



**Dhoni on Impact Player rule: It's how T20 cricket has evolved**

**Bangladesh Chief Adviser Yunus to begin key China visit on Wednesday**

**Neha Kakkar breaks down at Melbourne concert, apologises to fans for arriving late**



**3 DELHI**  
Delhi Govt's Women Welfare Schemes: Financial Aid, Safety, & More

**7 NATIONAL**  
Opposition accuses Govt of centralizing power through bills

**8 STATE**  
UP saw more development in last 8 years than in 70 years before that: CM Adityanath



**9 BUSINESS**  
India Loses 3% GDP Annually Due to Road Accidents: Gadkari



**11 SPORTS**  
Punjab wins first-ever IGTU Golf Sixes League in Gurugram

**MARKET**

SENSEX	NIIFTY
77984.38	23658.35
1,078.87	307.95
GOLD	SILVER
87,269.00	97,518.00
-509.00	-366.00

**WEATHER**

Sunrise 6:20 AM  
Sunset 6:35 PM  
Moonrise 3:35 AM  
Moonset 2:11 PM

Today's Prediction  
Maximum 36°C Minimum 22°C  
Tomorrow's Prediction  
38°C 23°C

## CM Rekha Gupta presented a ₹1 lakh cr 'historic budget', aims to transform Delhi

The total Budget outlay for 2025-26 marks a 31.5 per cent increase from the previous year. To combat pollution in Delhi, Rs 300 crore has been set aside by the BJP government.

Abhishek Byahut  
New Delhi  
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday presented a historic ₹1 lakh crore budget for the fiscal year 2025-26, marking a significant 31.5% increase from the previous year. This is the first budget from a BJP-led government in Delhi in over 26 years, and CM Gupta termed it as a roadmap to make the capital self-reliant and more developed. The budget focuses on ten key areas, including cleaning the Yamuna River, women empowerment, improv-



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- ₹300 crore allocated to address pollution.
- ₹500 crore set aside for cleaning the Yamuna River, similar to the Sabarmati project.
- ₹9,000 crore for Clean drinking water and sanitation efforts.
- ₹6,874 crore to set up more health centers and enhance existing health
- ₹12,952 crore allocated for the transport sector.
- ₹5,100 crore ear-

marked to provide Rs 2500 financial support to eligible women.

- Plans to install 50,000 CCTV cameras for safety.
- ₹696 crore for slum development.
- ₹100 crore for establishing 100 Atal Centers.
- Free laptops for 1,200 tenth-grade students.

speech, underscored the government's commitment to bringing transformative changes to Delhi and sharply criticized the previous AAP administration for what she described as years of stalled development. The education sector got the highest allocation of Rs 19,291 crore, up by 19.29 per cent from the previous budget, followed by health with Rs 12,893 crore and transport with Rs 12,952 crore. In her 138-minute speech, Gupta also focused on infrastructure development projects, announcing that the BJP-led Delhi government has

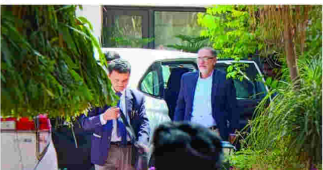
## India China hold diplomatic talks in Beijing

New Delhi  
India and China on Tuesday agreed to work together to make "substantial preparation" for the next meeting of their Special Representatives (SR) on the boundary question that is set to be held in the national capital later this year. The decision was taken at a fresh edition of talks held in Beijing under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the WMCC meeting was held in a "positive and constructive atmosphere" and both sides "comprehensively reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual



Control. "The two sides agreed to work together to make substantial preparation for the next meeting of the Special Representatives (SR), which will be held in India later this year," it said in a statement. The MEA said peace and tranquillity on the border are critical for the smooth development of overall bilateral relations. CONTD ON PAGE-2

## Cash row: SC in-house panel begins probe, visits Justice Varma's house



New Delhi  
The three members of a Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma on Tuesday as it commenced its inquiry into allegations of discovery of a cash pile at his residence here. Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Justice G S Sandhwalia, Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, and Anu Sivaraman, a Judge of the High Court of Karnataka, reached Justice Varma's official residence at 30, Tughlak Crescent and were inside for around 30-35 minutes. The committee is learnt to have inspected the site before leaving in the afternoon, the sources said. It is not known whether Justice Varma was at his residence when the inquiry panel reached. The findings of the crucial inquiry will decide the fate of Justice Varma who is facing allegations that "four to five semi-burnt sacks of Indian currency notes" were found in his Laxtyens home following a fire incident at around 11.35 pm on March 14. The apex court Collegium had recommended the repatriation of Justice Varma, who was de-registered by the Delhi High Court following a directive from Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, to his parent Allahabad High Court. On March 22, the CJJ constituted the three-member committee to conduct an in-house inquiry into allegations against Justice Varma and decided to upload the in-house inquiry report of Chief Justice D K Upadhyay of the Delhi High Court in the incident. It included photos and videos of the alleged discovery of a huge stash of cash. Justice Varma strongly denounced the allegations and said no cash was ever placed in the storeroom either by him or any of his family members. Agency



**Ministry of Finance**

### The GST Waiver of Interest & Penalty Scheme

Introduced under Section 128A of CGST Act

Considering the difficulties faced by the taxpayers, during the initial years of implementation of GST, amendments made in the CGST Act:

- To provide for waiver of interest and penalties for demand notices issued under Section 73 of the CGST Act for the fiscal years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Insertion of Section 128A in CGST Act to provide for conditional waiver of interest or penalty or both relating to demands raised under Section 73, for FY 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

In cases where the taxpayer pays the full amount of tax demanded in the notice upto 31.03.2025

The corresponding forms must be submitted by June 30, 2025

This timeline provides businesses sufficient time to comply with the scheme while encouraging them to regularise GST compliance without hefty interest & penalty.

Ease Your Compliance Journey with the GST Waiver of Interest & Penalty Scheme!

For more details, please refer to Section 128A of the CGST Act, 2017, Notification No. 20/2024-Central Tax dated 08.10.2024 and Circular No. 238/32/2024-GST dated 15.10.2024

Scan QR Code

## India, US trade talks begin; agreement aiming for \$500 Billion commerce

New Delhi  
Senior officials of India and the US will begin three-day talks on the proposed bilateral trade agreement here on Wednesday amid threats of reciprocal tariffs from the Trump-administration, an official said. To formally start the negotiations on the pact, Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch, along with a team of officials, is here. He will hold discussions with Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce Ramesh Agrawal. The two sides will



finalise the contours, schedule of negotiations and terms of reference of the agreement during their deliberations, the official said. The agreement would be finalised in two phases and the first phase is expected to focus on issues pertaining to goods trade. India and the US are targeting to conclude the first phase or tranche of the agreement by fall of 2025 (September-October). Normally in such trade pacts, two countries either significantly reduce or eliminate import duties on maximum (90-95 per cent) number of goods traded between them. Besides, they ease norms to promote trade in services and boost investments. Agency

**Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs**

@cbicindia @cbic\_india @cbicindia @CBICINDIA CBIC India



NEWS IN BRIEF

Delhi govt increases monthly aid for senior citizens

**New Delhi**  
Delhi government has announced an increase in the monthly financial assistance for senior citizens, raising the amount from Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500 for those aged 60 to 69, while those aged above 70 will receive Rs 3,000 per month.

Presenting the Budget, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government is committed to strengthening financial support schemes for senior citizens.

"The monthly assistance for senior citizens aged 60 to 69 is being increased to Rs 2,500, and those aged above 70 will now receive Rs 3,000 per month," she said.

Additionally, senior citizens from Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and minority communities in the 60 to 69 age group will receive an extra Rs 500 per month.

A total of Rs 3,227 crore has been allocated for these schemes, the chief minister said.

The government has also earmarked Rs 20 crore under the 'Grant In Aid (GIA) to Recreation Centres for Senior Citizens' scheme to provide spaces for relaxation and social activities, she added.

Delhi records season's hottest day air quality remains 'poor'

**New Delhi**  
Tuesday was the hottest day of the season so far in Delhi, with the national capital recording a maximum temperature of 37.1 degrees Celsius.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature was 1.1 notches above normal.

The monitoring station at Ridge recorded a maximum temperature of 38.7 degrees Celsius, 4.9 notches above normal.

During the day, humidity levels fluctuated between 22 per cent and 59 per cent while the minimum temperature had settled at 16 degrees Celsius, the IMD said.

The IMD office has forecast clear skies for Wednesday, with the maximum temperature expected to rise to 39 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature likely to settle around 18 degrees.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality remained in the 'poor' category.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the Air Quality Index (AQI) reading at 4 pm was 234.

Delhi Govt's Women Welfare Schemes: Financial Aid, Safety, & More

**New Delhi**  
In a bid to empower women and enhance their safety, the Delhi government has announced a host of welfare schemes, including a monthly honorarium of Rs 2,500, installation of 50,000 CCTV cameras, introduction of Pink PCR (all-female police assistance) units and a financial aid of Rs 21,000 for expecting mothers.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that the government would launch the Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) with an allocation of Rs 5,100 crore.

The scheme aims to recognise and support women's unpaid domestic labour, enhance their financial independence, decision-making power, and self-esteem, she said.

However, Gupta did not specify a launch date for the MSY Scheme.

To support pregnant women and newborns, the Mukhyamantri Matru Vandana Yojana (MMMVY) will be introduced alongside the central government's Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

Under this scheme one lakh beneficiaries will receive financial assistance of up to Rs 21,000 along with six nutrition kits. A budget of Rs 210 crore has been allocated for this initiative.

In an effort to strengthen women's safety, the government plans to install 50,000 new CCTV cameras in addition to the existing 2.8 lakh cameras across the city, Gupta said.

"We will take concrete steps to enhance women's safety and security by identifying 'dark spots' in Delhi — those areas that lack proper lighting, police presence, and connectivity."

She further added that such vulnerable zones will be systematically reduced.

The monthly financial assistance for 'women in distress' and those with disabilities will also be increased from Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000. A total of Rs 3,227 crore has been set aside for these security and welfare measures, she said.

The CM said the one-stop centre scheme allows distressed women to address all their issues in one location and the government has allocated a total of Rs 11 crore for their operation.

Additionally, the government will introduce travel cards for women to avoid free bus rides, replacing the existing pink ticket system to curb corruption.

Presenting the 2025-26 Budget, Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, announced that Rs 12,952 crore has been earmarked for the transport sector to improve public transportation and urban mobility in the capital.

To ensure a smoother, corruption-free experience for women using free bus services, Gupta said, a new digital travel card will replace



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta (right) and other officials during a meeting.

Delhi govt to set up modern gaushala allocates Rs 40 cr in FY26 Budget



A modern cow shelter (gaushala) with a roof and open sides, designed for better cow care and protection.

**New Delhi**  
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday announced the setting up of a model gaushala (cow shelter) in Ghumanhera village.

Presenting her maiden budget, Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, announced an allocation of Rs 40 crore for setting up a cow shelter.

"A budget of Rs 40 crore has been allocated to set up a 'Model Gaushala' equipped with modern facilities in Ghumanhera village of Delhi. Modern facilities will be provided in this Gaushala for cow protection, milk production and veterinary care," she added.

Gupta on Tuesday presented a Rs 1 lakh crore FY26 Budget with ten focus areas, including Yamuna cleaning, economic empowerment of women, infrastructure, water, and connectivity, asserting that this is a roadmap for making the national capital self-reliant.

In her 138-minute speech, Gupta said this budget is not an "isolated" or "random document".

"Rather it has a balanced mix of everything. It has the goal of flying high in innovation and infrastructure, while ground realities like special allocation for the deprived and model Gaushala have also been taken care of. Overall, this budget has height as well as depth," she added.

Gupta on Tuesday presented a Rs 1 lakh crore FY26 Budget with ten focus areas, including Yamuna cleaning, economic empowerment of women, infrastructure, water, and connectivity, asserting that this is a roadmap for making the national capital self-reliant.

Delhi govt allocates Rs 10 047 crores for social security in Budget

**New Delhi**  
The Delhi government has allocated Rs 10,047 crore for the social security sector with Rs 9,780 crore earmarked for schemes and projects under departments of social welfare, women and child development, and SC/ST/OBC welfare.

The move comes in an effort to ensure social security for all sections of society.

Presenting the Budget, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that Delhi should not only focus on modern infrastructure and economic growth but also ensure that the benefits of development reach every section of the society.

The government's schemes would support more than 9.50 lakh beneficiaries, including 4.02 lakh senior citizens, 4.18 lakh widows and women in distress, and 1.30 lakh persons with disabilities, she said.

Gupta announced a Rs 50 crore allocation for the 'Palna - National Creche Scheme', to establish 500 Palna-Anganwadi- cum-Creche Centres, enabling mothers to stay in the workforce after childbirth by providing childcare facilities.

The chief minister also proposed a budget of Rs 206 crore for the 'Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2 Scheme', which will upgrade 1,000 Anganwadi centres into Saksham Anganwadi Centres.

She said the centres will be equipped with modern facilities such as Wi-Fi connectivity, LED screens, water purifiers, smart learning tools, and audio-visual aids to support children's holistic development.

These upgraded centres would be co-located with other government buildings and linked to nearby government schools to ensure a smooth transition for children into formal education, Gupta added.

The chief minister also announced a Rs 5 crore budget for the rehabilitation of Delhi's homeless population to support them.

The initiative would provide not only shelter but also help them with vocational training and skill-building programs to become self-sufficient.



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta (right) and other officials during a meeting.

Gupta also introduced the 'Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stipend Scheme' to empower Scheduled Caste (SC) students pursuing technical and vocational education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), skill centres, and polytechnics in Delhi will receive a monthly stipend of Rs 1,000.

She further said that a Rs 2 crore budget has been earmarked under the 'GIA for Revamping of DSFDC' scheme to improve the Delhi Financial and Development Corporation (DSFDC).

The initiative would provide not only shelter but also help them with vocational training and skill-building programs to become self-sufficient.

Gupta also introduced the 'Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stipend Scheme' to empower Scheduled Caste (SC) students pursuing technical and vocational education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), skill centres, and polytechnics in Delhi will receive a monthly stipend of Rs 1,000.

She further said that a Rs 2 crore budget has been earmarked under the 'GIA for Revamping of DSFDC' scheme to improve the Delhi Financial and Development Corporation (DSFDC).

The initiative would provide not only shelter but also help them with vocational training and skill-building programs to become self-sufficient.

Gupta also introduced the 'Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stipend Scheme' to empower Scheduled Caste (SC) students pursuing technical and vocational education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), skill centres, and polytechnics in Delhi will receive a monthly stipend of Rs 1,000.

She further said that a Rs 2 crore budget has been earmarked under the 'GIA for Revamping of DSFDC' scheme to improve the Delhi Financial and Development Corporation (DSFDC).

The initiative would provide not only shelter but also help them with vocational training and skill-building programs to become self-sufficient.

Delhi allocates Rs 150 cr for drain remodelling

**New Delhi**  
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday announced an allocation of Rs 150 crore for remodelling of drains in the national capital, even as she rued how waterlogging has become the city's identity.

Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, said waterlogging and poor drainage system has been a serious problem here, which leads to flood-like situation every year.

"Waterlogging on roads, flood-like conditions, headlights of vehicles submerged in stagnant water and pictures of sinking roads, this has become the identity of our capital," she said.

She announced a total budget of Rs 603 crore for the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, of which Rs 315 crore has been allocated for various schemes.

She also proposed a scheme of "Remodelling of Drains for Flood Control", for which a budget of Rs 150 crore will be allocated.

The main objective of this project is to increase the water carrying capacity of the drains, so that the problem of waterlogging during the rainy season can be prevented, she said.

The government is also planning to clean and desilting open water bodies for flood control.

"Apart from this, modern machinery will also be procured, so that waterlogging can be controlled and flood control can be made more effective," she said.

She also blamed the previous governments' poor administration for the waterlogging issue in the national capital.

"People had started saying that - the rainy season in Delhi is worst. But in reality, the rain was not bad, but the administration of the previous governments of Delhi was bad. They never tried to eliminate the root of this problem, due to which waterlogging on the roads of Delhi was very common."

"But our government is fully committed to eradicating this problem from its root," she stressed.

This Budget is the first presented by a BJP-led government in Delhi in over 26 years, following the party's victory over the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in last year's assembly elections.

