

# The Homepages

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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WEATHER	
Forecast	
MAINLY CLEAR SKY	
Min.	16.0 (°C)
Max.	34.0 (°C)
Sunrise	06 :27
Sunset	18 :36
Precipitation	: 4%
Wind	: 12 KMPH
Humidity	: 35 %

## Short News

**Punjab has intensified fight against drugs, organised crime: Guv Kataria**



CHANDIGARH/IANS. Reiterating the firm commitment of the Punjab government to wipe out the scourge of drugs, Governor Gulab Chand Kataria on Friday said that under the 'Yudh Nasheyan Virudh', a special focus has been to break the economic chain in the entire nexus.

In his address on the first day of the Budget Session of the Vidhan Sabha, the Governor said the Punjab government has intensified its fight against drug trafficking and organised crime through strategic initiatives like the extremely resolute and focussed launch of war against drugs.

He said a high-powered Cabinet sub-committee under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema has been constituted to make this campaign a grand success.

Kataria said several properties of the drug traffickers have been demolished to send the message of firm conviction to completely eliminate the problem of drugs from Punjab. The Governor said the Special Task Force (STF), which has been restructured and strengthened as the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), was established to enforce drug laws, rehabilitate victims and prevent substance abuse. He said to educate people, 33,079 public awareness meetings were held statewide, and 19,523 Village Defence Committees (VDCs) were formed in just four months.

## India hits 1 billion tonnes coal production

### PM Modi calls it 'a proud moment'

New Delhi/IANS

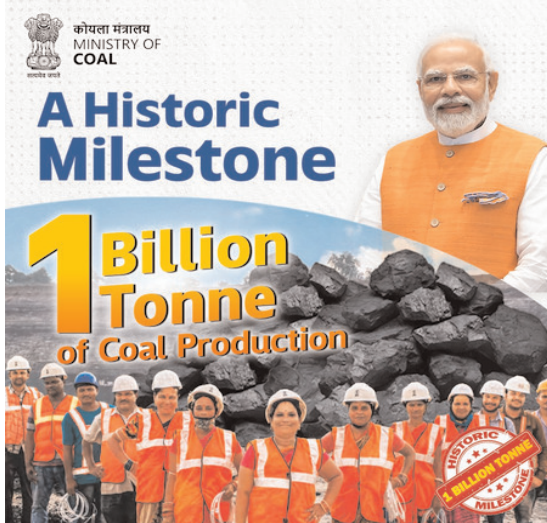
With India's coal production crossing 1 billion tonnes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed the feat as a "proud moment" and a "historic milestone" for the nation.

Reinforcing the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', this achievement is

**"This feat also reflects the dedication and hard work of all those associated with the sector", Modi wrote on X**

expected to further strengthen India's energy sector and reduce dependence on imports.

"A proud moment for India! Crossing the monumental milestone of 1 billion tonnes of coal production is a remarkable achievement, highlighting our commitment to energy security, economic



growth, and self-reliance," the Prime Minister posted on social media platform X.

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy, earlier informed in a X post that India has crossed a monumental 1 billion tonnes of coal production.

"India has crossed a monumental 1 BILLION TONNES of coal production! With cutting-edge technologies and efficient methods, we've

not only increased production but also ensured sustainable and responsible mining," the minister said.

Reddy further stated that, this achievement will fuel our increasing power demands, drive economic growth, and ensure a brighter future for every Indian under the visionary leadership of PM Modi.

Responding to the X post of the Union Minister, PM Modi wrote that 'this feat also reflects

**This achievement is expected to further strengthen India's energy sector and reduce dependence on imports**

the dedication and hard work of all those associated with the sector".

Earlier this week, the Central government set a target to supply 906.1 million tonnes (MT) of coal to the power sector in the financial year 2025-26. The Ministry of Coal shared this plan with the Parliament, following a request from the Ministry of Power regarding coal requirements for the next fiscal year.

Currently, the country has an adequate supply of coal. According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), coal-based power plants had a stock of 53.49 MT as of March 10, 2025.

This is 20.2 per cent higher than the 44.51 MT stock recorded on the same day last year.

## Power a critical component in achieving Viksit Bharat goal by 2047: Lal



New Delhi

Power is a critical component in achieving the goal of a developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047 and optimal utilisation of generating capacity can be ensured with the availability of adequate transmission system, which is the requirement of a reliable power system, Union Power and Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Manohar Lal, said on Friday.

Chairing the meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the Ministry here, Manohar Lal said that the National Electricity Plan (NEP) provides the details of the transmission system required to be added in the country during the period 2023 to 2032, which is commensurate with the generation capacity addition and growth of electricity demand in the country.

As per the NEP-

Transmission, about 1.91 lakh circuit kilometre (ckm) of transmission lines and 1,274 GVA (Giga Volt Ampere) of transformation capacity is planned to be added during the 10-year period (2023 to 2032).

The NEP-Transmission covering transmission plan till the year 2031-32 has been prepared by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

In the meeting, issues related to RoW (Right of way), new technologies in transmission, and cyber security were also discussed.

Members provided several suggestions concerning various initiatives and schemes. They also commended the initiatives and efforts of the Power Ministry in the expansion of the transmission network in the country.

The minister further directed officials to take appropriate actions to incorporate the suggestions

made by the members and prioritise the welfare of the people.

The government last month informed that the average electricity supply in rural areas has increased from 12.5 hours in 2014 to 22.6 hours in 2025 and in urban areas to 23.4 hours this year.

Manohar Lal said the goal is to make power accessible to everyone and which the government is aiming for 100 per cent electrification of households across the country.

The minister informed that fossil-based power capacity has increased from 168 GW in 2014 to 246 GW in January 2025 which shows an increase of around 46 per cent. He also informed that the increase in non-fossil capacity has increased from around 80GW in 2014 to around 220 GW in 2025 (as of January 31) which is an around 180 per cent increase.- IANS

## AAP leaders vow to strengthen party

### Gear up for upcoming Assembly polls post major reshuffle

New Delhi

In a strategic effort to strengthen its position ahead of key state elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) announced a major reshuffle in its organisational structure on Friday, with party leaders pledging to fortify the party and prepare for the upcoming polls.

This reshuffle comes on the heels of the party's disappointing performance in the February 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, where it secured just 22 out of 70



seats. Despite the loss, the AAP is determined to rebuild

and strengthen its base, with an eye on upcoming

elections in Gujarat, Punjab, Goa, Chhattisgarh, and other states.

Former Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has been appointed the new chief of AAP's Delhi unit, while former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia will take charge as the head of the party's Punjab unit.

The reshuffle also sees former Health Minister Satyendar Jain named as the co-in-charge of Punjab, while Gopal Rai has been appointed the in-charge of the Gujarat unit. (See p 2)

## Haryana's Health services have reached a pitiable state:MP Selja

Sirsa/HPC

MP from Sirsa Kumari Selja, said that Haryana's health department, which is responsible for the health of the state's people, now itself needs treatment. Over 6,000 positions are vacant in the department, and there is a severe shortage of doctors, nurses, and Class IV employees in hospitals.

There are no medicines, and there is a shortage of medical equipment, machines, and lab testing facilities, which is preventing patients from receiving proper treatment. It seems that the BJP government of the state has

locked down the health system.

In a statement released to the media Kumari Selja said that education and health need the most attention, but due to the BJP government's indifference and arbitrary actions, both departments conditions are deteriorating. From the primary health centers to district hospitals in the state, health services are crumbling, and people are forced to wander from one place to another for treatment. Private hospitals often refuse to treat Ayushman cardholders because their payments are delayed, and the bills they send face heavy cuts.

Moreover, during the question hour in the assembly, several legislators



expressed concerns about the shortage of medical equipment, machines, and lab testing facilities in their constituencies government hospitals.

Kumari Selja said that recruitment in the health

department has stalled, scandals are at their peak, malpractice is taking place in medical exams, and corruption is rampant everywhere. The people of Haryana are not getting treatment, nor are they getting employment. During this government's tenure of empty promises, corruption has increased rapidly. The public is raising their voice against the government, but the government remains deaf. During the budget session in the assembly, it was revealed that the state's hospitals are facing shortages of medical devices, medicines, and equipment for testing labs.

## DJ mounted Jugaad vehicle challaned Rs 33 thousand

**Campaign will continue even further, eyes being kept on this type of vehicles: SP Kaithal**

Kaithal/HPC

A special campaign is being run by the Kaithal police as per the order of SP Rajesh Kalra against those running DJ mounted modified (Jugad ) vehicles on roads spreading noise pollution and posing risk to lives of common man .

In this case , on Friday, Kaithal traffic police SHO SI Rajkumar's team a jugad vehicle on Karnal Road in Kaithal. During interrogation of the driver by the police team, the driver could not show any documents of this vehicle to the police. The vehicle was impounded by the police, and challaned for Rs 33 thousand.

The spokesman said that any way to modify the vehicles is against the traffic rules. Road accidents can occur due to tampering of vehicle safety standards by modifying the vehicle.

Kaithal police will further

deal with such drivers and their challans will be issued during



A DJ mounted jugad vehicle challaned and impounded by traffic police in Kaithal on Friday.

the campaign as per rules. SP Rajesh Kalra appealed to the public that they should strictly follow the traffic rules and do not ignore them.

The objective of the police is not to issue the challan, but to save the life of the common man by reducing the accidents on the roads.

The police is committed to the protection of the life and property of the common man and the common man should also cooperate in making the road safety campaign successful by following traffic rules as a responsible and sensible citizen.

## Budget presents glimpses of bright future of state

**Women will soon get Rs 2100 per month under Lado Laxmi Yojana**

Kaithal/HPC

In a press conference that was organized at BJP District Office Kapil Kamal today regarding the budget, district in -charge Amarpal Rana and BJP District President Mrs. Jyoti Saini said that the Naib Budget presented in the Assembly by Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini, the glimpse of the bright future of Haryana is clearly seen clearly.

Such big provisions have been made in the budget, which will make it easy to provide basic facilities like

education, medicine, electricity, water in the state, but also employment for youth, housing for homeless, special rights to local bodies and especially the dream project of the government, Lado Laxmi Yojana, Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini has done the work of implementing the manifesto.

For this, a provision of Rs 5000 crore was specially made in the budget.

Now soon women will start getting financial assistance of Rs 2100 per month in the state. District President Mrs. Jyoti Saini said that construction of Ayush Herbal Park in cities, construction of a sports complex in all the municipalities of the state is

actually the result of the Chief Minister's far - reaching thinking. Because



for human life, where it is necessary to have a pure environment, it is also necessary for the youth to create new sports opportunities.

For this, the government has kept a provision of

thousands of crores for sports stadiums in the budget, which is a big step in

the interest of the youth by Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini.

