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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Briefs

JAIPUR Raj tightens border security

Authorities have tightened security along Jaisalmer's 464-kilometer international border, banning Pakistani SIM cards to mitigate security risks from cross-border mobile signals. Under Section 163, night movement is prohibited within five kilometers of the border from 6 pm to 7 am through April 30. Additionally, foreign nationals must now obtain prior online permission to enter protected areas for business or tourism visa, with strict compliance mandated for hotel operators and tour guides.

CHANDIGARH Congress targets Mann in Assembly

Tempers flared in the Punjab Assembly on Wednesday as the Congress moved a condemnation resolution against Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over alleged disparaging remarks against women during the budget session. The House witnessed uproar after Finance Minister Harpal Cheema objected to Congress MLA Sukhpal Khaira's alleged remarks on women beneficiaries and demanded an apology. Congress MLAs staged a walkout after Khaira refused to apologise. The Speaker rejected the resolution against Mann. SAD MLA Ganieve Kaur Majithia said she would approach the National Commission for Women over the remarks.

BENGALURU K'taka seeks int'l tag for airports

Karnataka Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil on Wednesday criticised the Centre's decision to declare Madurai airport an international airport, calling it discriminatory towards Karnataka. He urged the Union Government to upgrade Hubballi and Belagavi airports to international status, saying it would benefit North Karnataka. Patil said the State had written to Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu in June 2025 on the issue and asked MPs Pralhad Joshi, Jagadish Shettar and Basavaraj Bommai to press the demand.

PATNA State revenue officials launch strike

Over 1,000 Bihar Revenue Service officers have launched an indefinite strike, protesting a new cadre ruleset that blocks their promotion to Deputy Collector Land Reforms. Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha has already accepted five resignations and warned of reassigning duties to Block Development Officers. Striking officials face salary cuts and must return government equipment as the standoff over career progression intensifies.

KOTA Youths kill 17-yr-old over reels rivalry

A 17-year-old student was allegedly killed with iron rods and a knife by two to three youths here following a dispute over social media reels, police said on Wednesday. The incident occurred at 11 pm on Tuesday in Prem Nagar, under Udhvyog Nagar police station limits. The victim was returning from a wedding when he was intercepted.

FUEL DUEL | Congress accuses govt of 'utter incompetence' in assessing Iran war impact and failing to secure energy supply

LPG crisis gives Oppn ammo against Centre

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday accused the Centre of "utter incompetence" in assessing the impact of the conflict in West Asia and not doing enough to secure energy supply leading to a severe shortage of LPG.

In Parliament, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi joined protesters sitting on the stairs of Makar Dwar to protest against the LPG shortage, which, due to rationing, has begun impacting restaurant and hotel business. The protesting MPs held a banner which read "PM is compromised" and showed a 'then and now cartoon' depicting him along with LPG cylinders. Inside both Houses of Parliament, the issue was raised by Opposition MPs who demanded a discussion on the subject. The Lok Sabha had to be adjourned soon after it convened for the day as the Opposition MPs protested vociferously about the Centre's handling of the crisis.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also posted on "X" about the issue, saying the Centre's "fake 'source based' assurances expose its utter incompetence."

Deadline nears, 108 Maoists lay down arms in Chhattisgarh

Jagdalpur: In a landmark development in India's anti-Naxal operations, a total of 108 cadres of the Dandakarany Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) formally renounced violence on Wednesday and joined the mainstream of society under the Poona Margem; Rehabilitation and regeneration initiative.

The surrender ceremony will be held at the Bastar Division Headquarters in Jagdalpur of Chhattisgarh in the presence of senior members of society, senior officers of the police and central security forces, as well as representatives of the district administration.

The event is one of the largest collective surrenders in recent years, underscoring the growing impact of rehabilitation-focused strategies in conflict-affected regions.

Officials emphasised that the initiative is not merely about disarmament but about creating pathways for regeneration, reintegration, and sustainable livelihoods for those who have chosen to abandon the path of violence. **-IANS**

Assam college drops ex-prez name

GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Tuesday decided to rename Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College and Hospital as Barpeta Medical College and Hospital.

Addressing a press conference after a meeting of the state cabinet, which approved the decision, Chief Minister



MIKA

COOKING CRUNCH

Main course back: The lawyers canteen at Delhi HC on Wednesday said it would halt its "main course" menu and offer food items such as sandwiches, salads, fruit chats and other similar refreshments. However, services resumed shortly after securing LPG supply.

Going electric: IRCTC has asked catering units at railway stations in its western zone to shift to microwave and induction plates and maintain stocks of ready-to-eat food items.

Temples log in: Temples in Karnataka have started preparations to stock wooden logs fearing LPG crisis could hamper 'prasada' preparation and distributions to the devotees.

Chaat masala: Vendors at Indore's famous Chaat Chowpatty have begun swapping traditional gas burners for electric appliances to keep the city's food culture alive.

U'khand firewood: Uttarakhand government is planning to provide firewood for commercial use, if required.

Narrow escape for 140 flyers in Phuket

MUMBAI

An Air India Express aircraft suffered a severe hard landing at Phuket International Airport, resulting in a collapsed nose gear and a prolonged runway closure that plunged the airport into operational chaos. The incident caused the airport to be shut for more than 10 hours, forcing multiple flights to be cancelled or diverted to other airports.

The incident occurred at approximately 11.24am on Wednesday when flight no. IX-938, which originated from Hyderabad, bounced upon its initial contact with the tarmac. On the second contact, the impact was severe enough to cause both nose wheels to detach from the landing gear assembly.

The nose landing gear strut scraped the runway surface, leaving long skid marks and causing minor damage to the pavement before the aircraft came to a halt, stranded in the middle of the sole landing strip.

The flight's abrupt landing

As Phuket Int'l Airport operates with only a single runway, the incident hit flight operations for nearly 10 hours

was captured on video, reportedly by a bystander, and shared widely on social media. Despite the aircraft's structural damage, sources confirmed that all 140 people on board, including seven crew members, were safely deplaned with no reported injuries.

We confirm that our Hyderabad-Phuket flight on 11 March experienced a nose-wheel issue at Phuket Airport. The crew followed all standard protocols, and guests were deplaned. We thank our guests, the Phuket airport authorities, and all stakeholders for their cooperation," an Air India Express spokesperson said.

As Phuket International Airport operates with only a single runway, the disabled aircraft completely paralysed flight operations.

UP factories face closure

Lucknow: A shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has pushed nearly 800 to 1,000 factories in the state to the verge of closure, raising concerns about the livelihood of more than 50,000 workers employed in these units. Industries dependent on heating processes such as carton box manufacturing, packaging, pharmaceuticals, snack production and fabrication have been hit the hardest as gas supplies have slowed drastically. Industrial units said many factories may be forced to shut operations within a day or two if supplies are not restored. Lucknow has around 45 to 50 factories linked to the carton box and packaging industry. These units rely on gas to heat rollers used in manufacturing corrugated sheets. The rollers are heated through burners installed inside them, which help in shaping cardboard into packaging material.

Meghalaya puts off local polls after violence, Army deployed

GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya government led by Conrad Sangma postponed Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections, scheduled for April 10 as violence hit the valley badly.

Realising an audio video clip CM Conrad Sangma said that by viewing the prevailing situation in the Garo Hills and giving respect to the sentiments of the people govt decided to stop the council elections for time being. "We will sit down and discuss, and appropriate steps will be taken. But for the time being, election is being hold, Sangma said.

Two persons were killed in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district early Tuesday after security forces opened fire to disperse violent mobs. The unrest erupted in the Chibinang area as tensions escalated between tribal and non-tribal groups over the nomination process for the GHADC elections, scheduled for April 10.

Viral Kumbh woman weds

Thiruvananthapuram: Monalisa Bhonsle, a young woman who shot to fame during the Prayagraj Kumbh Mela, tied the knot with her friend, a Muslim man, at a temple in nearby Poovar, hours after seeking police protection to evade the family's pressure. The groom is an actor from Maharashtra.

India a great partner in stabilising oil prices: Gor

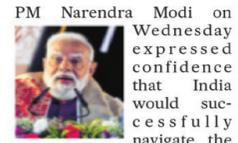
New Delhi: India is one of the largest consumers and refiners of crude oil and it is essential for New Delhi and Washington to work "hand-in-hand" to ensure stability of the energy market, US ambassador Sergio Gor said on Wednesday.

His reconciliatory overture came as the Congress maintained pressure on the government, alleging that Washington influences India's energy policy. The opposition party has been targeting the government after the US provided a 30-day waiver for Indian refiners to purchase Russian crude oil in view of the disruptions in the energy market following the West Asia crisis.

"India has been a great partner in maintaining stable oil prices around the world. The United States recognizes ongoing purchases of Russian oil are a part of this effort," the US ambassador said.

'Will navigate energy crisis successfully'

CHENNAI



PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday expressed confidence that India would successfully navigate the situation arising out of the West Asia conflict, just as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing a public meeting in Tiruchi ahead of TN polls, he said "The West Asia conflict has affected the energy supply chain of the whole world. We believe in the ideology of India-first. You have seen how our government protects the interests of Indians above everything in any situation. Our efforts will be the same this time too," he said.

EAM speaks to Lavrov

New Delhi: With the West Asia conflict destabilising energy supplies, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday spoke to his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and European Union's Foreign Policy chief Kaja Kallas with a focus on navigating the fallout of the crisis. "A good tele-con with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov of Russia. Shared our assessments on the West Asia conflict and related diplomatic efforts. Also took stock of our bilateral cooperation agenda," Jaishankar said on social media.

2027 Census will cover trans homes

The upcoming Census will collect data on sex of head of household-- Male, Female and Transgender, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday. Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, in a written response, said Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases. The questions for the first phase, which covers Houselisting and Housing Census, have been notified. Questions for the second phase, which is Population Enumeration where information of each individual will be collected, will be notified in due course, he added.



No data on SC/STs in senior posts

There is no data related to disproportionately low representation of SC or ST at the joint secretary level and above positions in the government, the Lok Sabha was informed. According to the government policy, reservation is provided to SCs and STs in promotion upto the lowest rung of Group A at the rate of 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively. MoS for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply.

Over 93,000 posts vacant in CAPFs

More than 93,000 posts are lying vacant in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles, the government informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. In a written reply to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai presented vacancies data in the paramilitary forces, showing that the CRPF has the highest number of vacancies at 27,400, followed by the CISF with 28,342 vacant posts. The BSF has 14,531 vacancies, the ITBP has 12,333, and the SSB has 6,784 vacant positions. The Assam Rifles has 3,749 vacancies, taking the total to 93,139 posts.

Oppn's signature drive to oust CEC

NEW DELHI

Signatures have been collected for a notice seeking a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Wednesday, adding that the MPs plan to submit the notice in both Houses of Parliament.

A senior MP familiar with the developments said they have finished collecting signatures and the notice will be submitted either on Thursday or Friday. The MP also said the notice will be submitted to both Houses.

Around 120 MPs have so far signed the notice to be submitted to the Lok Sabha, and around 60 MPs have signed the notice to be submitted in the Upper House, the source said.

According to rules, at least 100 MPs must sign a notice seeking the removal of the CEC in the Lok Sabha and the required strength in the Rajya Sabha is 50.

The notice has been signed by members from all INDIA bloc parties, the source added.

This is the first time a notice has been given seeking the removal of the CEC.