Gupta on Tuesday presented a Rs 1 lakh crore FY26 Budget with ten focus areas, including Yamuna cleaning, economic empowerment of women, infrastructure, water, and connectivity, asserting that this is a roadmap for making the national capital self-reliant.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients RAM CHANDER BHARTI and HIS WIFE RANI DEVI and their daughter ANJU alias R/H No. 140, SF, POKHET-8, SECTOR-24, ROHINI, DELHI-85 and MANJUN MEHRA and MAYANK MEHRA (daughter and son in law) R/O FLAT NO. 111/8, ALU GANJ, LODHI ROAD, NEW DELHI-110003 have severed all their relations and debarred their Son/In-Law Brother in Law namely SANJAY BHARTI and his wife SAPNA BHARTI from all their movable, immovable properties due to their misconduct/misdeeds. My clients shall be responsible for their any acts.

ATUL SAREEN  
Advocate  
CHAMBER NO. 307 LAWYERS CHAMBER ROHINI COURTS, DELHI-110085

PUBLIC NOTICE

Knows all men that my client Bulla Prasad Singh S/o Sh. Khagesar Prasad Singh S/Usba Devi W/o Sh. Bulla Prasad Singh both R/o Village Chanchra Ward No. 3, PO Barsohar, Distt. Katihar, Bihar - 854317 Presently at H.No. 179, Gali No.7, Samaypur, Delhi-110042 has disown and debar his son namely Arun Kumar from their all movable and immovable properties and have severed relations with him due to his bad behavior, attitude and disrespectful conduct. If anybody deals with him shall do so at his own risk and my clients shall not be responsible for the same.

ARVIND KAUSHIK (ADVOCATE)  
Ch. No. 306, Lawyer's Chamber, Block Rohini Court Complex, Delhi-110085

EASTERN RAILWAY

Notice Inviting Tender for Blasting work. Tender to be invited online by Chief Mechanical Engineer (LHB) Eastern Railway, Lilaah, Howrah, West Bengal. Tender Documents Cost: Rs. 4,000/- Tender Closing Date & Time: 11.04.2025 at 14:00 hrs. Website where complete details of tender is available: www.regs.gov.in

MSC-399/2024-25  
Tender Notice are also available at website www.indianrailways.gov.in/www.regs.gov.in

Follow us at @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER  
Name of work and its location: 30-Elect-71-T-2024-25-03 Comprehensive AMC of Johnson make escalators installed on NDLF PF No. Delhi Division (02 Nos. at DSA PF No./2, 02 Nos. at NDLF PF No. 14-15 FOD-II) for three years.  
Approx cost of the work in :- Rs. 23.10 lacs  
Address of the office :- Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.  
Estimate Money :- Rs. 45290.90  
Date & time of submission of tender :- 30.04.2025, 12.00 Hrs.  
Opening of tender :- 30.04.2025, 12.00 Hrs.  
Website & notice board :- www.regs.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)  
Name of work and its location: 01, 02, 03 & 04 - 2025 - 26 - WW  
Similar nature of work: - CTR/RT/RTTR including repair of track, engineering, distressing of track, post work for track maintenance, machine like lamping machines/slab screening/regulating machines & TTR/FCL.  
Approx cost of work: 1. Rs. 513077.57 2. Rs. 4531816.92 3. Rs. 21638276.01 4. Rs. 7999930.90  
Date and time for submission of tender: Upto 15:00 hrs. on 18.04.2025 Opening of tender and opening of tender: Upto 15:00 hrs. on 18.04.2025  
Website particulars notice board location: Complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.

Delhi Budget Allocates Rs 12,893 Cr for Health: New Medical Colleges, Beds

**New Delhi**  
The Delhi government on Tuesday allocated Rs 12,893 crore for the health sector in the 2025-26 budget to support flagship schemes like Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, set up two new medical colleges, and add 16,186 beds in government hospitals.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta presented the 2025-26 budget in the Assembly, announcing a significant push to strengthen the capital's healthcare infrastructure.

A major portion of the budget will support flagship schemes like Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM-JAY), aimed at providing financial protection and affordable healthcare to more families in the capital.

In her budget speech, Gupta said the government is committed to transforming Delhi's healthcare system by strengthening critical care



A modern hospital ward with several beds and medical equipment, representing the new medical facilities being set up.

services, expanding primary healthcare facilities, and modernizing medical infrastructure.

"Our goal is to ensure no one is left behind when it comes to quality healthcare," she added.

The budget earmarks Rs 1,666.66 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-AB-HIM) to boost critical care blocks and diagnostics, alongside Rs 320 crore for setting up 400 Health and Wellness Centres (HWC), also known as Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM).

Yojana (AB-PMJAY), ensuring more families benefit from free, cashless treatment for serious illnesses.

"We are determined to transform Delhi's healthcare system with sustainable reforms, modern infrastructure, and digital innovation. Every citizen — rich or poor, young or old — deserves access to affordable, high-quality healthcare," Gupta said.

She also announced that two new medical colleges will be established in Delhi to improve healthcare services and boost medical education.

"This will provide high-quality medical education to Delhi's youth and create new employment opportunities in the healthcare sector," she said, adding that the previous AAP government "never took strong steps" in the health sector.

"It is our aim to make Delhi a hub of health and education, and this initiative will give our youth an opportu-

nity to excel in the medical field," Gupta added.

Highlighting the current shortfall in hospital beds, Gupta cited World Health Organization (WHO) norms, which recommend 5 beds per 1,000 people.

"At present, Delhi has only 2.7 beds per 1,000 people — far below the required standard. This is why patients face long queues for OPD services, medicine, and diagnostic tests. The shortage of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, combined with limited radiology facilities like CT scans, US, and PET-CTs, further strains the system," she said.

To address this, the government plans to complete 24 pending hospital projects, including 7 ICU hospitals, 4 new hospitals, and the expansion of 13 existing facilities. Once completed, these projects are expected to add 16,186 new beds to Delhi's public healthcare system.

Yojana (AB-PMJAY), ensuring more families benefit from free, cashless treatment for serious illnesses.

"We are determined to transform Delhi's healthcare system with sustainable reforms, modern infrastructure, and digital innovation. Every citizen — rich or poor, young or old — deserves access to affordable, high-quality healthcare," Gupta said.

# Delhi govt to shift Tihar jail allocates Rs 10 cr for survey

**New Delhi**  
Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday announced plans to shift Tihar Jail to the city outskirts while setting aside Rs 10 crore in the 2025-26 budget for survey and consultancy services related to the shifting of the jail.

Established in 1958, Tihar Jail is one of India's largest prison complexes comprising nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres - one prison in Rohini and six prisons in Mandoli.

"In order to decongest the existing Tihar Jail Complex for the welfare of prisoners, a new scheme for development of a new Jail Complex by shifting the existing Tihar Jail Complex to some other location has been formulated," the Delhi chief minister said while presenting the budget in the assembly.

Located in West Delhi, Tihar is close to Tilak Nagar and Hari Nagar areas of the city. Originally designed to house approximately 10,025 inmates, it currently accommodates over 19,000,



leading to overcrowding and security challenges. The Delhi government has initiated the development of a new prison complex in Narela to alleviate congestion. Meanwhile, a Tihar Jail source said, "We had also asked for space in Bapra, but didn't get that. However, we have written to the Delhi government to provide 100 acres of land somewhere else."

The source said that Jail Numbers 1 to 9 are designed

to house approximately 5,000 inmates, but these accommodate over 12,000 prisoners at present.

"Jail Number 10 to 16 are designed to house approximately 3,700 inmates, but currently accommodate over 3,900 inmates. Jail Number 4 in Tihar and 12 in Mandoli are known as 'Mulaija Jail' which means first-time offenders. We have a large number of inmates in these two jails," said the source.

The source also said that a short-term proposal has been made for retrofitting the jail and vertically extending it up to two floors, making the capacity three times. "This will make the space sufficient for accommodation for up to five to ten years," the source said.

The chief minister in her budget also announced the formation of a society under the aegis of the Delhi Jail. The society will focus on the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. It will achieve this by developing their overall skills

through various skill-imparting programs. Additionally, the society will professionalise the functioning of different factories and manufacturing units within the jails. However, CM Rekha Gupta did not reveal any date of the shifting plans.

Delhi government offices, ministries and departments will also give preference in procurement to products manufactured in the jail complexes of Tihar, Rohini and Mandoli.

An official who requested anonymity said products made by the inmates are usually consumed in Tihar Jail and also sold through some shops, known as 'Tihar Haat'. Earnings from these shops are very less, but with this decision, the inmates will earn more.

"There are many different products that inmates make daily. Inmates are being paid for their production. It will be very beneficial for them if products made in Tihar jail are being purchased by different agencies," said the official.

# Delhi Budget: BJP govt's development agenda is mere eyewash, says Yadav

Staff Reporter  
New Delhi

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav here on Tuesday said that the BJP government's first budget, presented by CM Rekha Gupta in the assembly today, was a bundle of lies and betrayal for the people of Delhi.

He said that though the CM has announced a Rs 1 lakh crore budget, the hidden fact is that Rs 9950 crore will come out of the pockets of the taxpayers to fulfil BJP's welfare schemes at a reduced ratio.

Yadav said that the CM has termed this budget as one "guided by the principles of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, but in truth, the budget is based on the lies and false promises (juma) of Modi to betray the people of Delhi."

The Congress government headed by Sheila Dikshit had earmarked 34.3 per cent of the total budget in 2013-14 for capital expenditure and carried out unprecedented all-round developments, but 12 years later, the BJP government's budget has



**He said that though the CM has announced a Rs 1 lakh crore budget, the hidden fact is that Rs 9950 crore will come out of the pockets of the taxpayers to fulfil BJP's welfare schemes at a reduced ratio.**

reduced the capital expenditure allocation to 28

per cent, which shows that the BJP's development agenda is a mere rhetoric, Yadav maintained.

He said that the AAP government had brought down the capital expenditure to 19.85 per cent, which halted all development works in Delhi, and under the BJP government too, there was no hope of resuming the stalled development works any time soon. He said that despite all-round increase in prices, the BJP has reduced the capital expenditure allocation, which proves that the CM's rhetoric on development was that she was only paying lip service.

# 4 individuals involved in stealing e-rickshaws arrested by Noida Sector-20 police

Staff Reporter  
Noida

City police led by Noida Sector-20 Police Station arrested four individuals involved in stealing e-rickshaws.

The suspects are Amir (22), Sadre Alam (19), Faisal (25), and another Amir (20), their residences in Delhi and Noida. They formed a gang to steal e-rickshaws from the Service Road in Sector-31, Noida.

Based on specific information, a police team led by SHO 20 DP Shukla has arrested the above accused Sector-31, Nithari. ACP 1 Praveen Singh said that the arrests were made with assistance from local intelligence and community police efforts. From the arrested individuals, police recovered an e-rickshaw and a stepney connected to a specific



**Based on specific information, a police team led by SHO 20 DP Shukla has arrested the above accused Sector-31, Nithari.**

connected to a specific

FIR (No. 92/25), another e-rickshaw that was used in the theft, and two illegal knives, one from each of the two Amirs involved.

Two FIRs have been registered against the accused for the e-rickshaw theft and under the Arms Act against Sadre Alam and the other Amir.

# Plot buyers of Ramprastha City protest against developer, seek Haryana CM's Intervention

Gurugram

A large group of aggrieved plot buyers of Ramprastha City in Gurugram staged a protest outside the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (HREERA) office. The protesters accused the Ramprastha Group of Companies and its directors of duping them for decades by accepting advance payments for plots and failing to allocate them as promised. The buyers, many of whom have been waiting for nearly two decades, have now sought the intervention of Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to resolve their long-standing grievances.

The Ramprastha Group, which operates through multiple companies with its registered office at 114, Sector 44, Gurugram, had sold plots ranging from 200 to 600 square yards in Ram-

prastha City, Gurugram. These bookings were made over several years, primarily between 2006 and 2017. Despite collecting payments from buyers, the company has yet to fulfill its commitment by allotting plots or issuing final allotment letters.

Many buyers invested their hard-earned money in these plots with the hope of building their dream homes. The company provided receipts acknowledging full payments and, in some cases, even issued preliminary allotment letters for plots in sectors 92, 93, 95, and 37 in Sector D of Ramprastha City. Several buyers were assured via email that their plots in Sector 37 C & D would be allocated once HREERA approval was secured. However, despite repeated assurances, no concrete action has been taken, and the buy-

ers continue to be left in limbo.

According to Mr. Sanjay Jain, President of the Ramprastha City Buyers Group, the wait has now extended to more than a decade for many buyers, with some cases stretching to 19 years. He stated that despite relentless follow-ups, personal meetings with the directors of the companies, and even discussions with the Chairman of Ramprastha Group, Shri Balwant Singh Chaudhary, the buyers have received nothing but false promises. No demarcation of plots has been completed, no final allotment letters have been issued, and no development work has commenced at the site. The company, under various pretexts, has been delaying the process and has shown no commitment to handing

over possession of the plots.

With many of the affected buyers now being senior citizens, their fight for justice has become even more urgent. Mr. Sanjay Arora, Vice President of the plot buyers' group, highlighted that several buyers have already approached HREERA and filed complaints against the developer. He expressed concerns that despite having vast land parcels in Gurugram, the company appears unwilling to allocate plots to genuine buyers. Instead, there is growing apprehension among the buyers that the developer might sell the land to other real estate firms, further depriving them of their rightful property.

The protesting buyers have now written to Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and other relevant au-

thorities, urging immediate intervention. Mr. Mahender Malhotra, Secretary of the buyers' group, stressed that the authorities need to take stern action against the fraudulent activities of the company. He called for an immediate halt to any further dishonest, unauthorized, and illegal actions by the developer, ensuring that justice is served to hundreds of affected buyers who invested their life savings in these plots with the dream of building and owning a home.

With frustration mounting and no resolution in sight, the buyers continue their fight for justice, hoping that the government and regulatory bodies will take decisive action to hold the developer accountable and fulfill the long-overdue commitments to the plot owners.

# Artemis Hospitals Unites Global Experts at First Indo-UK Cough Symposium

Gurugram

Artemis Hospitals proudly hosted the first-ever Indo-UK Cough Symposium, a landmark event aimed at advancing the diagnosis and management of chronic cough. Leading specialists from India and the UK came together for this esteemed symposium, which promoted international cooperation in respiratory medicine.

The event was attended by renowned global faculty, Prof. James Hull, Respiratory Physician, Royal Brompton Hospital and Dr. Romana Kuchai, Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist, Imperial College NHS, who shared their valuable insights on the latest advancements in cough research, new treatment options, and optimal care for patients.

They were accompanied by renowned members of the internal team at Artemis Hospitals, including Dr. Shashidhar TB (Head - Surgery (ENT)), Dr. Arun Choudhary Kotaru (Unit Head & Sr. Consultant - respiratory disease & Sleep Medicine (Unit I)), and Dr. Shweta Bansal (Sr. Consultant & Unit Head - Respiratory Disease & Sleep Medicine (Unit II)), who contributed their expertise and experience, thus making the symposium a fertile ground for scientific exchange.



**The event was attended by renowned global faculty, Prof. James Hull, Respiratory Physician, Royal Brompton Hospital and Dr. Romana Kuchai, Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist, Imperial College NHS, who shared their valuable insights on the latest advancements in cough research, new treatment options, and optimal care for patients.**

quality-of-life impact on patients. This symposium is a critical step toward bridging the knowledge gap and facilitating international collaboration to maximize diagnosis and treatment outcomes. We are honored to have invited these specialists and will look forward to further progress in respiratory health."

According to Dr. Arun Kotaru, Unit Head & Sr. Consultant - respiratory disease & Sleep Medicine (Unit I) "The Indo-UK Cough Symposium has been a remarkable platform for knowledge exchange, allowing us to explore the latest advancements in chronic cough diagnosis and management. By collaborating with international experts, we are enhancing our understanding and improving treatment strategies to provide better

outcomes for our patients."

Present at the event Dr. Shweta Bansal, Sr. Consultant & Unit Head - respiratory disease & Sleep Medicine (Unit II) said "Chronic cough remains an often-overlooked yet distressing condition for many patients. This symposium has helped bridge the gap between research and clinical practice, equipping us with innovative approaches to enhance patient care. We are excited about the future possibilities that such global collaborations bring to respiratory medicine."

The symposium comprised recent discussions, case presentation, and interactive sessions, highlighting the worth of an interdisciplinary approach to chronic cough. The symposium received a good response from renowned pulmonologists, ENT specialists, and healthcare practitioners who were eager to enhance patient care quality.