She further said that the Chief Minister has taken many welfare decisions in the budget regarding the future of the country In

which increase in medical seats, organizing Haryana Olympiad for students, giving money up to Rs 1 lakh to winning students, touring meritorious students to ISRO, DRDO, Bhama, to visit scientific centers like ISRO, DRDO, Bhama, e-library, Kalpana Chawla Scholarship, French language knowledge in government schools etc .

This all will prove to be effective in grooming the future of the youth.Fomer district president Ashok Gujar district media in -charge Raj Raman Dixit Pradeep Bhatt Vijay Bhardwaj were among those present on the occasion.





## Short News

## Congress revamps UP leadership with 133 key appointments



**NEW DELHI.** The Congress, on Thursday, initiated efforts to bolster its organisational structure in Uttar Pradesh to prepare for the upcoming elections, party sources said.

Congress General Secretary (Organisation), K.C. Venugopal, has declared names of district presidents across the state, including key regions such as Lucknow and Basti. Notably, Prayagraj now has three appointed party presidents.

The list reflects a mix of continuity and change, as many experienced leaders retain their roles, while others see promotions.

Meanwhile, district presidents who have been reassigned despite commendable performance are reportedly being considered for roles in the Congress State Committee.

## Woman complains dowry harassment

**BHIWANI/HPC.** After marriage which continued only for eleven months, a woman has returned back to her home. A daughter of Bhiwani district the victim alleged that her husband had illicit relations with his sister-in-law (Bhabhi) and beaten her under impression of liquor. The police have registered the case and investigating.

According to the complaint lodged with the police, a married woman said she was married to a man living at Mahendergarh on April 17, 2024. She said her parents gave a handsome dowry in her marriage. For few days after marriage, everything was normal but soon she had to face dowry demands.

She said her husband would come to home in drunken state everyday and he would beat her when she protested. She alleged that her husband was in relation with his sister-in-law and mostly lived with her. Whenever she complained about her husband to the in-laws, they favoured their son. Her brother-in-law too kept an eye on her and didnot allow her to go out.

The victim said in her complaint that her husband took her to Mahendergarh on November 27 where she was beaten and tortured. She called her parents on November 28 and they took her with them. Police are investigating.

## Dhankhar asks workers to take forward party's policies



**KURUKSHETRA/HPC :** Bharatiya Janata Party's National Secretary Om Parkash Dhankhar today attended the Kurukshetra BJP office. During this, Advocate Vedpal and Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Chairman Dhumman Singh Kirmach and State Secretary Rahul Rana were also with him.

District President Tejinder Singh Goldy welcomed National Secretary Om Parkash Dhankhar and felicitated him by draping a shawl and giving him a sword. During this, party workers met Dhankhar and discussed about the upcoming programs. Om Parkash Dhankhar appealed to the workers to work hard for the party and inspired everyone for the success of BJP in the upcoming elections.

He encouraged the workers to take forward the party's policies and programs. This program was an important step for the BJP, in which a symbol of the workers' loyalty and commitment to the party was presented.

On this occasion, General Secretary Jaswinder Saini, District Media Incharge Shailesh Vats, Gulshan Saini, Vikram Sharma, Vijay Laxmi, Anu Malyan, Vandana, Rajesh Mehla, Sunil Chaudhary and other workers were present.

## Sanjay Raut says Maharashtra is burning after Manipur, blames Aurangzeb grave issue

**New Delhi.** Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Friday, during a discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the working of the Ministry of Home Affairs, made sharp remarks regarding the politics surrounding the name of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

## Akshay celebrates 6 years of 'Kesari', says 'celebrating a new chapter that begins soon'

Mumbai

As "Kesari" clocks six years since its release in Hindi cinema on Friday, Bollywood star Akshay Kumar announced that a "new chapter" is all set to begin soon.

Akshay took to his Instagram, where he shared some stills from "Kesari", which had an overlay text reading: "6 years ago... A story of courage shook the nation."

It went on to say: "21 Sikhs against thousands of Afghans. Outnumbered. Surrounded. But never defeated. They fought like lions, they became legends."

"History wrote one chapter... Now, we tell the next. The saffron rises again. New battle, same fire. Tomorrow.

For the caption, he wrote: "Celebrating 6 years of Kesari. Celebrating the spirit of Kesari. Celebrating a new chapter that begins...soon!"

Kesari, which will be released in 2019, is a war film starring Akshay Kumar and directed by Anurag Singh. It follows the events leading to the Battle of Saragarhi, a battle between 21 Sikh soldiers of the 36th Sikh Regiment of the British Indian Army and 10,000 Afridi and Orakzai Pashtun tribesmen in 1897.

On March 20, Karan Johar announced he is introducing a new filmmaker through his production house. He took to his Instagram, and shared a long note in which he spoke about introducing a new director with



his upcoming production.

He wrote, "When I began producing films (once I stepped into Dharma as an active part of the company), in 2003 with Kal

Ho Naa Ho - the idea was to

empower filmmakers and storytellers...to pay it forward. We got it right...we got it wrong but the intent was always to put

## NIA team visits Aurangzeb grave in Maharashtra

Keeps eye on suspicious movements



**CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR.** Amid the clamour for the removal of Aurangzeb's grave, a National Investigation Agency (NIA) team has reached Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar to

inspect Khultabad where the tomb is situated and was keeping a close vigil on suspicious movements. This comes after Nagpur was rocked by violence on March 17 night over the issue. The NIA team also visited the adjoining Parbhani, Jalna and Nanded districts in Marathwada, and Buldhana in Vidarbha to monitor suspicious movements there. The team has reportedly sought the assistance of the state Anti-Terrorist Squad.

Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has put up tin sheets on two sides of the 18th-century structure. It was done three days ago by the district administration after District Collector Dilip Swami and Superintendent of Police Vinaykumar Rathod visited the grave.--IANS

## 'The Dupatta Killer' director: Directing this documentary has been a shocking, sobering experience

Mumbai

‘The Dupatta Killer’, which delves deep into the story of Mahanand Naik, Goa’s infamous serial killer, has finally been released on DocuBay. Its director Patrick Graham shared that helming this has been a fascinating, shocking, and often sobering experience.

Patrick Graham, Director, shared: "Directing this documentary has been a fascinating, shocking, and often sobering experience."

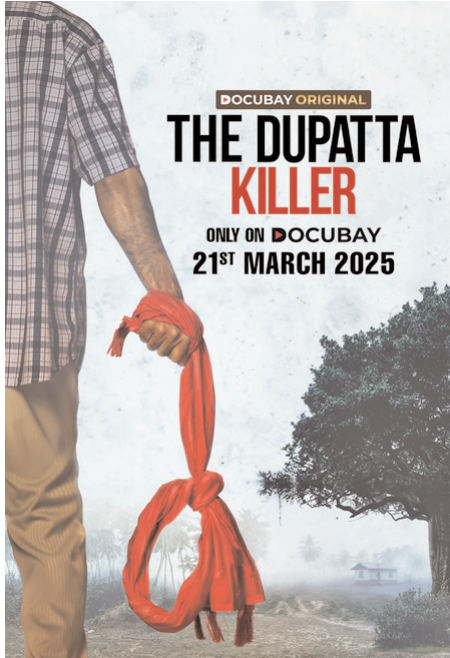
"When dealing with real-life stories, I believe in balancing storytelling with the responsibility to honor those affected. We didn't want to sensationalize the horror but rather bring out the deeper issues—the failures that enabled these crimes and the voices that were silenced. The Dupatta Killer is not just about the past; it's about the present, and what needs to change for the future."

Goa’s infamous serial killer Mahanand Naik was accused of murdering 16 women but convicted for only two.

The documentary sheds light on the cracks in the justice system, the stories of the victims, and the chilling psychology of a killer who evaded the law for years.

Produced by Samar Khan under Juggernaut Productions, The Dupatta Killer presents never-before-seen insights, expert analysis, and haunting first-hand accounts.

Aditya Pittie, Managing Director of IN10 Media Network, emphasised: "The Dupatta Killer is a stark reminder of the critical issues within our justice system and the far-reaching



"The Dupatta Killer is a stark reminder of the critical issues within our justice system and the far-reaching consequences of crime on society. This documentary is essential viewing for anyone who values accountability and the need for reform."

consequences of crime on society. This documentary is essential viewing for anyone who values accountability and the need for reform."

Samar Khan, Producer and CEO of Juggernaut Productions, added: "While fiction entertains, documentaries like The Dupatta Killer serve a greater purpose. They expose uncomfortable truths, start conversations, and, hopefully, lead to change. This is not just another crime documentary—it's an urgent narrative that needs to be heard."--IANS

## Mumbai hit-and-run: Octogenarian succumbs to injuries

New Delhi

An 85-year-old man died after being struck by a speeding motorcycle in a tragic hit-and-run incident in Mumbai's Worli area on Friday.

The motorcycle rider fled the scene, leaving the elderly man, Balraj Parmanand Mehra, critically injured.

Mehra was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The Dadar Police have registered a case against the motorcyclist.

According to information from the Dadar Police Station, the incident occurred when Mehra, a businessman, was on way back home after inspecting his private property.

A motorcycle, travelling at high

speed, hit him from behind, causing him to fall to the ground.

The motorcyclist did not stop to assist and instead fled the scene.

The police have registered a case against the unknown individual under sections 106 (causing death by negligence) and 281 (rash driving) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita



(BNS), and the Motor Vehicles Act. Authorities are now working to trace

the accused.

Mumbai Police reviewed CCTV footage from the scene and successfully identified the motorcycle rider as 22-year-old Yash Nandkumar Gaokar, a resident of the Worli Police Colony. It was later revealed that Gaokar is the son of a Mumbai Police constable.

Following the identification, the Dadar Police detained Yash Gaokar for questioning. However, after the initial inquiry, he was not immediately arrested. Instead, the police issued him a notice and instructed him to cooperate with the ongoing investigation.

"We have identified the accused and will ensure that a thorough investigation is conducted. We have given Gaokar a notice to appear for further investigation," said Mumbai Police.--IANS

## Notorious criminal Sonu Singh arrested after encounter in Patna

Patna/IANS

Notorious criminal Sonu Singh was arrested after an encounter with the Police in the Maner area of Patna district on Friday.

Following intelligence inputs, a joint team of Special Task Force and district police, led by Danapur ASP Bhanu Pratap Singh, raided Suarwarva village around



3 a.m. When the police approached, Singh tried to flee, leading to a chase and firing. The accused and his men fired several rounds at the police team as soon as they saw cops were approaching.

