for economic growth and job creation in the district.

The transformation of Sirsa from a strictly agrarian landscape into a burgeoning powerhouse of hydraulic engineering marks one of the most compelling industrial shifts in northern India. While the district's identity was once inextricably linked to its fertile soil and bountiful harvests, a new narrative is being forged in the heat of machine shops and assembly lines. This transition did not occur overnight; rather, it is the result of decades of persistent local innovation and a shift in economic priorities that saw the potential for heavy machinery to thrive alongside traditional farming.

**Global Tensions Drive Plywood Prices Up in Yamunanagar**

**Yamunanagar:** Plywood rates in Yamunanagar have surged by approximately 6% due to the rising costs of essential chemicals like formaldehyde and phenol, triggered by the US-Iran conflict. Manufacturers report that the price of formaldehyde has nearly doubled, jumping from ₹17 to ₹31 per kg, making it impossible to maintain previous market rates. This increase is expected to trickle down to the construction and furniture sectors, adding a financial burden to homeowners and builders.

The Haryana Plywood Manufacturers Association noted that the spike affects all categories of commercial and waterproof plywood, as well as flush doors.

Coupled with recent increases in industrial fuel and diesel costs, the local industry—a major supplier for the national market—is facing significant operational strain. Traders warn that interior design and renovation costs will likely see a corresponding rise in the coming weeks.

The recent surge in plywood prices in Yamunanagar serves as a stark reminder of how interconnected the local manufacturing sector has become with volatile global geopolitics.

While Yamunanagar has long been celebrated as the plywood capital of India, its internal stability is increasingly at the mercy of international conflicts that occur thousands of miles away.

## Ambala Scientific Industry Paralyzed by Fuel Shortage

**Ambala:** The non-availability of commercial gas cylinders has brought Ambala's renowned scientific apparatus industry to a near standstill.

Over 2,000 units involved in manufacturing laboratory glassware like test tubes and beakers are facing a total halt in production. Industry leaders are now urgently calling on the government to lay PNG pipelines in industrial clusters as a permanent solution to the volatile supply and pricing of traditional LPG cylinders.

The current crisis, linked to global geopolitical tensions, has jeopardized the livelihoods of thousands of skilled workers who are paid on a per-piece basis. The Ambala Scientific Instruments Manufacturers' Association (ASIMA) has requested the development of a dedicated industrial cluster to better organize the scattered manufacturing units.



Without immediate government intervention to provide fuel or permanent gas lines, the ₹3,000-crore sector faces a long-term threat to its global competitiveness.

The scientific apparatus

The scientific apparatus

## Haryana Hikes Rates for Affordable Housing Units

**Chandigarh:** The Haryana Cabinet has officially approved a 10-12% increase in the allotment rates for flats under the Affordable Group Housing Policy. This decision comes in response to rising project costs, including more expensive land, labor, and construction materials. Under the new structure, Gurugram will see the highest rates at ₹5,575 per square foot, followed closely by Faridabad and Sohna at ₹5,450, while low-potential towns are fixed at ₹4,250. These revised rates will apply to all licenses granted under the 2013 policy where allotments are pending. For projects where applications were already submitted, developers are permitted to demand the price difference from successful candidates, though applicants may withdraw and receive a full refund if they disagree with the hike. Additionally, the government has removed percentage caps on mixed-land use zones to encourage more flexible urban development.

The Haryana Cabinet's decision to implement a 10% to 12% hike in allotment rates for the Affordable Group Housing Policy marks a pivotal adjustment in the state's real estate landscape. This move is a direct response to the shifting economic realities of the construction sector, where the "affordable" tag has come under immense pressure from the rising costs of raw materials, land acquisition, and specialized labor. By officially sanctioning this increase, the government is attempting to strike a delicate balance between keeping homeownership accessible for the middle and lower-income groups and ensuring that developers have the financial incentive to actually complete these high-density projects.

## Middle East Conflict Triggers Industrial Crisis in Panipat

**Panipat:** The escalating conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran has dealt a severe blow to the industrial hub of Panipat, causing production costs to skyrocket and labor to flee. The handloom and textile sectors, which generate an annual turnover of ₹60,000 crore, are struggling with a massive shortage of LPG and a 40% hike in polyester yarn prices. Around 400 dyeing units have been forced to shut down, disrupting the entire supply chain for carpets, bedsheets, and blankets.

The crisis is exacerbated by a mass migration of workers who can no longer find or afford cooking gas in their rented accommodations. Despite factory owners providing electric induction stoves, many laborers are returning to their home villages. Exporters report that shipment times have doubled due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, leading international buyers to cancel or pause orders as production across the district has plummeted by nearly 60%. The industrial landscape of Panipat, world-renowned for its "textile city" status, is currently weathering a perfect storm of geopolitical and economic instability.

While the district typically thrives on a massive annual turnover of approximately ₹60,000 crore, the escalating conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran has sent shockwaves through its delicate supply chains. This is no longer just a distant political headline for the residents of Panipat; it is a localized crisis that has permeated every level of the handloom and textile sectors. The interconnectedness of global energy markets and local production has never been more apparent than in the current struggle to maintain the output of carpets, bedsheets, and blankets that the world expects from this region. A primary driver of this industrial paralysis is the sudden and sharp increase in the cost of essential raw materials, most notably polyester yarn. As a petrochemical derivative, the price of polyester is intrinsically linked to global crude oil stability, which has been shattered by the tensions in the Middle East. Manufacturers in Panipat are reporting a staggering 40% hike in yarn prices, a surge so aggressive that it has rendered previous contract prices obsolete. For an industry that operates on high volume but relatively

tight margins, such a spike in input costs acts as a financial chokehold, forcing factory owners to choose between operating at a loss or halting production entirely. The energy crisis has hit the dyeing sector with particular ferocity, leading to the forced closure of around 400 units across the district. These facilities are the heart of the textile supply chain, providing the vibrant colors and finishes that define Panipat's global brand. However, the non-availability and soaring costs of LPG have made it impossible to keep the industrial boilers and heating systems running. Without the dyeing units operational, the entire manufacturing sequence for high-value exports like premium carpets and intricate tapestries comes to a grinding halt, creating a massive backlog that affects both upstream weavers and downstream exporters. Beyond the mechanical and chemical challenges, the industry is grappling with a profound humanitarian and labor crisis that threatens its foundational workforce. A mass migration of workers is currently underway, driven by the simple but devastating inability to access or afford cooking gas for their daily

needs. Many of these laborers live in rented accommodations where they rely on small LPG cylinders, which have become scarce or prohibitively expensive due to the same global tensions affecting the factories. When the basic ability to prepare a meal becomes a daily struggle, the promise of industrial employment loses its luster, leading thousands to pack their bags and head back to their home villages. In a desperate bid to stem this tide of migration, some factory owners have taken the unconventional step of providing electric induction stoves to their workers. While this gesture highlights the resourcefulness of Panipat's entrepreneurs, it has proven to be an insufficient "band-aid" for a much deeper wound. The psychological impact of the crisis, combined with the rising cost of living and the uncertainty of future employment, has created a sense of instability that a simple kitchen appliance cannot fix. The loss of these skilled and semi-skilled workers is perhaps the most long-term damage the sector will face, as re-recruiting and training a new workforce once the crisis passes will take months, if not years.