Artemis Hospitals is dedicated to establishing medical excellence, innovation, and global association for developing healthcare. The success of this symposium is the launch of a new series of initiatives that are aimed at building global collaborations in respiratory medicine.

# 3-day fair at Shilp Haat begins to mark eight years of Yogi govt

Noida

A three day long fair was held here at Shilp Haat in sector-33A to mark eight years of the Yogi government in UP. The fair was inaugurated by the district in-charge minister Brijesh Singh.

On this occasion, he said that during these eight years, there have been extensive changes in UP. Remarkable works have been done by the government from the farmers who provide food to the women. He said that the double engine government has done development work in the country and the state.

Many programmes were organised in Gautam Budh Nagar on Tuesday to mark completion of eight years of BJP's rule under the leadership of CM Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh. People were also made aware about the achievements of the Yogi government on this occasion.

BJP MP Dr. Mahesh Sharma, MLA Pankaj Singh, MLA Tejpal Nagar, MLA Dharendra Singh and others were present during the programme. On this occasion, local artists gave a presentation of cultural programmes.

Gautam Badhha Nagar DM Manish Kumar Verma said that in the three-day



**Many programmes were organised in Gautam Budh Nagar on Tuesday to mark completion of eight years of BJP's rule under the leadership of CM Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh. People were also made aware about the achievements of the Yogi government on this occasion.**

fair, the people of the district have a golden opportunity to get information about the achievements of the Central and state governments, beneficiary-oriented schemes, public welfare programmes to name a few and to take advantage of the schemes.

# Delhi govt allocates Rs 139 crore to boost tourism plans IFF

New Delhi

The Delhi government has allocated Rs 139 crore for various schemes related to tourism and art, culture, and language in the 2025-26 budget, aiming to transform the national capital into a major tourist hub.

According to budget proposals, a sum of Rs 117 crore has been marked for various schemes, which is almost double of Rs 66 crore allocated last year.

Presenting the Budget in the Assembly, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta emphasised that the city has the infrastructure and facilities to host an international-level film festival.

"We propose to hold an international film festival this year to enrich Delhi culturally and promote it as a film destination. For this, I propose an allocation of Rs 30 crore," she said.

To boost tourism and branding, the government has proposed an outlay of Rs 25 crore. The government also plans to introduce boat tours on the Yamuna River, covering the stretch from Sonia Vihar to Jagatpur Shani Mandir.

Assam Assembly Speaker apologises to public for MLAs' behaviour

**Guvahati:** Assam Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary on Tuesday apologised to the people of the state for the happenings inside and outside the House on the previous day, which had resulted in "injury" to his deputy.

He ordered an inquiry by the assembly's privilege committee into the allegation of Deputy Speaker Nimal Momin that he was assaulted by Congress MLA Nihal Huda and others during a protest over the conduct of a ruling BJP legislator.

Congress legislators had demonstrated inside the assembly building on Monday, blocking the corridor leading to the chambers of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, against BJP MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi, who had verbally abused and tried to physically attack the opposition benches last week.

Deputy Speaker Momin had purportedly sustained an injury on his left hand during the protest, with ruling BJP MLAs alleging that Huda had assaulted him in the corridor.

Opposition AIUDF MLAs had also blocked the assembly building with bamboo fences, purportedly to save themselves from Kurmi, though they did not take the structures inside the House.

"With great pain and sorrow, I have to state certain points about the incidents that happened inside and outside the assembly yesterday," Daimary said.

He noted that the dignity of the House is of paramount importance, which is run by rules and traditions governing it.

"The people elect their representatives and wait with great expectation from them to address their issues, he added.

Daimary highlighted that Assam Assembly, approaching its centenary year, has a golden past and it is the behaviour of the members that determines its sanctity.

"But the happenings of the last few days, especially yesterday during which the Deputy Speaker had to face an unprecedented situation and was injured, are unfortunate. The behaviour of the elected representatives has tarnished the image of the assembly," he said.

# Punjab Assembly passes resolution on protecting state's water

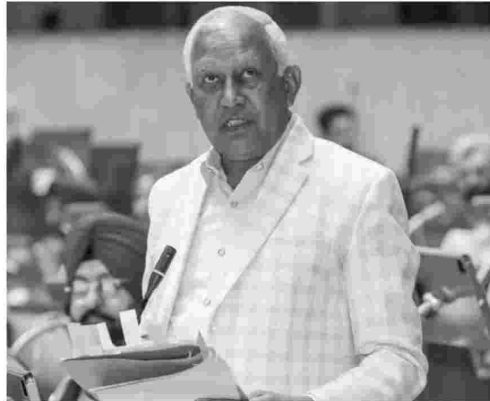
**Chandigarh:** The Punjab Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution to prevent depleting water level of the state with the state government accusing the Centre of not helping it to conserve the state's water resources.

AAP MLA Gurdev Singh Dev Maan moved a resolution in the ongoing Budget Session of the Punjab assembly to recommend the state government to take immediate steps to check the depleting water level and protect the environment.

Water Resources Minister Brinder Kumar Goyal, while speaking on the motion, highlighted initiatives of the AAP government to conserve groundwater and expressed disappointment over the Union government's "biased" approach.

Goyal said while the Union government consistently produces reports about declining water levels in Punjab, it has "never fulfilled" its responsibility to help conserve the state's water resources.

"Punjab requires Rs 17,000 crore for water courses work. If all water courses are constructed and underground pipes are laid, the state could save 20 per cent of its



water," said the minister, adding that while many canals have been restored, they are not fully capable of carrying water.

A significant financial investment is needed for infrastructure and recharge systems, he stressed.

Goyal said for a state

that lost its water for the nation, the Union government is not taking any concrete steps to address its water challenges.

Goyal said that during the previous Congress government's tenure from 2019 to 2022, Rs 2,046 crore was spent on canal in-

frastructure.

"In contrast, our government has invested Rs 4,557 crore from 2022 to 2025 on canal water conservation, infrastructure restoration and ensuring water reaches agricultural land, which is more than 2.25 times the previous expenditure," he said.

He said the state government had decided immediately upon forming the government to ensure water reaches agricultural land.

Previously, dam water was utilised at only 68 per cent, but now through the state government's efforts, it has increased to 84 per cent, said the minister, adding that the government has restored 17,072 water courses spanning 6,300 km, which had been dilapidated and non-functional for 30 to 40 years.

The government restored 79 canals extending 545 km, providing irrigation to 41,135 acres, he said.

Punjab DGP directs top cops to map drug suppliers in their districts

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav on Tuesday directed all senior police officers to identify and catalogue the main drug suppliers and peddlers in their respective districts within seven days.

The directive, issued through a stern letter, aims to systematically dismantle supply chains fuelling the state's narcotics trade. The anti-drugs campaign 'Yudh Nashian Viruddh' launched by the Punjab government on March 1 has resulted in arrest of 3,957 drug smugglers after registration of 2,248 FIRs across the state and led to recovery of large amount of contrabands, including 137.7 kg heroin from the possession of drug smugglers, said an official statement here on Tuesday.

"Feedback from the citizens and other inputs indicate that the street-level availability of heroin and other drugs has considerably reduced," the DGP said in a letter.

"However, there is a need to carry on the drug law enforcement in a meticulous and professional manner by en-

suring effective action against the drug peddlers" persons selling drugs in villages and urban mohallas, and suppliers" providing drugs to peddlers," he said.

DGP Yadav has mandated all the Commissioners of Police (CPs) and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) to personally oversee the mapping exercise to gather details of the suppliers funneling drugs in their respective areas and catalogue them on the basis of interrogation reports, public tips, intelligence inputs, data from the Safe Punjab 'Helpline' and backward and forward linkages unveiled in criminal investigations under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

"This cataloguing must be evidence-based and comprehensive," the DGP ordered CPs/SSPs, while giving them warning that vague claims of ignorance about drug sources would be deemed unprofessional.

"In the absence of effective mapping, it shall be presumed that you (CPs/SSPs) are not taking personal interest," he stated.

Punjab govt mulls restart of traditional bullock cart races in Ludhiana's Kila Raipur

**Chandigarh:** Formulations of the Punjab Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Rules, 2024 is under consideration to resume the traditional annual bullock cart races at the Kila Raipur sports event in Ludhiana, the state assembly was informed on Tuesday.

Replying to a question of AAP MLA Jasant Singh Gajjanmaja in the ongoing budget session in the assembly here, Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian said the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2019 has been notified by the government of Punjab for bullock cart races at Kila Raipur village of Punjab in the event of Kila Raipur Rural Sports.

"Now to restart bullock cart races in this event, formulation of 'The Punjab Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Kila Raipur Rural Sports Event and Fair) Rules, 2024' is under consideration," the minister said.

Khudian further said that his department has issued extensive guidelines to all the deputy commissioners for dog races keeping in view the legal position and the instructions related to Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

AAP MLA Gajjanmaja questioned whether there was any proposal of legalizing the sports of bullock cart and dog racing under consideration of the government.

Gajjanmaja said the bullock cart and dog races are the traditional sports of Punjab and Haryana and sought from the government to restart them.

Minister Khudian said he also agrees that these are traditional sports.

"The file in this regard has gone to the chief minister. After consulting the Advocate General, if (these sports) will be brought under the ambit of law as these sports are important," said the minister.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected Mayors, Presidents, and members of Municipal Councils and Municipalities in Panchkula. He congratulated all the newly elected representatives and highlighted that the recent civic election results demonstrate the people's desire for development, transparency, and good governance.



deputy commissioners for dog races keeping in view the legal position and the instructions related to Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

AAP MLA Gajjanmaja questioned whether there was any proposal of legalizing the sports of bullock cart and dog racing under consideration of the government.

Gajjanmaja said the bullock cart and dog races are the traditional sports of Punjab and Haryana and sought from the government to restart them.

Minister Khudian said he also agrees that these are traditional sports.

"The file in this regard has gone to the chief minister. After

consulting the Advocate General, if (these sports) will be brought under the ambit of law as these sports are important," said the minister.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected Mayors, Presidents, and members of Municipal Councils and Municipalities in Panchkula. He congratulated all the newly elected representatives and highlighted that the recent civic election results demonstrate the people's desire for development, transparency, and good governance.

Saini called on the representatives to take up the responsibility of transforming their cities into self-reliant, safe, and thriving urban centers. He assured full support from the Haryana Gov-

ernment in this endeavor, stating that cities are the pride of the state and serve as a measure of prosperity for visitors. He expressed confidence that under the leadership of the newly elected Mayors, Presidents, and members, Haryana's urban areas would progress rapidly toward becoming a developed state. He also highlighted the success of the 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' campaign, noting that the number of elected women representatives in the civic elections had exceeded expectations.

Additionally, Saini highlighted that provisions have been made in the budget to enhance the self-reliance of urban

# Newly Elected Urban Local Body Representatives Take Oath in Panchkula

**Komal Ramola Chandigarh:** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday urged the newly elected representatives of urban local bodies to work beyond party politics and contribute towards making Haryana's cities clean, prosperous, and drug-free. He emphasized their role in the decisive war against drug abuse, strengthening the cleanliness campaign, and advancing the 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected Mayors, Presidents, and members of Municipal Councils and Municipalities in Panchkula. He congratulated all the newly elected representatives and highlighted that the recent civic election results demonstrate the people's desire for development, transparency, and good governance.

Saini called on the representatives to take up the responsibility of transforming their cities into self-reliant, safe, and thriving urban centers. He assured full support from the Haryana Gov-



ernment in this endeavor, stating that cities are the pride of the state and serve as a measure of prosperity for visitors.

He expressed confidence that under the leadership of the newly elected Mayors, Presidents, and members, Haryana's urban areas would progress rapidly toward becoming a developed state. He also highlighted the success of the 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' campaign, noting that the number of elected women representatives in the civic elections had exceeded expectations.

Additionally, Saini highlighted that provisions have been made in the budget to enhance the self-reliance of urban

drug abuse, urging the use of the 'Manas Portal', which is monitored by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, to report drug-related activities while ensuring the confidentiality of informants.

He underscored the importance of transparency and honesty in governance, pointing out that the state government has allocated a budget of over Rs 2,05,000 crore for development, with a significant portion dedicated to urban local bodies. He encouraged all representatives to ensure proper utilization of these funds for public welfare and state development.

Additionally, Saini highlighted that provisions have been made in the budget to enhance the self-reliance of urban

bodies. The budget allocated to municipalities for development has been doubled to Rs. 3,114 crore as per the 2014 Finance Commission's recommendations, and the Urban Local Bodies Department's budget has been increased to Rs. 5,666 crore for the upcoming financial year.

The Chief Minister emphasized Haryana's crucial role in the realization of Prime Minister Modi's vision of a self-reliant and developed India. He noted that with the formation of a 'triple engine' government following the civic elections, development efforts would accelerate threefold, aiming to achieve the Prime Minister's goal of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

# At college convocation Mann calls for more women in politics to bring about change

**Ludhiana:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday exhorted young women to join politics and be a part of the decision-making process of the country to bring about much-needed change.

Addressing the annual convocation of the Government College for Girls, Ludhiana, the chief minister said women have outnumbered men in every other field but politics is still an exception.

While politics has been traditionally dominated by men, Mann said, now the time has come for women to excel in it too. Women's participation is imperative to creating an egalitarian society and cementing democracy at the grassroots, he said. Mann said women



must exercise their franchise carefully so that their vote makes a difference by sending the right type of leaders to the state assembly and Parliament.

This will help in making Punjab a progressive and prosperous state in the country. The state government has made concerted efforts to em-

power women in the state, the chief minister said.

He said that his government has appointed eight women deputy commissioners and six women have been appointed senior superintendents of police.

Eighteen women officers have been appointed additional DCs, which is the highest number of

women posted by any government to these coveted posts, he said. The CM further said the Punjab government has given more than 52,000 jobs to the youth in the past 36 months.

He said it is a matter of "immense pride and satisfaction" for him that all jobs have been given completely on merit and expressed hope that the youth who got the jobs become active partners in the socio-economic development of the state.

Besides being the nation's food bowl, Punjab also has the distinction of being the sword arm of the country and its people are well-known all over the world for their courage, resilience and spirit of enterprise, Mann said.

# Online ticket booking system started for Srinagar's Tulip Garden

**Srinagar:** Tourists intending to visit the famous Tulip Garden here can now book tickets online as authorities have started online and QR code-based booking system at several places including the Srinagar Airport, Floriculture director Shakeel-ul-Rehman Rather said on Tuesday.

The garden is being thrown open to the public on Wednesday.

"We have planted 1750 lakh tulip bulbs and other flowers," Rather said.

The director said this year, the department has started the facility of online ticket booking system.

"We have also kept online ticket facility. Tie-up has also been done with the tourism departments of many countries and their websites have the link for online tickets.



Apart from this, tickets are also available through physical mode.

"For the first time, there is also an online ticket facility, and in the coming two-three years, this entire process will be made online," he added.

Rather said a QR code-based ticket booking facility has also been placed for tourists at the Tourist Reception Centre and the airport to

avoid rush at the garden. "Tickets have also been made available at several hotels, and our effort will be that in the coming years, only those who have tickets come to the garden to ease the burden of traffic and avoid rush," he said.

The director expressed hope of an increased footfall this year. "Last year, when the garden was inaugurated,

there were about 15 days remaining of the holy month of Ramadan. But, this time, its inauguration is being done in the last days of Ramadan and so, it is expected that we will cross the figure of 4.5 lakh that visited the last year," Rather said.

Nestled between the Dal lake and the Zabarwan hills, the opening of the Asia's largest tulip garden will mark the beginning of the tourism season in the Kashmir valley.

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden was set up by then-Gujarat Minister of the erstwhile state in 2007, to advance the tourism season in Jammu and Kashmir that was earlier limited to summer and winters. Formerly known as Siraj Bagh, the garden is spread over 55 hectares.

# "Pension battle: Employees' right or government burden?"



By Dr Satyavan Saurabh

Restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) has become an important social and economic issue in India. It is not only a matter of concern for government employees but also for the country's financial policy and social security. In 2004, the Old Pension Scheme was abolished and the New Pension Scheme (NPS) was implemented, but in the last few years, there has been a widespread movement and political debate among employees regarding the restoration of OPS.