Govt asks Telegram to remove pirated content

New Delhi: The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has issued a notice to Telegram under the Information Technology Act, 2000, to remove pirated content from its platform, according to government sources.

The sources informed that the action follows complaints received from OTT platforms,

including JioCinema, Amazon Prime Video and others, alleging large-scale piracy of copyrighted content on Telegram. Based on the complaints and examination of the matter, 3142 Telegram channels were identified for distributing pirated content, including films and OTT content, sources added.

AIMIM hints at backing RJD in Bihar RS elections

PATNA

Rajya Sabha election may lead to a new political synergy in Bihar as state AIMIM president Akhtarul Iman on Wednesday dropped ample hints that his party would extend its support to RJD in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections.

Iman held discussions with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in this connection.

After his meeting with Tejashwi, Iman told newsmen that he would apprise the AIMIM chief and MP, Asaduddin Owaisi, of the deliberations that took place during the meeting as his leader (Owaisi) would take a final call on the issue of party's support to RJD in RS polls. "We had very positive discussions on our party's support to the RJD candidate in the RS polls," he remarked. Owaisi will also attend the Iftar party.

In bare-hand fight, 18-yr-old kills leopard with stones

Shimla: Attacked by a leopard, an 18-year-old student in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district defended himself with his bare hands and smashed the animal's jaws with stones, killing it.

The second-year Industrial Training Institute (ITI) student was rushed to the Arki hospital on Monday and discharged the same day after treatment. Forest officials gave him Rs 5,000 as immediate relief and as recognition of his bravery.

The incident occurred around 7 am on Monday when Pravesh Sharma was crossing the fields in Sarli village in Arki to get milk. **-PTI**

Alliance clouds gather in Assam

GUWAHATI

The fragile attempt to stitch together a united Opposition front in Assam hit another rough patch on Wednesday, with Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi announcing a "pause" in alliance talks with Rajiv Dal — a move swiftly challenged by the party's chief Akhil Gogoi, who demanded that

POLL WATCH ASSAM

negotiations move ahead "at lightning speed". Gogoi said the Congress had been trying to forge a united alliance with Rajiv Dal to take on the ruling dispensation in the upcoming Assembly elections, but had been unable to reach a comfortable arrangement.

BAREILLY

In a rare and dramatic turn of events, a pothole on a highway in Uttar Pradesh reportedly brought a woman back to life after she had been declared brain dead by doctors.

Vineeta Shukla, 50, a senior assistant in the copy section at the judicial courts in Pilibhit, collapsed at her home on February 22 while doing household chores. She was rushed to a hospital in



Bareilly where doctors found her completely unresponsive during examination. According to medical records reviewed later, her Glasgow Coma Scale had dropped to three points against the normal score of

Back to life, via pothole jolt

15. Doctors also noted the absence of brainstem reflexes and dilation of pupils, a condition known as mydriasis. With her vital parameters deteriorating, she was declared brain dead at the Bareilly hospital and discharged.

Her husband, Kuldeep Kumar Shukla, said the family had almost lost hope. "Her breathing had nearly stopped and her heartbeat was sinking. I had told relatives to start preparing for her last rites," he said.

While the family was bringing her back home in an ambulance via the Bareilly-Haridwar National Highway 74, the vehicle hit a large pothole near Hafizganj. The sudden and violent jolt shook the ambulance.

Kuldeep said the shock produced an unexpected response. "After the jerk, her breathing suddenly returned to normal. We were stunned. I immediately called my family and told them to stop the cremation preparations," he said.

Entrance exam for vacant seats in classes 6 to 9 in Sarvodaya schools on March 22



Meeting chaired by DM Manish Kumar Verma, instructions to create additional examination centers for centers with large student numbers

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Entrance exams will be held on March 22 for admission to vacant seats in classes 6, 7, 8, and 9 in the district's Jaiprakash Narayan Sarvodaya schools and girls' schools. A meeting in this regard was held on Wednesday in the NIC auditorium under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma. It was decided in the meeting that the question paper for the entrance exam will be prepared by the Principal of the District

Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Prayagraj. The District Magistrate directed that in case of a large number of candidates at Jaiprakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalaya Surwal Sahni and Girls' School Kaudihar, nearby schools should also be made examination centers. At the same time, the entrance exams for Jaiprakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalaya Khai Karchana and Koraon will be held in the same school premises. The District Social Welfare Officer informed that as per the instructions

of the Social Welfare Director, in the districts where the direct recruitment examination for Sub-Inspector Civil Police and equivalent posts is to be held on 14th and 15th March, the entrance examination for Sarvodaya Vidyalayas will be conducted on 22nd March. In the same sequence, the entrance examination will be conducted on 22nd March in Jaiprakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalayas Surwal Sahni, Koraon, Khai Karchana and Balika Vidyalay Kaudihar of Prayagraj.

Mobile Phone Distribution to ASHA Workers and Supervisors in Tinsukia, Assam



Assam

In a significant boost to grassroots healthcare, ceremonial mobile phone distribution programs for ASHA workers and supervisors were held today across Sadiya and Doomdooma Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LAC) in Assam's Tinsukia district. Sadiya LAC Event MLA Bolin Chetia inaugurated the program at Dangori Community Hall, distributing 398 mobile phones to ASHA workers and supervisors. This initiative equips frontline health workers with essential communication tools for improved service delivery, real-time reporting and community outreach.

Doomdooma LAC Event At Marwadi Dharamshala, Cabinet Minister of Assam Rupesh Gowala led the distribution of 216 mobile phones to ASHA personnel in Doomdooma LAC. The event follows his recent inauguration of sub-health centres at Chengeljan and Doimukhia under Hapjan Block PHC, further strengthening local healthcare infrastructure. These distributions—totaling 614 phones—underscore the Assam government's commitment to modernizing primary healthcare under schemes like the National Health Mission. District and block health officials attended both events to support the Rollout.

Lalji Yadav Appointed State Vice President of Yadav Mahasabha

Jaunpur

In a significant organizational development, Lalji Yadav the District President from Jaunpur, has been appointed as the State Vice President and State Organization In-Charge of the Akhil Bharatvarshiya Yadav Mahasabha (Uttar Pradesh). The Appointment was made by the State President of the organization, Ashok Yadav (Advocate, Supreme Court of India), recognizing Lalji Yadav nearly 25 years of dedicated social service and active organizational contribution. According to sources within the organization, Lalji Yadav has been actively involved in social and community activities for many years. He has played an important role in strengthening unity within the Yadav community and encouraging youth participation in the organization. His commitment and leadership capabilities have now earned him a major responsibility at the state level. Receiving such a significant role at the state level from the historic district of Jaunpur is being seen as a matter of pride not only for Lalji Yadav but also for the entire district. Members of the community believe that under his leadership, the organization will become stronger and will work more effectively for the welfare and development of society. On this occasion, Lal Bihari Yadav (Leader of Opposition, Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council) and Manoj Singh Yadav (National General Secretary) formally presented the appointment letter to Lalji Yadav in the Presence of several senior office bearers and members of the organization. After receiving the appointment letter, Lalji Yadav expressed his gratitude to the state leadership and assured that he would discharge his responsibilities with dedication, honesty and commitment. He stated that strengthening unity within the Yadav community, promoting education, enhancing social awareness and expanding the organization would be his top Priorities. He further added that through the organization, efforts will be made to connect youth across various districts of Uttar Pradesh and work continuously for the progress and empowerment of society. He also emphasized that the organization will remain committed to protecting the rights, dignity, and interests of the community. The news of his appointment has brought a wave of happiness across the region and the district. Several Prominent members of society and supporters congratulated him and expressed confidence that under his leadership, the organization will achieve new heights. Among those present on the occasion were Dr. Rajpati Yadav, Shiv Sahay Yadav, Mayashankar Yadav, Janardan Yadav, Brijbhushan Yadav, Tej Bahadur Yadav, Jai Hind Yadav, Shiv Dhani Yadav, and Rang Bahadur Yadav, along with many other supporters and well-wishers.

BSA withheld the salaries of three Headmasters

Ghazipur

District Basic Education Officer, Upasana Rani Verma, conducted a surprise inspection of four Primary schools in the Sadat education area on Monday to assess the situation. During the inspection, the BSA discovered several irregularities and she withheld the salaries of the headmasters of three primary schools and sought an explanation. This action by the BSA caused a stir in the primary schools. The BSA inspected Primary School Aspura,



Primary School Atampur Chhapra, Primary School Parsani, and the composite school in Mubarakpur Hartara.

During the inspection, it was found that many teachers were not using the teacher manual, their teacher diaries were incom-

plete and some students were found without uniforms. The headmasters were unable to provide satisfactory answers to

this question. The inspection also found the cleanliness of the schools to be unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the maintenance and stock registers of materials related to ongoing construction work in the schools were also not presented on site. In light of these irregularities, the BSA has ordered the salaries of the headmasters of all three primary schools to be withheld and has sought an explanation from them. Following this action, vigilance has increased in other schools as well.

A student returning home from school was hit by a speeding biker



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Tharwai / A student was returning home from school with her mother near Sahjipur village, under the Tharwai police station area, when a speeding biker hit her, causing serious injuries. She is undergoing treatment. The student suffered a fractured right arm and head

and abdominal injuries due to the severe head injury. The incident occurred around 2:30 pm on February 23, 2026. The student is undergoing treatment. The severe head injury caused a blood clot in the brain, causing mental impairment. The father, Manoj Kumar Chaurasia, is a resident of Sahjipur village, Tharwai police

station, Prayagraj. His daughter, Mahek Chaurasia, was returning home from school with her mother. Based on the complaint filed by the victim's father, Inspector Santosh Kumar Pandey has taken cognizance of the matter and filed a report against the biker. The case is currently under investigation.

Sujanpur Pradhan Hemlata Patel Invited as Special Guest to National Event

Fatehpur

Hemlata Patel, the Village Head (Pradhan) of Sujanpur Gram Panchayat under Bahua block in Fatehpur district and President of the Gulabi Gang Democratic, is set to bring pride to the district once again at the national level. She has been invited as a special guest to the National Empowered Women Panchayat Conference, scheduled to be held on March 11 in New Delhi by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. During the conference, Hemlata Patel inspiring journey and achievements in rural governance will be presented before representatives from across the country. Her selection is being seen as recognition of her outstanding work and commitment toward rural development. Earlier as well, Hemlata Patel has been honored on several prestigious Platforms in



Lucknow and New Delhi for her commendable efforts in strengthening grassroots governance. According to officials, her administrative skills and active involvement in development initiatives have also earned her a place in the department "Dream Team," highlighting her leadership abilities and effective working style. At the conference, the development model of Sujanpur Gram Panchayat, along with its women-centric initiatives and Hemlata Patel journey of struggle and success, will be showcased on a large screen for delegates from across the country. This recognition is being con-

sidered a matter of Pride for the entire district of Fatehpur and the state. The national conference is being organized under the Government of India "Empowered Panchayat Women Leaders Campaign." Along with Hemlata Patel, Beenu Devi, the Village Head of Mishramau Gram Panchayat in Teliyani block, will also participate in the event to gain insights into innovative practices and implementation of development schemes at the panchayat level. Hemlata Patel repeated recognition at the national level reflects the positive transformation in rural governance and grassroots leadership in Fatehpur district. Her efforts to transform Sujanpur into a women-friendly and development-oriented Gram Panchayat are now being viewed as a model at the national level. happiness on the occasion, Hemlata Patel said that being invited by the Ministry.