## Cabinet Amends Superior Judicial Service Recruitment Rules

**Chandigarh:** The Haryana Cabinet has cleared significant amendments to the Superior Judicial Service Rules of 2007, aimed at enhancing meritocracy within the judiciary. The quota for promotions based on merit-seniority has been reduced from 65% to 50%, while the share for the Limited Competitive Examination (LCE) has been more than doubled to 25%. This change is intended to provide greater upward mobility for high-performing judicial officers. While 25% of posts will remain reserved for direct recruitment, eligibility has been broadened to include candidates from the Subordinate Judicial Service alongside practicing advocates. The spokesperson noted that these updates follow Supreme Court directives to ensure transparency and efficiency in judicial service conditions. The new rules also introduce a more consistent roster system to manage seniority across different recruitment channels fairly. The Haryana Cabinet's recent decision to overhaul the Haryana Superior Judicial Service Rules of 2007 marks a watershed moment for the state's legal infrastructure. By recalibrating the mechanisms through which judges ascend to higher benches, the government is signaling a shift away from traditional seniority-



based models toward a system that actively rewards individual competence and rigorous testing. This legislative update is not merely an administrative tweak; it is a fundamental reorganization of the judicial career ladder, designed to ensure that the most capable legal minds are fast-tracked into positions of significant responsibility. The move aligns Haryana with a growing national trend of judicial reform aimed at reducing pendency and improving the quality of trial court judgments. Central to this reform is the dramatic reduction of the promotion quota based on "merit-cum-seniority," which has been scaled back from 65% to 50%. Historically, this category allowed for a predictable, time-bound progression for officers, but critics often argued it lacked the competitive edge necessary to

drive excellence. By trimming this majority share, the Cabinet has effectively signaled that time served will no longer be the primary determinant for the majority of elevations. This change is expected to create a more dynamic environment within the lower judiciary, as officers realize that while seniority remains a factor, it is no longer the guaranteed path to the superior service it once was. In a move to balance this reduction, the share of appointments through the Limited Competitive Examination (LCE) has been more than doubled, increasing from 10% to 25%. This "accelerated promotion" route is designed specifically for high-achieving judicial officers who wish to prove their mettle through a rigorous examination process rather than waiting for years of service to accumulate.

## BJP Chief Criticizes Congress Over Internal Factionalism

**Karnal:** Haryana BJP President Mohan Lal Badoli has launched a scathing attack on the Congress party, labeling it "directionless" due to persistent infighting and internal power struggles. Speaking at a workers' meeting in Sonapat, Badoli claimed that while the Congress is demoralized and lacks a clear vision, the BJP is growing stronger through its selfless, "nation-first" cadre.

He emphasized that the BJP's success is rooted in the loyalty of its grassroots workers who prioritize national interest over personal gain.

Badoli urged party members to actively promote the welfare schemes initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini. He highlighted achievements such as MSP-based crop procurement, free healthcare under the Ayushman and Chirayu schemes, and the fulfillment of housing dreams for the poor. According to Badoli, the latest state budget serves as a testament to the government's commitment to every Haryanvi citizen.

In a significant political maneuver in Karnal, Haryana BJP President Mohan Lal Badoli has ignited a fresh wave of rhetoric against the Congress

party, characterizing the opposition as an entity paralyzed by its own internal divisions. During a high-stakes address at a workers' meeting in Sonapat, Badoli did not mince words, labeling the Congress "directionless" and suggesting that persistent infighting has rendered the party incapable of presenting a unified vision for the state. This critique aims to draw a sharp contrast between what Badoli describes as the chaotic power struggles of the opposition and the disciplined, mission-oriented structure of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Badoli's narrative centers on the idea that while the Congress is purportedly demoralized and fractured, the BJP continues to consolidate its strength through a "nation-first" philosophy.

He argued that the fundamental difference between the two parties lies in the character of their cadres; according to the state president, the BJP's growth is fueled by a selfless workforce that prioritizes collective national interest over individual ambition. This appeal to grassroots loyalty is a classic mobilization tactic, designed to reinforce the morale of party workers by framing their daily efforts as part of a larger, noble

crusade for the country's welfare.

The BJP chief's speech served as a rallying cry for party members to transition from internal organization to active public outreach. He urged the cadre to become ambassadors of the various welfare schemes launched under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

By positioning the party worker as a bridge between the government and the citizen, Badoli is looking to ensure that the "pro-incumbency" sentiment is maintained through direct engagement. He emphasized that the success of the party's governance model depends entirely on how effectively these benefits are communicated to the last person in the social hierarchy.

Among the specific achievements highlighted by Badoli was the government's robust mechanism for MSP-based crop procurement, a highly sensitive and vital issue in the agrarian landscape of Haryana. By emphasizing the reliability of state-led purchasing, the BJP president sought to reassure the farming community of the government's support amid shifting market dynamics. This focus on agri-

cultural security is intended to undercut opposition narratives that have historically attempted to gain ground by questioning the ruling party's commitment to the peasantry.

Healthcare and social safety nets also featured prominently in Badoli's defensive and offensive strategy. He pointed to the Ayushman Bharat and the state-specific Chirayu schemes as transformative interventions that have provided free, high-quality medical care to millions who previously could not afford it. By highlighting these "life-saving" policies, Badoli is attempting to build a narrative of a compassionate government that looks after the physical and financial well-being of its most vulnerable citizens. For the BJP, these schemes represent the tangible "dividends of double-engine growth" that they want the voters to remember.

The dream of homeownership for the impoverished was another cornerstone of the President's address, as he spoke about the fulfillment of housing promises under various state and central initiatives. Badoli framed the provision of "pucca" houses not just as a construction achievement, but as a restoration of dignity for the poor.

# Rajasthan Resident Booked for Pakistani Terror Ties

**Abohar:** Security agencies have uncovered a dangerous plot involving a resident of Hanumangarh who was allegedly in communication with a Pakistani terror handler. Investigation into a young man's social media activity revealed he was using Instagram to coordinate with Shahzad Bhatti, a known operative, and had shared images of weaponry. The suspect reportedly requested "urgent business" meetings via his mobile number. This discovery follows the arrest of three individuals in Ambala who were found with RDX and improvised explosive devices.