## What was the Old Pension Scheme (OPS)?

In India, before 2004, government employees were given pensions under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Under this, a fixed pension was given for life after retirement. 50% of the last salary was given as a pension. Dearness Allowance (DA) was linked, due to which the pension kept increasing from time to time. The entire funding was done by the government; there was no contribution from the employee. But NPS was implemented on 1 April 2004, due to which this system was closed for newly recruited government employees.

Imagine getting a fixed income every month even after your job is over, like a magical treasure that never gets empty! This was OPS—a defined benefit pension scheme in which government employees received 50% of their last salary as pension after retirement. Dearness Allowance (DA) was also added to this, due to which the pension kept increasing from time to time. Under this scheme, the government gave a full guarantee of pension, and the employee did not have to make any contribution.

## New Pension Scheme (NPS) and Controversy

In 2004, the central government abolished OPS and implemented NPS, which is a defined

contribution scheme. In this, employees have to invest a certain part of their salary in a pension fund, which has to depend on market-based returns. Now imagine that your pension is floating on the waves of the stock market—sometimes up, sometimes down! This is the reason why there is a feeling of insecurity among employees about NPS, because there is no guaranteed pension in it.

## Why is the demand for OPS restoration increasing?

Financial insecurity: The pension amount in NPS depends on the private market performance, which does not provide permanent and fixed income to retired employees. The pension in OPS used to increase with the dearness allowance, whereas NPS does not have this benefit. States like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, and Himachal Pradesh have announced the implementation of OPS. Lakhs of government employees are on strike and protesting, increasing the pressure on the government. OPS is considered an essential means for financial stability in old age. Many retired employees under NPS are struggling to meet their expenses.

## International perspective: pension systems in other countries

A superannuation fund system is in place here, in which both the employee and the employer make regular investments, and after retirement this amount is given in the form of a pension.

Different models have been adopted for the pension system in many countries of the world. Some countries have continued schemes like OPS for government employees, while other countries have adopted a private investment-based system. Under the Social Security System in the US, government and private employees get a fixed pension after retirement. However, government contribution is limited in this, and personal investment is also necessary. A state pension scheme is in place in Britain, in which the government ensures a minimum pension, but private schemes are encouraged for additional pension.

Germany has a strong public pension system, where both employees and employers make mandatory contributions, resulting in a guaranteed pension. France also has a defined benefit pension system, where the government plays a major role and employees are provided with a permanent pension.

Why do MPs and MLAs get pensions?

An important ques-

tion also arises: if the pension of government employees has been abolished, then why are MPs and MLAs still given pensions? Do MPs and MLAs take policy decisions during their tenure, for which they get special privileges? In many states, MLAs get lifelong pensions after one term, which is different from the rules for general government employees. Many former MPs and MLAs have already been working in government services, and they get double pensions. Many employment organizations argue that when the pension of government employees has been abolished, then their representatives should also be kept in the same category. The burden of pension of MPs and MLAs on the government treasury is increasing, due to which the demand for abolishing it is increasing.

Potential benefits, financial impact, and challenges of OPS restoration

Restoration of OPS may increase the government's financial burden. The government will have to allocate a large part of its budget for pension payments, which may affect other development schemes. Some economists believe that implementing OPS may lead to long-term economic imbalances. A permanent pension scheme will provide security to employees, and they will be assured

about their future. People's inclination towards government jobs will increase, due to which qualified and talented people will join the administrative services. When retired employees get assured income, they will maintain their purchasing power, which will maintain stability in the market. OPS gives employees an opportunity to live with dignity in old age.

## conclusion

Restoration of old pension is not just an employee welfare policy but a broader social and economic issue. The government has to adopt a balanced approach and formulate a policy that ensures the economic security of employees and, at the same time, maintains the financial balance of the government. The future of OPS restoration will depend on how the government resolves this issue and whether a middle path is possible.

(Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist)

## Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only correct solution.

		5	8	7				
8	7		1		3			
	5			8	3	2		
	1						5	
	4	6	5				8	
2			8			9	1	
		5		9	4			
			4		8			

## Solution, Sudoku

5	1	4	3	6	7	9	8	2
8	7	9	1	2	5	6	7	4
2	7	6	8	4	9	5	3	1
3	5	7	6	8	4	2	1	9
6	9	1	7	5	2	8	4	3
4	2	8	9	3	1	7	6	5
1	6	2	5	7	3	4	9	8
9	8	5	4	1	6	3	2	7
7	4	3	2	9	8	1	5	6

## THE WISDOM TREE BY SUVEEN KUMAR

## REFELCTION

Everything clearly reflects, it reflects when you are loved, it reflects when you are unloved, it reflects when you are relaxed, it reflects when you are disturbed, it reflects when you think of someone and blush, it reflects when someone waits for you and your rush, a mere reflection of love sweetens everything around you and a bare reflection of love poisons everything around you. eyes with kindness, mouth with sweetness, skin with softness and thoughts with greatness stay desirable. don't let anything come in you that you don't want the world to see, because everything that is in there will reflect. everything throws some signals that are felt by everyone around you. reflection doubles your power when it brings you inside out and it halves your power when it brings you outside in.

life is easy when you and your reflection are on the same page, life is difficult when you are your reflections don't really talk to each other and life is death when your own reflection is your enemy. clean yourself everyday as you get yourself dirty everyday, nourish yourself everyday as you fight a battle everyday, cherish yourself everyday as you remain with yourself everyday, adjust with yourself everyday as you change yourself everyday, hold yourself everyday as you let fall yourself everyday, save yourself everyday as you spend yourself everyday, praise yourself everyday as you insult yourself everyday, celebrate yourself every day as you find yourself everyday.



Moral: Be so clean in life that you can feel proud of your reflection.

# Dhaj: Gujarat's first eco-village balancing environment, progress

Dhaj, Gujarat's first eco-village located in the remote forest area of the Mandvi North Range of the Surat Forest Department is setting an example for other villages across the country by maintaining a balance between environmental conservation and development, as per a Gujarat Chief Minister's Office release.

World Forest Day is celebrated on March 21 to raise awareness among citizens about the importance of trees and forests. This year, the theme for the day is "Forests and Food," highlighting the crucial role forests play in food security, nutrition, and livelihoods.

On this occasion, let us talk about Dhaj village in Mandvi Taluka of Surat district, which is Gujarat's first eco-village. Located in the remote forest area of the Mandvi North Range of the Surat Forest Department, this fully forest-dependent village is setting an example for other villages across the country by maintaining a balance between environmental conservation and development, the release read.

"With the noble intention of fostering collective environmental consciousness in the state and ensuring sustainable economic development, Dhaj village was declared an eco-village in 2016. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, prepara-

tions are underway to develop Naghoi village in Olpad Taluka, Surat, as an eco-village in the coming days," the release read.

Dhaj village is located 70 km from Surat. Situated amidst dense forests, the village once lacked basic amenities. There were no paved roads or electricity, and villagers depended on forest produce for their livelihood. To promote environmental conservation and pollution control, the Gujarat Ecology Commission declared Dhaj an eco-village and provided fundamental facilities. Due to sustainable techniques and collective efforts under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Dhaj village has witnessed an environmental revolution.

"Deputy Forest Conservator Anandkumar stated that after Dhaj village was declared an eco-village in 2016, various facilities such as biogas, underground water storage, rainwater harvesting, solar-powered streetlights were introduced for environmental conservation. Intensive efforts have been made to raise awareness among farmers about natural farming. Currently, the Gujarat Ecological Commission (GEC) has merged with the Forest Department. In the future, Naghoi village in Olpad Taluka will be developed as an eco-village," the release read.

The total working area of the Mandvi North Range is 10,000 hectares, covering 27 villages. The villagers earn their livelihood through farming and animal husbandry on the forest land allotted to them by the Forest Department. Dhaj village has been provided with various facilities, including solar-powered lights in homes, underground water tanks for rainwater storage, biogas units, a cremation ground, a mobile network tower, a dairy cooperative for women engaged in animal husbandry, and a classified solid waste unit. Under the guidance of the Forest Department, a Forest Welfare Committee has been formed, led by local youth and community leaders, to oversee forest conservation.

"Dharmeshbhai Vasava, President of the Forest Committee, mentioned that mobile network connectivity was a significant issue in the past. However, with the joint efforts of the state government and the Forest Department, the installation of a mobile tower has facilitated seamless communication, healthcare, and education services," the release read.

The introduction of biogas has brought a transformative change in the life of Saruben Vasava, a resident of the village. She shared that she no longer has to cut firewood from the forest, and the

biogas facility has relieved her from the smoke, which previously caused irritation and discomfort to her eyes. Cooking has now become much easier for her.

"Farmer Dashrathbhai Vasava stated that the eco-village project has resulted in the establishment of a cremation ground in Dhaj village. The Forest Department has undertaken several welfare initiatives, such as providing biogas, underground water tanks, solar streetlights, and paved roads. A dairy cooperative was also established, supplying milk-producing animals to women, enabling them to earn a livelihood by selling milk. Additionally, villagers have benefited from various government schemes, including the PM Awas Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, and Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana under Ration card system," the release read.

Daily wage labourer Singhbhai Vasava expressed his happiness upon receiving financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, enabling him to fulfil his long-cherished dream of owning a permanent house. He recalled the hardships of living in a makeshift dwelling and the constant worry about providing a suitable environment for his children's education and residence. With ₹1,20,000 from the scheme and his lifelong savings, he

was able to build a well-equipped house.

"Ushaben Vasava, Secretary of the Dhaj Women's Dairy Cooperative, shared that 15 members supply milk daily to the Sumul Dairy-operated cooperative. Women in the village earn between ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 per month from milk production, making them self-reliant. Under the eco-village project, the dairy has been equipped with a milk fat testing machine and a computer. Previously, women had to walk five kilometers daily to sell milk in neighboring villages, but now they can sell it within Dhaj village, securing a stable income," the release read.

On this occasion, let us talk about Dhaj village in Mandvi Taluka of Surat district, which is Gujarat's first eco-village. Located in the remote forest area of the Mandvi North Range of the Surat Forest Department, this fully forest-dependent village is setting an example for other villages across the country by maintaining a balance between environmental conservation and development, the release read.

## TOP STORY

Dear Reader, If you have any news or you have any suggestion regarding our newspaper or you have any problem with any government department, you may contact us on 24 hour helpline no- 0120-4225517, 4241284 for Delhi & Ghaziabad (9582310372), for Noida (981899989), Advertisement (9818799941), Circulation (0856925450)

Readers are recommended to make all necessary enquiries and seek appropriate advice before action on any advertisement and content published in this publication. The printer, publisher, editor and seller of the 'Top Story do not vouch for any claims. The publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having final authority of or binding in any way. We do not owe any responsibility for damage or loss to any person, a purchase of this production is not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only.

FOR ADVERTISING IN TOP STORY PLEASE CONTACT: 9818799941

# Opposition accuses Government of centralizing power through bills

**New Delhi**  
Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday accused the NDA government of attempting to give more powers to the Centre and weakening the states through various bills and amendments.

Participating in the discussion on The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the Upper House, Sanjay Yadav (BJD) asserted that only when the states are strong then the country and the Union automatically become prosperous and powerful.



Expressing similar views, Manas Ranjan Mangaraj (BJD) said, "The proposed amendment bill raises further concerns regarding NDRF (National Disaster Response Fund) allocations. The original 2005 Act defined disaster response as 'addressing any threatening disaster situation or disaster'. However, the amendment seeks to redefine it as 'for meeting different aspects of disaster management'."

Stating that the change is worrisome, he said, "Instead of decentralising the usage of the NDRF fund, the central government appears to be asserting greater control over it, which raises suspicions. Such centralising action may create further conflicts and delays in the relief measures during disasters."

Mangaraj alleged that the Centre has not extended significant assistance to Odisha, one of the most natural disaster-prone states from the NDRF performance the state's exemplary experience in dealing with natural disasters.

Sanjay Singh (AAP) asked the government to rise above differences, politics and blame games when it comes to the management

of national disasters. He stressed the need to bring together societies, organisations and political parties in managing national disasters while underlining the role of centre, state, CSOs and political parties.

Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla (YSRCP) said the bill aims to modernise India's disaster management plans, which has been in place since the enactment of the Disaster Management Act 2005, and it addresses the evolving challenges posed by disaster, particularly in the light of climate change and urbanisation.

However, he said, "This bill fails to mandate disaster risk assessment as part of an approval process for new infrastructure. This oversight could lead to preventable disasters."

Moreover, Alla noted that disaster relief and compensation are not recognised as enforceable legal rights under this bill.

Ashok Kumar Mittal (AAP), while acknowledging that this bill is a step to make disaster management modern, said the NDMA has been given the responsibility for national planning, which may limit the independence of the states.

He also said that steps must be taken to ensure there is no shortage of funds for states to deal with disasters and stated that the bill lacks disaster prevention provisions.

Naresh Bansal (BJP) asserted that the bill will help in making disaster management stronger and more efficient through early warning systems.

Praful Patel (NCP) supported the bill and congratulated Home Minister Amit Shah for making NDMA even more robust and for the steps taken to strengthen the preparedness of disaster management, not just at the Centre but at state, district and urban bodies levels.

## Boiler Act Replaced: Lok Sabha Passes New Bill



**New Delhi**  
The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed a bill to provide for the regulation of boilers, safety of life and property of persons from the danger of explosions of steam-boilers and uniformity in registration.

The Boilers Bill, 2024, seeks to repeal the century-old Boilers Act, 1923.

The bill was earlier passed by the Rajya Sabha in December last year.

Praful Patel (NCP) said the bill, which aims to decriminalise seven offences and promote ease of doing business, was cleared in the Upper House by a voice vote.

The bill also has provisions to ensure the safety of persons working inside a boiler. It also provides that repair of boilers should be undertaken by qualified and competent persons.

Piloting the bill, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said several colonial-era redundant and obsolete provisions have been removed and the bill seeks to do away with the colonial mind-set.

"We have made the bill simple and readable," he said. Allaying concerns of certain members, he said the legislation is not taking away powers of the state governments.

None of the rights of states has been taken away with today's law, the minister assured the members.

The opposition members walked out during Goyal's reply when he was criticising the previous Congress-led government for delaying this law.

## India Must Align Climate Efforts After US Exit: Panel

**New Delhi**  
India, being a major player in the fight against climate change, must take responsibility and align its efforts with other countries following the US exit from the Paris Agreement, a parliamentary panel said in a report on Tuesday.

In its report tabled in Rajya Sabha, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change said India should be concerned about climate change as it has a large population.

"The committee is of the view that climate change is a global concern and India, being amongst the most populous countries, needs to be concerned about that... We must cooperate with other countries globally as climate summits after the Paris Agreement have shown slow progress," the 31-member panel headed by BJP Rajya Sabha member Bhubaneswar Kalita said.

"While taking progressive steps, India must correlate her efforts with other countries," it said.

The panel expressed concern over the US administration withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and its impact on climate funding for developing countries.

"Under these circumstances, India, being a large country and a major player in climate change mitigation, must take responsibility and work towards achieving its goals," the panel said.

Since returning to office, US President Donald Trump has withdrawn the US from the Paris Agreement and the Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETP), a multilateral initiative launched at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021 to help coal-dependent developing countries shift to renewable energy.

Apart from the US exit, geopolitical issues such as wars, trade disputes and the failure of developed countries to deliver climate finance have weakened trust among nations and made climate action more difficult.

## China has Deepseek the US has ChatGPT -Where does India stand? AAP MP in RS

**New Delhi**  
Aam Adami Party MP Raghav Chadha on Tuesday in Rajya Sabha questioned India's position in the world in AI, as China and US make big strides in the field.

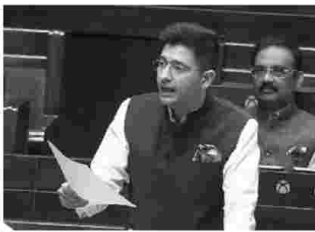
Chadha said that America has developed indigenous models of artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Grok, while China has come up with Deepseek, a low cost AI model.

"Is India lagging in the field of AI? Will India not be able to have its own generative AI models?" Chadha wondered.

He said that between 2010 and 2022, of all AI patents registered in the world, 60 per cent were by America and 20 per cent by China.

On the other hand, India, which is the world's fifth-largest economy, has registered only half per cent of patents, Chadha said.

He added that both, the USA and China, not only have a four-five years of head start, but they have also invested heavily in AI research and development.