They tried to flee from the spot while firing at the

joint team. In retaliation, the police team also fired at them. Sharat R S, Patna City SP (West), confirmed the arrest: "We had information that Sonu was hiding in Suarwarva village. Our team launched a raid, and during the chase, they fired several rounds. In retaliation, our team also fired at them. Sonu sustained a gunshot injury in his leg. He has been taken to PMCH

hospital for treatment under police custody."

Singh was one of the top 10 wanted criminals in the district with multiple cases of murder, attempt to murder, dacoity and loot lodged in different police stations in Patna district. He had been on the run for a long time.

Other criminals at the spot managed to escape by taking advantage of the darkness. Police teams are

now tracking down the remaining absconding criminals. Police

interrogation is underway to gather information about his criminal activities and gang members. He was involved in the Dahi Gop murder case. Dahi Gop along with his friend Gorakh Rai were gunned down on December 21, 2024, in Pethia Bazar under the Danapur cantonment area.

Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that there is no question of protecting anyone in connection with the honey trap row.

The Chief Minister's response came after Leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly R. Ashoka, former Home Minister and BJP MLA Araga Jnanendra, MLA V. Sunil Kumar, and Minister K. N. Rajanna raised the issue of the honey trap and sought his statement.

They demanded that those responsible for the case be dismissed, and a judicial



inquiry should be ordered.

Minister Rajanna, who also represents the Scheduled Castes, made honey trap allegations, to which state Home Minister G. Parameshwara announced that he would conduct a high-level probe into it.

"The government is responsible for ensuring that justice is served and those guilty under the law are punished. If Minister Rajanna files a complaint, a high-level investigation will be conducted, as the Home Minister has already assured. Raising the issue again is unnecessary," Parameshwara said.

"Minister Rajanna did not name anyone. If the minister had named anyone, action could have been taken," the Home Minister said.

CM Siddaramaiah reiterated that there is no question of protecting anyone.

statement of Siddaramaiah assumed importance as the BJP MLA N. Munirathna alleged that Deputy CM D.

K. Shivakumar is behind the honey trap network in the state.

MLA Munirathna said, "I want to give one advice to Dy CM Shivakumar. I know your honey trap team. I know when you hold their meeting during the wee hours. You also have a family and should not resort to such cheap levels."

Meanwhile, Minister Rajanna claimed on the floor of the House on Thursday that political rivals tried to honey-trap him and that the matter needs to be investigated.

Responding to the issue and the BJP's demand for an investigation, Parameshwara announced that a high-level probe would be conducted.

"This is a question of the honour of every member of this House. We must put an end to it," he emphasised.

The issue sparked a heated debate in the Legislative Assembly, leading to dramatic developments as members became emotional while discussing the matter.--IANS

## As Class 10 board exams begin, K'taka Assembly urges parents not to pressure students

Bengaluru

The Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC, Class 10) Board exams commenced in Karnataka on Friday, with approximately 8.96 lakh students appearing for the examination across 15,881 examination centres in the state.

The Karnataka Assembly extended best wishes to the students and urged parents not to pressure their children.

The House also expressed concern over the circulation of fake question papers on social media before the exams and directed the State Minister for Education, Madhu Bangarappa, to take strict action.

Speaker U.T. Khader conveyed his message at the beginning of the session. He said, "Today, the SSLC (Class 10) board exams are beginning, and I want to wish the students good luck. About 8,96,447 students are taking the examination across 15,881 centres. Dear students, this is an important stage in your life. I urge you to write your

exams without stress or fear. We hope you achieve good results. Your dedication, hard work, and the guidance of your parents and teachers will bring you success."

He further added, "Parents should not put mental pressure on their children. It is important to provide them with emotional support. Your primary role is to help them focus on their studies peacefully."

Addressing the students, he said, "Dear students, your Class 10 exams are the first phase of your academic journey; they are not the end of your life. We believe in you, and our support and blessings will always be with you. Our prayers are with you for success."

Minister for Education Madhu Bangarappa thanked the House for its good wishes for the students taking the board exams.

At this point, Speaker Khader intervened and expressed concern over fake question papers being circulated online.

He stated, "I appreciate the efforts of Minister Madhu Bangarappa. However, I want to

bring to your attention that an App is systematically spreading messages claiming to have access to the question papers, which can be obtained by paying thousands of rupees. These messages also suggest that many students have already accessed these papers, misleading and luring others. I have seen these



messages and sent them to you. Please investigate and take immediate action."

Minister Madhu Bangarappa responded, stating that he had already issued a warning in this regard. "We are also verifying the matter through our department. Forwarding such messages unnecessarily is a

serious offence. During the Class 12 exams, I personally met with students to ensure they were writing their exams without fear."

He further added, "I usually avoid discussing social media forwards because, as a minister, if I comment on them, students may get disturbed when they hear about it. I am deliberately avoiding media discussions on this matter. However, trust that we have made all necessary preparations to ensure the smooth conduct of exams. We will also address the issue of fake question papers being circulated on social media before the exams."

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka also shared his thoughts, stating, "We have all been through this phase. We have witnessed students experiencing stress and depression over their exam results. I want to appeal to parents not to put pressure on their children. This is my humble request. The students are already under stress, and even a slight drop in grades can cause

them anxiety."

He also raised concerns over the circulation of fake question papers, saying, "On social media, these fake question papers appear exactly like the original ones. Some students may be misled, which could negatively impact their exams. The government must take strict action through the police department to curb such social media forwards."

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Siddaramaiah stated that the SSLC exams had begun and assured that the government had arranged for students to travel freely on RTC buses.

He added, "Last year, I decided against awarding grace marks because students' real abilities should be reflected in their performance."

Grace marks were given during the Covid-19 pandemic, but this time, students will write their exams without the expectation of grace marks. I wish all students, both boys and girls, the best of luck on this occasion."--IANS



Short News

River-linking project progressing rapidly, says MP CM Mohan Yadav



**BHOPAL.** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said on Thursday that the ambitious task of delivering water to every farm through the river-linking project is progressing rapidly.

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gifted two major river-linking projects for Madhya Pradesh, which is a golden opportunity to expand irrigation area further in the state.

The Chief Minister made this statement addressing the inaugural ceremony of Narmada-Kshipra Multipurpose Micro Lift Irrigation Project of worth Rs 2,489.65 crore in Ujjain on Thursday.

Under this project, water will be lifted from the Omkareshwar reservoir near Barela village in Khandwa district, which is a significant step in irrigation, agriculture, and rural development in the region.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi resolved long-standing inter-state river disputes, paving the way for river-linking projects. The Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal (PKC) project faced disputes between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for 20 years, but with the resolution, the project is now taking shape," Yadav said.

Similarly, work has commenced on the Ken-Betwa link project following agreements between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Yadav said, adding that these projects aim to provide water to every farm in the state.--IANS

SC launches 'in-house' probe against Justice Yashwant Varma

Cash at judge's residence

New Delhi/IANS

The Supreme Court on Friday initiated an internal probe against Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma as per the established "in-house procedure" for the constitutional judiciary, after a large amount of unaccounted cash was reportedly discovered at his residence in the national capital.

CJI Sanjiv Khanna has sought a report from the Delhi High Court Chief Justice D.K. Upadhyaya and briefed puisne judges of the top court.

As per media reports, a huge amount of cash was found last week when a fire brigade had gone to Justice Varma's residence to douse a fire, when the judge was not at home.

As per the "in-house procedure", the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is competent to receive complaints against the conduct of judges of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justices of the High Courts.

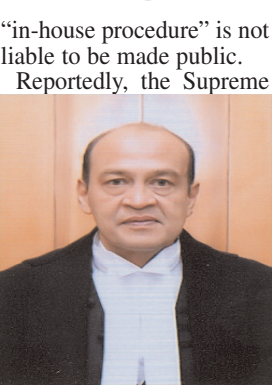
Similarly, the Chief Justices of the High Courts are competent to receive complaints against the conduct of High Court judges. The apex court Court, in its full Court meeting in May 1997 had adopted two resolutions.

The first resolution "The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life" lays down certain judicial standards and principles to be observed and followed by the judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, and the second "in-house procedure" provides for taking suitable remedial action against judges who do not follow universally accepted values of judicial life including those included in the Restatement.

As per the SC judgment in the Indira Jaising v. Supreme Court of India case, it has been held that the report of a committee constituted as a part of the

"in-house procedure" is not liable to be made public.

Reportedly, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended the transfer of Justice Varma back to his parent High Court - the Allahabad High Court. The statement is yet to be uploaded on the official website of the apex court.



As per the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), the proposal for transfer of HC judges is initiated by the CJI in consultation with four senior-most puisne judges of the Supreme Court, commonly known as Collegium.

The MoP further provides that the CJI is also expected to take into account the views of the Chief Justice of the High Court from which the judge is to be transferred, as also the Chief Justice of the High Court to which the transfer is to be effected, besides taking into account the views of one or more Supreme Court judges who are in a position to offer

views.

Born in January 1969, Justice Varma obtained a law degree from Rewa University and practised mainly on the civil side handling varied nature of matters relating to constitutional, industrial disputes, corporate, taxation, environment, and allied branches of law. He served as Chief Standing Counsel for the State of UP from 2012 till August 2013, when he was designated as 'senior advocate' by the Allahabad High Court.

Justice Varma was elevated as an Additional Judge in October 2014 and was transferred to the Delhi High Court in

October 2021. At the Delhi High Court, Justice Varma is currently the third seniormost judge dealing with writ petitions challenging the constitutional validity of any law, statutory rule, regulation or notification pertaining to municipal tax.

As per the latest roster, Justice Varma-led division bench, which also comprised Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar dealt with sales tax cases and GST cases, Letters Patent Appeals, regular First Appeals (Original Side), Company Appeals, matters to be heard by Commercial Appellate Division, etc.

Tejashwi slams Nitish over his 'Earth will end in 10 years' remark

Patna

A fresh political controversy erupted after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar claimed that the use of mobile phones would lead to the destruction of Earth in 10 years.

Leader of Opposition, Tejashwi Yadav, took a dig at Nitish Kumar's statement, calling it "conservative and anti-technology".

"From an environmental perspective, the Bihar assembly is going paperless, and members are encouraged to ask questions online." "If a member has to ask a supplementary question, they need to refer to a



mobile or tablet. But Bihar has a computer-illiterate Chief Minister who is against technology, youth, students, and women," Yadav said.

"It is unfortunate and condemnable that Bihar has such a conservative Chief Minister," Yadav said.

During Question Hour, Kumar Krishna Mohan alias Suday Yadav was seen using his mobile

phone while asking a question regarding PDS dealers. Upon noticing this, CM Nitish Kumar raised a strong objection, reminding the House that mobile phones are already banned inside the Assembly.

Addressing Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav, the CM demanded strict action, saying: "It is already banned in the House. I request you (Speaker) that whoever comes with a mobile phone should be thrown out of the House."