The interrogation of the Ambala suspects revealed that the original plan was to trigger a blast in Hanumangarh, but the attempt failed due to technical issues with the explosives. The group had conducted reconnaissance of sensitive sites in Delhi, Punjab, and Haryana before moving their focus to Ambala. Authorities have recovered mobile evidence of direct communication with handlers across the border, and the Rajasthan police are now seeking custody of the Ambala suspects for further questioning. The uncovering of a dangerous plot in Abohar has sent shockwaves through the security apparatus



of Northern India, revealing a sophisticated web of cross-border coordination aimed at disrupting the peace of the region. At the heart of this investigation is a resident of Hanumangarh whose digital footprint provided the first crucial clues into a conspiracy that spans state and international lines. Security agencies, acting on precise intelligence, began a deep dive into the social media activities of this young man, eventually discovering a direct and frequent line of communication with a known Pakistani terror handler. This discovery has highlighted the growing challenge for law enforcement as traditional boundar-

ies are bypassed by the instantaneous and encrypted nature of modern social media platforms. The investigation into the suspect's digital life specifically pointed toward the use of Instagram as a primary tool for radicalization and operational planning. It was through this popular photo-sharing app that the Hanumangarh resident reportedly established contact with Shahzad Bhatti, a notorious operative known for handling cross-border assets. The evidence recovered from the suspect's account was deeply troubling, as it included the exchange of images featuring high-grade weaponry and tactical gear. This digital trail served as a

potential signal for an impending strike. The transition from vague online chatter to specific requests for direct coordination indicated that the plot had moved out of the conceptual phase and was nearing a point of execution that required immediate intervention.

The breakthrough in the Abohar-Hanumangarh link did not happen in isolation but was catalyzed by a significant counter-terrorism operation in Ambala. Earlier, security forces in Haryana had successfully intercepted and arrested three individuals who were found in possession of a terrifying arsenal, including RDX and sophisticated improvised explosive devices. This seizure was one of the largest in recent years for the region, and it immediately triggered a multi-agency effort to trace the origins and intended targets of the explosives. The arrest of the Ambala suspects provided the physical evidence that corroborated the digital warnings found in the Hanumangarh investigation, linking the two cases into a single, cohesive threat.

During the high-intensity interrogation of the three suspects caught in Ambala, a chilling admission came to light regarding their original objectives.

# Women's Commission Summons Actor Over Harassment Claims

**Faridabad:** The Haryana State Women Commission has called upon Bhojpuri singer and actor Pawan Singh to address allegations of molestation and defamation leveled against him by a Haryana actress. Commission Chairperson Renu Bhatia has instructed the Faridabad Police to ensure both parties appear for a hearing on April 2. The complainant alleges that the singer touched her inappropriately during a 2025 event in Lucknow and that his promotional team subsequently targeted her with online harassment.

The actress claims that the negative publicity led to her losing professional opportunities, including a long-standing role in a prominent Ram Leela production. She has requested the removal of defamatory content and pornographic thumbnails using her likeness from the internet. The Commission has previously taken similar actions against other high-profile entertainers to address concerns over lyrics and digital harassment.

The Haryana State Women's Commission has taken a decisive step in addressing a high-profile grievance by summoning the well-known Bhojpuri singer and actor Pawan Singh to Faridabad. This legal move follows a formal complaint lodged by a Haryana actress who has accused the enter-

tainer of molestation and a subsequent campaign of digital defamation. By invoking its power to intervene in matters concerning the dignity and safety of women, the Commission is signaling that professional status does not grant immunity from accountability. The case has quickly become a focal point for discussions regarding the treatment of women within the regional film industries of North India, particularly when cross-border professional interactions are involved. The Chairperson of the Commission, Renu Bhatia, has been particularly proactive in ensuring that the grievance is handled with the necessary legal gravity. She has officially instructed the Faridabad Police to facilitate the appearance of both the complainant and the accused for a formal hearing scheduled for April 2, 2026. This face-to-face mandate is designed to allow the Commission to scrutinize the testimonies of both parties in a controlled, quasi-judicial environment. By involving the local police in the summoning process, the Commission is ensuring that the directive carries the weight of state authority, preventing any potential evasion by high-profile individuals who might otherwise ignore administrative notices.

According to the details provided in the complaint, the origins of this dispute

trace back to a professional event held in Lucknow during the year 2025. The Haryana actress alleges that during this gathering, Pawan Singh touched her inappropriately, an act she characterized as a clear instance of molestation. This specific allegation forms the criminal core of the complaint, suggesting a breach of physical boundaries that the actress claims left her feeling violated and unsafe in a professional setting. The Lucknow event, which was meant to be a celebration of regional talent, has thus become the primary crime scene under investigation by the Haryana-based Commission. Beyond the physical encounter, the actress has leveled serious accusations regarding the aftermath of the event, specifically pointing toward a coordinated campaign of online harassment. She claims that after she raised objections to the actor's behavior, his promotional team and online followers targeted her with a barrage of defamatory content. This digital "trolling" is alleged to have been a retaliatory measure intended to silence her and damage her public standing. In the modern era, such online campaigns are often as damaging as physical assaults, as they can permanently stain a person's digital footprint and lead to widespread social ostracization.

# Special SIT to Probe Gurugram Minor's Rape Case

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has mandated the formation of a Special Investigation Team comprising three female IPS officers to take over the inquiry into the sexual assault of a young girl in Gurugram. A three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, expressed deep disapproval of the local police's conduct, specifically questioning why the charges were reduced from the most severe categories of the POCSO Act. The court has demanded that the Gurugram Police transfer all case documentation to the new team by Thursday and has issued show-cause notices to the officers involved to justify why they shouldn't

face disciplinary measures. Furthermore, the Child Welfare Committee and a medical professional from Max Hospital have been asked to explain their handling of the situation and alterations made to medical reports. The parents of the victim had approached the top court seeking an independent probe following what they described as an insensitive and inadequate initial investigation. The Supreme Court's intervention in the Gurugram minor's rape case marks a significant judicial rebuke of the local law enforcement's handling of sensitive sexual assault investigations. By mandating the formation of a Special Investigation Team

(SIT) composed exclusively of three female IPS officers, the apex court has signaled a lack of confidence in the initial probe conducted by the Gurugram Police. This move is designed to ensure that the survivor is provided with a more empathetic, gender-sensitive, and legally rigorous investigative environment. The court's decision to hand-pick high-ranking female officers reflects a strategic attempt to restore the integrity of the case, which the victims' parents alleged had been compromised by procedural lapses and an overall lack of institutional sensitivity. Chief Justice Surya Kant, leading a three-judge bench, expressed profound "disap-

proval" regarding the trajectory of the initial investigation. A primary point of contention for the court was the unexplained dilution of the charges. The bench specifically questioned why the Gurugram Police chose to reduce the severity of the charges from the most stringent categories of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act to lesser offenses. In judicial terms, such a reduction can significantly impact the bail prospects of the accused and the eventual sentencing, leading the court to suspect either gross incompetence or a deliberate attempt to weaken the prosecution's position from the outset. The Supreme

Court's directive includes a strict deadline for the transfer of all case files, evidence, and documentation to the newly formed SIT. By requiring this transfer to be completed by Thursday, the court is preventing any further tampering or "sanitization" of the records. This sense of urgency is a hallmark of the current bench's approach to crimes against children, where the "golden hour" of evidence collection and victim testimony is paramount. The immediate takeover by the SIT is intended to stop the bleeding of the case's legal merits and to provide the family with the assurance that an independent, high-level body is now

in control of the pursuit of justice. In a rare and stern move, the court has also issued show-cause notices to the specific police officers who were originally assigned to the case. These officers are now legally required to justify their conduct and explain the rationale behind the procedural decisions that the court found so objectionable. If their explanations are found wanting, they face the prospect of severe disciplinary measures, ranging from suspension to permanent marks on their service records. This "accountability phase" of the Supreme Court's intervention serves as a warning to law enforcement agencies

nationwide that the top court is closely monitoring the implementation of the POCSO Act and will not tolerate the shielding of offenders through administrative maneuvers.