He said that between 2010 and 2022, of all AI patents registered in the world, 60 per cent were by America and 20 per cent by China.

According to him, 15 per cent of the total AI workforce are Indians, as about 4.5 lakh of them have been working in foreign countries as AI professionals.

Despite India being a digital economy with over 90 crore internet users, it has become a consumer of AI and not its producer, he said.

The AAP leader, when asked about India's AI potential, said that OpenAI founder Sam Altman termed it "disappointing" and urged the government to deliver a response by becoming an AI producer.

To be on the frontline in the field, India needs to be producing indigenous AI chips, have a dedicated AI infrastructure fund, research grants, tax breaks as well as a check on talent migration, he said.

"We have to increase the financial investments in AI. The USA spends 3.5 per cent of its GDP on AI research and China 2.5 per cent but India is spending only 0.7 per cent," the AAP MP said.

## SC takes suo motu cognisance of controversial Allahabad HC order on rape

**New Delhi**  
The Supreme Court has taken cognisance on its own of a controversial Allahabad High Court ruling that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the string of a 'pyjama' do not amount to offence of rape.

A bench of Justices B R Govoi and Augustine George Masih is slated to hear the matter on Wednesday.

Legal experts had deplored the observation of the Allahabad High Court on what constitutes a rape charge, calling for a restraint by judges and underlining the drop in public confidence in the judiciary due to such statements.

The high court on March 17 had ruled that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the 'pyjama' string do not amount to offence of rape but such offence falls under the ambit of assault or use of criminal force against any woman with the intent to disrobe or compel her to be naked.

The order was passed by Justice Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra on a revision petition filed by two



persons who moved the court, challenging the order of a Special Judge of Kasganj by which the court had summoned them under Section 376 of IPC apart from other sections.

According to facts of the case, an application was moved before the court of Special Judge, PCSO Act, alleging that around 5:00 pm on November 10, 2021, she (informant) was returning from the home of her sister-in-law (husband's sister) along with her minor daughter aged about 14 years.

Accused Pawan, Akash and Ashok, who were from her village, met her on the way on a muddy road and asked where she was coming from. When she replied she was coming from her sister-in-law's place, Pawan offered a lift to her daughter, assuring her that he would drop her at her residence.

Relying on his assurance, she permitted her daughter to accompany him on his motorcycle. The accused persons stopped their motorcycle on the muddy way to her village and started grabbing her breasts. Akash dragged her and tried to take her beneath the culvert and pulled the string of her pyjama.

Two persons reached the spot on hearing the cries of her daughter. The accused persons threatened them with life by pointing a country-made pistol and fled the place. After recording the statement of the victim and

the witnesses, the court summoned the accused for offence of rape.

After going through the materials on record, the court found, "In the present case, the allegation against accused Pawan and Akash is that they grabbed the breasts of the victim and Akash tried to bring down the lower garment of the victim and at that purpose, they had broken string of her lower garments and tried to drag her beneath the culvert, but due to intervention of witnesses they left the victim and fled away from the place of incident."

"This fact is not sufficient to draw an inference that the accused persons had determined to commit rape on the victim as apart from these facts no other act is attributed to them to further their alleged desire to commit rape on the victim," the court said.

The court in its order on March 17 further observed that the specific allegation against accused Akash is that he tried to drag the victim beneath the culvert and pulled the string of her pyjama.

## Chairman RS Calls for Floor Leaders' Meeting on Judiciary Issues; Asserts Parliament's Sovereignty

**New Delhi**  
In a significant move, Rajya Sabha Chairman has convened a meeting with Floor Leaders today at 4:30 PM to deliberate on critical issues concerning the judiciary. The decision follows consultations with the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition, underscoring a rare political convergence on matters affecting parliamentary sovereignty.

Addressing the House, the Chairman emphasized that no constitutional provision allows for a review or appeal against a constitutional amendment. Highlighting the supremacy of Parliament, he pointed out that any amendment passed with due endorsement from state legislatures and sanctioned by the President under Article 111 must hold the field. He cautioned that if a constitutional amendment is rendered non-executable, it raises concerns about the relevance of Parliament to reflect on the sit-

## Rs 858 crore for pollution control remains unutilized due to lack of approval Par panel

**New Delhi**  
The budgetary allocation of Rs 858 crore for pollution control in 2024-25 remains unutilized due to lack of approval from the Union Environment Ministry for the continuation of the scheme, a parliamentary panel has said in its report.

In the report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change said air pollution has assumed "gigantic proportions", affecting not just Delhi but many other cities.

"In such a scenario, the committee is shocked to note that amount to the tune of Rs 858 crore allocated for 'Control of Pollution', which is 27.44 per cent of the annual revised allocation of the ministry, remains unutilized since the approval for continuation of Control of Pollution Scheme filed 2025-26 is awaited," the 31-member panel headed by BJP Rajya Sabha member Bhubaneswar Kalita said.

"At a time when the ministry is required to address

"This House, in 2015, unanimously created a legal system with only one abstention. That framework, endorsed by state legislatures and signed by the Hon'ble President, should stand as the rule of law. Now is the time for us to reaffirm that decision," he stated.

"This House, in 2015, unanimously created a legal system with only one abstention. That framework, endorsed by state legislatures and signed by the Hon'ble President, should stand as the rule of law. Now is the time for us to reaffirm that decision," he stated. He urged members to reflect on the situation, stating that Parliament has the authority to ensure that its constitutional mandates are upheld.

The Chairman also noted the unprecedented step taken by the Chief Justice of India in placing all related materials in the public domain, acknowledging it as a healthy development. However, he stressed that the matter required further deliberation, leading to today's scheduled meeting with Floor Leaders.

"The legislature and judiciary function optimally when they operate within their respective domains with efficiency. I am confident that our discussions today will yield a constructive way forward," he added. The high-level meeting is expected to address growing concerns regarding judicial intervention in constitutional amendments and broader questions about the sovereignty and supremacy of Parliament in the legislative process.

## SC signals AIIMS takeover if Apollo falls short

**New Delhi**  
The Supreme Court on Tuesday said if poor people are not provided free treatment at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital here, it will ask the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to take it over.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh took serious note of alleged violation of lease agreement under which the hospital run by Indraprastha Medical Corporation Limited (IMCL) was to provide free medical and other facilities to one-third of its indoor poor patients and 40 per cent of its outdoor patients without any discrimination.

"If we find out that poor people are not provided free treatment, we will hand over the hospital to AIIMS," the bench said. The bench observed that the hospital, constructed by the Apollo Group in 15 acre land in posh area of Delhi which was given on symbolic lease of Rs 1, was to be run on 'no profit and no loss' formula but has instead turned into a pure commercial venture where poor people can hardly afford treatment.



the grave and critical challenge of deteriorating air quality, the ministry has not been able to decide the continuation of the concerned scheme, as a result of which not even 1 per cent of the funds allocated for the scheme have been utilized so far," the panel said.

Under the 'Control of Pollution' scheme, the Centre provides financial assistance to pollution control boards/committees and funding for the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) which aims to reduce particulate pollution in 131 highly polluted cities by 40 per cent by 2026 compared to 2019-20 levels.

The committee noted that rising pollution not only leads to various health issues but also harms the environment.

"The scenario of air pollution in the country is indeed very grim and has been affecting one and all," it said, recommending that the ministry take serious note of the reasons for this gross underutilization.

It also observed that while plantation drives are carried out frequently, the survival rate of these plants is very low.

"There is a need not only to plant the trees but also to ensure that once planted, they are looked after well and continue to survive and grow... There is also a need for audit of the plantation activities, so that the allocations made in this regard are utilized optimally," it said.

## Modi's Mukhwa visit has enthused Char Dham pilgrims Uttarakhand govt

Dehradun: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mukhwa, the winter abode of "Mother Ganga" in Uttarkashi district earlier this month, has created a favourable atmosphere for the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand.

Char Dham Yatra refers to a pilgrimage to four holy sites -- Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath -- situated in the higher ranges of the Himalayas. Modi visited Mukhwa and Harzil on March 6.

The annual Char Dham Yatra is scheduled to begin this year with the opening of the doors of Gangotri and Yamunotri temples in the Garhwal Himalayas on April 30.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Mukhwa, "the winter seat of Maa Ganga", and tourist destination Harzil has created a favourable atmosphere for the annual pilgrimage. It has enthused pilgrims even more, an official release here said.

It was for the first time that the prime minister came to Uttarakhand close to the start of the Char Dham Yatra.

Though he came to formally promote winter pilgrimage to the Himalayan temples, did considerable branding of the Char Dham Yatra too, it said.

The prime minister's grand promotion of the Yatra has created more enthusiasm among people.

Seeing the enthusiasm for registration, preparations are being made for better crowd management, it said.

"The government is busy preparing for the Char Dham Yatra. The travel arrangements of Uttarakhand have attracted devotees from all over the country and the world and have increased their confidence.

"The Prime Minister has promoted the Char Dham Yatra a lot. We are committed to providing better facilities to the pilgrims," Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said.

This time the Char Dham Yatra is starting ten days earlier than last year.

The Char Dham Yatra was inaugurated on May 10 last year. This time it is starting from April 30.

## UP saw more development in last 8 years than in 70 years before that: CM Adityanath

Gorakhpur (UP):

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday that his government has ensured more development of the state in the last eight years than achieved in 70 years before that.

He said that his government replaced the previous administration's policy of "one district, one mafia" with "one district, one medical college", transforming the lives of people across the state.

Speaking at an event in Gorakhpur, marking eight years of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state, Adityanath highlighted the state's progress since 2017.

"Earlier, the state lagged in development, youth struggled with an identity crisis, and unemployment and hunger drove people to despair. Women and traders felt unsafe. Today, Uttar Pradesh is self-re-

liant...executing major development projects, making it one of the country's leading states," Adityanath said.

"Before 2017, riots were frequent in the state...there was a mafia in every district. We eliminated these mafias and, instead of 'one district, one mafia,' we introduced 'one district, one medical college,'" he asserted.

Adityanath further said that the state, once avoided by investors, has now become a major hub for investment and tourism, he said.

Highlighting infrastructure development, he stated that the state now has the highest number of expressways



in the country and improved interstate connectivity with Bihar and Jharkhand and also Nepal.

The state also has India's most extensive railway network, the highest number of metro rail cities, and the country's first island waterway, he said.

The CM also mentioned increased crop yields in his speech and said, "Uttar Pradesh remains the top producer of food grains in the country."

He pointed out that before 2017, Uttar Pradesh lagged behind in 45 central government schemes, but it now ranks first or among the top two states in

their implementation.

Speaking about Gorakhpur, he said the "smart city" has electric buses, CCTV-monitored traffic management and enhanced security for women and businesses.

The city also has a thriving fertiliser factory, improved infrastructure and road connectivity to Lucknow and Varanasi. Besides, Gorakhpur now has two new polytechnic institutes, 23 new colleges, four new ITIs, and a veterinary college, he highlighted.

He also noted that two more universities have come up since 2017, taking their number to four and added that work was underway for one more varsity in the district.

He said that his government replaced the previous administration's policy of "one district, one mafia" with "one district, one medical college", transforming the lives of people across the state.

A new Atal Residential School has been built at a cost of Rs 71 crore. The government has also distributed over 1.25 lakh free smartphones and tablets to students, he said.

Besides, he said, in the GIDA industrial area, companies such as Indian Glycols, Apollo Tubes, and CP Milk & Food Products have invested heavily, generating employment for over 50,000 youth.

A distillery worth Rs 1,200 crore is set to begin operations soon, while Varun Beverages and Tatva Plastics have invested Rs 1,071 crore and Rs 200 crore, respectively, he added.

CM Adityanath emphasised that his government has also focused on poverty eradication, housing and social welfare.

## Both accused in Mandi firing case arrested by Police

Rajan Puncthi Mandi:

In a significant breakthrough, the Mandi police have arrested both accused involved in the firing incident targeting a dhaba owner near Pulgharat. The case, which had been under intense investigation for the past four days, saw a major development when the police apprehended the suspects late last night.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Mohammad Ajmal (25) and Azam (19), both residents of Sujanji village in Muzaffargarh district, Uttar Pradesh. The duo had been residing as tenants in Dangu village of Balhatesh, Mandi district, for some time, where they worked in aluminium fittings.

The shocking incident occurred on March 20, 2025, when 61-year-old Pradeep Guleria, owner of the Royal Lass Kitchen dhaba near Pulgharat, was attacked. The firing incident sent shockwaves through the community, prompting the authorities to launch an intensive investigation.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by the Additional Superintendent of Police, was formed to probe the

matter. Alongside the SIT, four other teams were deployed to collect evidence and track the accused. The investigation involved extensive analysis of CCTV footage from various locations and the examination of dump data from the crime scene.

On March 24, 2025, investigators obtained crucial leads that helped identify the suspects. Based on the gathered evidence, the police successfully traced the accused and arrested them during a late-night operation. Along with the arrests, the police also recovered the firearm used in the crime.

Both the arrested individuals will be produced before the court today, where the police will seek their remand for further investigation. Authorities are now probing the motive behind the attack and whether the accused had any accomplices.

The arrest of the accused has provided relief to the local community and the victim's family. The police have assured that a thorough investigation will be conducted to ensure justice is served.

Further updates on the case will follow as the legal proceedings unfold.

## District Development Festival Showcases UP's Growth Under Yogi Model



Akash Jain Agra:

The three-day District Development Festival was inaugurated at GIC Ground, Agra, with the theme "UP - The Growth Engine of India." The event commenced with the traditional lighting of the lamp by Honorable District In-charge and Minister of Tourism and Culture, Shri Jaiveer Singh. The festival aims to highlight the transformative governance and development milestones achieved under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In his address, Jaiveer Singh underscored Uttar Pradesh's remarkable transformation from a crime-ridden state before 2017 to an economic powerhouse today. He

credited the "Yogi Model" for eliminating crime, hooliganism, and extortion, paving the way for industrial growth, employment, and economic stability. He stated that under the Yogi government's firm policies, law and order have been strengthened, benefiting farmers, entrepreneurs, and youth through initiatives like loan waivers, the Kisan Samman Nidhi, and the Seventh Pay Commission.

Highlighting the government's success in attracting global investment, he noted that the Global Investors Summit secured ₹40 lakh crore worth of MoUs, with ₹10 lakh crore materialized in the Ground Breaking Ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He also emphasized infrastructure advancements, including six operational expressways, ongoing work on 11 new ones, a cruise service from Gokul to Vrindavan, and the construction of a ₹567 crore terminal at Kheria Airport, Agra. Under the Smart City Project, ₹978 crore has been invested in Agra's development, with discussions underway to open the Taj Mahal for night tour moon nights.

MLA Shri Purushottam Khandelwal lauded the government's commitment to religious and infrastructural growth, emphasizing Agra's spiritual heritage and advocating for temple restoration and beautification.

## Boiler Act 2024, a historic step towards industrial safety and modernization: MP Chahar

Akash Jain Agra:

Fatehpur Sikri MP and National President of BJP Kisan Morcha, Rajkumar Chahar, emphasized the significance of the Boiler Act 2024 while addressing the Lok Sabha. Highlighting its necessity, he stated that the previous Boiler Act of 1923, introduced during British rule, had become outdated in the wake of industrial advancements. With India now in 2025, it was imperative to modernize regulations for the benefit of workers, industries, and property.

MP Chahar extended his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, acknowledging his leadership in reforming obsolete laws since 2014. He commended the government for replacing punitive British-era regulations with fair and just laws.

As part of these reforms, the Boiler Act 2024 was proposed by Prime Minister Modi's cabinet on August 2, 2024. Following its introduction by Union



Minister Piyush Goyal in the Rajya Sabha, the bill received parliamentary approval in December 2024. MP Chahar stressed that the new law was crucial for workers' safety, a top priority for the Modi government.

MP Chahar also linked the Boiler Act 2024 with the Public Trust Act 2023, emphasizing its role in simplifying business regulations. The act enables faster inspections, digitization of processes, and modernization of safety measures.

The new law decriminalizes three out of seven offenses, ensur-

ing a smooth transition and coordination.

The Central Boiler Board will be responsible for regulating safety measures and coordinating state-level inspections. Chahar emphasized that state governments should ensure corruption-free inspections, with mandatory reports from inspectors. Additionally, he called for a comprehensive disposal plan for boiler waste (fly ash), urging research on its alternative uses to prevent environmental hazards.