He further warned about the negative impact of excessive mobile phone use."Earlier, we used to see this a lot. We knew there would be trouble, so

we stopped in 2019. If this continues, the world will end in the next 10 years," Kumar said.

"Why are you standing with a mobile phone? Speak on your own," Kumar asked Suday Yadav. Tejashwi Yadav's remarks have added fuel to the ongoing political battle between the ruling alliance and the opposition.

The debate over technology, governance, and Nitish Kumar's leadership is likely to intensify in Bihar's political circles. The opposition leaders are raising questions about is Nitish Kumar out of touch with modern governance.--IANS

Security forces' searches underway to locate missing Meitei youth

Imphal

Massive search by the Manipur police and other security forces continued for the fifth day on Thursday to locate 20-year-old Meitei youth Luwangthem Mukhesh, who went missing on March 16, an official said.

A police officer said that state police personnel, along with Assam Rifles and other Central force personnel, have been conducting search operations jointly and separately in Imphal West, Imphal East, Churachandpur, Bishnupur, and Kangpokpi districts to rescue Mukhesh, a resident of Keishampat Lelmajam Leikal area of Imphal West district.

Tracker dogs were also deployed to locate the missing youth, the official said, adding that Mukhesh was reported missing after driving a car towards the tribal-dominated district Churachandpur on March 16 afternoon.



Mukhesh's family members registered a missing person report at the Imphal Police Station.

"All-out efforts are ongoing to trace Mukhesh by the police personnel and

other security forces. Massive search operations are on in all suspected areas," the official said, adding that the civil society organisations are also trying to gather inputs about the whereabouts of the missing youth.

He said that CCTV footage shows his vehicle was last seen in Bishnupur district near Chinikon, close to the Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district.

Protest demonstrations are going on in Imphal demanding that security forces immediately rescue the missing youth.

Holding the demonstration at Keisampat locality, the protestors also demanded that the lives of innocent civilians be saved.--IANS

MP: 3 bikers killed in separate road accidents

Bhopal

Three motorcyclists were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Madhya Pradesh.

A speeding vehicle from Katni hit a motorcyclist, resulting in his instant death on Thursday night near Fuliao Mata Temple on the Damoh-Katni state highway in Hindoria police jurisdiction.

The victim, identified as Bihari Chaurasia, 54, son of Ramnath Chaurasia and a resident of Hindoria, was pronounced dead in a nearby hospital.

Police officers from the Bandakpur outpost, led by ASI Rajendra Mishra,

arrived promptly and registered a case against the driver who fled the scene.

Investigations are underway.

In another incident, a reckless trailer truck wreaked havoc in Barela, Jabalpur, near Sharda Temple on Thursday afternoon. The truck, en route to Jabalpur from Mandla, first collided with a car and then ran over two motorcyclists travelling in the opposite direction.

The motorcyclists were killed on the spot, while the car occupants sustained injuries and were rushed to the hospital.

A police officer told IANS, that the truck struck the car before hitting the

motorcycle, dragging it approximately 50 metres.

The driver abandoned the vehicle and fled the scene. Authorities have launched a thorough investigation into the matter.

While on Friday morning a head-on collision occurred between two cars near Hathni Pipariya village within Damoh district's Nohata police jurisdiction.

The crash left four individuals critically injured, but no lives were lost.

Police station in-charge Arvind Singh said a person Aman Rai, 25, from Sagar, was travelling to Jabalpur with his mother, Anita Rai, when their vehicle collided with another car, injuring them.--IANS

Fighter jets to land on highways in Assam soon: CM Sarma

Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Thursday that fighter aircraft will soon be able to land on the state's national highways.

The state administration is preparing to facilitate this development later this year.

Addressing the media after a Cabinet meeting in Dibrugarh on Thursday, CM Sarma said, "We are upgrading the national highway between Dibrugarh and Jorhat to meet international standards. Soon, Indian Air Force fighter jets will be able to land on this highway. Assam will witness several significant developments this year."

In a veiled remark aimed at the Opposition, the Chief Minister said, "Some people criticise us when we

discuss developmental initiatives, but the truth is that our government is actively working on projects such as building underwater tunnels and international standard highways. These advancements will be visible within a year."

In addition to infrastructure development, CM Sarma also announced measures to boost business activity in Assam.

During the Cabinet meeting, a decision was taken to allow shops in Guwahati, Dibrugarh, and Silchar to

remain open 24 hours a day.

In other urban areas, businesses can now operate until 2 a.m.

"Guwahati, Dibrugarh, and Silchar are municipal corporations, and the Cabinet has approved continuous business operations in these cities for 24 hours in a day. Previously, the state government mandated a weekly closing day for shops, but this restriction has now been lifted, allowing businesses to remain open throughout the week," said the new business-friendly Chief Minister.

In rural areas, businesses will now be permitted to operate until 11 p.m.

Highlighting workers' welfare, Chief Minister Sarma emphasised that no business establishment can force employees to work beyond nine hours per day.

"Employees in small businesses cannot exceed 48 working hours per week, with shifts capped at nine hours per day. For shops operating 24 hours, owners must hire a minimum of three employees to manage three shifts, each lasting no more than eight or nine hours," the CM said.

This move, he added, aims to generate employment in small-scale businesses.

Expressing optimism, CM Sarma said the new business-friendly measures would promote economic growth, especially during festive seasons like Bihu and Puja.--IANS



Driver burnt alive as speeding truck collides with two tankers in Rajasthan

Jaipur

In a tragic accident, the driver of a truck was burnt alive in a head-on collision with two tankers on Friday in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district.

The accident occurred at around 6.30 a.m. at the Ladpura intersection in the Mandalgarh police station area in the district.

As per reports, the speeding truck collided with two tankers, triggering a massive fire that reduced all

three vehicles to ashes.

The truck was carrying ash from Chittorgarh and crashed into a cement tanker (blocker) and an empty diesel tanker.

The impact caused the truck's gate to jam, trapping the driver inside. He was unable to escape the sudden flare and was tragically burnt alive in the fire.

Though people tried to rush to his help, the sudden burst of flames kept them away. The fire in no time overtook

the three vehicles.Following the accident, heavy traffic congestion was reported on the highway. Police arrived at the scene and managed to clear the jam.

Probationer IPS officer Jatin Jain, in charge of Mandalgarh police station, stated that due to an earlier accident in Chittorgarh, traffic had been diverted towards Ladpura, leading to congestion at the intersection.

Amidst this rush, an out-of-

control truck, moving at high speed, collided with the two tankers.

Eyewitnesses reported that the truck driver applied sudden brakes, causing its tyres to catch fire. The flames quickly spread to the other vehicles, igniting a fierce blaze.

The truck driver, identified as Shambhulal Dhakad (45) of Phoolji Kheda village, was unable to escape and perished in the fire.Fire brigade teams and police personnel battled the inferno

for over an hour before bringing it under control.The burnt-out vehicles were later removed, and normal traffic flow was restored.The deceased driver's body has been kept at Mandalgarh Hospital's mortuary, awaiting post-mortem after the arrival of his family.

Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, while police have urged drivers to maintain safe speeds to prevent such tragedies.--IANS

I will communicate with CMs, MPs, and citizens in their native language after Dec: HM Shah

NEW DELHI, March 21 (IANS) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that after December, he will correspond with the Chief Ministers, MPs, ministers, and citizens of every state in their native language. He stated that this would serve as a strong reply to those who use language to cover up their corruption.

"Every language of India is a jewel of our culture," he added.

Seven aides of Amritpal Singh brought to Punjab on transit remand

New Delhi

Seven associates of MP Amritpal Singh, who were lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act (NSA), have been brought to Punjab on transit remand.

The individuals will be presented in the Ajnala court on Friday, where Punjab Police will seek their remand for further investigation into the 2023 attack on the Ajnala police station.

Advocate Ritu Raj, speaking on the matter, said, "The seven individuals whose NSA detention is ending will be presented today. This includes Bhagwant Singh (alias Pradhan Mantri Bajek), Daljit Singh Kalsi, and five others. Their custody will be determined in court; we'll have to wait and see what happens."

In a related development, a senior official revealed earlier that Punjab Police had secured the transit remand, completing the legal transfer of the detainees from Dibrugarh Central Jail to Punjab.

The transfer took place via two separate flights, three of the seven associates were flown together, while the remaining four were sent on a different aircraft.

Earlier, four detainees, Gurmeet Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Daljit Singh Kalsi, and Basant Singh, were released by Dibrugarh jail authorities. However, as soon as they were freed,



Punjab Police re-arrested them in connection with a case registered at Ajnala Police Station. The re-arrested individuals were later presented before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Dibrugarh.

Amritpal Singh, the leader of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, and his nine aides were lodged in the Dibrugarh jail in Assam as NSA was slapped on them two years ago.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Singh contested as an Independent and emerged victorious from the Khadoor Sahib seat in Punjab.

The detainees had been lodged in Dibrugarh Central Jail since March 2023, following a crackdown on Amritpal Singh and his associates in Punjab. Authorities had invoked the NSA due to concerns regarding their involvement in activities that could disturb public order and national security.

According to a top Punjab Police official, the inquiry into the 2023 attack incident at the Ajnala police station would continue.--IANS

Relish each and every happy moment of life : Cartoonist Sandeep Joshi

Rohtak/HPC

Cultivating happiness through expressive art of cartooning was focused in the "Building Happiness Sukh Srijan" workshop organised by the Department of Psychology and Happtitude laboratory of Maharshi Dayanand University(MDU) on the occasion of International Day of Happiness on Thursday.

Eminent Cartoonist Sandeep Joshi, an invited resource person in the workshop, elucidated upon the art of happiness through cartooning. "We must relish each and every happy moment of life and express ourselves creatively," he said while delivering a lecture and demonstration on cartooning. Joshi drew caricatures and cartoons to explain this creative art. In the technical session,

he gave assignment(s) to the participants who enthusiastically drew figures, sketches and cartoons.

Speaking as the Chief Guest in the workshop, MDU Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajbir Singh said that a positive mindset is required to be happy in life. One must cultivate an appreciative mindset in life, he added. Creative arts

is a platform for happiness, he opined.

Head of Psychology Department Prof. Anjali Malik threw light on the aims and objectives of the workshop. She said that the 3-day workshop would be focusing on the pathway of happiness using expressive arts. "Happiness is not a mere destination, happiness is the way," Prof. Deepti Hooda said while expressing the vote of thanks.

Director, CDOE, Prof. Nasib Singh Gill also spoke in the session and stressed upon the importance of positivity in life.

Faculty members of the Department of Psychology Prof. Shalini Singh, Prof. Sarvdeep Kohli and Dr. Shashi Rashmi were present on the occasion.