Lucknow

Steps have been taken to further improve the quality of healthcare services in Uttar Pradesh. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between two hospitals in Prayagraj and a military hospital, which will help Provide advanced medical services to the general Public. This information was shared by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak. He said that similar MOU will also be implemented in other districts of the state. "Providing quality healthcare to every citizen of the state is our priority," he Said. Speaking at a meeting held at the Vidhan Sabha Secretariat on Tuesday, Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak informed that an MOU has been signed between the Additional Director of Medical and Health Services (Prayagraj Division) and the Director of Cantonment Hospital, Prayagraj to introduce Artificial Intelligence-based super specialty facilities in two hospitals in Prayagraj. The 108-bed Cantonment Hospital, Prayagraj has a 20-bed Intensive Care Unit equipped with ventilators, a dialysis unit and an automated Pathology laboratory with various diagnos-

Quality Healthcare for Every Citizen is Our Priority: Brajesh Pathak



tic facilities. The hospital received the Defence Minister Award in 2022 and 2024. During the Mahakumbh-2025 in Prayagraj, the Cantonment General Hospital provided specialist ICU facilities at the Central Hospital in the Kumbh area and at the Sub-Central Hospital in Sector-24, where medical teams treated more than 700 critically ill Patients. According to the MOU, the available equipment and human resources will be used to establish and operate Artificial Intelligence-based Super Specialty Intensive Care Units at Tej Bahadur Sapru Hospital (Bailey Hospital) and Motilal Nehru Divisional Hospital (Colvin Hospital) in Prayagraj. These medical units will Provide facilities related to critical care, cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery, nephrology and gastroenterology. The inten-

sive care units will operate under a "Hub and Spoke" model through a telemedicine setup. Cantonment General Hospital, Prayagraj will function as the central hub and will use remote ICU monitoring in coordination with Medanta Super Speciality Hospital, Max Hospital, and Sunrise Society for Women Development, Noida. Artificial Intelligence-based telemedicine will be used for real-time Patient monitoring and expert Intervention. **Specialists to Be Available in OPD** Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak also informed that each medical unit will have two specialist OPD sessions every week with specialists Present on site. For ICU monitoring, two emergency medical officers, six staff nurses and four Paramedical staff will be available round the clock. High-parameter beds, High

Dependency Units (HDU), ten BiPAP machines, advanced AI-based telemedicine units, and electronic surveillance facilities will also be Provided. The human resources and advanced medical equipment available at Cantonment General Hospital will be provided free of cost to the concerned hospitals for two years. During this Period, healthcare staff will receive continuous training to enhance their technical Capabilities. **1.4 Crore People to Benefit** Under the MOU, healthcare Personnel will also receive training in endoscopy and colonoscopy, 2D echocardiography and cardiac emergencies, EEG and neurological diagnosis and nephrology trauma care in ICU settings. Through this initiative, nearly 14 million (1.4 crore) people in the Prayagraj division will benefit from improved medical facilities. Additional Chief Secretary (Medical and Health) Amit Ghosh, Director General of Medical and Health Services Dr. Pawan Kumar Arun, Special Secretary (Medical Health and Family Welfare) Dharendra Singh Sachan, and Nodal Officer Dr. Vikasendu Agarwal were also present on the Occasion.

50 complaints received at the Women's Public Hearing, prompt resolution directed

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Mrs. Geeta Vishwakarma, Member of the Uttar Pradesh State Women's Commission, heard the grievances of aggrieved women at the Women's Public Hearing held at the Circuit House on Wednesday. Approximately 50 cases related to domestic violence, dowry harassment, illegal occupation, police and cyber-crime were raised. Some cases were resolved on the spot, while the remaining were referred to the concerned departments, with instructions for timely action. At the public hearing, Sharmila, a resident of Chaka Gosai Ka Talab, Naini, accused her in-laws of harassment and assault for dowry. Both parties were directed to appear before the Women's Commission, Lucknow, on March 19th. Kallo Devi of Karailbag complained of illegal occupation of her land, and the concerned police station was directed to take action and inform the Commission. Rachna Kumari of Lala Ki Sarai, Shivkuti, complained of harassment by local residents. Mannu Bano of Kareli accused her in-laws of dowry harassment and demanded the registration of an FIR. In both cases, the respective station heads were directed to investigate and submit a report within a week. Meanwhile,



Rakhi Jaiswal of Purana Katra submitted a petition to have her tenant vacate her shop, prompting the Police Commissioner and District Magistrate to take

necessary action. The Member urged officials to address complaints from women at police stations with seriousness and sensitivity, and to resolve minor

cases at the police station level so that victims do not have to resort to court.

She also requested a progress report on

women-related schemes and the distribution of assistance funds. Additional City Magistrate (First) Digvijay Singh and officials from various

departments were present. Prior to this, the Member inspected the district jail, reviewed the arrangements, and provided necessary guidance.

Teacher held hostage and beaten on molestation charges; case filed under multiple sections

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. In a village in the Sarai Inayat police station area, villagers captured a teacher, held him hostage, and severely beat him on charges of molestation. Following the incident, tension prevailed in the area. Police have filed a case against the accused teacher and an investigation has been launched. According to reports, some villagers captured a teacher, accusing him of molesting a young woman. It is alleged that the villagers held him hostage, assaulted him, and publicly humiliated him. The incident became a topic of discussion throughout the area. Law experts say that only the police



and the law have the authority to take action against anyone accused. Capturing, holding, and beating someone is a serious crime in itself. Upon receiving information about the incident, police arrived at the scene and began investigating the matter. Police have filed a case against the accused teacher, Sujit Kumar Singh, under serious sections including molestation, the SC/ST Act, and other relevant sec-

tions. The teacher claims that he was walking on his way when some people attacked him and assaulted him. He has dismissed the allegations of molestation as baseless and attributed it to a village election rivalry. According to the police, the case is being investigated by ACP Tharvai. Further action will be taken based on the facts that emerge from the investigation.

Awareness about intellectual property rights among students is essential: Justice Sudhir Narayan

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A one-day national workshop and awareness program on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) was organized at Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University on Wednesday. Chief guest Justice Sudhir Narayan said that comprehensive legal changes are needed to protect intellectual property globally. The intellectual property laws in force in India are not yet fully recognized internationally. He added that no comprehensive law has yet been enacted in India regarding IPR. Just as a separate law exists for copyright, a similar system should be developed for intellectual property rights. Universities should take initiatives in this direction and make special efforts to increase awareness among



students. The keynote speaker, Professor Mansi Sharma of the Law Department at Indira Gandhi National Open University, said that there is a need for widespread awareness about intellectual property in society. Every original creation and creation by humans is intellectual property, and providing legal protection is the primary objective of IPR. He emphasized that the new generation should strive to

preserve their intellectual property and pass it on to future generations. Furthermore, there is a need to preserve traditional and acquired knowledge in digital media. Presiding over the program, University Vice Chancellor Professor Satyakam said that in Indian tradition, intellectual property has always been used for public welfare.

In ancient times, sages and saints possessed immense knowledge, but its

purpose was not business but the welfare of society. In Western civilization, knowledge and learning expanded after business became linked to business. He stated that with the development and use of new technologies, IPR needs to be further strengthened. In the era of artificial intelligence, it is essential to protect intellectual property by adhering to existing laws and regulations and providing proper references to sources. Professor Satyapal Tiwari welcomed the guests at the inaugural session, while Professor J.P. Yadav introduced the topic. The workshop was moderated by Dr. Gaurav Sankalp, and the vote of thanks was given by Dr. Satish Chandra Jaisal. Participants also presented their research papers in the technical sessions of the workshop.

A three-day training program on mushroom production techniques was launched at Khusrobag, Prayagraj

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Under the Integrated Horticulture Development Mission (IDM), a three-day training program on horticultural crop production management, protected cultivation, and mushroom production techniques was launched at the Horticulture Experiment and Training Center, Khusrobag, Prayagraj. The program was inaugurated by Chief Horticulture Specialist Dr. Virendra Singh. In the inaugural



session, Dr. Singh explained the benefits of intensive cultivation of

mango, guava, and other fruit trees, considering the small size of the land

holdings, and detailed information on canopy management and crop protection. The demand for vegetables is constantly increasing. It was also highlighted that mushroom production is of particular importance in ensuring adequate nutrition for vegetarians and in creating self-employment opportunities for educated youth. Farmers can obtain good employment opportunities and increase their income by adopting mushroom production. Dr. S.R. Baghel, CEO of Shubh Seva Agro

Welfare Foundation, Lucknow, discussed in detail the characteristics and market value of various mushroom species, especially oyster, button, and milky mushrooms. He explained that mushrooms are an important source of vegetable supply. Mushrooms are a completely vegetar-

ian and highly nutritious food, used as nutritious vegetables.

Information

It is informed to the general public that my original deed dated 24-03-2003, whose registration number is 573, book number -1, volume 3774, page 163/172, number 3238, is recorded. Really lost. Name: Anita Sah Wife: Basant Sah Address: 83L/1K/Q/P Harwara, dhoomanganj, Prayagraj-211011

Editorial

Is The Gulf Now Questioning Its US Ties - And The American 'Guarantee'?

The war in Iran, unleashed through pre-emptive strikes by the US and Israel on February 28, is well into its second week, and there are no signs of either side giving up soon. Contrary to expectations, Iran has hit back hard and refused to buckle under the tremendous pressure exerted on it. The targeted assassination of its Supreme Leader and over 40 top military commanders has only strengthened its resolve to fight back. Over the past 12 days, not only has Iran hit back at Israel, but it has also successfully targeted a number of American military bases and assets across the region. These attacks, coupled with strikes on critical energy infrastructure like oil depots, oil fields, gas fields and perhaps the most critical, closure of the Strait of Hormuz, have sent the entire region into a spiral. People are asking tough questions, especially on the ineffectiveness of the regional security apparatus as well as the security guarantees of America that it has been promising the region for over decades. Many are questioning the whole logic of it, while others are already looking at alternative security options for the future. Why has it happened? Why are Gulf nations so helpless and unable to secure their land against Iranian attacks? What are the options to ensure foolproof security in the region, going forward? Tough questions that will be debated long after the war is over. For understanding the current security dynamics and why it has failed, there is a need to fully understand the Gulf Security Architecture. The security arrangement in the Gulf goes back to the security umbrella provided by the British till the late 1960s. Thereafter, it was the US that took over the responsibility with the articulation of the Nixon Doctrine in 1969, which called on US allies to contribute to their own security with the aid of American security assistance. The "Twin Pillars policy" was a natural outgrowth of it. It incorporated twin pillars in the form of Saudi Arabia and Iran to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf. This policy, however, fell apart after the Iranian revolution, which took away one critical pillar (Iran) of the policy. At his 1980 State of the Union Address, in reaction to the 1979 Iranian revolution, President Jimmy Carter had assured the region, stating, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the US, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." Following it, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was created in 1981 to bring together countries of the region against the perceived threat from two enemies: Iran, an ideological enemy, and Iraq, a belligerent power. The birth of GCC was thus based on two major pillars - fear and exclusion (of Iran and Iraq). In its construct, however, the GCC chose to ignore the geographical and geopolitical realities of the region. Iran and Iraq, geographically, cover almost the entire northern coast of the Persian Gulf, are critical links towards the Levant, Central Asia and South Asia, and are huge reservoirs of natural resources. After the Iraq war in 1991, the US reinforced its military presence in the region through the establishment of permanent bases. The Fifth Fleet HQ moved to Bahrain in 1995, while the Al Udeida base in Qatar was set up in 1996; the US CENTCOM relocated to it in 2003. Continuing its security presence in the region, the US introduced the Cooperative Defense Initiative (CDI) in 1999, a plan for the integration of the defence forces of the GCC, Egypt, and Jordan, and to coordinate intelligence-sharing between them. In May 2006, the US launched the Gulf Security Dialogue (GSD) for the promotion of intra-GCC and GCC-US cooperation to meet common perceived threats.