MP Chahar hailed the Boiler Act 2024 as a landmark reform in industrial safety, ease of doing business, and economic growth. He concluded his speech by congratulating Prime Minister Modi on India's coal production surpassing a billion tons on March 20, 2025. Urging unanimous support for the bill, he emphasized its importance in enhancing industrial safety, boosting investment, and generating employment.

Chahar highlighted the act's potential to benefit industries like power, steel, food, and chemicals, generating employment opportunities and enhancing India's industrial reputation. The central government will oversee its implementation for three years, ensur-

## UP Minister Inaugurates Vikas Mahotsav Celebration in Bulandshahr

Avnish Tyagi Bulandshahr:

Bulandshahr witnessed the grand inauguration of the three-day Vikas Mahotsav celebration on Tuesday at Nikunj Hall, located in the Exhibition Ground. Organized to commemorate the successful completion of 10 years of the Central Government and 8 years of the Uttar Pradesh Government, the event aimed to highlight the development and progress achieved under their leadership.

The prestigious ceremony was inaugurated by the Uttar Pradesh Government's State Minister, Dr. Arun Kumar, who was joined by District Magistrate Shrutu Sharma and other notable public representatives. In a symbolic gesture of the government's commitment to public welfare, the chief guest distributed grants and certificates to eligi-



ble beneficiaries of various schemes, reinforcing the administration's dedication to inclusive development.

The central theme of the Vikas Mahotsav was "Uttar Pradesh: The Growth Engine of the Nation," emphasizing the state's remarkable

progress driven by principles of service, security, and good governance. The venue was adorned with intricate rangoli designs, vibrant floral garlands, and colorful balloons, setting the stage for a festive atmosphere.

Various government departments actively participated in the event, setting up informative stalls to educate the public about numerous welfare schemes and policies. The Information Department took a proactive approach by distributing the "Uttar Pradesh Vikas Book-

let" along with message pamphlets containing important announcements from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Students from local schools and cultural groups captivated the audience with mesmerizing performances that remarked "8 Saal Bismillah" (8 Remarkable Years), reflecting the state's impressive developmental journey. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of the "8 Years of Excellence" development booklet by State Minister Dr. Arun Saxena, District Panchayat President Dr. Atul Tewatia, District Magistrate Shrutu Sharma, SSP Shlok Kumar, and several MLAs.

In a major welfare announcement, officials reiterated the success of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, under which 1.86 crore women have received free gas connections. Further reinforcing its

commitment to public welfare, the government announced the provision of free gas cylinders during Holi and Diwali to eligible beneficiaries. Additionally, as part of the Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme, financial aid and certificates were distributed to eligible families, ensuring financial support for the marriage of their daughters.

The Vikas Mahotsav was graced by the presence of several prominent dignitaries, including MLA Pradeep Chaudhary, MLA Lakshmi Raj Singh, MLA Meenakshi Singh, District Panchayat President Dr. Atul Tewatia, BJP District President Vikas Chauhan, and Thakur Sunil Singh. Their presence underscored the significance of the event in promoting governmental achievements and public welfare initiatives.

## UP govt to launch summer camps in council schools for students' holistic growth

Lucknow:

In a major initiative to enhance learning and extracurricular engagement, the Uttar Pradesh government is set to introduce summer camps in select council schools during the summer break. Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Basic Education Department has begun preparations to organize these camps from May 20 to June 15.

This initiative will allow students to engage in fun learning, sports, and various skill-based activities. Following CM Yogi's directives, the summer camps will run in the morning for an hour and a half, focusing on interactive and engaging activities for the holistic development of children. The camps will be su-

pervised by Shiksha Mitras, instructors, and teachers, with additional support from NGOs and graduate volunteers.

Additionally, in order to ensure children's well-being, nutritious snacks such as jaggery chikki, millet laddoos, ragmanna laddoos, and jaggery-chana will be provided under the Supplementary Nutrition Program. This will keep children physically and mentally active while fostering a love for learning.

The summer camps will further incorporate Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)-based activities, life skills, personality development, yoga, sports, science, and technology experiments, arts, cultural programs, and environmental awareness.

ISIS greatest threat to Russia's security says Russian Ambassador in Pakistan

Islamabad: Russia's Ambassador to Pakistan Albert P Khorev on Tuesday identified ISIS as the greatest threat to Russia's national and regional security, a media report said. He told the Express Tribune that Afghanistan's efforts to combat militancy were inadequate but attributed it to economic challenges and prevailing security conditions in the country. The Russian Ambassador was speaking at the Express Tribune at its Peshawar office. Khorev identified ISIS as the greatest threat to Russia's national and regional security, stating that Moscow is closely monitoring the situation and working with regional partners under the 'Quartet' format to counter terrorism. Khorev also highlighted Russia's collaboration with regional countries under the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) to eliminate militancy. He reaffirmed Moscow's support for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other regional states in tackling militant threats, The Express Tribune reported. Khorev also dismissed media reports alleging that Russia has found evidence of Pakistan supplying arms to Ukraine.

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Yunus to begin key China visit on Wednesday

Beijing/Dhaka: Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus will start his four-day visit to China on Wednesday during which he is scheduled to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping to reorient bilateral ties after the fall of Sheikh Hasina government. Yunus' visit to Beijing comes ahead of his request for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the upcoming BIMSTEC meeting at Bangkok to be held from April 2 to 4. It is yet to be confirmed by India. Yunus will begin his China visit by taking part in Boao Forum for Asia, the annual meeting of Beijing's strategic think-tank. "China welcomes Chief Adviser Yunus to attend the conference in China", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakan said on Tuesday. "Let me stress



Yunus' visit to Beijing comes ahead of his request for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the upcoming BIMSTEC meeting at Bangkok to be held from April 2 to 4. It is yet to be confirmed by India.

that China and Bangladesh are traditional friendly neighbours and comprehensive strategic cooperative partners". In Dhaka, the Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen told the media that the Chief Adviser's visit to China would be very successful, productive and a milestone visit with some announcements. "This is going to be the most important visit by

a Bangladeshi leader in 50 years," Yunus' press secretary Shaiful Alam quoted Yao as saying after his meeting with Yunus on March 16, according to a report by Diakha Tribune on Sunday. Yunus will begin his China visit by taking part in Boao Forum for Asia, the annual meeting of Beijing's strategic think-tank, in which leaders and officials be-

sides corporate heads from different countries take part. Later, he will travel to Beijing and hold talks with Xi on March 28, according to Alam. Since the fall of Hasina government, China has hosted several delegations including Bangladesh's Adviser for Foreign Affairs of the Interim government Touhid Hossain and headline Islamic parties

Balochistan CM orders strict action against govt employees involved in anti-state activities

Islamabad: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has ordered strict action against government employees and officers involved in anti-state activities, according to a media report on Tuesday. Chairing a high-level meeting, the chief minister ordered divisional and deputy commissioners to identify and act against the officials engaged in activities that go against the state's interests, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. The chief minister said that no government employee would be allowed to undermine state policies, warning that violators would be dealt with accordingly. Meanwhile, an FIR has been registered against Mahrang Baloch, leader of the Baloch Yakjethi Committee (BYC), along with several other leaders and activists, in connection with the killing of three people during a protest in Quetta, reported the paper.

The case includes multiple sections of the anti-terrorism act and other legal provisions, police said. So far, three cases have been filed against the BYC in Quetta. Meanwhile, protests continue across Balochistan against the arrests of Mahrang Baloch and other BYC leaders. On Sunday, a shut-down strike was observed for the second consecutive day in several cities, including Turbat, Mastung, Kalat, Kharan, Chagai, and Panjgur. During the meeting, officials provided a detailed briefing on the law-and-order situation and service delivery across the province. The chief minister reiterated that maintaining peace and upholding the state's authority were top priorities and emphasised that no road would be allowed to be blocked, and every district officer was responsible for ensuring law enforcement in his jurisdiction.

India has 'intent and capability' to interfere in election Canadian intelligence officer

Ottawa: India has the "intent and capability" to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes, a media report said quoting a top Canadian intelligence officer. Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) deputy director Vanessa Lloyd also claimed that China, Russia and Pakistan too could interfere in the federal election campaign. Lloyd was addressing a media briefing Monday on efforts to protect



The integrity of the general election, voting for which takes place on April 28. "We have also seen that the government of India has the intent and capability to interfere in

Canadian communities and democratic processes to assert its geopolitical influence," Lloyd said, according to CTV News. Under a federal protocol introduced in 2019, a panel of bureaucrats has the power to use the public if it decides one or more incidents threaten Canada's ability to hold a free and fair vote. The panel receives regular updates from the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elec-

tions Task Force, which is chaired by Lloyd. Most threat actors "likely have adapted their tradecraft to conceal foreign interference activity, making it even more challenging to detect," she said. Lloyd said China is highly likely to use tools enabled by artificial intelligence (AI) to interfere in the federal election campaign and "highly likely to turn to social media to promote narratives favourable to its interests", the news

channel said. This would be done to specifically target Chinese ethnic, cultural and religious communities in Canada using deceptive means, it said. Lloyd also alleged that Russia has tried to build "dissemination networks" across social media and news websites that amplify Kremlin talking points. "It is possible that Russia will use these online networks to opportunistically conduct foreign information manipu-

lation and interference operations directed at Canadians," CTV News said quoting Lloyd. Pakistan could also conduct foreign interference activities against Canada in line with its strategic aims, she added. Meanwhile, quoting unnamed sources, The Globe and Mail alleged Tuesday that agents of India and their proxies would use these online networks to opportunistically conduct foreign information manipu-

BUSINESS

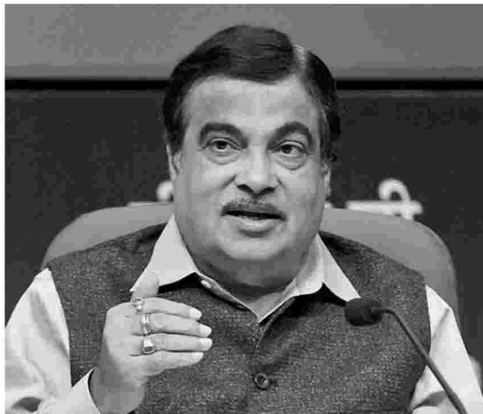
Bajaj Finserv large and mid cap fund marks first anniversary with strong performance

Chandigarh: Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Company (AMC) has celebrated the first anniversary of its Bajaj Finserv Large & Mid Cap Fund, showcasing a robust performance in its inaugural year. The fund has outperformed its benchmark, the Nifty Large Midcap 250 TRI, by delivering a cumulative alpha of 8.07% in the Direct Plan and 6.45% in the Regular Plan. The Bajaj Finserv Large & Mid Cap Fund is an open-ended equity scheme that focuses on investments in large and mid-cap stocks, setting itself apart with its MOAT investing strategy. This approach prioritizes companies with strong economic moats—distinct competitive advantages that provide a long-term edge over peers. The fund currently holds 69 high-quality stocks that exhibit strong economic moats, such as management strength, cost

advantages, economies of scale, switching costs, brand strength, and patents. By maintaining a focus on quality businesses that can sustain long-term profitability, the fund aims to build a well-diversified portfolio designed for long-term wealth creation, ensuring resilience amid market fluctuations. Ganesh Mohan, Chief Executive Officer, Bajaj Finserv AMC, commented on the milestone, stating, "Our Large and Mid-Cap Fund was launched with a vision to balance stability and growth. Over the past year, we have successfully navigated dynamic market conditions while staying committed to investing in quality businesses with strong long-term potential. We sincerely appreciate the trust of our investors and remain dedicated to delivering sustainable value through disciplined and research-driven investing."

India Loses 3% GDP Annually Due to Road Accidents: Gadkari

New Delhi: India is losing 3 per cent of its GDP due to around 5 lakh road accidents annually in the country, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Tuesday. The Minister for Road, Transport and Highways made the remarks while addressing AMCHAM's Technology Interventions For Road Safety: US-India Partnership in the national capital. The most important problem for the country is road accidents, Gadkari said, noting that every year India sees 4,80,000 accidents, which lead to 1,38,000 deaths of people aged between 18 and 45 years. The minister raised concerns that 10,000 deaths are of children below 18 years. Gadakari said, "It is one of the major pub-



lic health issue and the most important thing is also, we are losing 3 per cent of GDP because of road accidents." The Union minister cited poor detailed project reports (DPRs) as one of the key reasons

for accidents. "DPR consultants are the main culprits who are responsible for the road accidents. (They prepare DPRs) sometimes because of cost saving, other different reasons and non-serious approach...." he said. Gadkari further said that to promote helping of accident victims, the government has decided to provide an award of Rs 25,000. "We have taken the decision that any third person who is going to help to the victim of an accident, we will give him an award of Rs 25,000. Also, if any patient, by accident or after accident, is admitted to any hospital...we can give him Rs 1,50,000 maximum or 7 years expenditure for his treatment from the doctor," he said.

47,674 Tax Defaulters, Untraceable, Owe Rs 5.91 Lakh Cr: Govt

New Delhi: About 47,674 direct tax defaulters who owe over Rs 5.91 lakh crore to the government have been declared untraceable, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. In case of indirect taxes, as of January 31, 2025, as many as 60,853 tax defaulters having dues of Rs 43,525 crore have been declared untraceable. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said, the measures taken by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to recover dues from the tax defaulters include making available databases like individual transaction statement and 360-degree profile generated by the department and those maintained by other agencies like FIU-IND to the field units for identification of assets for recovery. Additionally, measures are taken to monitor the arrear demand collection/reduction in respect of top 5,000 cases of arrear demand in all the jurisdictions and giving targets to field formations for annual cash collection and reduction of the demand. The measures taken by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to recover dues from the tax defaulters include coordinating with Income Tax Department and various banks, attachment of bank accounts of defaulters besides seeking information from Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND).

SUD life enhances claim settlement experience with continuous innovation

Noida: Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company Ltd. (SUD Life), a trusted name in the Indian life insurance sector since 2009, is transforming its claim settlement process with a focus on innovation, efficiency, and customer-centricity. In FY 2023-24, SUD Life achieved a record-breaking claim settlement ratio of 98.29% for individual claims, 95.53% for group claims, and 99.09% for Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) claims. During the period, the company successfully settled 1,992 individual death

claims amounting to ₹120.97 crores, 4,190 group claims worth ₹159.16 crores, and 17,386 PMJJBY claims amounting to ₹347.72 crores. This upward trend in claim settlements marks a significant improvement over previous years. In FY 2022-23, SUD Life maintained a claim settlement ratio of 96.07% for individual claims, 97.37% for group claims, and 96% for PMJJBY claims. The company's dedication to excellence was also evident in FY 2021-22, with settlement ratios of 97.42% for individual claims, 97.95% for group

claims, and 98.26% for PMJJBY claims. The consistent increase in claim settlement performance reflects SUD Life's operational efficiency, commitment to continuous improvement, and dedication to timely claim resolutions. SUD Life has introduced its cutting-edge Digital Claims Platform, aimed at making claim settlements faster, more transparent, and seamless. The platform facilitates a "Click to Claim" experience, ensuring eligible claims are processed within 24 hours. It also provides real-time updates through SMS, email, WhatsApp, and

letters, allowing beneficiaries to track their claims conveniently. As a result of these advancements, the company has reduced its average claim processing time from 11 days in FY 2022-23 to just 7 days in FY 2023-24, reinforcing its commitment to efficiency and customer satisfaction. Speaking about this achievement, Shri Abhay Tewari, MD & CEO of SUD Life, stated, "At SUD Life, our commitment to our policyholders is our number one priority. We understand that each claim represents a family's trust in us during their most vulnerable moments. By embracing innovation and continuously refining our processes, we are ensuring that this trust is honored with speed, transparency, and compassion." SUD Life believes that empowered employees are crucial for delivering compassionate and efficient service. The company regularly conducts training sessions, assessments, workshops, and online learning modules to keep its workforce updated with the latest procedures and regulations. By investing in continuous learning, SUD Life fosters a culture where expertise and empathy go hand in hand, ensuring the highest standards of customer service. Looking ahead, SUD Life is committed to further reducing claim processing timelines and enhancing the overall claims journey. The company plans to leverage advanced technologies such as Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for faster document processing and expand communication channels for clearer and timelier updates. By streamlining operations and adopting cutting-edge technology, SUD Life aims to seek and deliver information in customer-centric insurance solutions.