Research scholars and students participated enthusiastically in the workshop.



Cartoonist Sandeep Joshi, addressing the workshop in MD university on Thursday. HP PHOTO

59 Persons arrested drinking alcohol, creating ruckus

Rohtak/HPC

The Rohtak Police campaign against people drinking alcohol and creating ruckus in public places continued for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. The campaign was carried out from 7 pm to 12 midnight. Under the campaign, different police teams raided different places and arrested 59 persons on the second day of the drive. The police had arrested 145 persons on the first day of the special campaign on Tuesday. Action was taken against the people under section 172 (2) of the BNSS.

Rohtak Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Y.V.R. Shashi Shekhar informed that acting on the orders of Rohtak Superintendent of Police (SP) Narendra Bijarnia, the

police, on the basis of information received from various sources, identified places where people were consuming alcohol and creating ruckus in public. The Rohtak Police conducted simultaneous raids at such identified places, the ASP said and added that during the raid, people were found consuming alcohol or creating ruckus on the roadside, footpath or inside a vehicle at these places. Action was taken against the accused persons under Section 172(2) of the B.N.S.S. A total of 59 persons were arrested by the Police for consuming liquor and creating ruckus in public places on Wednesday night, the ASP said and appealed to the general public not to consume alcohol in public places.





## Waqf Law

The central government has indicated that the Waqf Board Amendment Bill will be introduced for passage in the budget session of Parliament. The Union Cabinet has approved the bill recommended by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. That is, the legal formalities for passing the bill in Parliament have been completed. On the issue of this Waqf Bill, the Muslim Personal Law Board and Hindu organizations are agitating against each other.

The Muslim Personal Law Board alleged that if the Waqf Bill is passed in Parliament, the government will snatch away our mosques, demolish dargahs and also occupy the graveyards. Obviously, there is no substance in these allegations, yet the government should try to build a broader consensus for this bill. However, all amendments within the Parliament are passed on the basis of majority or voice vote. If the same system has been used in the JPC, then the opposition's objections are nothing but shouting. The executive and the legislature have constitutional privileges to amend any issue or law in the House. There are Muslims and MPs from SP, Congress, Trinamool Congress etc. in the House, so there should be a wide debate on this bill in Parliament.

However, the Waqf Bill is being termed as interference in religious matters, whereas the Waqf Board is an institution for the management of land and immovable properties. There is no mention of it in Muslim religious books. Even in most Muslim countries, the Waqf Board does not exist. There was no Waqf law in our original Constitution. It was included in 1954 through an amendment in the Constitution. Many Muslim religious leaders have also said that it is not right to link the Waqf Board with religion. As far as the question of amendment in it is concerned, this demand has been raised from time to time from the Muslim community itself. In fact, the Union Minority Ministry had received 148 complaints in 2023, most of which were from Muslims. Even today 40,951 cases are pending in tri-

bunals or courts, so this bill cannot be considered interference in religious matters. This allegation of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board is not correct at all. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board had said similar things at the time of triple talaq law and Citizenship Amendment Bill i.e. CAA, which later proved to be wrong. In fact, more than 9 lakh acres of land in the country is under the Waqf Board, which is the highest after the Railways and the Army.

The annual income of about 8.7 lakh properties has been reported to be only Rs 200 crore, whereas according to the report of the Sachar Committee, this income should be more than Rs 12,000 crore. The question is whether there is a huge scam in this or a group of land mafia wants to hide the truth? The irony is that in the Muslim society of Waqf, which has properties worth Rs 1.26 lakh crore, according to the assessment of 2023-24, even today about 32 percent are illiterate and 30 percent are poor Muslims. Why do Waqf Boards not help such Muslims? Obviously, the allegations of the Muslim Personal Law Board cannot be accepted, but still, considering the current environment of the country, the central government should have a more comprehensive discussion. Along with this, the Muslim Personal Law Board should also stop making inflammatory statements.

The objective of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to redress the issues and challenges in regulating and managing Waqf properties. The Amendment Bill seeks to improve the administration and management of waqf properties in India. It aims to overcome the shortcomings of the previous act and enhance the efficiency of Waqf boards?. The primary objective of the Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024 is to repeal the Mussalman Wakf Act, 1923, a colonial-era legislation that has become outdated. The repeal aims to ensure uniformity, transparency, and accountability in the administration and management of waqf properties.

# The little bird chirping in the courtyard of the house on the verge of extinction

**Vijay Garg**

Many bird species have disappeared in the world of birds, and many are on the verge of extinction. The first house is grazing in the courtyard. The sparrow now looks little, and the risk of its extinction is increasing. This little bird has joined the red list today.

Everyone's lifestyle has changed. Because of this changed lifestyle, the little sweet bird sparrow chirping in the house-to-courtyard is getting away from humans. Because of the growing population of humans, the blessing of birds is decreasing today. The fields and barns are also decreasing due to urbanisation. Sparrows that we call 'human friends' are not equal to their place of living today. Though villages still have a better environment, they have a substantial number, the situation in the city is alarming. But people can easily hear the chirping of sparrows even around them when they try a little. That is why many of the capital people are coming forward to conserve it.

**Many steps being taken to conserve sparrows**

In the capital too, several steps are being taken regarding the declining number of sparrows. Many of the civil societies, NGOs and government institutions here are engaged in the work of spreading awareness to conserve sparrows. These

efforts aim to prevent the declining number of this bird and reestablish them in their natural habitat.

**It was included in the Red List in 2016**

According to UK's 'Royal Society of Protection of Burdous and Andhra

**University studies, sparrow population has decreased by 60-80 per cent.** For the same reason, the International Union for Conservation of Nature included it in the red list in 2016. Despite this, birds, including sparrows, are at risk of extinction.

**Life of many birds is in distress**

Climate change and humanitarian activities such as indiscriminate deforestation, urbanization and increased use of pesticides, have become a big threat to birds. The life of sparrows and other birds is in distress by the rise in temperature and the continuous changes in the weather. This change is affecting the processes

of their food, shelter, and reproduction, thereby declining their numbers.

**Protection has to be initiated**

The Government of India has included sparrows in the Schedule-II of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, to ensure the

**existence of birds even more dangerous.**

**It is necessary to promote greenery**

The main reason for the declining population of sparrows is urbanization and climate change. Unless we make changes to our lifestyle, efforts to conserve it will remain incomplete. Granting grain water for sparrows in homes, creating artificial nests, and increasing greenery in cities, can be its conservation measures. Especially in urban areas, where concrete walls and glass windows are proving dangerous to birds, it is extremely necessary to promote greenery.

**be environmental consciousness and personal efforts**

The dwindling population of birds, including sparrows, is not just an environmental crisis, but a sign of deep disturbances in the ecosystem connected to our lives. Everyone has to work together to conserve it. We have to sharpen our efforts to bring back the sparrows in our homes and courtyard like the old days. We have to take small steps around our homes, such as keeping grain and water for birds and preparing their habitat-friendly environment. In addition, it is also necessary to promote tree-plant and conserve natural resources. With such an effort, we can keep sparrows and other birds safe.

❏ We have to sharpen our efforts to bring back the sparrows in our homes and courtyard like the old days. We have to take small steps around our homes, such as keeping grain and water for birds and preparing their habitat-friendly environment. In addition, it is also necessary to promote tree-plants and conserve natural resources.

## Nari Shakti is the foundation of a strong and progressive society

Nari Shakti is not just a word but the foundation of society. When a woman is empowered, not only the family, but the entire society moves towards progress. The Madhya Pradesh government is committed to the all-round development and empowerment of women. I believe that the true meaning of women empowerment is to give women their rights, opportunities and equality so that they can take decisions independently and participate in society and family to their full potential. Women empowerment is linked to their education, their health, political and economic opportunities, equalities and their social freedom.

**Progress towards women empowerment**

In 2025, when we review the work done towards the development and empowerment of women, we will find that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, meaningful and important efforts have been made towards women empowerment in the country and state. Various efforts are being made to connect women with various institutional systems such as health care, education, career and vocational counseling/training, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, etc., and to provide them guidance so that they can understand and use their full

potential. Women are playing a leading and important role in every field today. Women are setting such records that could not even be imagined a few years ago. Today's women are awakened and are also taking the lead in many fields. Happy families, ideal society and prosperous nation are created by the thoughts of women and their life values.

**MP govt is friendly to women**

In accordance with the concept of Women Led Government of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, continuous efforts are being made to promote women leadership and increase their participation in Madhya Pradesh. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi, the Madhya Pradesh government is working diligently to fulfill every resolution of women empowerment. In Madhya Pradesh, various schemes and programs are being run for the all-round development, protection, socio-economic empowerment, better health, nutrition of adolescent girls and women, which aim to empower them in every field. Among these, Hub under Mission Shakti, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, One Stop Center, Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, Mahila Helpline 181, Sakhi Niwas, as well as Chief Minister Ladli Bahana Yojana-2023 and Chief Minister Ladli Laxmi Yojana etc. are prominent schemes.

In this sequence, as per the wishes of the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister, Nari Empowerment Mission is being started for the resolution of challenges and obstacles in the progress of girls and women in the state and for overall empowerment. The main objective of this mission is to ensure access to various government services along with education, health, nutrition, economic development and security of women and girls. Through the mission, efforts will be made to increase the economic self-reliance of women and economic participation in the society. Mission activity will be conducted in coordination with the departments related to the schemes run by various departments.

**Women have been made aware**

Women have been made aware about health, nutrition and hygiene through Anganwadi services and health programs in the state, which has also reduced the malnutrition rate. The state government has left no stone unturned in terms of financial resources for the safety of pregnant women and infants. The upgradation, maintenance and operation of Anganwadi centers has always been the top priority of the Madhya Pradesh government. In this direction, the Council of Ministers chaired by Chief Minister Dr. Yadav has decided to upgrade 12 thousand 670 mini Anganwadi centers of the state as full

Anganwadi centers. For this, 476 new posts of supervisors. A total of 13 thousand 146 new posts including 12 thousand 670 Anganwadi assistants have been approved. In the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, run for the health and nutrition of pregnant women, Madhya Pradesh has got the first position at the national level for 5 consecutive years from the inception of the scheme till the year 2022-2023.

The safety of daughters and women is one of the top priorities of the Madhya Pradesh government and for this the state government has taken many steps. One Stop Center, Women Helpline 181 are working with this objective. 57 One Stop Centers are operating in all the districts of the state to help women in distress, through which free assistance has been provided to more than 1 lakh women.

Through schemes like Women Helpline Number 181, women are getting immediate solution to their problems. Shaurya Dals have been formed with the aim of preventing crimes against women and making it effective. A total of more than 22.52 lakh girls / women are members of Shaurya Dal in every Anganwadi area at village / ward level in the state. Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to give death penalty to those who rape innocent girls.