Nitish Kumar, And The Great Bihar Promise That Never Came

The politics of dour men is often workmanlike, yet effective when they acquire power. Take PV Narasimha Rao, for instance. Until he became Prime Minister, he was barely acknowledged as a charismatic leader, but finished his political innings as arguably one of the most wily and consequential politicians independent India had seen. So was his political protege, Manmohan Singh. At one of the lowest points in his career as a politician and the last press conference as Prime Minister, Singh famously quipped: "History will be kinder to me than the contemporary media or, for that matter, the Opposition in the



Parliament." Those were prescient words by a man content to remain in others' shadow most of his political life but managed to irrevocably change India's destiny. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could be clubbed with such men in the way he played the game of politics, but falls well short in his achievements. Kumar has indicated he is hanging up his more than 20-

It was fitting in a way to see that the first two Indian cricketers being interviewed together on the field after India's mind-bogglingly one-sided thrashing of the Kiwis in the final of the T20 World Cup were Abhishek Sharma and Varun Chakravarty. Over the course of the two must-win knockout matches that India played in the tournament (the virtual quarter-final against the Windies and the semi-final vs England) before the final, the Indian T20 juggernaut that had struck fear in the hearts of the rest of the cricket playing world over the last two years was well and truly up and running again, finding that crucial element that fuels T20 teams more than any other - momentum. The only two big question marks that remained ahead of the summit clash were hanging heavy on Abhishek and Varun. Ironically, for many, the top-ranked T20i batter and bowler in the world didn't deserve a place in the playing XI for the final. Those of us who have followed Indian cricket for years knew that the team management would never tinker with a winning combination, regardless of form concerns for a couple of key players and that too just before the last match of the tournament. India went in with an unchanged XI, and Abhishek had a great day in the office, while Varun, though expensive, was amongst the wickets. And with that, almost every box was ticked for a national team that represents a country which became the first to win three men's T20 World Cup titles. The records that were made and broken, of course,



don't just end there. India has also become the first team to successfully defend the title and also the first host nation (co-hosts this time with Sri Lanka) to win the cup. But these records will be merely of academic interest in the corridors of power of Indian cricket. The biggest takeaway of this World Cup win will be a crown that was not amongst the prizes that were handed out on Sunday night - that of being hands-down the best and most ruthless T20i machine in world cricket. One that is so far ahead of the others that a single blip, like the shock loss vs South Africa in the Super Eights, is viewed as a major catastrophe. India had absolutely dominated bilateral T20i cricket from after the 2024 edition of the World Cup (in which they were unbeaten) till before the beginning of this edition, winning eight consecutive bilateral T20i series. Everyone knew what this team was capable of. But a World Cup title is the final, biggest seal of approval and stamp of authority. Suryakumar Yadav might have become the third Indian captain - after MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma - to win the title, but his team has become perhaps the first T20i set of play-

ers who are not just world champions, but the absolute bosses of the shortest format of the game on the international stage. The one thing that I fervently stressed on while doing a pre-match analysis was Team India's big-match temperament. In my mind, there is a gulf the size of the Antarctic Ocean between India and every other team when it comes to the mental toughness that is required to play a World Cup final, regardless of what happened just before that or how they got there. Remember how the men in blue struggled a bit in the initial stages of the tournament, even against "minnows" and were searching for that "complete game", that absolutely clinical performance that was expected of the top-ranked T20i team in the world that had blown away all opposition in its path? We didn't really see that happen consistently in the league stage as such (though the win against Pakistan was not a nerve-wracking one), and neither in the Super Eights (India lost to South Africa, and even Zimbabwe made 184 against Surya and co.). Every Indian cricket fan had their hearts in their mouths in the second semi-final, where

England, thanks to a blitzkrieg of a knock by Jacob Bethell (105 off 48), almost chased down a mammoth 254-run target. But in the final, facing a team they had never beaten before in the history of the tournament (NZ had a 3-0 win-loss record against India at the men's T20 World Cup before this final), we were served a performance that was so clinical - in both the batting and bowling departments (the fielding, especially catching needs to be worked on) - that the contest (if it can be called that) had lost all its sting inside the first 10 overs of the second innings and incredibly bordered on being "boring". The final result? A huge 96-run win for India that meant that the trophy that was won back in 2024 was not going anywhere. Who would have envisaged this almost complete performance and show of dominance when in their first match of the tournament India were reduced to 77/6 against the USA, or when Namibia, ranked 15th in the ICC T20i team rankings topped nine Indian wickets or when the Netherlands managed to get up to 176/7, with India winning that encounter by just 17 runs, or when South Africa shot out the overwhelming pre-tournament favourites for just 111, handing them a 76-run loss? Even if India were to win, it wasn't going to be easy. South Africa had emerged as serious title contenders - just like they did in 2024. And just like in 2024, we knew that if India had to win the title, they would have to find a way to beat Aiden Markram and his team. An India vs South Africa final

seemed almost destined to happen. And then the almost unthinkable happened. The Proteas were hit by the Allen-Seifert storm in the first semi-final. It was a play so much out of left field that it stunned even the staunchest of Kiwi supporters. An unbeaten 33-ball century - the first century ever in a T20 World Cup knockout match, and that too the fastest, a 117-run first wicket stand, a more than comfortable nine-wicket win inside 13 overs against a tournament favourite that had humbled the mighty Indian T20i cavalcade! Let no one tell you any different - nobody saw this coming. And just like that, South Africa had been eliminated, and with that, India's biggest bogey team had been shown the door. Regardless of what the overall head-to-head statistics might have been against New Zealand before this final, if there was a poll run on who Indian fans would like to see on the opposite side in the final between South Africa and New Zealand, I can bet the majority of the fans would have voted for the latter choice. I agree that hindsight is perfect vision and true that there is a historical similarity between the two teams - neither have won a World Cup, etc. - but given how South Africa had been playing and the fact that Ahmedabad (the venue for the final) had become almost a home base for them (five matches at the venue), where they remained unbeaten, they could have potentially been fiercer foes. That's not to say that India couldn't have beaten them in the final.

How India Should Navigate A 'New' Nepal

On March 5, 2026, Nepal went to the polls in a snap general election for its 275-member House of Representatives, the first electoral test after the tumultuous protests of September 2025 that forced the resignation of then Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. The vote, held amid intense political ferment, drew roughly 60% turnout from over 18.9 million registered voters, including nearly one million first-time Gen Z voters. The verdict has been nothing short of transformative. The four-year-old Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah - widely known as Balen - delivered a stunning performance, capturing 120 of the 165 first-past-the-post seats and emerging as the largest force in proportional representation with 49.14% of the vote. This places the party on course to command around 180 seats overall, a decisive majority. The election simultaneously marked the collapse of Nepal's traditional political order. The once-dominant Nepali Congress was reduced to 17 seats, a fall of seventy-two from 2022, while the

Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) secured only seven seats, down seventy-one. The Nepal Communist Party (NCP) also slipped to seven seats. Smaller formations such as the Shram Sanskriti Party managed three seats, while the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and a handful of independents secured single victories. The symbolism of the moment was underlined in Jhapa-5, where Shah defeated Oli himself - an outcome widely read as the electorate's repudiation of the entrenched political elite. Finalised by 8 March, the results effectively clear the path for an RSP-led government, most likely under Shah's leadership, bringing to an end a prolonged cycle of instability that has produced fourteen governments in seventeen years. Several factors converged to produce this dramatic political shift. At the heart of the upheaval lay the Gen Z protests of 2025, triggered by Oli's controversial decision to ban 26 social media platforms, a move widely perceived as an attempt to silence youthful dissent.

This Poll Season, Mamata Banerjee's Hindu Outreach Goes The Extra Mile

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has been on an overdrive for about a year, to announce and inaugurate temples in various corners of the state, amid BJP allegations that she is "appeasing" the minority Muslim community.

Banerjee -- a devotee of goddess Kali -- holds an annual Kali Puja for decades at her home, barely a couple of kilometers away from the famous Kali temple in Kalighat. But she never played up her personal religious credentials in the political arena before the BJP landed in a big way on Bengal's battleground in 2019. Now she seems to have decided to play up the Bengali-Hindu sentiment on the political stage to counter the BJP brand of "Hindutva" in a bipolar political state. Read: BJP's "Fake Hindu" Jibe At Mamata Banerjee As Bengal Gets A Piece Of Puri She had trodden this path for the 2021 assembly polls, reciting from the "Chandi" (invocation of Durga) on stage at election campaigns, to counter BJP's Hindutva push with "Jai Sri Ram" slogans and Hanuman Jayanti rallies that lack a Bengali cultural identity to it. The fallout since has been overwhelming - a factor the ruling Trinamool Congress thinks could



be to the party's advantage. Digha is in East Midnapore district, where BJP's Suvendu Adhikari - who defeated Mamata from Nandigram, in 2021, after shifting to the BJP -- holds a lot of cards. In December 2025, a grand Mahakal temple in Siliguri has been announced for which a trust has been formed. The Chief Minister also inaugurated a bridge project in Gangasagar that will connect the little islands at the delta where pilgrims gather for the auspicious Makar Sankranti in January. The foundation stone for a Rs 262 crore "Durga Angan" project in New Town, Kolkata, was also laid by the Chief Minister, who at the time had dismissed any allegation of appeasement politics, saying it was a tribute to UNESCO's recognition of Durga Puja as a cultural heritage. The 17-acre complex will have temples, museums and cultural spaces.

If the Durga Angan and Gangasagar projects are large scale, Banerjee also inaugurated a local temple of goddess Bagalamukhi in Kalighat, close to her home. A new temple complex has come up where a non-descript tiny temple of the goddess stood, and mostly devotees from the neighborhood offered prayers. Banerjee is a worshipper of "Ma Bagala" since childhood. While the Chief Minister has plied the state's 27 per cent minority Muslim population with government schemes and stipends for minority students and developing religious sites, she is being extra cautious this round to establish that it is not by overlooking the interests of the majority Hindu community. To prove the point, she has raised her government's grants to the 40,000 Durga Puja committees across the state from Rs 85,000 to Rs 1.10 lakh recently. Durga Puja is the state's biggest religious festival. As a political veteran, Banerjee is reaching out to her core Bengali-Hindu voters.