# Cricket

## IPL 2025: KKR, RR eye batting, bowling overhaul to bounce back

Guwahati

Ottomised in their previous matches, title-holders Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals will eye a quick course correction in ever aspect when they face each other in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

The Knight Riders were beaten by seven wickets by Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the tournament-opener while the Royals were given a 44-run drubbing by Sunrisers Hyderabad.

The common theme in those defeats was how the seemingly powerful batting and bowling units of KKR and RR failed to fire.

While the Rajasthan outfit might offer the excuse of playing on a Hyderabad shiftfront for the malfunction of their bowling unit, the Kolkata side do not have any such cover.

Apart from Sunil Narine, none of the KKR bowlers were able to contain free-flowing RCB batters, and in that the mystification of mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy might just worry them a bit.

Even on an Eden Gardens pitch that had some grip, Chakravarthy was given a troubling by Phil Salt and Virat Kohli.

The KKR camp now hopes that the spinner will find his stride on a Guwahati pitch that generally has some bite.

They will also keep an eye on the fitness of Anrich Nortje, who is recovering from a back strain. If the South African gets a green signal from the physios, then he will walk in for Spencer Johnson.

Similarly, KKR's middle-order batter crumbled spectacularly after skipping Ajinkya Rahane and Narine gave them a blistering start, eventually setting



for a sub-par score.

Their batting pivots such as Venkatesh Iyer and Andre Russell got out, playing pre-determined cross-batted shots, and KKR will hope that they will show more game awareness in Guwahati.

The Knight Riders will also hope that Rinku Singh regains his hitting prowess down the order. It is crucial in converting a good total into something more intimidating in nature.

His recent T20 form is not that encouraging and in his last five international outings, Rinku has logged scores of 11, 9, 8, 30, 9 along with a 12 in the IPL opener.

Rinku and his top-order colleagues in KKR will hope that the Rajasthan bowlers would once again struggle to find their groove here.

The likes of Jofra Archer, who bowled the most expensive spell in the history of IPL against SRH, Fazalhaq Farooqi and Mahesh Theekshana were rudderless against the onslaught of Travis Head and Ishan Kishan. Archer had leaked 76 runs from his overs at the Uppal.

But they have an opportunity in Guwahati to regain their form.

It will also be a blot on stand-in skipper Rryan Parag who, at times, looked perplexed on the field about the decisions to be made.

The Rahul Dravid-coached side will eye sharper and more intuitive leadership from Parag against KKR.

Teams (from): Kolkata Knight Riders: Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Rinku Singh, Quinton de Kock, Rahmanullah Gurbaz,

Angrish Raghuvanshi, Rovman Powell, Manish Pandey, Luvniti Sisodia, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Moeen Ali, Ramandeep Singh, Andre Russell, Anrich Nortje, Vaibhav Arora, Mayank Markande, Spencer Johnson, Harshit Rana, Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarthy, Chetan Sakariya.

Rajasthan Royals: Rryan Parag (stand-in captain), Sanju Samson, Shubham Dube, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Kunal Rathore, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhiru Jurel, Nitish Rana, Yuvvir Singh, Jofra Archer, Maheesh Theekshana, Wanindu Hasaranga, Akash Madhwal, Kumar Kartikeya Singh, Tushar Deshpande, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Kwen Maphaka, Ashok Sharma, Sandeep Sharma.

Match starts at 7:30 pm.

“Poor death bowling and lack of support for Root cost England, says Jos Buttler



## Dhoni on Impact Player rule: It's how T20 cricket has evolved

New Delhi

Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was not quite convinced about the need for the Impact Player rule when it was first introduced in the IPL, but now sees it as a part of T20 cricket's evolution.

The 43-year-old, who remains a talismanic figure for the Chennai Super Kings despite relinquishing captaincy last year, said he does not consider himself an Impact Player as he remains the first-choice wicketkeeper of his side.

“When this rule was implemented, I felt it wasn't really needed at that time. In a way, it helps me, but at the same time, it doesn't. I still do my wicket-keeping, so I am not an impact player,” Dhoni told ‘The Star’.

“I have to be involved in the game. A lot of people say the rule has led to

more high-scoring games. I believe it's more due to the conditions and the comfort level of players,” he added.

The rule has been criticised by the likes of India's Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma and star all-rounder Hardik Pandya, both of whom believe that it can affect the growth of all-rounders as teams tend to choose big-hitting batters for this role.

Dhoni said the rule does give teams the comfort of an extra batter for crunch situations.

“The number of runs being scored isn't just because of an extra batsman. It's about the mindset, teams now have the comfort of an extra batter, so they play more aggressively,” he said.

“It's not that all four or five extra batters are being used, it's just the confidence of having them. This is how T20 cricket has evolved,” he added.



## Lanka court sentences Indian to hard labour over cricket match fixing



Colombo

An Indian national was on Tuesday sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment by the high court in the central town of Matale in connection with a 2024 case of fixing a cricket match.

Yogji Patel was charged based on a complaint by Uppal Tharanga, chairman of Sri Lanka selectors, over a proposal to fix matches in the Legends League T20 tournament played in Kandy.

Patel, who was tried in absentia as he had fled the country despite a travel ban by the court, was arrested in March last year and later released

on bail in May under strict bail conditions.

After he fled the country, his lawyers told the court that he had fled due to death threats.

The judge had previously ordered the police's CID to issue an interim warrant for Patel's arrest.

Sri Lanka, in 2019, adopted the Prevention of Sports Related Corruption Act which carries jail terms up to 10 years and fines of over USD 5,50,000.

Local media reports said the accused was also fined Sri Lankan Rupees (SLR) 85 million and ordered to pay SLR 2 million to Tharanga for defamation.

## England captaincy would be a dream, says Duckett

London

England's Ben Duckett said it would be a dream to captain his country but the top-order batter has no idea if he is even in the running to replace Jos Buttler as limited-overs skipper.

Wicketkeeper-batter Buttler stepped down from the role on February 28, three days after England's group-stage exit at the Champions Trophy, with Harry Brook considered a front-runner to replace him.

Asked if he would be interested in taking over the vacant role, Duckett told Sky Sports: “To captain England would obviously be a dream. I don't think it's on the radar but I don't know that, which is why I am answering like that.”

“We will see what happens moving forward and what decisions are made. I am just pretty happy playing for England at the minute. “Three or four years ago I wouldn't have thought I'd be doing that, so just living my dream as a kid, representing my country — I am very happy playing all three formats.”

The 30-year-old has played 22 ODIs and 17 Twenty20 Internationals, scoring 1,058 and 412 runs, respectively. He has also played in 32 tests, scoring 2,270 runs.

## MS Dhoni's unbreakable legacy immortalized in Platinum with Men of Platinum's Signature Collection

New Delhi

As the Indian Premier League (IPL) season unfolds, cricket enthusiasts across the country are gearing up for another thrilling ride. The anticipation is heightened as MS Dhoni, fondly known as ‘Thala,’ prepares to don the yellow jersey once again, sparking immense excitement among fans. More than just a tournament, IPL is a celebration of sporting excellence, and for Dhoni's ardent followers, it is an opportunity to relive the legacy of one of cricket's finest. Honoring this unbreakable bond between Dhoni and his fans, Men of Platinum introduces the MS Dhoni Signature Edition—a collection of exquisite platinum jewellery crafted to embody the resilience, strength, and timeless appeal of the cricketer legend. Designed in rare and enduring platinum, this exclusive collection serves as a testament to Dhoni's legacy and the unwavering loyalty of his fans. More than just an accessory, the Men of Platinum x MS Dhoni Signature Edition represents the deep-rooted admiration for the cricketer icon. Each piece is crafted in 95% pure platinum, a metal renowned for its rarity, strength, and ability to withstand the test of time—much like Dhoni's storied career. Defined by

clean, bold lines and a minimalist aesthetic, the collection features Dhoni's signature engraved in platinum, symbolizing his remarkable journey from a small-town boy to an international cricketer legend. From sleek chains to statement rings and bold bracelets, each piece in the collection is designed to exude sophistication and reflect the unyielding spirit of the man who has inspired millions. As the IPL action heats up, fans can elevate their game-day style with jewellery that encapsulates Dhoni's grit, resilience, and unbreakable will. Reflecting on his association with Men of Platinum, Dhoni shared his thoughts on what makes this collection special: “Throughout my cricketering journey, every challenge, victory, and lesson has shaped who I am—instilling values that continue to guide me, both in life and on the field. Platinum is rare, resilient, and built to last, just like the mindset needed to overcome every challenge. For me, wearing platinum jewellery is a reminder of endurance. That's what makes the collaboration with Men of Platinum special. Each piece in this collection goes far beyond fleeting trends. The collection is a symbol of timelessness—one of perseverance, self-expression, and the drive to keep moving forward.”

## ICC retains Nitin Menon in Elite Panel of Umpires

Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday included Allahdine Paleker of South Africa and England's Alex Wharf in the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires which features Nitin Menon as the only Indian, while Jayaraman Madangopal has been promoted to the Emerging Panel.

Michael Gough and Joel Wilson will make way for the two new entrants in Palekar and Wharf.

According to BCCI sources, the 50-year-old Madangopal has been promoted to the Emerging Panel which makes him eligible to officiate in overseas Tests and ODIs. Former Tamil Nadu player Madangopal has so far officiated in one Test, 22 ODIs and 42 T20is.

Meanwhile, Menon is ranked second behind Richard Illingworth in the Elite Panel of Umpires.

Palekar, a former first-class cricketer from South Africa, has officiated on-field in four Tests, 23 ODIs and 67 T20is in men's international cricket and a total of 17 women's international games — having also officiated at major ICC tournaments such as men's T20 World Cup 2024, and the Under-19 men's Cricket World Cup 2024.

Wharf brings a wealth of experience from his 16-year first-class career, having also featured in 13 ODIs for England.

Wharf has officiated on-field in seven Tests, 33 ODIs, and 45 T20is in men's international cricket, and has stood at the recent ICC men's and women's World Cups, the respective men's and women's T20 World Cups in 2024 and the men's Champions Trophy in 2025.

ICC chairman Jay Shah gave his warm wishes to the two new entrants, Palekar and Wharf, while also thanking the outgoing umpires, Gough and Wilson.

“By definition, being an elite official brings with it scrutiny and pressure, but we are confident that both Allahdine and Alex possess the temperament, experience and skill to deliver consistently at this very top level,” Shah said in a statement.

“On behalf of the ICC, I wish them all the best for the upcoming season as well as for the future. We would also like to place on record our sincere thanks to both Joel and Michael for their services to the world game, over a number of years.”

## If I had all the money in the world, I would rather be a pilot: Glenn Phillips

New Delhi

When he is done taking superhuman catches on a cricket field, Glenn Phillips, a man of multiple interests, would love to fly planes for a living.

After all, flying has always been his passion and if he had all the money in the world, the New Zealand and Gujarat Titans all-rounder would rather be a pilot than a cricketer.

Phillips also detailed how he uses his experience of playing a variety of sports in cricket, the hard work behind his gravity-defying catches, how playing in India has made him a better player of spin and why his fourth team in the IPL has already become his favourite one.

But Phillips was most animated when asked about his love for flying, not very surprisingly either.

“Yeah, it's a huge passion of mine. If I wasn't playing cricket and I had all the money in the world growing up, I probably would have ended up being a pilot, to be fair. I love being in the air,” said Phillips.



“I love all the procedures around being a pilot, the radio communications, but obviously the handling of the plane itself. And I don't really know why I love it so much, but I think anybody who's into aviation doesn't really know either.”

“Obviously, the feeling of flying is something that humans have wanted all the time. So, I guess I'm no different from all those people.” The 28-

year-old South African-born player, who plays all three formats for New Zealand, still has a lot of cricket left in him and if he has not made enough money by his retirement, he would happily take up the pilot's job.

“I guess if it comes down to wanting to do something that I enjoy after cricket. Ideally, I'd like to be able to go into the mountains and have absolutely no need for work and do all

my hobbies.”

“But if push comes to shove, it means that I still need to work, piloting would be my first option on the list,” said Phillips, who has flown the two-seater Cessna 152 aircraft. With cricket now taking most of his time, his flying time is limited to simulators.

Blend of natural talent and hard work has made me the flier that I am

Phillips' remarkable reach and agility on the field can be attributed to genes and his stint as a gymnast in his growing up days.

His jaw-dropping catches, most recently seen in the Champions Trophy, are also a result of his dedication to fielding aspect of his all-round game.

“I think there is definitely a huge piece of it that comes down to genetics from a speed and agility perspective. So, I guess you can say a little bit naturally gifted, but at the end of the day, talent and natural gifts can only get you so far.”

“So, the other half of it is working

my butt off to try and be able to cover all my bases, to go into in the middle and understand that I've done the work. So if I do drop catches, it's not because I haven't put the effort in,” said the Blackcaps all-rounder.

His left-handed grab to dismiss Mohammad Rizwan and his right-handed stunner to get rid of Shubman Gill in the Champions Trophy are fresh in the minds of cricket followers but they don't feature in Phillips' top-three catches.

“I would probably say Marcus Stoinis at the SCG in the T20 World Cup (2022). That one was pretty good, covered a lot of ground, full dive. And then I've taken a catch for Gloucester in the T20 Blast out at deep backstop point. “That was a full dive to my left after a full sprint. And that was pretty cool. And then I'm probably going to say Ollie Pope at Hagley Oval at Gully (during a Test), just because I literally couldn't get any further than that. That was the max limit I've been able to dive at,” he reflected.

## Punjab wins first-ever IGU Golf Sixes League in Gurugram

**Gurugram**  
Punjab emerged the winner among six-state teams in the inaugural IGU Golf Sixes League organized by the Indian Golf Union here at the DLF Golf and Country Club late on Monday.

The Upraj Singh-Zorawar (21) duo and pair of Shlok Limaye and Guransh (19) totaled 40 points to help Punjab clinch the inaugural title.

The pair of Kabir Sachdev and Brisha Singh (21), along with the Tannush Singh-Mahira Sharma (22) duo, helped Haryana finish as the runner-up with 43 points. Uttar Pradesh settled for the second runner-up position with the Ranveer Beri-Bhavraj Rattan pair (23) and the duo of Yajnas Mehrotra and Arghya Gautam (22), registering 45 points overall.

The event was played in the scramble best ball stroke play format with six players each under the age of 12 representing the six teams. The two best scores out of the three pairs in each team were considered for the final standings.

Praising the IGU for the successful organization of the tournament, R&A development manager for Middle East, Central Asia and India Neal Graham stated: "Golf Sixes League is a proven development initiative which encourages new golfers into the sport in a fun and competitive way. It allows young people to bring their new-found skills from the lesson tee onto the course in an encouraging and inclusive team environment."



We hope the introduction of the Golf Sixes League in India by the Indian Golf Union will deliver similar results for golf participation in the country as we have seen in the British Isles, Europe and Africa."

The Golf Sixes League, a ground-breaking initiative which introduces new junior golfers to the game, was held for the first time in India during the DP World Tour and Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) sanctioned USD 2.25 million Hero India Open this week.

The event was aimed at creating excitement among young golfers apart from providing a unique opportunity for children to display their talent in an exciting team format. In fact, the Golf Sixes League format has been developed by the R&A, the Confederation of Professional Golf (CPG), the Ryder Cup European Development Trust (RCEDT), DP World Tour and Ladies European Tour.

IGU president Brjinder Singh expressed enthusiasm and support for the

Golf Sixes League, saying, "This initiative aligns perfectly with our goals of promoting golf and making it more inclusive. Golf Sixes is a fast-paced and dynamic format that features teams of six players competing in six-hole matches. The format is designed to be fun, interactive, and easy to understand, making it perfect for children and beginners." "We are thrilled to support the Golf Sixes League and look forward to seeing its impact on growing the game of golf in India," added the President.

## Larrazabal gets Indian Open 2025 off with a bang

**Gurugram (Haryana)**

Pablo Larrazabal of Spain edged out Shiv Kapur of India in a unique Hero Shot competition as the 2025 Indian Open got off in an exciting manner. Eight players battled it out in a special competition which was a test of skills and distance control.

Apart from the winner Larrazabal and runner-up Kapur, the other competitors were Pawan Munjal, Executive Chairman Hero MotoCorp; defending champion Keita Nakajima; 2024 HIO runner-up Veer Ahlawat; the 2023 Indian Open winner, Marcel Siem; Daniel Hillier and Rafa Cabrera-Bello.