The scope of the judicial inquiry has also expanded beyond the police to include the medical and child welfare ecosystem. A medical professional from Max Hospital has been summoned to explain the handling of the victim's medical examination and, more critically, why certain alterations were allegedly made to the medical reports. In cases of sexual assault, the forensic and medical report is the cornerstone of the prosecution; any

discrepancy in these documents can lead to the acquittal of the accused. By demanding an explanation for these "alterations," the court is investigating the possibility of a broader conspiracy to suppress evidence at the clinical level, which would represent a catastrophic failure of medical ethics. Similarly, the local Child Welfare Committee (CWC) is under the scanner for its perceived inadequacy in managing the situation. The CWC is legally mandated to be the primary protector of the child's interests during such a crisis, providing psychological support and ensuring that the legal process does not re-traumatize the victim.

# Vigilance Bureau Files FIR in Massive Bank Fraud

**Panchkula:** The Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau has officially registered a case regarding a ₹150 crore scam involving the Municipal Corporation of Panchkula and Kotak Mahindra Bank. The investigation focuses on allegations of forgery, cheating, and criminal breach of trust after discrepancies were found in the civic body's fixed deposits. This represents the second major banking scandal hitting the state, following a separate ₹590 crore fraud involving other financial institutions. While the bank claims it has initiated its own reconciliation process and insists that its documentation and KYC protocols were followed, state authorities have taken over the primary investigation. Haryana's Chief Secretary has directed the bureau to fast-track the probe to identify how the funds were misappropriated.



The bank had attempted to file a separate police complaint, but officials indicated that the specialized vigilance unit would remain the lead agency for the inquiry. The Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau has initiated a high-stakes investigation into

a ₹150 crore financial scandal involving the Municipal Corporation of Panchkula (MCP) and Kotak Mahindra Bank. This case, which centers on the alleged misappropriation of the civic body's fixed deposits, has sent shockwaves through the state's administra-

tive and financial sectors. By filing a formal FIR (First Information Report) under charges of forgery, cheating, and criminal breach of trust, the Vigilance Bureau has signaled that this is not a mere accounting error but a calculated criminal enterprise.

# Bomb Threat Prompts Search at Gurugram School

**Gurugram:** Security forces were deployed to a private educational institution in Gurugram following a threatening email claiming an explosive device was on the premises.

The school was immediately evacuated as bomb disposal squads and canine units conducted a sweep of the buildings and surrounding grounds. After an exhaustive multi-hour search, officials declared the threat a hoax, as no suspicious items were discovered. Local police are now working with cybercrime experts to trace the digital footprint of the email to identify the sender.

This incident follows a series of similar hoax threats targeting schools in the NCR region. Authorities have reassured parents that safety protocols were followed strictly and that they are taking the matter seriously to prevent future disruptions.



The recent bomb threat targeting a private school in Gurugram, while fortunately a hoax, has highlighted the increasing vulnerability of educational institutions to "digital terrorism" and the high-stakes logistical challenge of managing such emergencies.

In a city like Gurugram, where thousands of students are concentrated in high-density school zones, a single threatening email can trigger a massive ripple effect of panic, gridlock, and

psychological distress.

The swift deployment of bomb disposal squads, canine units, and specialized police personnel demonstrates the city's commitment to "zero-risk" protocols, but it also underscores the immense strain these frequent hoaxes place on public resources. Each such incident requires hours of meticulous searching, effectively paralyzing the neighborhood and causing a day of lost learning for students. The investigation into

this specific threat has revealed a complex, cross-border digital trail that security agencies are now aggressively pursuing. Recent breakthroughs in similar cases within the NCR region have shown that these threats are often not the work of isolated pranksters, but part of coordinated efforts to create "atmospheres of fear."

For instance, the recent arrest of a 30-year-old suspect, Saurabh Vishwas (alias Michael), in connection with a series of school bomb hoaxes, has exposed a link to handlers operating from across the border in Bangladesh.

Vishwas allegedly provided hundreds of Gmail IDs in exchange for cryptocurrency, which were then used to send threatening emails—some of which were traced to foreign servers and included provocative political messaging.

# No Arrests in Bathinda Crash Killing Four Youths

**Bathinda:** Four days after a tragic road accident claimed the lives of four young men from Punjab, police are yet to make any arrests.

The victims, who were reportedly residents of a private rehabilitation center in Sirsa, died when their car struck a tree near Sandoha village.

While an FIR has been filed against the center's operators for culpable homicide, the father of one deceased, Balpreet Singh, alleges that gross negligence by the facility allowed the men to leave without supervision.

Local authorities in Haryana conducted an inspection of the Rori-based center but found no patients on-site.

The facility owner claims the building was rented to a third party running a separate rehabilitation service. Investigators are currently verifying whether the youths had left for a personal visit or were sent on an errand by the center.

Raids are ongoing across the region to locate the accused individuals named in the complaint.

The lack of arrests in the Bathinda road crash that claimed

the lives of four young men from Punjab has sparked intense public scrutiny and emotional pleas from the victims' families.

The accident, which occurred near Sandoha village on the Maur-Talwandi Sabo road between 11 PM and midnight on March 21, 2024, involved a car carrying five occupants that rammied into a pole and overturned.

While the investigation is in full swing, the case has evolved from a tragic traffic incident into a probe into the potentially illegal and negligent operations of a

private de-addiction and rehabilitation center in Rori village, Sirsa.

The four victims—identified as Balpreet Singh (26) of Barnala, Harpreet Singh and Gursimran Singh of Mansa, and Jashandeep Singh of Moga—were all residents of the Rori-based facility.

A fifth occupant, Amandeep Singh, who was reportedly the person being "picked up" by the group, survived with minor injuries.

The central controversy lies in why four individuals admitted

for drug rehabilitation were allegedly sent out unsupervised late at night to perform tasks usually reserved for center staff.

Families of the deceased, particularly Sukhwinder Singh (father of Balpreet), have expressed shock, questioning how patients deemed unfit to manage their own lives were entrusted with a 50-km midnight mission.

In response to the tragedy, the Maur police have registered an FIR under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

The case names the center's owner, Ranjeet Singh, his associate Arun Kumar, and other unidentified partners. However, as of March 25, 2026, no arrests have been made, as the accused remain at large.

The complexity of the case is heightened by jurisdictional hurdles; while the accident happened in Punjab, the facility is located across the border in Haryana.

Recent inspections of the Rori facility have further muddied the waters. A joint team of police and health officials found the center empty, with no patients

on-site. The building's owner, a licensed doctor, has distanced himself from the incident, claiming he had merely rented the premises to Ranjeet Singh.

Authorities are now verifying the legality and clearances of the rehabilitation center, as many such small facilities operate on the Punjab-Haryana border to offer anonymity to patients.