## Satire

Russia's Stalin loved Hindi, TN's Stalin opposes



The friend said to us, 'Tell us why is Stalin in the news these days? Is his intention to bring about a change in the system and create conflict?'

We said, 'Stalin was there in the past and is there in the present too. First we will tell you about Joseph Stalin, who was the dictator of Russia. After the death of the great revolutionary Lenin in 1924, Stalin took over the power of the Soviet Union. He expelled his rival Trotsky to Siberia. Stalin became famous because in the Second World War, the Russian army defeated Hitler's German army in the Battle of Leningrad. 3,30,000 German soldiers were killed in this terrible war. In honour of the Russians who defeated Hitler, King George VI of Britain sent a sword which was respectfully handed over to Stalin by British PM Churchill in Tehran.

Friend said, 'Don't tell me about history because it is said - History-Geography is very unfaithful, memorized at night, cleaned in the morning!'

We said, 'When Vijayalakshmi Pandit went to Russia as India's ambassador, Stalin flatly refused to accept her identity card written in

English and asked whether your independent country does not have its own language? Bring your identity card in that language. After all, Stalin accepted her identity card only when she brought it written in Hindi. This should be told to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin who is opposing Hindi. In his budget, he arbitrarily changed the symbol of Rupee to Tamil symbol whereas the official symbol of Rupee was made by an artist from Tamil Nadu itself and was awarded by the Central Government. Tamil actresses like Vijayanti Mala, Hema Malini and Sridevi earned fame in Hindi films.

Friend said: Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Jayalalitha was also Dharmendra's heroine in the Hindi film 'Izzat'. IAS officers working in Delhi and northern states of Tamil Nadu learn Hindi very quickly. Despite this, MK Stalin is blindly opposing Hindi for political reasons. Politics can make you do anything. On the other hand when Vijayalakshmi Pandit went to Russia as India's ambassador, Stalin declined to accept her identity card written in English.

## Science Fact

Bird flu has infected a person after spreading to cows. Here's what to know

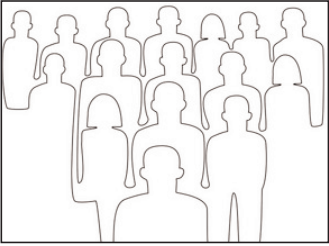
A strain of avian influenza that has likely sickened and killed millions of birds around the globe has popped up in an unexpected species: Cows. On April 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed that cattle on a farm in New Mexico had tested positive for a strain of bird flu called H5N1. The news followed a March 25 announcement that officials had detected the virus on two dairy farms in Kansas and two Texas farms. The virus was also detected in a Michigan herd that had recently received cows from Texas, the USDA reported on March 29. Five additional herds in Texas have tested positive, and an outbreak in Idaho is presumed to have been caused by H5N1. A person exposed to cattle on one of those Texas farms has tested positive too, becoming only the second person in the United States ever documented to be infected with H5N1, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported April 1. The individual is being treated with an antiviral drug for a single symptom, eye redness. It's unclear how the cows were infected, although consuming wild bird excrement is a possibility. The person was probably infected while in close contact with the cows. Most people fall ill with H5N1 only after close contact with infected animals, typically poultry, and these infections can be mild to deadly. Right now, the CDC considers H5N1's risk to people to be low. But milk from infected cows should be thrown out before reaching our food supply, the USDA says. Pasteurization would also kill the virus, so it should not spread through the country's milk, the agency said.



## Spiritual

Why we're all our brothers' keepers

Recently, a Karnataka judge ruled that the bystanders in a village who witnessed a woman being assaulted and paraded naked, and did nothing to protect her, were as guilty as her attackers by being complicit in the crime, and were held collectively responsible for it. The concept of collective responsibility is based on the precept that for evil to triumph it is enough that good men do nothing to prevent it, a quote often attributed to Edmund Burke, but according to different sources, originally articulated by John Stuart Mill: "Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing." During the British Raj, the charge of collective responsibility earned notoriety for being used to penalise entire communities for any acts of defiance against the colonial regime. More recently, the rubric of collective responsibility has been invoked to deem all the residents of a neighbourhood culpable for damage caused to public and private property during a riot, with compensatory fines imposed on all. The most sweeping example of collective responsibility was imposed after the end of WWII by the victorious allies against the entire German nation for crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis, including the genocidal Holocaust. The burden of aggregate guilt was carried even by those who hadn't been born at the time these crimes took place, an anomaly all the more marked in that the winners of the war felt no need for public displays of remorse for the atomic horror unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Going beyond the courts of temporal law to the higher tribunal of moral philosophy, the dictum of collective responsibility can be traced to Emmanuel Kant's explication of what he termed the Categorical Imperative. Kant opposed the proposition that the 'good' is the foundation of morality and replaced it by the 'right'. What is good for one might not be so for another, but what is right is so for all.



## Letter to the Editor

A tribute to Natures tiny messengers

Sir

The theme for this year's World Sparrow day ,celebrated on March 20 , is 'A Tribute to Nature's Tiny Messengers' and as we celebrate let us give a clarion call to raise awareness about the decline in sparrow populations due to environmental degradation and other factors which if not addressed now can have these tiny friendly creatures of man and nature get enlisted in the 'extinct creatures list' .

Though environmentalists and bird lovers do take measures to conserve ,preserve and protect these agile, lively little birds there is a steep decline in their population, especially in urban regions . These tiny birds enjoy living alongside human settlements but in recent years due to various factors such as rapid urbanisation, lack of green spaces, the use of chemical compounds in seeds and grains , environmental changes, noise and sound pollution have resulted in sparrows disappearing at an alarming rate. Though conservation efforts are being done by nature lovers and other agencies a joint effort by the public is also a must in order to protect and preserve these birds. The theme no doubt aims to restore human affection for sparrows inspiring and encouraging them to protect nature's little companions.

Awareness campaigns , events and encouraging and including the younger generation to be very much a part of this can enhance protection measures of these birds. Let us be aware that sparrows are vital for the ecosystem and their absence would lead to disturbance of ecosystems, which affects various plant and wildlife species.

M Pradyu

## Tech

Motorola Edge 50 Ultra Leaked Teasers Suggests Design, Key Specifications

Motorola Edge 50 Ultra is expected to be unveiled soon. It is likely to launch alongside two other models. While the Motorola Edge 50 Pro is set to launch in India on April 3, a third Motorola Edge 50 Fusion model could also be unveiled soon. The Motorola Edge 50 Ultra design had recently leaked via renders suggesting multiple colour options and hinting at some key features of the handset. Now a tipster has shared short video teasers of the handset that once again suggest the design and key specifications. Tipster Evan Blass (@evleaks) shared a series of small clips on X (formerly Twitter) that show the Motorola Edge 50 Ultra from different angles. The videos also suggest some of the features of the handset. It is seen in a beige colour option in the first clip, where we also get a close-up of the expected triple rear camera unit, the curved display edges, and the textured back panel. In successive clips, we see the Motorola Edge 50 Ultra with speakers placed on both the top and bottom edges, a centred hole-punch cutout for a selfie camera, and a USB Type-C port at the bottom. One of the teasers also hints at a scratch-resistant screen, while another teases a feature that is said to help with accurate portrayal of skin tones, something the Edge 50 Pro is confirmed to offer. The last clip shows the handset being dunked in water, which suggests an IP rating, possibly something as high as an IP68. Samsung Reportedly Working on a Super App for Financial Services An earlier leak suggested that the Motorola Edge 50 Ultra is expected to launch in at least three colour options - Beige, Black, and Peach Fuzz. It is also tipped to launch in China with the moniker Moto X50 Ultra.



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# Bangladesh's interim govt and betrayal of its liberation legacy

Deepak Kumar

**NEW DELHI:** The vandalism at the historic residence of Mujibur Rahman on February 5-6 has reverberated throughout Bangladesh and beyond, igniting a wave of outrage and concern. As the nation navigates a period of political instability under an interim government, these audacious attacks on a site emblematic of Bangladesh's Liberation War raise critical questions about governance, law enforcement, and the dedication to safeguarding national heritage. The pressing inquiry is clear: How can a government that professes to champion democratic ideals and honour the legacy of independence permit such egregious violations against the very symbols of its foundation?

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, revered as the founding father of Bangladesh, was instrumental in the nation's fight for independence from Pakistan. His residence at 32 Dhanmondi in Dhaka transcends mere bricks and mortar - it stands as a hallowed site of historical and emotional resonance. It was within these walls that Mujib made pivotal decisions during the fraught lead-up to the 1971 Liberation War. Tragically, it was also here that he and most of his family met their untimely demise on August 15, 1975, marking one of the most harrowing episodes in Bangladesh's narrative.

Transformed into the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, the house drew

visitors from across the globe, eager to grasp the sacrifices that forged Bangladesh's independence. Given its immense significance, any act of vandalism against this site is not merely a crime, it is an affront to the nation's collective memory. Mujib's poignant words resonate now more than ever: "Write my name in place of the father's name of the girls raped during the Liberation War, and give the address '32-Dhanmondi'". These sentiments encapsulate his unwavering dedication to the nation, a legacy that is now under siege.

The interim government of Bangladesh, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus assumed power with the promise of creating a neutral atmosphere for forthcoming elections. However, it has become increasingly evident that this administration is either unable or unwilling to address the recent wave of vandalism sweeping the nation. While political strife is not new to Bangladesh, the recent violent incidents point to a more profound issue: a government that may be either complicit in or grossly negligent of these actions.

One particularly alarming development is the emergence of bulldozer rallies, which have been repurposed as instruments of destruction. These events, initially framed as political protests, have been systematically directed at the Dhanmondi. The organised and deliberate nature of these assaults raises troubling questions about potential state complicity or, at the very least, a troubling lack of action.

Disturbingly,

eyewitness accounts and video evidence from the demolition site reveal the presence of an ISIS flag during the chaos, highlighting the involvement of radical factions in these acts of violence. This situation points to a perilous connection between the interim government and extremist Islamic groups, notably Hizb ut-Tahrir, which seems to have gained traction during this administration.

Despite the outcry from civil society and international observers, the interim government's response has been tepid at best. There have been no swift arrests, and official communications have been vague, if not outright dismissive. This raises critical concerns about the rule of law and the government's commitment to its citizens. If the state fails to safeguard the very symbols of its liberation struggle, what confidence can the public have in its ability to protect its people?