Age of retirement for Tata Trusts trustees is something to think about



Delhi: One day after stepping down as a director, Vijay Singh, vice chair of Tata Trusts, was present at the Tata Sons board meeting. Tata Sons welcomed him to attend the meeting as a token of their thanks for his time on the board, but since he had already resigned, he was unable to vote on any matters on the agenda. Despite his status as a nominated director of Tata Trusts—the parent company of Tata Sons—Singh did not have any additional authority during board meetings. Nominee directors of Tata Trusts have far more clout than other directors at Tata Sons; they can veto acquisitions or capital expenditure programs worth more than Rs 100 crore, for example. But they still need the majority vote of the Tata Trusts trustees to make decisions. The only item on the agenda that did not pass was an investment plan that did not receive approval from Tata Trusts; all the others included Air India,

When oil prices drop every month, US stocks go up

Delhi: Wall Street indexes rose in choppy rises as in-line European markets ended flat, continuing their 10-week winning streak. The Federal Reserve is expected to decrease interest rates twice this year, according to U.S. inflation figures. Crude prices fell 1%, the first monthly decline since November, as markets braced for fresh levies from Washington and crude exports from Iraq's Kurdistan

Tata International, and Tata Capital. After the approval of the biggest shareholder is obtained, the proposal would be reviewed again at the subsequent board meeting

region. According to a White House source, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine will depart the Oval Office early Friday after a contentious meeting with Trump. Following reports of falling yearly inflation and sluggish consumer spending in the latest statistics tracked by the Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury rates hit multi-month lows. A drop of 2.93 points, or 0.34%, was recorded by MSCI's global stock index.

of Tata Sons. After Singh left, the two remaining nominee directors at Tata Sons are Noel Tata, chairman of Tata Trusts, and Venu Srinivasan, vice-chairman.

Adani group bans sanctioned ships at ports



Delhi: India's largest private port operator, Adani Group, has banned entry of tankers that are sanctioned by Western countries at all of its ports - sources said and documents show move that could hit Russian oil supplies for two Indian refiners that regularly get Russian oil delivered at Adani's Mundra Port in Gujarat. India is the biggest buyer of Russian seaborne oil, mostly shipped on tankers that are

sanctioned by the European Union, the US and Britain.

HPCL-Mittal Energy, which operates a 226,000-barrels per day Bathinda refinery in northern Punjab, gets all of its crude supplies at the Mundra Port. The

port is also used by Indian Oil Corp, the country's biggest refiner, for oil imports. IOC gets crude supplies for its 10 refineries at multiple ports in India.

Adani, IOC and HEMEL had no immediate comment when reached out.

Gadkari says Mercedes-Benz wants to export 'made in India' cars

Delhi: According to Nitin Gadkari, India's minister of road transport and highways, Mercedes-Benz has told the government that it plans to increase production at its plant outside of Pune in order to fulfill its goal of exporting "Made in India" automobiles to

markets worldwide. The chairman of Mercedes, according to Gadkari, informed him that the production quality in India is strong, which has led the company to consider increasing manufacturing in the nation to fulfill the demands of worldwide

markets. "The chairman of Mercedes was telling me that they are going to look at increasing the productivity of Mercedes in India... And they want to export Mercedes from here to (markets) all over the world," Gadkari said. At the Auto Retail

India resists full crypto framework, fears systemic risks

Delhi: A government paper reveals that India is considering not regulating cryptocurrencies but rather maintaining partial monitoring, due to concerns that integrating digital assets into the country's mainstream financial system could pose systemic dangers. According to the memo reviewed by Reuters, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) believes that it would be impossible to regulate cryptocurrencies in a way that effectively limits their dangers. The inauguration of U.S. President



Donald Trump has coincided with a rise in the price of bitcoin, the most valuable cryptocurrency by market capitalization, and a general improvement in the worldwide acceptability of cryptocurrencies. Stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency

that is backed by fiat currency and hence less susceptible to violent swings, have also been legalized in the US. Despite China's ongoing cryptocurrency ban, Reuters reported last month that the country is looking into a stablecoin.

India, UAE set \$100 bn non-oil trade goal by 2030

Delhi: India and the United Arab Emirates are targeting \$100 billion in trade by 2030, excluding oil and precious metals, India's commerce ministry said in a statement. The target was decided during a meeting between Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and the UAE's minister of foreign trade, Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, in New Delhi last week. They were reviewing bilateral trade between the two countries under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that came into effect in 2022. Both leaders stressed deeper cooperation in emerging sectors renewable energy.

Adani will spend 70,000 crore in Maha; govt. inks five MoUs for 1.08 lakh

Delhi: Adani Enterprises Limited would invest 70,000 crore in Nagpur, Maharashtra, to establish a coal gasification and downstream derivatives complex. This MoU was signed with the state government. Project is projected to enhance state energy and industrial output and create 30,000 jobs. The Maharashtra government signed five MoUs worth 1.08 lakh crore. Adani's investment tops. The com-



pany develops high-growth enterprises and spins them off as independent companies in mining, infrastructure (airports, roads, data centres, water management), solar manufacturing, defence, and edible oils. Adani Enterprises

would invest ₹70,000 crore in the Integrated Surface Coal Gasification and Downstream Derivatives Project in Linga, Kamleshwar, Nagpur to provide next-generation energy solutions for Maharashtra.

Tata Capital's home financing records substantial growth

Delhi: Housing financing has been a consistent area of growth for Tata Capital, and the company sees this as a key component of its overall retail growth plan. Tata Capital Housing Finance is well-positioned to take advantage of structural opportunities in India's underdeveloped housing finance sector, as its portfolio expanded at a robust 33 percent compounded annual growth rate between FY23 and FY25. With an increase from ₹30,850 crore in FY24 and ₹22,100 crore in FY23, the home loan segment of the firm now accounts for ₹38,400 crore, or 17 percent, of Tata Capital's consolidated gross loan book as of March-end. This represents a gain of 74% over the past two years and a 24% increase over the past year, suggesting that



Govt allows companies to display revised MRP on old unsold packs

Delhi: As a comfort to packaged goods makers who were waiting for labelling and packaging clarity to figure out how to pass the GST gains on to customers, the government has authorized them to display revised MRPs on unsold old packets of items. But before the end of the demand for residential credit is still high and that the category is expanding. Tata Capital continues to

year, businesses must sell off their old inventory. The consumer affairs ministry announced on Tuesday that until December 31 or until supplies run out, whichever comes first, makers, packers, or importers of pre-packaged goods can show amended MRPs. The government has cater to a diverse range of clients, including salaried individuals, entrepreneurs, and small enterprises,

EU to Give a Hand to India's Seafood Exports Following US Tariff

Delhi: After suffering under the US's harsh tariff regime, Indian seafood exporters are about to receive a vital lifeline in the EU. Shrimp exports, which were struck particularly hard by Washington's recent 50% tariff on Indian goods, could see an immediate 20%



increase, according to the Commerce Ministry. The European Union (EU) cleared

102 new Indian fishing operations for export this month, effectively eliminating all pending permissions, marking a significant milestone. With the listings in place, which encompass aquaculture units, sea-caught processing factories, and cold storage facilities,

all of India's main seafood exporters can now begin shipping to the EU. India sent \$1.1 billion worth of seafood to the European Union in FY24, making it the country's second-biggest seafood export market. The ministry anticipates that

Ad exchange sues Google for monopolistic violations

Delhi: The advertising exchange PubMatic Inc. is suing Alphabet Inc.'s Google, claiming that Google has unlawfully monopolized the ad technology market and is seeking billions of dollars in damages. This is the second lawsuit that an advertising exchange has filed against Google in as many months. In April, a federal judge found that Google had unlawfully monopolized two important technology markets, namely ad exchanges and the tools used by websites to sell ad space, called ad servers. The lawsuit was filed in a federal court in Virginia. Another trial to determine whether



Google must divest portions of its advertising business to fix the unlawful behavior is scheduled to take place this month before the same Virginia judge who agreed with the Justice Department and a few states in April. The US Department of Justice has demanded that the

corporation sell its AdX advertising exchange and enable its technology to communicate with competitors' systems without delay. Instead of selling off its assets, Google plans to integrate its advertising exchange with other technologies. and put a compliance

Amazon eyes bumper sales

Delhi: Amazon is preparing for an even greater surge in festive sales this year as a result of the reorganization of GST slabs, which would lower the prices of many consumer goods. This will increase spending by the salaried class, many of whom look for online offers when purchasing products, especially for expensive ones. Outside of ethnic clothing, which is the norm for festivals, the most purchased items during festivals tend to be smartphones, gadgets,

and durables. We anticipate a greater increase in holiday sales compared to previous year. Regardless, consumers typically wait for sales to begin before making large purchases; however, this time around, the trend has quickened thanks to the GST cuts. Customers can expect to save a ton of money this holiday season because to merchants' enticing bargains and a drop in GST on millions of products, according to Saurabh Srivastava, VP of categories at Amazon India.

Desi stars turn global trendsetters

From Milan to Paris and London, Indian actresses make powerful style statements at international fashion weeks

From Milan to Paris and London, Indian actresses are commanding the global fashion spotlight with fearless style and unmistakable confidence. Blending

couture elegance with a modern edge, these stars turned international fashion weeks into their personal runways—proving that Indian glamour is not just present on the world stage, it's defining it.

Alia Bhatt dominated Milan Fashion Week 2026 in an oversized black leather coat, tailored to perfection and paired with pointed shoes and shades. Her fierce gothic vibe showcased fearless fashion authority.

Priyanka Chopra

Jonas mesmerized at Paris Fashion Week, donning a sweeping floral jacquard skirt with a grey blazer and tee. The romantic yet structured look at Jardin des Tuileries highlighted her seamless fusion of softness and sharpness.

Deepika Padukone stunned at Paris Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2025 in an oversized beige blazer dress with puffed shoulders, sheer stockings, leather gloves, pointed stilettos, and a dramatic tilted white hat.

Sreeleela turned heads at Milan Fashion Week SS26 in a striking layered ensemble blending sporty elements with high-fashion flair. The black dress under an oversized orange jacket exuded contemporary dynamism, marking her as a rising global style force.

Kriti Sanon commanded attention at London Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2026/27, reimagining classic outerwear with a vibrant scarf and bold glam. Her confident presence spotlighted Indian elegance on the international stage.

Hooda family welcomes baby

Actor Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram welcome their baby girl, sharing emotional moments as the actor embraces fatherhood for the first time



10th March 2026

Papa. And most importantly - Lin, thank you for making me a father and for bringing our little girl into this world. A little girl and a lifetime of love."

On Tuesday, Randeep and Lin shared dreamy photos from their maternity shoot in a joint post, smiling warmly as they placed their hands on the actress' baby bump. The couple accompanied the post with a heart emoji, leaving fans excited and showering them with love in the comments.

Actor Randeep Hooda and his wife, actress Lin Laishram, who had announced their pregnancy on their second wedding anniversary, November 29, 2025, have welcomed a baby girl on Tuesday. The occasion is doubly special as it also falls on Randeep's father, Ranbir Hooda's, birthday. Taking to his Instagram to share a glimpse of their newborn daughter, Randeep posted a photo of his father, Ranbir, holding the baby girl. Along with the picture, he wrote, "दादा अर पोती नै जन्मदिन की घणिए बधाई. Today, as I become a father, my appreciation for you has only grown deeper.