As raids continue across the region, the families are demanding swift justice, arguing that the negligence of the facility operators directly led to the loss of four young lives.



## Staying calm gives you a clearer view: Shubman Gill on leadership

**Ahmedabad:** Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill emphasised clarity and composure in leadership as the team prepares for IPL 2026, building on a strong and consistent foundation established over the past seasons.

Speaking at Gujarat Titans Shubharambh 2026 in Ahmedabad, Gill highlighted the importance of staying true to oneself and maintaining calm in pressure situations.

"I think I'm just being myself, and the calmness comes from a sense of belief and security that I have within my group and in my own game," Gill said.

He added, "Staying calm in any situation gives you an eagle-eye view, you're able to look beyond the moment, see the bigger picture, and have a much clearer, long-term vision."

Gujarat Titans have been among the most consistent teams in the IPL since their debut, including a title-winning first season and a runners-up finish in 2023. Building on this foundation, Gill's approach reflects conti-



nity in leadership, with a focus on clarity, confidence and trust within the group.

Gujarat Titans Shubharambh 2026, a landmark event, brought together players, leadership, partners

and fans, marking the start of a new season while reflecting on the franchise's journey and growth over the years.

Providing further insight into the team's preparation, Director of

Cricket Vikram Solanki highlighted the importance of continuity and stability in building the squad.

"As far as this season is concerned and putting a squad together, we had a really good year last year. We just fell at the final hurdle. We made very small changes at the auction, it just needed a little bit of adjustment," Solanki said.

"There were five players who came in, and Matthew Hayden has joined us as well. The work is essentially shared among all of us, and we all try to work very hard. We are mindful of supporting these players as best as we can."

Gujarat Titans will begin their IPL 2026 campaign against Punjab Kings in Mullanpur on March 31, before returning to Ahmedabad for their first home match against Rajasthan Royals on April 4.

With a strong core, minimal changes to the squad, and a clear approach built on trust and consistency, Gujarat Titans head into IPL 2026 with focus, belief and a long-term vision.

## Ben Duckett to skip IPL in favour of county stint at home

**London:** England batter Ben Duckett has given himself the best chance of regaining his best form by pulling out of the upcoming Indian Premier League with the Delhi Capitals.

Duckett will skip the IPL in favour of some red-ball cricket for county side Nottinghamshire, with the left-hander keen to prioritise some time in the middle ahead of a busy upcoming home summer for England.

England are scheduled to play a pair of three-match series this summer against New Zealand and Pakistan as part of the ICC World Test Championship, while the side also have white-ball fixtures with India and Sri Lanka at home across the next six months.

Duckett managed just 202 runs from 10 innings during England's disappointing Ashes tour of Australia at the start of the year and the

31-year-old is hoping a stint at county level will help him regain his best form in the Test arena.

"I have given this a lot of thought, and it has not been an easy choice," Duckett said. "It felt like the best thing for me to do to be ready to play for England is to be here right now, at home, refreshing my mind and body."

"(I want to) play some four-day cricket for Notts, and try to find that form I had (early on) last summer."

Duckett's poor run of form with the bat continued after the Ashes, with the top-order performer struggling for consistency during a white-ball series in Sri Lanka in the lead-up to the recent ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

While Duckett was a part of England's squad at the T20 World Cup, he failed to feature in any of their matches and was watching on from the side as the side was bun-

dled out by eventual winners India in the semi-final stage of the competition.

The chance to reunite with former England coach Peter Moores at Nottinghamshire also played a major part in Duckett's decision to turn his back on the IPL, with the veteran batter keen to keep playing for his country in all three formats.

"I want to work with Peter Moores, who knows my game inside out. It'll be so refreshing, and good for my game, to go back to him. He's a big part of where I am today," Duckett added.

"He knows where I've come from and will be a massive help for me. He might spot some nuggets that I'm doing differently from a year ago."

"(I will) just keep everything open and relaxed, go back to the drawing board, and see if there's anything to refine."

## Australian duo Marcus Stoinis & Cooper Connolly join Punjab Kings squad

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Kings' Australian stars Marcus Stoinis and Cooper Connolly have officially joined the squad in Mohali ahead of the upcoming season. The duo arrived earlier on Wednesday to link up with the rest of the team as preparations enter the final phase for the Indian Premier League 2026 season. Both players were seen in high spirits as they were welcomed at the New International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh. Their arrival significantly boosts the squad, adding a blend of international experience and youthful energy. Punjab Kings, who finished as runners-up last season, have been undergoing intensive training over the past few weeks in preparation for the tournament. The team is now gearing up for its highly anticipated season opener against Gujarat Giants, scheduled to be played on March 31 in front of their home crowd. The inclusion of Stoinis brings all-round



strength to the side, given his proven track record in both batting and bowling in international and franchise cricket. Meanwhile, Connolly adds fresh talent and versatility, with the young Australian seen as a promising prospect for the future. The squad is led by captain Shreyas Iyer, who will look to guide the team to its maiden IPL title after narrowly missing out last season. Punjab Kings' bowling attack features key names such as Arshdeep Singh and Yuzvendra Chahal, providing both pace and spin options. The team also boasts interna-

tional talent including Lockie Ferguson and Marco Jansen, strengthening their bowling depth. In the batting department, players like Prabhsimran Singh and Nehal Wadhwa are expected to play crucial roles alongside experienced campaigners. The full PBKS squad for IPL 2026 includes Shreyas Iyer (Captain), Shashank Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Yuzvendra Chahal, Azmatullah Omarzai, Harnoor Singh Pannu, Harpreet Brar, Lockie Ferguson, Marco Jansen, Marcus Stoinis, Mitch Owen, Mushceer Khan, Nehal Wadhwa, Prabhsimran Singh.

## KKR retire jersey number 12 to honour Andre Russell

**Kolkata:** In a fitting tribute to Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) legendary all-rounder Andre Russell, the franchise have decided to retire jersey number 12 in honour of their Eternal Knight. The three-time champions made the special announcement at their pre-season event - Knights Unplugged 3.0 - on Tuesday evening.

Andre Russell, who has returned to the KKR setup as a 'power coach' ahead of the new season, had a distinguished 12-year tenure with the Kolkata Knight Riders, representing the franchise in the TATA IPL from 2014 to 2025. With his iconic hairstyle and incredible prowess on the cricket field, the West Indian went on to become one of KKR's most prominent players, playing a significant role in helping them secure two TATA IPL titles

(2014, 2024). Russell featured in 140 TATA IPL matches, scoring 2,651 runs at a strike rate of 174.17 and picking 123 wickets. He is only the second all-rounder in the TATA IPL to register more than 2000 runs and 100 wickets. His power-packed performances also earned him the Most Valuable Player of the tournament in 2019, where he amassed 510 runs at a staggering strike rate of 204.81 and an average of 56.66. The two-time ICC Men's T20 World Cup winner (2012 and 2016) also holds the best bowling figures for a KKR bowler in TATA IPL history, registering 5 for 15 against Mumbai Indians in the TATA IPL 2021. His 122 wickets for the franchise make him the second-most successful bowler in their history, only second to Sunil Narine (192 wick-



ets). Speaking on the occasion, Venky Mysore, Chief Executive Officer, Kolkata Knight Riders, said, "We've had a long association with

Andre Russell, not just with KKR but also on a personal level. On the field, he has given us so many reasons to celebrate his performances

over the years. He always wore the number 12 proudly, and the number is so unique to Dre Russ, that wanted to share a fitting tribute. So, in the Knight Riders tradition of starting a new legacy, we'd like to retire this number for KKR in his honour."