In examining the assaults on Mujibur's House, it is crucial to scrutinise the involvement of prominent political figures, extremist groups, social media influencers and foreign intelligence agencies. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been frequently implicated in interfering with Bangladesh's political dynamics, and its potential role in inciting radical factions cannot be overlooked. It should be noted that recently ISI's Chief visited Bangladesh. It should be also mentioned that this was the maiden visit

of any ISI chief after 1971. Evidence indicates that ISI agents have extended both ideological and logistical assistance to organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is actively engaged in efforts to undermine Bangladesh's secular governance.



Moreover, figures such as YouTuber Pinaki Bhattacharya have significantly influenced the narrative surrounding these targeted attacks. Bhattacharya, recognised for his provocative political commentary, has been accused of promoting divisive rhetoric that empowers extremist groups. On the eve of this vandalism, Pinaki was also seen to have directly incited a mob, through his Facebook account, to demolish the 32 Dhanmondi using a bulldozer. His impact, alongside that of other political influencers, has fostered an environment

where acts of vandalism are not merely tolerated but, in some circles, even encouraged. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) also plays a pivotal role in this context. With a longstanding history of attempting to erode the legacy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the party often aligns itself with factions that seek to diminish his stature in Bangladesh's political and historical narrative. During the February 5 vandalism and subsequent demolition of Bangabandhu's residence, media reported that Ayesha Akhter Dina, a leader of the BNP Women cell of Narayanganj city, provided the bulldozers that were used in the demolition. Although BNP leaders have publicly distanced themselves from any direct involvement in the attacks, their reticence to denounce these actions also clearly hints at either tacit

approval or a calculated political strategy. Radical Islamic factions have increasingly influenced the recent wave of destruction in Bangladesh, with the display of an ISIS flag during the demolitions serving as a stark reminder of their growing presence amid the nation's political chaos. These groups, notorious for their efforts to obliterate historical narratives that clash with their extremist ideologies, seem to have found unexpected support within the interim government. Hizb ut-Tahrir, in particular, has drawn attention for its long-standing agenda to undermine Bangladesh's secular framework in favour of a more radical one. The government's inability to rein in their activities raises alarming questions about its potential complicity with these extremist elements.

The assault on historical

sites has not been limited to Mujibur's House; other significant monuments tied to the nation's political heritage, especially those linked to key figures from the Liberation War, have also fallen victim to this campaign of erasure. These deliberate actions indicate a concerted effort to obliterate vital symbols of Bangladesh's political and historical identity. The destruction of these landmarks transcends mere political vengeance; it represents a systematic attempt to dismantle the very foundations of the country's narrative of independence.

In the midst of this turmoil, the inaction of Bangladesh's military stands out as a glaring failure. Tasked with ensuring security and stability, the armed forces remained largely passive while historic sites were systematically destroyed. Given the organised nature of these attacks, the military's lack of intervention raises serious doubts about its impartiality and operational effectiveness. Whether this inaction stems from a deliberate choice or is a result of higher political directives, it paints a disconcerting picture of the current state of governance and institutional integrity in Bangladesh.

The Indian government has issued a strong denunciation of the recent vandalism at the residence of Mujibur Rahman, characterising it as an affront to the intertwined histories of India and Bangladesh. Officials in New Delhi underscored the necessity of safeguarding the legacy of Bangladesh's fight

for independence, calling on the Dhaka administration to take stringent measures against the perpetrators. As a pivotal ally during the 1971 Liberation War, India has voiced alarm over the growing power of extremist factions and the potential interference of external entities, such as the ISI, in undermining Bangladesh's secular principles.

Against this backdrop, a great amount of Anti-India rhetoric has also floated in Bangladesh where interim government's advisors like Nahid Islam and Touhid Hossain accused India of helping Sheikh Hasina to destabilise Bangladesh from its soil. Foreign Affairs Advisor Touhid Hossain also summoned the acting High Commissioner of India to Dhaka and handed him a letter of protest over this issue.

This act of vandalism transcends mere property damage, it highlights a more profound malaise within Bangladesh's political landscape and governance. An interim government that fails to protect the nation's historical sites demonstrates an inability to conduct free and fair elections or uphold the tenets of democracy. For Bangladesh to truly honour its heritage and secure a prosperous future, it must confront and eliminate those who aim to obliterate or manipulate its historical narrative.

(Deepak Kumar is an Indian security and strategic affairs analyst specialising in geo-politics and geo-economics. Views expressed are personal)

## S. Korean court dismisses lawsuit over this year's hike in medical school admissions

**Seoul**

A South Korean court on Friday dismissed a lawsuit by medical professors seeking to nullify the government's admissions hike in medical schools for this year.

The ruling by the Seoul Administrative Court marked the first court decision among a string of complaints filed by the medical community in protest of the government's plan that increase annual admissions to medical schools, Yonhap news agency reported.

The court ruled that the defendants had no authority to request for the nullification of the plan, saying they were not the "direct counterpart" subject to the quota hike.

Since February last year, thousands of trainee doctors have left hospitals to protest against the government's decision that raise the number of medical students by some 2,000 for this year.

Meanwhile, a consultative body of medical school deans on Friday urged medical school students to return to class as their reinstatement deadlines neared.

"We will firmly uphold next year's medical school enrollment quota of 3,058 students, and the 40 universities are preparing to ensure that students receive a high-quality education," the Korean Association of Medical Colleges and Graduate School of Medicine (KAMC) said in a letter.

The letter addressed medical school students who are taking a leave of absence en masse to protest against the government's medical reform plans that included a sharp increase in the number of students admitted to medical schools.- IANS



## Sensex, Nifty extend winning streak for 5th day, wrap up week with 4 pc gain

**Mumbai**

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty on Friday continued their upward momentum for the fifth consecutive session, driven by a stronger rupee and a rebound in IT stocks.

Fresh foreign fund inflows further boosted investor sentiment. The Sensex touched an intra-day high of 77,042 before settling at 76,906, rising by 557 points. Over the week, the index surged by 3,077 points, or 4.17 per cent. Similarly, the Nifty climbed to a high of 23,403 and ended the day at 23,350, gaining 160 points. For the week, the Nifty jumped 953 points or 4.26 per cent. Among the top gainers on the Sensex, NTPC led the way with a 3.3 per cent rise on Friday. Bajaj Finance, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle India, Tata Motors, and Axis Bank also recorded strong gains.

On the other hand, Mahindra & Mahindra declined by over 1 per cent, while Tata Steel, Infosys, Titan, and Bajaj Finserv also ended lower.

In the broader market, the BSE MidCap index climbed over 1 per cent, while the SmallCap index surged more than 2 per cent during the intra-day trading session.

The BSE Oil & Gas index led the sectoral gains, rising over 2 per cent, while the Power, Healthcare, and Financial Services indices also recorded strong growth.

On the downside, the BSE Consumer Durables index declined by 0.8 per cent, and the Metal index slipped 0.4 per cent. The rupee strengthened further with a sharp rise of Rs 0.40 or 0.46 per cent at 85.94, as FII inflows surged with strong buying figures in recent days.

"The Fed's decision to hold rates steady and its forecast for lower interest rates ahead pulled the dollar down, providing significant support to the rupee, but major Capital market strengthening gives the rupee the strong push higher," said Jateen Trivedi of LKP Securities.



## Bangladesh: Students protest in Dhaka University against anti-Hindu remarks

**Dhaka**

A group of Dhaka University (DU) students under the banners of 'Hindu Students of Dhaka University' and the 'Bangladesh United Sanatani Awakening Alliance' on Friday demonstrated in the campus against obscene remarks on their religion.

The students are protesting against derogatory remarks about Hinduism and a deity, made by a fellow student on social media, local media reported.

The students demanded suspension and exemplary punishment for the accused.

They further urged the university to take institutional measures to prevent misinterpretation of Sanatan Dharma in classrooms. Additional demands include preventing teachers from misinterpreting Hinduism during literary analysis classes and taking action against derogatory posts targeting minorities on the university's 'Dhaka Bissobiddaloy Shikharthi Sangsad' Facebook group, reports Bangladesh's leading newspaper, The Daily Star.

The accused Md Abu Sayem, a student from the Department of Bangla at

Dhaka University has been continuously making derogatory comments about Hinduism. These comments have upset the Hindu community from the university and Bangladesh. Some protesters expressed their anger, stating that their religious values were not respected, and questioning why there are no steps taken when minority religions are offended, Bangladesh's leading newspaper Dhaka Tribune reported.

Various rights groups, eminent citizens, and socio-cultural organisations in Bangladesh have earlier condemned the violence, specifically targeting Hindus, in different parts of the nation, after the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

According to a report of Dhaka-based human rights organisation, Ain O Salish Kendra (AsK), there are reports of a total of 147 incidents of vandalising houses, temples, and business establishments of the Hindu community across the country. Some 408 households were vandalised in these incidents, including 36 cases of arson. Besides, there have been reports of 113 incidents of vandalising business establishments.



'Hindu Students of Dhaka University' on Friday demonstrated in the campus against obscene remarks on their religion

## India got back 297 stolen antiquities from US in 2024

**New Delhi**

So far 588 Indian antiquities smuggled out of the country have been secured back from the US, of which 297 were repatriated in 2024, the Central government has informed Parliament.

The information was given by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. He was responding to a question on the number of "looted or stolen artefacts" expected to be returned under the US-India Cultural Property Agreement to prevent illicit trade of antiquities.

The Cultural Property Agreement (CPA) has been signed with the US to prevent the smuggling of Indian antiquities. The agreement, being preventive in nature, has no timelines or target numbers, the minister explained.

The minister was also asked whether the government plans to collaborate with international organisations or other nations to strengthen India's efforts in recovering stolen antiquities.

India collaborates with different international organisations, including UNESCO and INTERPOL as per requirement. The CPA has provision for fostering cooperation and mutual understanding in the matters of technical assistance, illicit trade and pillage of cultural property, the minister said.

He was also asked a question on whether the government has observed a "resurgence of ancient sects", particularly during events like the Kumbh Mela.

Shekhawat replied that the Kumbh Mela is a significant Hindu pilgrimage festival and one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, where millions of devotees converge to bathe in sacred rivers. During this event, many ancient sects, spiritual organisations and religious leaders come together, often showcasing rituals, traditions and practices that have been passed down through centuries.

"The resurgence of ancient sects in India is driven by factors such as a growing interest in cultural and spiritual heritage coupled with the search for deeper meaning amid modern religious challenges," he said.

Social media and religious tourism have also played a role in spreading awareness of these sects. This revival is significant in contemporary society as it helps to preserve traditional practices, fosters social cohesion and strengthens national pride in India's cultural roots, the minister added.-IANS

## Major fire in London substation, Heathrow Airport shut

**New Delhi**

London's Heathrow Airport has been shut down for the day after a fire in a substation in the western part of the city led to a power outage and has left more than 16,000 homes without electricity.

According to British media over 150 people have also been evacuated.