Photos: Instagram @randeephooda

Michael: Makers announce early screenings

Lionsgate has announced that its upcoming biographical drama *Michael* will debut in limited early-access screenings two days before its official theatrical release, offering fans an advance look at the highly anticipated film about the life of the King of Pop. The studio confirmed that the film will have one-night-only premium format screenings on Wednesday, April 22, ahead of its wide theatrical

rollout on Friday, April 24. Tickets for the early-access shows will go on sale at 6 am PT/9 am ET on Wednesday, March 11. Directed by Antoine Fuqua, the film stars Jaafar Jackson, the nephew of global pop icon Michael Jackson, in the titular role. The project marks Jaafar Jackson's major screen debut as he portrays the legendary performer whose music and performances shaped modern pop culture.



Jaafar Jackson as uncle Michael Jackson

'I know I smell good'

Benny Blanco clears the air on hygiene after 'dirty feet' moment goes viral



Selena Gomez kissing Blanco's feet

Days after Benny Blanco's "dirty feet" moment went viral on the internet, the American record producer addressed the discussion and opened up about his hygiene habits. According to PEOPLE, the discussion happened during the latest episode of the podcast *Friends Keep Secrets*, which Blanco co-hosts. During the episode, Blanco asked his frequent collaborator Ed Sheeran about his daily routine, including whether he showers every day. "Do you shower every day?" Blanco asked. "Yeah, sometimes twice a day mostly twice a day actually," Sheeran replied. Blanco reacted with surprise. "Really?" Sheeran then joked about how people may think he does not smell good, even though that is not the case. "I feel like I'm like you though I look like I don't smell good," Sheeran quipped. "But actually you're the best-smelling person I know," Blanco responded with a smile and spoke about his own hygiene habits. "I know, I smell good," Blanco said with a smile. "And I never, like even if I don't shower..." he trailed

off, before co-host Batalucco gestured to Blanco and asked him to smell his hands. Batalucco sniffed, and Blanco's co-host Burd, 37, commented, "He always smells good." Burd also shared how people have often spoken about his own scent. "People used to say that I have a particular smell," Burd said. "They said it's not good or bad. You have a smell. I found that so unnerving." For those who may not know, the online discussion started after the first episode of *Friends Keep Secrets*, which was released on February 24. In the episode, Blanco appeared to be sitting on Burd's couch with his feet visible on camera. Soon after, several social media users quickly commented on the appearance of his feet.



Benny Blanco's "dirty feet" viral photo

Ek Din trailer unveiled

The trailer of Junaid Khan and Sai Pallavi's *Ek Din*, a romantic Hindi adaptation of the Thai film *One Day*, produced by Aamir Khan, was unveiled



A still from the film

The trailer of Aamir Khan's son Junaid Khan and Sai Pallavi's *Ek Din* was unveiled on Wednesday. The film also marks Sai's Hindi film debut, as she is primarily known for her work in Tamil and Telugu cinema. Produced by Aamir, the film is the Hindi adaptation of the Thai film *One Day*. The 2-minute-12-second trailer, set against the picturesque backdrop of snow-clad mountains, opens with Junaid's character Rohan standing in front of a Bell of Fortune. He explains to his friend that hopeless lovers from all over the world ring the bell to try their luck in love, hoping to find their soulmate. His friend jokes that no matter how many times he rings the bell, his fate will never change. Moments later, he sees Sai's character Meera and hopes that someday she becomes his, even if just for 'ek din'. Just then, a strong gust of wind blows Junaid's beanie and Sai's scarf as the bell rings. Soon after, another scene shows Sai holding a cupcake for Junaid while singing a birthday song. As he is about to blow out the candle, she stops him and asks him to make a wish. Looking at her, Junaid says that his wish has already been fulfilled. Later, Junaid and Sai are seen roaming around together and spending time with each other, suggesting that Junaid's character's wish has finally come true and their love story is progressing beautifully. However, the mood suddenly shifts when Sai's character, in what appears to be a house, is seen completely heartbroken. She slaps Junaid and tells him that she trusted him, before asking him to get out. Sai then asks Junaid, "All this just for ek din?" to which he replies that sometimes even a single day is enough. Another scene shows Sai kissing Junaid's forehead. The trailer ends with Sai saying that it is the most beautiful day of her life, and Junaid responds that tomorrow she won't remember the day. *Ek Din* is scheduled to release in theatres on May 1, 2026.

Briefs

\$1mn for info on wife-killer Indian: FBI

FBI has raised to \$1 million the reward for information about an Indian national wanted for allegedly killing his wife in 2015, hiking the sum from \$250,000 offered previously. Bhadrakumar Chetanbhai Patel, 35, was last known to be in Newark, New Jersey. He is wanted for allegedly killing his wife Palak Patel while working at a donut shop in Maryland on April 12, 2015.

Kim watches missile tests

North Korea's Kim Jong Un and his teenage daughter observed tests of strategic cruise missiles fired from a warship, media reported on Wednesday, as North Korea threatened responses to US-South Korean military drills. Images showed them looking at a screen showing weapons being fired from Choe Hyon, a year-old naval destroyer.

Carney close to majority

A fourth MP of Canadian parliament has defected to join the Liberals, bringing PM Mark Carney closer to a majority in the House of Commons. Lori Idlout, a member of the left-leaning New Democrats, is joining the party. She said she had undergone "much personal reflection and encouragement from my community, family and supporters".

Spacecraft to reenter Earth

A Van Allen Probe spacecraft weighing 600kg is likely to re-enter Earth's atmosphere 14 years after launch, Nasa says. The spacecraft was projected to re-enter at 23:45 GMT on Tuesday, though there is a 24-hour margin of "uncertainty". Van Allen Probe A, launched in 2012, is likely to burn up as it travels, though components may survive.

6 die in Swiss bus blaze

Six people died in a bus fire in a Swiss town believed to have been caused by a man on board who set himself ablaze. Cops said the man was said to be "disturbed" and was one of the dead.

Girls die in drone attack

An explosive-laden drone blamed on Sudanese paramilitaries hit a school and a health centre in southern Sudan on Wednesday, killing 17 people, mostly girls.

GULF TENSIONS ESCALATE | Tehran threatens banks and financial institutions in UAE's Dubai, Saudi Arabia & Bahrain**Iran hits ships, Dubai airport & oil facilities**

DUBAI

Iran attacked commercial ships on Wednesday across the Persian Gulf and targeted Dubai International Airport, escalating a campaign of squeezing the oil-rich region as global energy concerns mounted and US and Israeli airstrikes pounded the Islamic Republic.

Two Iranian drones hit near Dubai International Airport, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates and the world's busiest airport for international travel. Four people, including an Indian national, were wounded, but flights continued, the Dubai Media Office said.

Iran's Joint Military Command announced it would start targeting banks and financial institutions in West Asia. That would put at risk, particularly Dubai in the UAE, home to international financial institutions, as well as Saudi Arabia and the island



IRAN TROLLS TRUMP WITH POSTER: Iran has mocked President Trump with a provocative poster depicting him holding a Nobel Peace Prize medal while standing over the bodies of dead children. The poster circulating on social media depicts Trump with a sardonic smile. The post read, "Nobel Cannibal".

kingdom of Bahrain.

Kuwait said its defences downed eight Iranian drones and Saudi Arabia said it intercepted five heading towards

the kingdom's Shaybah oil field. Iran has stopped cargo traffic in the narrow strait through which about a fifth of all oil is shipped. It has also targeted oil fields and refineries in Gulf Arab nations, aiming to generate enough global economic pain to pressure the US and Israel to end strikes.

The UN Security Council was to vote later on Wednesday on a resolution sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council demanding Iran stop attacking its Arab neighbours.

Witnesses reported airstrikes hitting Tehran after Israel said it had renewed attacks. Blasts were heard in Beirut and in southern Lebanon after Israel said it was hitting targets connected to Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. The attacks set a building ablaze in Beirut's populated Aicha Bakkar, engulfing the top two floors.

Other Israeli strikes on southern and eastern Lebanon killed 14 people. A Red

Cross worker also died on Wednesday of wounds sustained on Monday when his team was hit by an Israeli strike while rescuing people from an earlier attack.

At least 500 people have been killed so far in Lebanon since Hezbollah triggered the latest fighting with Israel after the US and Israel began the wider war with their surprise bombardment of Iran.

Israel warned of three Iranian attacks on Wednesday, with sirens heard in Tel Aviv and elsewhere, but there were no reports of casualties. Saudi Arabia said it had destroyed six ballistic missiles launched towards Prince Sultan Air Base, a major US and Saudi-operated facility, and intercepted two drones over Hafar al-Batin. The British military reported an attack on a container ship off the UAE, saying the "extent of the damage is unknown". Another ship was hit by a projectile in the Persian Gulf, it said. The crew was safe.

US jets flying deep into Iranian skies: Gen Caine

WASHINGTON

US fighter aircraft are operating deep inside Iranian airspace with "relative impunity" after much of Iran's advanced air defence network was neutralised during the first phase of Washington's military campaign, the Pentagon said.

"Most of their higher-end surface-to-air missile systems are not factors at this point in time," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General **Dan Caine** (R) told a Pentagon press briefing alongside Secretary of War **Pete Hegseth**.

Caine said the US-led campaign had struck over 5,000 targets, including missile launch sites, drone facilities and other military infrastructure across Iran. "US Strategic Command bombers recently dropped dozens of 2,000-pound GPS penetrating weapons on deeply buried missile launchers," he said.

Ballistic missile attacks have fallen 90% since the start of the operation, while one-way attack drones have decreased 83%, Caine said.

Hegseth said the campaign



was delivering "overwhelming and unrelenting precision" and remained focused on destroying Iran's missile stockpiles and launchers, crippling its navy and ensuring the regime could never obtain nuclear weapons. "We will not relent until the enemy is totally and decisively defeated," Hegseth said.

PENTAGON: 140 TROOPS HURT IN IRAN CONFLICT About 140 US service members were wounded during the first 10 days of sustained attacks linked to the American military campaign against Iran, the Pentagon said.

Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said most injuries were minor and 108 service members had already returned to duty.

Eight service members remain severely injured and are receiving the highest level of medical care, Parnell said.

ALLIES IN INDIA HAVE BEEN GOOD ACTORS: WH The US has temporarily permitted India to accept Russian oil already on ships at sea to ensure energy supplies amid the conflict with Iran, the White House said.

Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said President Donald Trump, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and the national security team took the decision because India had previously stopped buying sanctioned Russian oil.

Leavitt said the 30-day waiver would not provide significant financial benefit to Moscow.

WAR SNIPPETS**MOJTABA WAS HURT IN STRIKE THAT KILLED HIS FATHER, IRAN'S CYPRUS AMBASSADOR CONFIRMS**

Iran's new supreme leader **Mojtaba Khamenei** was injured in the February 28 attack that killed six of his family members, including his father, Tehran's ambassador to Cyprus has confirmed. In an interview at his embassy compound in Nicosia, Alireza Salarian elaborated on the circumstances in which Mojtaba, 56, was injured, saying he was lucky to survive the strike, which levelled the late ayatollah's residence. "He was also there and he was injured in that bombardment but I haven't seen that reflected in the foreign news," he told the 'Guardian'. "I have heard he was injured in his legs and hand and arm ... I think he is in the hospital as he is injured." Explaining why the cleric had not appeared in public or made any statements since he succeeded his father, he added: "I don't think he is comfortable [in any condition] to give a speech."