Sharing his thoughts, an emotional Kolkata Knight Riders Power Coach Andre Russell added, "It has been over a decade of amazing achievements with this franchise, and I got a bit emotional watching the video. To be a part of two championship winning teams with KKR, and to see what it means to everyone, that's an amazing feeling. When you win a World Cup, that feels special, but when you win the IPL, it's something different. I just want to say thanks to this franchise for making this journey so special for me."

## New Zealand warm up for T20WC with South Africa series victory

**Christchurch:** New Zealand capped off a spectacular home campaign by completely outplaying South Africa in the fifth and final T20I at the Hagley Oval here to build momentum ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026.

The hosts secured a resounding 92-run victory on Wednesday to officially wrap up the five-match T20I series with a comprehensive 4-1 margin.

After South Africa won the toss and elected to bowl, New Zealand punished the visitors by posting a mammoth 194/6 in their 20 overs, led by skipper Melie Kerr.

In response, a clinical

and relentless Kiwi bowling attack restricted the Proteas to a mere 102/9, ensuring a massive victory to close out the series, according to ICC.

Kerr was the undisputed star of the game as she delivered a historic all-round masterclass to earn the Player of the Match award.

Taking the South African bowling attack to the cleaners, Kerr notched up a sensational century, scoring a blistering 105 runs off just 55 deliveries. Her stellar knock was studded with 19 boundaries and a towering six, single-handedly propelling the hosts to their formidable total.



Not content with just her batting heroics, Kerr then weaved her magic with the ball. She stifled the South African run chase, returning with superb bowling figures of 2/6 in her three overs. Kerr's dominance in the fifth T20I was the perfect culmination of

her spectacular form throughout the tour, which rightfully earned her the Player of the Series award. Serving as the linchpin of the White Ferns' lineup, she finished as the leading run-scorer of the series and consistently provided vital breakthroughs with her leg-

spin.

The 4-1 series victory highlighted New Zealand's quality with the ICC Women's T20 World Cup on the horizon where they will aim to defend their title. The hosts opened the series with a massive 80-run win, but South Africa fought back to claim an 18-run victory in the second T20I at Seddon Park. However, the White Ferns swiftly responded brilliantly. Veteran Sophie Devine stepped up in the third T20I at Eden Park, claiming crucial wickets and producing a match-winning, 55 not out off 38 balls to secure a milestone chase. A tight six-wicket win in the fourth match

gave New Zealand an unsailable 3-1 lead, before they completely dismantled Laura Wolvaardt's Proteas in the finale. This emphatic series win serves as the ideal preparation for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in the United Kingdom. A convincing triumph over the 2024 runners-up provides the White Ferns the perfect tonic ahead of the big tournament. New Zealand will continue their preparations for the T20 World Cup with a three-match away series against England while South Africa host India for a five-match series before their T20 World Cup campaign.

## Premier League great Salah will leave lifetime of memories

**London:** Mohamed Salah will leave Liverpool this summer as one of the greatest players ever to represent the club and to grace the Premier League.

Salah's statistics deliver the evidence - but so much more lies beneath the numbers for the iconic Anfield figure labelled the 'Egyptian King' by his adoring followers on the Kop.

He arrived at Liverpool from AS Roma on 23 June 2017 for £34m, a fee now resembling an act of grand larceny when set against what he subsequently achieved, according to BBC Sport.

Salah, like another eventual Premier League great in Kevin de Bruyne, had been at Chelsea but failed to make an impact, scoring two goals in 19 appearances, with only 10 starts.

He turned down Liverpool to join Chelsea when leaving Swiss side Basel in January 2014 - his only Anfield memory before he eventually arrived on Merseyside being a start for Jose Mourinho's side in a 2-0 win there in the following April.

It was an encounter famous for Steven Gerrard's slip and a result that pushed the title towards Manchester City. Since then, however, Salah has provided memories to last a lifetime for Liverpool and their global fanbase as he has helped add the Champions League, two Premier League titles, the FA Cup, EFL Cup, UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup to Anfield's honours board. Salah's career started as something of a slow burner at Basel, with coach Murat Yakin hinting at what he could become after he scored in their 2013 Europa League quarter-final win against Tottenham.

Yakin said: "If Mohamed

could score as well, he would not be here any more." He did. And he was not.

Salah progressed at such a rapid rate after leaving Chelsea, first on loan at Fiorentina then a superb spell at AS Roma, that by the time he arrived at Anfield he was the finished article - but it is unlikely that even Jurgen Klopp realised what a talent he had signed.

The first goal Salah scored was a scruffy, bundled effort from on the goal line in a 3-3 draw at Watford on the opening day of his first season. From then on he never stopped scoring.

As he prepares to take his leave, Salah has scored 255 goals in 435 games for Liverpool. This puts him third on the club's all-time list of scorers, behind Ian Rush and Roger Hunt. In the Premier League, he has made 310 appearances for Liverpool, with 189 goals and 92 assists.

This total of 281 goal contributions is the biggest for one club in Premier League history, five more than Wayne Rooney for Manchester United.

Salah possessed the selfish, ruthless streak that is common among all the greats, but the assists figure alone demonstrates he was also a team contributor. He put down his marker in a stellar first season, scoring 44 goals and contributing 14 assists in 52 appearances. The campaign ended in tears, however, after he injured his shoulder when challenged by Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos in the Champions League final, lasting only 31 minutes of a 3-1 loss in Kiev. He only had to wait a year for Champions League final redemption, scoring an early penalty when Liverpool beat Tottenham 2-0 in Madrid.

## Bairstow criticises level of care shown by England regime

**London:** Jonny Bairstow has criticised the England set-up, suggesting they need to bring "the care back in the game".

The debate around England's dismal Ashes defeat continued on Monday when it was confirmed coach Brendon McCullum, director of cricket Rob Key and Test captain Ben Stokes were to remain in their posts.

Wicketkeeper Bairstow was a key player in the early success under Stokes and McCullum but was dropped in 2024 and has not returned to the side since, according to BBC Sport.

"You need the care back in the game," Bairstow said. "It is OK saying people care about things - no they don't. 'If you are in the system, you are in the system.'"

"As soon as you are out of the system, you are out of the system." Bairstow, now 36, scored four hundreds across the first four

matches under the current regime in 2022 before suffering a serious leg injury later that year.

He returned for the 2023 Ashes but was dropped the following summer, with his last Test - a match against India in March 2024 - his 100th.

The England and Wales Cricket Board's review came after this winter's 4-1 Ashes defeat, a tour blighted by poor planning, standard performances and off-field issues.