The final in which Larrazabal and Kapur made the grade, required the players to display a combination of three Skills where players were awarded for distance control. Players were to inform the distance they would hit with the Driver, a 5-iron and the Pitching Wedge.

Each player got three shots with each club. The player winning two Skills out of three would go on to win the Final, as Larrazabal edged out Kapur to emerge victor.

The competition began with eight players in the Shootout competing in a knockout format, which meant a Round of Eight, semi-final and the final.

The Round of Eight was a Straight-Drive contest, with all players getting four shots each. The top four players hitting closest to the centre line progressed to the Semi-Finals. After the first round, Larrazabal, Kapur, Pawan Munjal, and Veer Ahlawat progressed to the semi-finals.



"We struggled to impose our game, some faced Indian spinners for first time: Jos Buttler"



**Each player got three shots with each club. The player winning two Skills out of three would go on to win the Final, as Larrazabal edged out Kapur to emerge victor.**

The semi-final was a Closest to Pin contest from 125 yards. All players got six shots each with the top two progressing to the final. The two players eliminated at this stage were Pawan Munjal and Ahlawat.

The total prize money was USD 10,000, with the winner picking up USD 4,000 and the runner-up USD 2,000.

On Wednesday, the top players will be engaged in the Pro-Am, and the main event will start on Thursday, with 138 players vying for a purse of USD 2.25 million.

## James' quality never in doubt, says England boss Tuchel



**Latvia**  
England manager Thomas Tuchel said he has never had any doubts about the quality of Reece James after the right back marked his first international start in two years by scoring the opener in Monday's 3-0 win over Latvia.

The 25-year-old set England on their way to a comfortable World Cup qualifying win at Wembley with a sublime first-half free kick as Tuchel picked up his second win in as many matches since taking charge.

James made his England debut in 2022 but has been limited to 17 caps due to a succession of injuries. An injury to Trent Alexander-Arnold opened the door for James to return to the line-up under Tuchel, who coached James at Chelsea from 2021-2022.

"There cannot be any doubt about Reece's quality, it's the highest level," Tuchel told reporters. "We were in

close contact in the last weeks. "We were clear he'd trained without pause and if he didn't play it was the choice of the club, protecting him. We knew he was in a good space mentally. "If you play a dominant match like today he can be, like in the last 20 (minutes), a hybrid midfielder and help to create an overload because he has the quality on the ball."

James has played just 14 matches in all competitions for Chelsea this season, with the club managing his minutes given his injury problems.

"I know the quality he has in that foot — it's amazing. He has every right to be happy and proud of his performance. He's in excellent shape," Tuchel said.

"When we called him up he hadn't had many games but it wasn't due to injury, they were just taking care and managing him. He looks sharp and in shape."

## CISF coastal cyclothon celebrates major milestone in Chennai with over 1 crore public engagements

**Chennai**  
Chennai witnessed an extraordinary display of enthusiasm and unity as the CISF Coastal Cyclothon 2025 made its much-anticipated entry into the city on March 24. The pioneering initiative, which has captured the imagination of millions across the country, is a first-of-its-kind endeavor covering an astounding 6,553 km along India's coastline. As the event crossed the two-thirds mark of its journey, the impact of this historic ride has been nothing short of phenomenal, with over 20 lakh people engaging directly and more than 80 lakh interactions recorded across social media platforms.

The event at Chennai's iconic Marina Beach was a resounding success, marked by a massive turnout of spectators, participants, and supporters, including several high-profile celebrities and dignitaries. The Cyclothon, now well into its final phase, has covered approximately 4,700 km, with the grand culmination set to take place in Kanyakumari on March 31. However, beyond the numbers and milestones, this initiative stands as a testament to the CISF's commitment to strengthening India's coastal security while fostering meaningful engagement with coastal communities.

The CISF Coastal Cyclothon is not just an endurance test but a powerful movement aimed at raising awareness about coastal security and community empowerment. Throughout this extensive journey, CISF personnel have been actively engaging with the public, organizing interactive events designed to forge stronger bonds between security agencies and local communities. These initiatives are expected to create a more integrated and vigilant coastal security network, with citizens playing an instrumental role as "Tat Praharis" or coastal sentinels.

The journey so far has seen the Cyclothon pass through various villages, towns, and cities spanning seven states



and Union Territories. As one team reached Karnataka along the western coast, another simultaneously progressed through Tamil Nadu on the eastern seaboard. Each stopover has been met with overwhelming support, as the cycling teams interact with diverse groups, including students, fishermen, healthcare workers, and community leaders. Schools, colleges, hospitals, community centers, and fishermen's associations have all become vibrant hubs for discussion, where crucial topics such as coastal security, emergency preparedness, and the role of civilians in safeguarding the coastline have been addressed.

The message of coastal security and national safety has resonated strongly with the public, further reinforced by the enthusiastic participation of thousands of registered cyclists who have joined the movement at various stages. At every stop, the warmth and encouragement from local communities have reaffirmed the importance of this mission. The CISF personnel have been deeply moved by the heartfelt appreciation shown by citizens, recognizing the force's vital contribution to protecting the nation's economic infrastructure and coastline.

Adding to the spectacle, cultural programs showcasing the rich heritage of

India's coastal regions have been an integral part of the Cyclothon. These vibrant celebrations have included traditional dance performances, music, and folk art, reflecting the diverse and unique identities of the coastal communities. Schoolchildren, in particular, have shown immense enthusiasm, often cycling alongside the main teams for short distances, symbolizing their solidarity with the cause.

As the Cyclothon progresses, it will continue to pass through the coastal stretches of Kerala and Puducherry before its grand culmination at Kanyakumari on March 31. The event's final stage is expected to be a momentous occasion, with both cycling teams converging for a concluding ceremony that will mark the end of this ambitious and historic endeavor.

The success of the CISF Coastal Cyclothon has also been bolstered by the endorsement and support of numerous eminent personalities. Sports icons such as Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra, shooter Manu Bhaker, and football legend Baichung Bhutia have expressed their admiration for the initiative. Cricketers legends, including Sunil Gavaskar, Suresh Raina, Javagal Srinath, and Harbhajan Singh, have lent their voices to promote the cause.

## Barcelona's Pedri puts Champions League glory ahead of Ballon d'Or

**Barcelona**  
Barcelona midfielder Pedri said he is putting team trophies ahead of individual accolades this season and would only want to be awarded the Ballon d'Or if this side won the Champions League and completed the treble.

"I would rather win the treble than the Ballon d'Or. If the Ballon d'Or comes, I want it to come alongside the collective titles," he told local media on Monday.

Barcelona are on an 18-game unbeaten run in all competitions which has taken them to the top of LaLiga, the Champions League quarter-finals and the semi of the Copa del Rey. "I would rather win the treble than the Ballon d'Or. If the Ballon d'Or comes, I want it to come alongside the collective titles," he told local media on Monday.

"Being nominated is a dream, but winning the trophies is more important to me. We are at a time where everything is at stake. You can lose three games and be out of the three titles."

The 22-year-old said it was important to meet the challenges head on and would look forward to a Champions League final against fierce rivals Real Madrid if they both made it.

"We must continue to enjoy these matches to get the best outcome. I would certainly welcome a Champions League final against Real Madrid — it would mean we made it," he added.

"You can't be afraid of any opponent."

## Raducanu happy to have found her spark again during Miami run

**Washington**  
Emma Raducanu said she had rediscovered her competitive spirit at the Miami Open this week after the Briton won four WTA main draw matches in succession for the first time since her U.S. Open triumph in 2021.

Raducanu has struggled with form and fitness issues since her only Grand Slam triumph as a teenager and has worked with a string of different coaches without much success. Vladimir Platenik the latest to leave her team last week after 14 days.

**"That's the biggest win for me, feeling a lot of hunger, feeling on the court competitive, wanting to run down every ball, and that's the biggest win I from this week."**

After reaching the third round of this year's Australian Open, Raducanu lost five out of her next six matches but has hit her stride in Miami, easing to a 6-1 6-3 fourth-

round win over former French Open semi-finalist Amanda Anisimova on Monday.

"Circumstances change all the time, but for me the biggest thing I'm proud of is finding the competitive spirit and being there for every ball and drawing that out of myself," the 22-year-old told reporters after making her first WTA 1000 quarter-final.

"I think that's been missing in the last few months and even fewer days at times."

"That's the biggest win for me, feeling a lot of hunger, feeling on the

court competitive, wanting to run down every ball, and that's the biggest win I from this week."

Raducanu, who is being helped by coach Mark Petchey in Miami, next plays fourth seed Jessica Pegula. "I feel like in my environment, in my surroundings with the people I'm with, pretty relaxed, and I can be myself and expressive and true to myself. That's important," she added.

"I'm really happy with how things are on and off the court right now and just also happy that I was able to transfer on to the court."





## Neha Kakkar breaks down at Melbourne concert, apologises to fans for arriving late

New Delhi Singer Neha Kakkar broke down and apologised profusely to her fans after she allegedly arrived three hours late for her concert in Melbourne, Australia.

In a video, she posted on Reddit by a user, the singer is seen crying on stage while some audience members booed for apparently arriving late for the concert.

Some members could be heard shouting 'go back' to Kakkar, who then took the mic to address the audience.

**"You have been really sweet and patient itni der se aap log wait kar rahe ho. I hate it. Maine life mein kabhi kisi ko wait nahi karwaya,"** the 36-year-old singer said.

"You have been really sweet and patient itni der se aap log wait kar rahe ho. I hate it. Maine life mein kabhi kisi ko wait nahi karwaya," the 36-year-old singer said.

"Aap itne der se wait kar rahe ho. I'm so sorry. You mean the world to me. Aap log itne sweet ho. I was so worried about ki kya hoga. It means a lot to me. I'll always remember this evening forever. But I'll make sure, aap log jo mere liye itna keemat time nikaal ke aaye ho, I will make you all dance," she added.

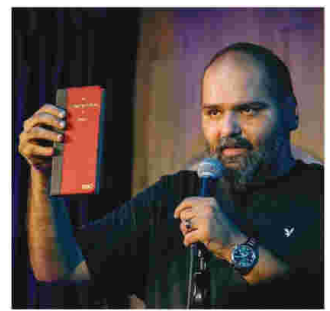
Kakkar known for songs such as "Buhe Vich", "Kaala Chashma" and "Manali Trance" performed in Melbourne on Sunday, a day after her concert in Sydney.

While her apology pacified some in the audience, many were still not convinced.

A voice in the video said, "This isn't India, you're in Australia. Go back and take rest. We waited for over two hours. Very good acting. Yeh Indian Idol nahi hai."

One person posted a photo of Kakkar standing on the stage and captioned it, "Came up the stage at 10pm for 7:30 show. Then doing drama of crying. Wrapped up in less than an hour. Such a crap concert. Heights is unprincipled."

Another person called her concert a "waste of time and money".



## As his jokes backfire, unfazed Kamra says he won't apologise

Mumbai Popular Indian comedian Kamra has refused to apologise after jokes he made during a stand-up show angered supporters of a top politician in Maharashtra state.

Clips of the jokes - some of them were directed at the state's Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde - had gone viral.

Members of the Shiv Sena party, which is led by Shinde, vandalised the hotel in Mumbai - the capital of Maharashtra - where the show was held.

A police case was also registered against Kamra and politicians from the state's ruling coalition have asked him to apologise.

In a statement released on Monday night, Kamra said he would "co-operate with the police and courts for any lawful action" taken against him.

"But will the law be fairly and equally deployed against those who have decided that vandalism is the appropriate response to being offended by a joke?" he added.

Police arrested 12 people for the vandalism at the hotel, which housed a comedy club where the show was filmed. They were later released on bail.

As the controversy raged, Shinde said he did not support the vandalism, but added that "the other person should also maintain a certain standard".

"There is freedom of expression. We understand satire. But there should be a limit," he told BBC Marathi.

Kamra is a well-known name in the Indian comedy scene, with his political satire and stand-up shows getting millions of views on social media.

In his latest show - called Naya Bharat (New India) - Kamra refers to Shinde's 2022 defection from the Shiv Sena party which triggered a major political crisis in the state.

The move led to a split in the Shiv Sena - India's Election Commission later recognised Shinde's group as the "real" Shiv Sena. The party is now part of the governing coalition in Maharashtra along with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Nationalist Congress Party.

In the show, Kamra sang a parody of a Bollywood song where he indirectly referred to Shinde as a traitor, outraging his supporters.

It's not clear when the show was filmed at the hotel but the reactions this week were swift.

After Shiv Sena workers ransacked the venue, the studio Habitat - which often hosted stand-up comedy shows - said it was shutting down until it figured out "the best way to provide a platform for free expression without putting ourselves and our property in jeopardy".

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Mumbai's civic authorities, also demolished some structures at the hotel, citing alleged building violations.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who is from the BJP, criticised Kamra, asking him to apologise. "None of us are against freedom of speech. We support satire or even political satire and we do not point it differently," he said.

Both he and Shinde accused Kamra of speaking on behalf of the opposition.

## Whatever I say on social media is without malice: Hansal Mehta

Mumbai Actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on filmmaker Hansal Mehta after he appeared to downplay the 2020 demolition of her Mumbai office by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), asking whether her property was truly vandalised.

"It's not some third class series or atrocious films that you make, don't try to sell your dumb lies and agendas here in the matters related to my ordeals, stay out of it," Kangana's post was a response to Hansal Mehta, who while reacting to a social media user wrote: "Was her house vandalised. Did goons enter her premises? Did they do this to challenge her freedom of expression or for alleged PSI violations? Please enlighten me. Maybe I don't know the facts."

Mehta's comment was prompted by a user pointing out his silence during the 2020 incident, when Kangana's property in Mumbai was partially demolished by BMC officials under the then Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government. The demolition, which occurred shortly after her public spat with Shiv Sena leaders, was widely seen as political retaliation. The Bombay High Court later ruled the action illegal and said it "smacks of malice."

"They called me names like haramkhor, threatened me, served a notice late in the night to my watchman and next morning before courts could open bulldozers demolished the entire house," Kangana wrote in a post on X. "High court called the demolition completely illegal. They laughed at it and raised a toast to my pain and public humiliation."

"It seems your insecurity and mediocrity has not only made you bitter and stupid but it had blinded you as well," she added.

## Jacqueline Fernandez to miss performing at IPL ceremony in Guwahati



Mumbai Actor Jacqueline Fernandez will skip performing at the IPL ceremony in Guwahati on Wednesday as her mother is not keeping well.

A source close to the actress informed, "Jacqueline's mother is still in the ICU recovering. As the family awaits further update from the doctors. In these challenging times, Jacqueline has chosen to be by her mother's side, and unfortunately will be missing performing at the IPL Ceremony."

More details regarding the health of Jacqueline's mother are yet to be acquired. Meanwhile, on the acting front, Jacqueline was last seen sharing screen space with Sonu Sood in 'Fateh', which marked the latter's directorial debut.

The film is an action-packed thriller inspired by real-life cybercrime events during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Trailer of R Madhavan, Siddharth, Nayanthara's Tamil film 'Test' unveiled

Chennai Captivating audience's attention, the makers of "Test" unveiled the film's intriguing trailer on Tuesday.

The Tamil film stars R Madhavan, Nayanthara and Siddharth in the lead roles. S. Sashikanth has helmed the project.

Sharing his experience directing 'Test', Sashikanth in a press note said, "Test as my first film has been an incredible journey -- one that tested my own storytelling limits. This isn't just a film about cricket; it's about the human spirit, the choices that shape us, and the fine line between victory and downfall. Bringing this vision to life with such a phenom-



nal cast made the experience even more special." The trailer shows Siddharth as a seasoned batter, while Madhavan's Saravanan is a scientist struggling to mount his project. Nayanthara plays Madhavan's wife.

Official synopsis of the film read, "A cricketer fueled by passion, a teacher

caught between love and duty, and a scientist on the brink of brilliance find their lives intertwined -- three lives, three battles, and one ultimate TEST. The gripping trailer of this Netflix film offers a glimpse into a world where every move, every sacrifice, and every ambition hurtles them toward a defining moment. Watch as Saravanan (R. Madhavan) and Kumudha (Nayanthara) navigate the complexities of marriage while pursuing their own dreams, and Arjun (Siddharth) wrestles with the fine line between professional and personal choices, alongside his wife Padma (Meera Jasmine), who fiercely protects their personal space."