**UN WARNS OF HIGHER FOOD PRICES, COST-OF-LIVING IF HORMUZ SHUTS**

The UN has warned of significant risks to global trade and development, including higher food prices and cost-of-living, if the Strait of Hormuz is closed amid the West Asia conflict. The UN Conference on Trade and Development said in a report the military escalation due to the US-Israeli strikes on Iran and retaliation by Tehran has disrupted shipping flows through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints. The narrow passage carries around a quarter of global seaborne oil trade and significant volumes of liquefied natural gas and fertilisers. "The resulting ripple effects go far beyond the region, affecting energy markets, maritime transport and global supply chains," the report said.

MELONI: US-ISRAELI ATTACKS ON IRAN VIOLATE INTERNATIONAL LAW

Italian PM **Giorgia Meloni**, a close ally of President Trump, said the US-Israeli attacks violate international law. In an address to the Senate on Wednesday, Meloni described a broader international crisis "in which threats are becoming increasingly terrifying and unilateral interventions outside the confines of international law are multiplying". She said the "the American and Israeli intervention against the Iranian regime" should be understood as part of that broader crisis.

'RUSSIA HELPING IRAN WITH DRONE TACTICS FROM UKRAINE WAR'

Russia is reportedly helping Iran attack US and Gulf nation targets in West Asia by providing advanced drone tactics from its war in Ukraine, CNN reported. Until now, Russian intelligence sharing with Iran had been reported as general assistance with targeting. However, Russia has now stepped up to providing specific tactical advice, as the Shahed drones, designed by Iran but mass produced by Moscow, have been successful in penetrating the air defences of Gulf countries. "What was more general support is now getting more concerning, including UAS [drone] targeting strategies that Russia employed in Ukraine," the official said. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia was supporting Iran with drones, and would definitely help it with missiles and air defences.

WAR COST WILL BE PASSED ON TO CONSUMERS: SHIPPING GIANT BOSS

Increased transport costs driven by the conflict in Iran will be passed on to consumers, the boss of the world's second biggest shipping company has told BBC. CEO Vincent Clerc said Danish shipping giant Maersk has mechanisms in place so if fuel prices go up or down, that is passed on to its customers. "So what it means is that ultimately, in this case, these increases will pass to our customers and will pass on to the consumers."

Animals in distress | People abandon pets as they escape from Dubai

DUBAI

As rising tensions and missile threats push residents to leave parts of West Asia, animal rescue groups in Dubai say they are witnessing a troubling rise in abandoned pets, with dogs, cats, fish and turtles being left behind as families scramble to evacuate the region.

Shelters and rescue organisations in the city say they are struggling to manage a



sudden spike in animals being deserted. Groups such as K9 Friends say they have been flooded with requests from pet owners seeking to surrender their animals or asking for help to rehome them before leaving the country.

Animal welfare organisations say many residents making hurried plans to leave are finding it difficult to navigate the complex procedures required to relocate pets internationally.

Rescue experts say owners should board their pets at commercial facilities across the UAE until they can arrange travel for them overseas.

Veterinarians in Dubai have also reported a rise in enquiries from pet owners

about euthanising their animals, with some allegedly asking clinics to put down even healthy pets due to relocation costs and paperwork requirements.

Images on X appear to show dogs tied to lamp posts without food or water, while cats and pups have reportedly been left outside homes or shelters in crates. Rescue organisations say they are trying to arrange foster homes and temporary shelters.

Pak may escalate Af conflict to avoid being drawn into Iran war

NEW DELHI

Pakistan is likely to escalate attacks in Afghanistan as the war in Iran rages on. Islamabad has come under immense pressure to join the war in Iran, especially after Saudi Arabia was hit by missile strikes. Intelligence officials say Pakistan is planning a major escalation in Afghanistan so it can buy time or try to avoid joining the war in Iran. It would act as a major diversionary tactic, and Pakistan could use this as an excuse not to join the war.

The pressure stems from the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed on

September 17, 2025. The central clause states any aggression against either country shall be considered as an aggression against both. This wording was modelled on the defence principles, which are similar to Nato's Article 5.

Last month, Pakistan declared it was in a war with Afghanistan. When the Israeli and US forces struck Iran, Pakistan's Ishaq Dar was attending an Organisation of Islamic Cooperation meeting in Riyadh. Dar told the Senate on March 3, Pak had reminded Iranian leader Abbas Araghchi of its defence obligations to Saudi Arabia. Officials say Pakistan never anticipated Iran would carry out strikes on Saudi Arabia.

**Have hit Russian missile component plant: Ukraine**

Kyiv: Ukrainian forces have struck one of Russia's "most important military factories", President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said. "The plant produced electronics and components for Russian missiles. The very missiles that strike our cities, our villages and civilians," BBC quoted him as saying.

British Storm Shadow missiles were used to hit Kremniy El plant in the border region of Bryansk, Ukraine's military said.

Russian authorities say at least six civilians were killed and 42 injured in the "terrorist missile attack". President Vladimir Putin's spokesman said it was "obvious that the launch of these missiles was impossible without British specialists". "To prevent such barbaric actions by Kyiv, the special military operation is being conducted," Dmitry Peskov said.



HAWAII VOLCANO SHOOTS LAVA FOUNTAINS: A spectacular lava fountain from Hawaii's Kilauea volcano soared to 1,000 feet on Tuesday, leading to temporary closures at a national park and a key highway due to falling glassy volcanic fragments and ash, media reports said.

The eruption on Hawaii's Big Island has captivated residents and visitors for over a year with its intermittent bursts of lava. Tuesday's fountaining marked the 43rd episode since the current activity began in December 2024.

The molten rock is confined within Kilauea's summit crater inside Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, posing no threat to homes or buildings.

Chile marks its shift to right; Kast takes office

Santiago: Far-right leader Jose Antonio Kast was sworn in Wednesday as Chile's new president, marking the Latin American nation's most pronounced shift to the right since the return of democracy in 1990.

In a ceremony at the National Congress in the coastal city of Valparaiso and attended by dozens of heads of state, Kast and his future Cabinet took their oaths of office months after the conservative's landslide victory in the 2025 election.

UK ejecting hereditary nobles from the Lords

LONDON

Centuries of British political tradition will end within weeks after Parliament voted to remove hereditary aristocrats from the unelected House of Lords.

On Tuesday night members of the upper chamber dropped objections to legislation passed by the House of Commons ousting dozens of dukes, earls and viscounts who inherited seats in Parliament along with their aristocratic titles.

Government minister Nick Thomas-Symonds said the

change put an end to "an archaic and undemocratic principle". "Our parliament should always be a place where talents are recognised and merit counts," he said. "It should never be a gallery of old boys' networks, nor a place where titles, many of which were handed out centuries ago, hold power over the will of the people."

The House of Lords plays an important role in Britain's parliamentary democracy, scrutinising legislation passed by the elected House of Commons. But critics have argued it is unwieldy and undemocratic.

Starmer was warned of reputational risk in appointing Mandelson: Papers

LONDON

Documents released on Wednesday by the British government show officials believed there was a "reputational risk" to appointing Peter Mandelson as the US ambassador because of his relationship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The concerns were raised in a document sent to PM Sir Keir Starmer in December 2024 before he appointed Mandelson to the role, seen as vital to establish a good relationship with the administration of President Trump.

The document spelled out other reputational issues over Mandelson's work in a previous Labour government related to financial matters, including high-profile donors, and his work at Global Counsel, a lobbying firm he co-founded.

Lawmakers have forced the Starmer government to disclose thousands of files about the decision to name Mandelson to the key diplomatic post at the start of Trump's second term, despite Mandelson's past friendship with the convicted sex offender.

Authorities published over 100 pages of documents

related to the ties on the government website on Wednesday. The government has said the files will show Mandelson misled officials about the extent of the relationship. But Starmer is facing a political storm over his decision to give him the Washington job.

The documents are being published in batches after review by Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee.

Police have asked the government not to release files that could compromise their criminal investigation into Mandelson.

Angolan team spots ghost jumbos in Nkangala

In the southeastern part of Angola, the Nkangala people preserve an ancient legend: one day a young elephant left the herd and approached the Quembo River. At the water's edge he shed his skin, from which a woman appeared, and from them the Nkangala people were born. They consider themselves descendants of the elephant and today — guardians of this sacred animal world, CNN reported.



Now the Nkangala believe they guard the elephants' flood spirits. Yet for decades the local people have lived beside ghosts that, it seemed, remained invisible to the eyes

of researchers. The 27-year civil war, which began in 1975, transformed the remote Angolan plateaus into an almost untouched landscape the size of Great Britain. Such a supposedly fortified "hideout" became the perfect place for one of the planet's largest land animals — the elephant — to hide from human sight.

South African researcher Steve Boyes dreamed of seeing these elephants and

launched a long expedition — using over 180 trail cameras, motion sensors, acoustic and thermal sensors, and helicopter flights over the mountainous and marshy terrain. But no elephant appeared, and the mystery grew into his obsession. "It's almost like hunting the white whale from 'Moby-Dick'," said the renowned German director Werner Herzog, who made Boyes and his quarry the subject of his latest film.

Senegal school that drew students from US is at centre of abuse investigation

Dakar (Senegal): The American Dara Academy in Senegal marketed itself to families in the US as an affordable boarding school where their children could study the Quran alongside an American curriculum. Parents and families, many with West African roots, sent their children to the school believing it would be a rigorous and affordable religious education.

But the school is being probed for alleged physical abuses, with hundreds of students withdrawing from the academy and one of two campuses, where most of the alleged abuses took place, now closed, said an official. Students alleged supervisors beat disobedient pupils repeatedly in a so-called "magic room." They were sometimes ordered to strip to underwear or be naked and told to squat with arms extended, gripping heavy rocks. If the rocks fell, the beatings grew worse.



'KING OF THE WORLD': A satirical Titanic-inspired statue depicting Trump and Epstein appeared on the National Mall in Washington on March 10. Spray-painted in gold, the installation faces the Washington Monument. The 12-foot-tall sculpture is titled 'King of the World'. The installation is placed alongside banners displaying photos of the two men with the slogan 'Make America Safe Again'. The work was installed by an anonymous artist collective known as The Secret Handshake.

Briefs

DHAKA
Rana rattles new-look Pakistan

Fast bowler Nahid Rana claimed a maiden five-wicket haul as Bangladesh crushed Pakistan by eight wickets in the first ODI on Wednesday. Rana returned figures of 5-24, while captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz took 3-29 with his off-spin as Pakistan were bowled out for 114 in 30.4 overs, their lowest ODI total against Bangladesh. Pakistan's inexperienced top order collapsed after debutants Sahibzada Farhan and Maaz Sadaqat added 41 runs for the opening stand. Rana struck repeatedly with sharp short deliveries to leave Pakistan struggling. Faheem Ashraf top-scored with 37 as Pakistan were reduced to 82-9 before the last-wicket stand lifted them past 100. Bangladesh chased down the target comfortably.

ADELAIDE
Diksha to lead 5-player challenge

Diksha Dagar will spearhead the Indian challenge as the Ladies European Tour continues in Australia with the Women's Australian Open this week. Pranavi Urs, Avani Prashanth and Hitaashee Bakshi are also in the field, while Vani Kapoor will compete as an invitee, taking the Indian contingent to five players. Diksha heads into the tournament with confidence after a top-five finish last week, which lifted her into the top 10 of the Ladies European Tour Order of Merit. The Women's Australian Open returns to the tour schedule for the first time since 2016 and will be played at the Kooyonga Golf Club in Adelaide. Champions Hannah Green, Grace Kim and Minjee Lee headline field.