Bowlers such as Mark Wood, who was picked despite missing the entire summer after knee surgery, only to manage just one Test, broke down with injuries while the batting line-up also struggled with only Joe Root and Jacob Bethell making centuries.

"If people get a finger injury, fine, but you have got to be on the park," Bairstow said.

"It is OK playing four or five games a summer and missing the



rest, but you are not backing things up and that is why you get injured. Jonny Bairstow has voiced strong concerns over player management and selection policies within the England cricket team, particularly in the aftermath of recent performances in the The Ashes. Speaking about teammate Mark Wood, Bairstow expressed sympathy for the fast bowler, pointing out the physical demands placed on him without adequate preparation. He noted that Wood, who regularly bowls at speeds exceeding 95 mph, has often been expected to perform

without sufficient match practice. Bairstow suggested that such handling has contributed to Wood's recurring injury issues. In his view, the fast bowler has not been managed properly, raising concerns about workload planning and player welfare.

Meanwhile, England men's managing director Rob Key acknowledged that the team may have "overvalued loyalty" during the Ashes series. This admission reflects internal recognition of possible shortcomings in selection decisions. The team management persisted with underperforming batters such as Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope, despite strong performances from players in domestic county cricket. Bairstow highlighted that a lack of competition for places in the squad can lead to complacency among players. He stressed that when individuals are not consistently chal-

lenged, performance standards can drop.

He remarked that players become comfortable when they are not under pressure from others pushing for selection. According to him, this comfort can quickly turn into complacency if not addressed. Bairstow further pointed out that when players are eventually questioned or criticised, they may struggle to respond effectively if they are not accustomed to such scrutiny within the team environment. The issue of team culture and accountability has also been echoed by Liam Livingstone, the Lancashire all-rounder, who recently criticised the England hierarchy. Livingstone revealed that he was reluctant to be part of the recent ICC Men's T20 World Cup squad and claimed that coaches told him he "cares too much," a comment that has sparked debate over player-management relationships.



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	
75,273.45	1.63%		23,306.45	1.72%		21,473.65	1.93%		63,640.35	2.05%		23,909.35	1.74%		53,674.15	2.03%		55,331.05	2.3%	
Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open		Previous close	Open	
74,068.45	74,652.01		22,912.40	23,064.40		21,067.00	21,236.25		62,360.70	63,051.40		23,499.30	23,672.50		52,605.65	53,024.75		54,087.00	54,087.00	
High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low		High	Low	
75,849.76	74,550.47		23,465.35	23,063.20		21,612.45	21,236.05		64,038.45	62,975.25		24,072.60	23,672.05		54,146.15	53,024.75		55,688.50	54,591.15	

## Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Shriram Finance	956.00	5.80
UltraTechCement	11,204.00	4.09
Bajaj Finance	882.75	3.98
Grasim	2,647.80	3.86
Adani Enterpris	1,886.60	3.78

## Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Tech Mahindra	1,408.50	-1.69
Power Grid Corp	295.00	-1.34
TCS	2,377.40	-0.89
Bharat Elec	413.45	-0.24
UltraTechCement	10,362.00	-5.23

## Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Apr 02	144,980.00	6,068.00 4.37
Silver May 05	236,797.00	12,856.00 5.74
Crudeoil Apr 20	8,233.00	-503.00 -5.76
Naturalgas Mar 26	272.10	-5.50 -1.98

## Stock markets rally for 2nd day as crude drops on hopes of de-escalation in West Asia War

**Mumbai** : Stock markets rallied for the second consecutive day on Wednesday, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closing nearly 2 per cent higher, as crude oil prices dropped and global markets advanced amid hopes of de-escalation in the war in West Asia.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,205 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at 75,273.45. During the day, it soared 1,781.31 points or 2.40 per cent to 75,849.76.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 394.05 points or 1.72 per cent to end at 23,306.45. From the 30-Sensex firms, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, Inter-Globe Aviation and Trent were the biggest gainers.

Tech Mahindra, Power Grid, Tata Consultancy Services and Bharat Electronics were the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, tanked 5.07 per cent to USD 99.19 per barrel.

"Markets continued to build on the previous day's mo-



mentum as global risk sentiment improved, with hopes of peace emerging on the radar. Potential diplomatic progress between the US and Iran-despite mixed geopolitical commentary-led to easing crude oil prices below USD 100, which was welcomed by the market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE SmallCap Select index jumped 3.05 per cent and MidCap Select index climbed 2.50 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended higher. BSE MidSmall Private

Banks Quality Tilt surged 3.70 per cent, followed by commodities (2.75 per cent), PSU Bank (2.61 per cent), realty (2.53 per cent), metal (2.51 per cent), industrials (2.49 per cent) and services (2.42 per cent). A total of 2,959 stocks advanced, while 1,357 declined and 156 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher. Markets in Europe were trading in positive

territory.

"The primary trigger for improved sentiment was emerging signals of a potential pause in the ongoing US-Iran conflict. Reports indicating a possible ceasefire framework and diplomatic engagement raised expectations of de-escalation, prompting a risk-on reaction across global markets," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said.

However, with conflicting narratives still in play, the optimism remains fragile and largely anticipatory rather than confirmed, he added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 8,009.56 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth Rs 5,867.15 crore. On Tuesday, the Sensex jumped 1,372.06 points or 1.89 per cent to settle at 74,068.45. The Nifty surged 399.75 points or 1.78 per cent to end at 22,912.40.

## Medicall Hyderabad 2026 to Showcase Future of Healthcare at HITEX

**Hyderabad** : The 46th edition of Medicall, India's largest medical equipment exhibition, will be held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre here from April 4-6, marking 20 years of connecting the healthcare ecosystem.

The event is expected to feature over 300 exhibitors and attract more than 6,000 doctors, hospital owners and healthcare decision-makers from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and neighbouring regions, the organizers said in a release here on Tuesday.

Medicall has evolved into a key platform for healthcare providers to build, upgrade and expand facilities, offering a comprehensive marketplace for hospital procurement and technology sourcing.

The exhibition will showcase a wide range of products and solutions, in-

cluding medical equipment, diagnostic and laboratory technologies, hospital infrastructure, surgical instruments, consumables, as well as digital health and AI-based systems.

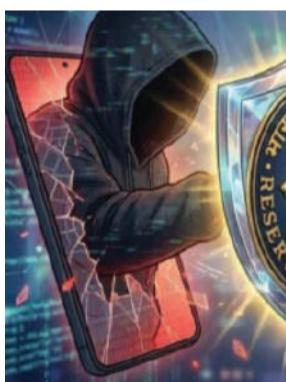
The event provides an opportunity for hospitals, especially small and mid-sized institutions, to compare technologies, interact with suppliers and make informed investment decisions. A major highlight of this year's edition is the focus on 'Make in India' medical technologies, with several domestic manufacturers showcasing cost-effective solutions tailored for the Indian healthcare landscape. The event will also host seminars and workshops led by industry experts, aimed at guiding entrepreneurs, hospital administrators and stakeholders on emerging trends, operational efficiency and healthcare innovation.