NEW DELHI
Mandaviya pushes for F1 revival

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has stepped up efforts to revive Formula

WC winning India receive 25 crore as prize money

Overall prize purse reflects a significant increase since 2024

DUBAI

Champions India received USD 2,639,423 (approximately 25 crore), the biggest share from the prize money pool after winning the men's T20 World Cup at home, as the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday announced the distribution of a record USD 11.25 million players' prize fund following the tournament's conclusion.

India beat New Zealand by a comprehensive 96-run margin in the final to lift their second successive title and secure the highest payout from the prize fund. The overall prize purse reflects a significant increase in ICC tournament prize money introduced in 2024. The governing body said the revised structure is aimed at boosting financial rewards for players and strengthening the global development of cricket.

Runners-up New Zealand earned USD 1,422,692, which is approximately Rs 13 crore. Semi-finalists South Africa

11.25 million
ICC's total prize money in USD for all teams

and England also received substantial payouts from the prize pool, earning around 9.24 crore and USD 8.96 crore respectively for their performances in the tournament. Among the other top finishers, the West Indies were awarded USD 538,269. Pakistan, which played all its matches in Sri Lanka during the tournament, received USD 522,692. Further down the prize distribution list, Zimbabwe were allocated USD 491,538, while Sri Lanka received USD 475,962.

The group of Afghanistan, Australia and the United States, which were eliminated at the Super 8 stage, each earned USD 309,808 from the tournament prize pool. Scotland received USD 278,654 for their participation and performance, while Ireland took home USD 271,731.



India's Jasprit Bumrah, Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube celebrate after winning the T20 World Cup. PTI

IPL | All matches at Chinnaswamy remain subject to clearance from K'taka govt

First phase games announced

NEW DELHI

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru will face Sunrisers Hyderabad in the opening match of IPL 2026 in Bengaluru on March 28, as the BCCI on Wednesday announced the schedule for the first phase of the tournament amid concerns over international travel caused by the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

However, all matches scheduled at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium remain subject to clearance from the Karnataka government-appointed expert committee. The committee is scheduled to meet on March 13 to assess venue preparedness following the deadly stampede at the stadium during last season's event.

The BCCI released the schedule for the first 20 matches of the tournament and said the complete schedule will be announced once the election dates in three states, Tamil Nadu, Assam and West Bengal, are finalised.

Apart from the state elections, the escalating conflict in West Asia is also a concern for the board, as it has disrupted international travel. Major aviation hubs such as Doha and Dubai are currently operating under restrictions, affecting flight availability.

As a result, several players from South Africa and the West Indies have not yet returned home even a week after the conclusion of their T20 World Cup campaign.

It remains uncertain whether players from those two nations who are part of IPL squads will be able to report to their respective franchises on time.

"There was a substantial



Middle East crisis a factor

Apart from the state elections, the escalating conflict in West Asia is also a concern for the board, as it has disrupted international travel. Major aviation hubs such as Doha and Dubai are currently operating under restrictions, affecting flight availability. As a result, several players from South Africa and the West Indies have not yet returned home even a week after the conclusion of their T20 World Cup campaign.

| Date | Start | Home | Away | Venue |
|----------|---------|------|------|----------------|
| 28/03/26 | 7:30 PM | RCB | SRH | Bengaluru |
| 29/03/26 | 7:30 PM | MI | KKR | Mumbai |
| 30/03/26 | 7:30 PM | RR | CSK | Guwahati |
| 31/03/26 | 7:30 PM | PBKS | GT | New Chandigarh |
| 01/04/26 | 7:30 PM | LSG | DC | Lucknow |
| 02/04/26 | 7:30 PM | KKR | SRH | Kolkata |
| 03/04/26 | 7:30 PM | CSK | PBKS | Chennai |
| 04/04/26 | 3:30 PM | DC | MI | Delhi |
| 04/04/26 | 7:30 PM | GT | RR | Ahmedabad |
| 05/04/26 | 3:30 PM | SRH | LSG | Hyderabad |
| 05/04/26 | 7:30 PM | RCB | CSK | Bengaluru |
| 06/04/26 | 7:30 PM | KKR | PBKS | Kolkata |
| 07/04/26 | 7:30 PM | RR | MI | Guwahati |
| 08/04/26 | 7:30 PM | DC | GT | Delhi |
| 09/04/26 | 7:30 PM | KKR | LSG | Kolkata |
| 10/04/26 | 7:30 PM | RR | RCB | Guwahati |
| 11/04/26 | 3:30 PM | PBKS | SRH | New Chandigarh |
| 11/04/26 | 7:30 PM | CSK | DC | Chennai |
| 12/04/26 | 3:30 PM | LSG | GT | Lucknow |
| 12/04/26 | 7:30 PM | MI | RCB | Mumbai |

delay in the departure of West Indies and South Africa players. It will be a tough task to get them back to India on time. Airfares have also increased significantly because of the conflict in West Asia," a team official told PTI.

The second match of the opening weekend will see Mumbai Indians take on Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The opening weekend will not feature any double-headers.

In its statement, the BCCI also confirmed the distribution of home venues for several franchises during the first phase of the tournament.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru will play five home matches in Bengaluru and two in Raipur. Punjab

Kings will host four home matches in New Chandigarh and three in Dharamshala, while Rajasthan Royals will play three home games in Guwahati and four in Jaipur.

During the first 16 days of the competition, the tournament will feature four double-headers. The afternoon matches will begin at 03:30 PM IST, while the evening matches will start at 07:30 PM IST. "Following the opening encounter on Saturday, Mumbai Indians will take on Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday," the BCCI said in its statement.

The board is closely monitoring both the domestic election schedule and the evolving situation in West Asia before finalising the remainder of the IPL 2026 fixtures.

Abhishek retains top spot in ICC T20I rankings

Chakravarthy loses No 1 bowling position to Rashid

DUBAI

India wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan rode on his impressive T20 World Cup campaign to climb to a career-high second position in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings for T20I batters released on Wednesday.

Kishan is now just four rating points behind India opener Abhishek Sharma, who retained the No. 1 spot following his quick half-century against New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final.

The left-handed Kishan moved up two places in the rankings after scoring 317 runs during the tournament. He now has 871 rating points, trailing Abhishek, who leads the list with 875 points.

New Zealand's Tim Seifert and England's Jacob Bethell also achieved career-best rankings after notable performances in the T20 World Cup. Seifert climbed four places to sixth position, while Bethell jumped 17 places to reach 16th in the latest list.

However, there was a change at the top of the T20I



India's Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the World Cup final. ANI

bowlers' rankings. India spinner Varun Chakravarthy lost the No. 1 position to Afghanistan's Rashid Khan following the conclusion of the global tournament.

Chakravarthy now occupies the second spot with

875

Abhishek's rating points

740 rating points, while Rashid moved to the top with 753 points. Afghanistan had exited the tournament at the group stage.

Chakravarthy dropped a place despite his strong performances during the competition. Rashid reclaimed the No. 1 ranking even though he did not play any matches in the last week.

Several bowlers gained places in the updated rankings after impressive displays in the T20 World Cup. England leg-spinner Adil Rashid moved up one place to fourth, while India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah climbed one position to sixth.

India all-rounder Axar Patel also made significant progress, rising six places to 17th after a series of effective performances during the tournament. Meanwhile, the race for the top position among T20I all-rounders remained tight. Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza retained the No. 1 spot.

Babar skips National T20 Championship

KARACHI

Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam has opted out of the National T20 Championship to focus on correcting flaws in his batting technique ahead of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), which begins on Mar 26.

Babar was earlier named in the Lahore Whites squad for the National T20 Championship, which is currently underway in Peshawar. However, it has now emerged that he will not take part in the domestic competition.

Instead, the star batter has decided to work with coaches to address technical issues in his batting before returning to competitive cricket in the PSL.

There has been no official confirmation regarding the identity of the coaches assisting him. However, a source close to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Babar and the team management had mutually agreed that he should focus on correcting flaws in his batting technique rather than participate in the national tournament. Babar is expected to represent Peshawar Zalmi in PSL II.

Dube sneaks into train to reach Mumbai after WC win

India all-rounder boarded the Sayaji Nagari Express

MUMBAI

Shivam Dube, whose explosive batting added 24 runs to India's total in the final of the T20 World Cup final, quietly travelled by train from Ahmedabad to Mumbai, railway officials said on Wednesday.

A senior railway official said they learnt from media reports that with all flights to Mumbai fully booked, Dube chose to travel by train so he could reach the city as early as possible to be with his two young children, despite the possibility of being mobbed by cricket fans.

The India all-rounder boarded the Mumbai-bound Sayaji Nagari Express from Ahmedabad in the early hours of Monday, along with his wife Anjum and a friend, just hours after he and his teammates lifted the World Cup.

According to the official, railway staff became curious after noticing Dube's name on the reservation chart. A ticket checker wondered if the passenger was the cricketer Shivam Dube. However, his



India's Shivam Dube and Tilak Varma hug each other after finishing the first innings. ANI

wife handled the situation deftly and dismissed the possibility, saying there was no reason for the cricketer to travel by train.

To avoid being recognised by fellow passengers, Dube reportedly wore a cap, mask and a full-sleeved T-shirt when he boarded the train at 5.10 am. He then climbed to his upper berth in an AC three-tier coach, the official said.

The train journey from Ahmedabad to Mumbai takes at least eight hours. The offi-

cial said Dube spent most of the trip resting after the hectic tournament and celebrations that followed India's triumph.

He was also reportedly concerned about disembarking at Mumbai's Borivali station in broad daylight, after 1 pm, fearing he might be recognised by fans. A Government Railway Police official said that before the train reached Borivali, Dube sought police assistance to ensure that his exit from the station remained as discreet as his departure from Ahmedabad.

logistics

ICC defends travel plans for stranded T20 WC players

DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday expressed sympathy for international players stranded in India after the T20 World Cup but criticised what it called "uninformed and unhelpful" suggestions that anything other than safety is guiding the travel plans disrupted by the ongoing West Asia conflict.

The conflict, which began after American and Israeli

bombing of Iran last month, has led to the closure of air-space across the Gulf region, throwing international flight schedules into disarray.

The ICC said it empathises with players who remain stranded, particularly those from South Africa and the West Indies. However, it emphasised that the safety, feasibility and welfare of the teams are being carefully considered while arranging alternative travel routes.

Providing an update on travel arrangements, the ICC

said the South African contingent will begin departing for home on Wednesday night, with all members expected to leave within the next 36 hours.

Nine West Indies players have already departed, while the remaining 16 have been booked on commercial flights scheduled to leave India within the next 24 hours, the ICC said.

Their earlier charter flight, which was scheduled to take off from Kolkata, had to be cancelled due to logistical

issues.

The ICC has faced criticism from several figures in international cricket. Former England captain Michael Vaughan raised concerns, while South African cricketer David Miller suggested that England players were provided better travel arrangements, noting that they were able to leave within a day of their semi-final exit. Earlier, West Indies head coach Darren Sammy had also expressed frustration over the lack of updates

from the governing body.

Responding to the criticism without naming any individual, the ICC rejected the allegations.

"The ICC rejects any suggestion that these decisions have been driven by anything other than safety, feasibility and welfare.

Suggestions otherwise across a variety of media platforms from people uninformed of the situation are as unhelpful as they are incorrect," the governing body said.



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