## Govt deploys AI shield, tighten RBI norms to combat rising digital payment fraud

**New Delhi**: With digital payment fraud emerging as a growing concern, the government on Tuesday outlined a comprehensive, technology-driven strategy combining stricter RBI norms, artificial intelligence tools and large-scale public awareness campaigns to protect users and strengthen trust in the system. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed the Rajya Sabha that the Reserve Bank of India has updated its framework on unauthorised electronic banking transactions to address challenges arising from rapid digitisation.

The revised guidelines include provisions for compensation in small-value unauthorised transactions, ensuring quicker relief and stronger consumer protection. In a significant move to tackle fraud at scale, the government has facilitated the creation of the Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC), a dedicated Section 8

company. The entity is designed to monitor and analyse fraud trends in real time using cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine



learning and big data analytics, enabling early detection and coordinated response. Further strengthening the system, the RBI has introduced "MuleHunter.AI", an advanced AI-based solution to identify mule accounts — bank accounts used to transfer illicit funds in fraud cases. The tool is cur-

rently operational in 26 banks and is being progressively expanded, marking a major step in dismantling organised digital fraud networks. Banks across the

country have also been advised to implement robust, real-time transaction monitoring systems and adopt AI-driven tools to detect suspicious patterns, unusual behaviour and interconnected fraud networks at an early stage. Recognising that awareness is as critical as enforcement, the government has intensified fi-

ancial literacy efforts. Under the Centre for Financial Literacy (CFL) project, over 2,400 centres have been set up nationwide to educate citizens on safe banking practices and fraud prevention. Mass outreach campaigns are also being leveraged to spread awareness. Initiatives such as "RBI Kehta Hai" by the RBI and "SEBI vs SCAM" by the Securities and Exchange Board of India are using multimedia platforms to sensitise the public about cyber risks and precautionary measures. Financial Literacy Week is also observed annually to reinforce these messages.

The government emphasised that this multi-pronged approach — combining regulatory safeguards, AI-powered surveillance and citizen awareness — is aimed at securing India's rapidly expanding digital payments ecosystem, curbing fraud risks and enhancing overall consumer confidence.

## BonV Aero partners ParaZero to bring hard-kill drone defence system to India

**Mumbai**: Indian unmanned systems firm BonV Aero has entered into a strategic partnership with NASDAQ-listed ParaZero Technologies to introduce 'DefendAir', a hard-kill counter-drone system, into India's defence and security framework.

The collaboration was announced in Mumbai and marks a significant development in the country's efforts to strengthen its counter-drone capabilities amid evolving aerial threats.

Under the agreement, BonV Aero has been granted exclusive rights to deploy the DefendAir system in India. The company also plans to move towards domestic manufacturing of the system at a later stage.

This initiative aligns with India's broader push for indigenisation and self-reliance in defence technology, particularly in critical and emerging domains such as unmanned systems and counter-drone solutions.

The partnership comes at a time when aerial threats are rapidly evolving, often outpacing conventional defence mechanisms. The proliferation of drones in both civilian and conflict scenarios has created new security challenges.

BonV Aero's Co-Founder and CEO Satyabrata Satapathy stated that the changing threat landscape necessitates a significant upgrade in India's response capabilities to effectively counter emerging risks.

He emphasised that DefendAir has been specifically engineered to operate in scenarios where traditional countermeasures, such as jamming

systems, may prove ineffective or restricted. Ariel Alon, Chief Executive Officer of ParaZero Technologies, highlighted that the partnership offers an opportunity to integrate field-tested solutions into India's security infrastructure.

He noted that the system can be deployed across a wide range of operational scenarios, including border surveillance, protection of strategic assets, convoy security, and urban law enforcement operations.

The development comes against the backdrop of increasing concerns over drone incursions along India's land borders and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in smuggling activities along coastal regions.

Additionally, the growing use of first-person-view (FPV) drones in modern conflict zones has underscored the need for advanced counter-drone technologies capable of neutralising such threats effectively.

Currently, radio-frequency jamming is the primary method used to counter drones. However, its effectiveness is limited against autonomous or encrypted drones that do not rely on external communication signals.

Moreover, regulatory restrictions limit the use of jamming systems near sensitive locations such as airports and nuclear facilities, where uninterrupted electromagnetic spectrum usage is critical.

DefendAir addresses these challenges through a kinetic interception mechanism. Its net-launching system can capture and neutralise hostile

drones mid-air without disrupting communication or navigation systems. This capability makes the system particularly suitable for deployment in sensitive and high-security environments, where conventional countermeasures may not be viable or permitted due to operational constraints. An additional advantage lies in its ability to recover intercepted drones intact, enabling authorities to carry out detailed forensic and technical analysis to support intelligence gathering and threat assessment.

The system has reportedly undergone extensive field testing across multiple operational scenarios and has demonstrated consistent effectiveness in neutralising unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) threats, including in active conflict zones. The collaboration between BonV Aero and ParaZero Technologies also includes the deployment of 'DropAir', a platform designed for autonomous delivery operations in high-altitude and remote regions.

This additional capability is expected to support logistics and supply chain requirements in difficult terrains, particularly for defence and emergency response applications.

With this partnership, BonV Aero aims to further strengthen India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem and contribute to the country's broader self-reliance initiatives in critical technologies. The collaboration is also positioned to address the evolving operational requirements of defence forces, paramilitary units, and central security agencies.

## Puravankara to launch 30 projects worth Rs 55,000 Cr across South India, Mumbai

**Bengaluru**: Puravankara Limited on Wednesday announced plans to launch 30 new residential and mixed-use projects across South India and Mumbai over the next 24 months, with a total estimated Gross Development Value (GDV) of over Rs 55,000 crore.

The company said the upcoming

portfolio will span nearly 51.14 million square feet of developable area, marking a significant expansion in its growth pipeline. A majority of the projects are currently in the approval stage, while the rest are under design, with approvals to be initiated soon. The Bengaluru-based developer stated that the expansion re-

flects its focus on high-quality developments in key urban markets, backed by strong launch inventory and disciplined capital allocation. For the first nine months of FY26, the company reported pre-sales of Rs 3,859 crore and customer collections of Rs 3,045 crore, indicating sustained demand.

## क्या वित्तीय धोखाधड़ी में आपके पैसे डूब गए?

फर्जी स्कीम में निवेश गैवा दिए?

एक कंपनी ने मुझे ज्यादा रिटर्न का वादा किया था और अब उसका कोई अता-पता नहीं!

## अपनी शिकायत सचेत पोर्टल पर दर्ज करें

- यह पोर्टल, वित्तीय अनियमितताओं की शिकायत दर्ज करने से संबंधित जानकारी और मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करता है।
- सचेत पोर्टल में दर्ज की गई शिकायतों को आवश्यक कार्रवाई करने के लिए संबंधित प्राधिकारियों को भेजा जाता है।
- उपयोगकर्ता पोर्टल पर अपनी शिकायतों को ट्रैक कर सकते हैं।

अपनी शिकायतें <https://sachet.rbi.org.in> पर दर्ज करें

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