In an X post on Friday morning (India time), the airport advised passengers not to travel and also to contact their respective airlines for further details.

"Due to a fire at an electrical substation supplying the airport, Heathrow is experiencing a significant power outage. To maintain the safety of our passengers and colleagues, Heathrow will be closed until 11.59 pm on March 21," the airport said.

An airport spokesperson told the BBC, "Whilst fire crews are responding, we do not have clarity on when power may be reliably restored... we are working as hard as possible to resolve the situation."

As per reports several flights have already been diverted while the airport authorities "expect significant disruption over the coming days".

The reports have mentioned that the Scottish and Southern Electricity Network, which supplies power to nearly four million homes in central and southern England, as well as the north of Scotland, said the fire broke out at the North Hyde substation and that emergency services were on the scene.

The London Fire Brigade reported that a transformer inside the substation caught fire, prompting a large-scale emergency response. Ten fire



engines and around 70 firefighters were deployed to the scene. As a precaution, a 200-metre cordon has been established, and residents have been advised to keep doors and windows closed because of smoke.

Heathrow is the UK's largest airport, handling around 1,300 landings and take-offs each day. A record 83.9 million passengers passed through its terminals last year.-IANS



## Short News

## Ola Electric confirms receiving inquiries from govt over EV registrations, trade certificates



**NEW DELHI.** Ola Electric said on Friday it has received inquiries from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) regarding discrepancies in its sales data and issues related to trade requirement certificates.

The ministries have also sought clarification on reports "regarding non-compliance to the requirement of trade certificates", Ola Electric Mobility said in a regulatory filing.

The company further explained that the registration backlog in February occurred after it terminated contracts with two national vendors managing the registration process. This step was taken as part of Ola's strategy to streamline operations and improve profitability.

Despite these challenges, Ola Electric said that daily registrations have now increased and are over 50 per cent of its three-month daily sales average.-- IANS

## PMAY-U 2.0: Construction of over 3.53 lakh houses approved, over 2.67 lakh for women alone

**NEW DELHI.** The government has approved proposals for the construction of over 3.53 lakh houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban 2.0 (PMAY-U 2.0) scheme, it was announced on Friday.

A total of 3,52,915 lakh houses under beneficiary-led construction (BLC) and affordable housing in partnership (AHP) components of PMAY-U 2.0 in 10 states/UTs -- Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Odisha, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh -- were sanctioned during the meeting of Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC), according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban was first launched in June 2015. Under the scheme, 118.64 lakh houses have been sanctioned while about 92 lakh houses have already been constructed and delivered to beneficiaries.-- IANS

## South Korea loses suit on compensation to Mason Capital over Samsung merger



**SEOUL.** South Korea has lost a lawsuit seeking to annul an investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) ruling that ordered it to pay compensation to US hedge fund Mason Capital over losses from tech major Samsung's controversial 2015 merger of two units.

The Ministry of Justice in Seoul said on Friday that the Singapore International Commercial Court turned down the South Korean government's request the previous day to annul the arbitration ruling that Mason filed against it in 2018, reports Yonhap news agency.

## SEBI proposes ESOP benefits for startup founders even after IPO



**MUMBAI.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a change in rules that will allow startup founders to continue holding Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOPs) even after their company goes public.

This move aims to provide relief to founders of new-age technology companies who often receive ESOPs instead of cash-based salaries in the early years of their business.

## Shashi Tharoor at Dr LM Singhvi Memorial Lecture

## India's soft power balances ancient wisdom, modern multi-alignment

New Delhi

**Dr** Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, delivered the 10th Dr L.M. Singhvi Memorial Lecture on the theme 'India's Soft Power'. Describing India's soft power, Dr Tharoor observed that "Soft power projects multi-alignment which is a web of interconnected networks where influence is dispersed and collaboration is key. Multi-alignment allows India to navigate this network world with agility and purpose, engaging in multiple coalitions and platforms that serve different objectives which, in turn, is a reflection of the crucial role India is able to play across the world and that advances universal principles."

The Dr L.M. Singhvi Memorial Lecture is an annual lecture series organised by Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University in memory of Dr L.M. Singhvi, a multifaceted personality and a jurist par excellence, who made invaluable contributions to society as a statesman, diplomat, writer, and lawyer. The memorial lecture was held under the aegis of Singhvi Endowment, an endowment instituted by Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi, son of late Dr L.M. Singhvi, and Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Member of Parliament, at Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University in memory of his father.

In the memorial lecture, Dr Tharoor explained the concept of soft power, "Soft power accounts for the influence that a country wields beyond its military or hard power. It rests primarily on three resources: its culture in places where it's attractive to others, its political values when it lives up to them at home and abroad, and its foreign policies when they are seen as legitimate and have moral authority. Soft power is what people think about a country as soon as they hear its name. A hard power is what they feel when they confront a country."

Hard power is exercised. Some power is evoked. In today's world, soft power has become a key tool to geopolitical strategy embraced across the globe".

Focusing on India's soft power, Dr Tharoor observed, "As influence shifts increasingly from military and economic might to cultural and intellectual leadership, India's soft power stands as a vital asset. We

embrace a cultural gift from India. When India's leadership promoted yoga globally, getting the UN to nearly unanimously recognize the International Yoga Day, it became a quiet, powerful testament to India's role in fostering balance and harmony worldwide," he said.

Speaking on Bollywood's role as an important instrument to Indian soft



embody the true ideas and a vision of India that transcends borders. India's multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-party, pluralistic civilization and democracy have emerged as an attraction to many, especially our parliamentary institutions and procedures, conducting free and fair elections and our ability to involve the non-governmental sector and civil society in the quest for inclusive growth."

"When millions around the world roll out yoga mats on International Yoga Day, it bears a tradition that embodies the balance between ancient wisdom and modern wellness. In doing so, we

power, Dr Tharoor, stated, "It is not only a celebration of the dynamism of Indian cinema but also reinforces Bollywood's role as an important instrument to Indian soft power, embedding India's spirit into the global imagination. Today, Indian cinema's international success and influence have elevated Bollywood as a formidable force of our soft power, reshaping global perceptions and expanding India's cultural footprint on the world stage."

On the other facets of India's soft power, Dr Tharoor observed, "India's claims to a global leadership role in the

world of the 21st century lie in the aspects and products of Indian society and culture that the world finds attractive. The roots of India's soft power run deep as ours is a civilization that has existed for millennia. We can reaffirm that the global respect that India has enjoyed comes from its ability to serve as an inspiring example of the successful management of diversity despite all the challenges we faced and overcame and this reflects India's essence. It radiates as a quiet force, achieves perceptions, nurtures goodwill and builds bridges across divides, unlike blunt instruments of coercion, soft power thrives on persuasion. India's vaccine diplomacy during the COVID pandemic stands as a powerful example of leadership rooted in responsibility and solidarity. India's technical prowess through its space programme opened new avenues for international collaboration and invited the world to partake in its dreams of a shared future among the stars. India has emerged as a formidable force in shaping the global space order and positioned itself as a partner of choice for nations seeking to join the frontier of space exploration."

Dr Abhishek Singhvi, Rajya Sabha member and Senior Advocate, Supreme Court, reflected on the memory of his illustrious father. He said, "He [Dr L.M. Singhvi] was a renaissance person, multi-coloured and multi-faceted. The true meaning of a Renaissance person is the one who is a master of many subjects. His diplomacy in the UK touched great heights as was his glorious career in law, which he readily gave up when he took up the role of the High Commissioner. He also conceptualised the Law Day, now celebrated as Constitution Day. He was behind the entire diaspora movement based on his comprehensive report on Pravasi Bhartiya. He coined both the words Lokpal and Lokayukta in the 1960s and strived ceaselessly for decades to operationalize them in our

body politic. He wrote the report which led to the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in Panchayati Raj and a revolution in local self-government. As a Member of Parliament, he believed in and practised cross-party large-heartedness and magnanimity and shunned the narrow walls of divisiveness and distrust."

In his welcome address Professor (Dr) C. Raj Kumar Founding Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University said, "We are here to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr L.M. Singhvi, and I would like to describe him as India's VIBGYOR Man and that essentially captures the many facets of his personality. His contributions span across many areas of public life and he remains one of India's leading public intellectuals as well. I also want to thank, Dr Abhishek Singhvi, for his philanthropic act of establishing this endowment in memory of his father, Dr L.M. Singhvi, which for us is an opportunity to celebrate the legacy of one of India's leading jurists."

Professor (Dr) S.G. Sreejith Executive Dean, Strategy & Institution Building, Jindal Global Law School said in his introductory remarks that Jindal Global Law School is honoured to receive this endowment. "Dr L.M. Singhvi was not just a diplomat, statesman, and scholar -- he had deep faith in the power of law, especially international law, as a universalizing force."

To honour this vision, Jindal Global Law School hosts the annual Dr L.M. Singhvi International Conference on International Law and International Relations and the Dr Singhvi Memorial Lectures.

These events celebrate Dr L.M. Singhvi's insights into intersections and his ability to bridge the relationship between international law and politics."

Professor Dabiru Sridhar Patnaik Registrar, O. P. Jindal Global University delivered the concluding address.-- IANS

## Hiring in India's renewable energy sector to surge over 18 pc in FY25: Report

Bengaluru

**H**iring in renewable energy sector in India is expected to surge more than 18 per cent in FY25 as the country accelerates its transition towards achieving the ambitious target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, according to a report on Friday.

The rapid expansion of renewable energy projects is expected to increase the direct and indirect jobs in the industry. It is also leading to transformation in workforce dynamics, skills demand, and retention trends, stated the report by TeamLease Services.

It highlighted a strong 23.7 per cent year-on-year growth in

employment in FY24 -- a significant leap from 8.5 per cent in FY23 and 10.4 per cent in FY22.

Although projections indicate a slight moderation to 18.9 per cent in FY25, the sector remains a vital source of job creation, supporting the country's clean energy ambitions.

Contractual workforce demographics in the renewable energy industry are largely youth-driven, with 26.9 per cent of employees in the 26-30 age bracket and 27.9 per cent in the 31-35 segment.

The sector also maintains a significant presence of experienced professionals, with 16 per cent in the 35-40 years group and 18.2 per cent in the

40+ category, the report said.

"India's renewable energy sector is at a crucial inflection point, driven by strong government initiatives and rising



corporate investments. The sector is set to boost jobs, with an increasing demand for

specialized and technology-driven roles," said Subburathinam P. Chief Operating Officer, TeamLease Services.



The renewable energy sector is also generating opportunities across skilled, semi-skilled, and

highly skilled roles. Furthermore, the report highlights the rising demand for technology-driven roles in solar, wind, and hybrid energy systems as companies increasingly adopt digital innovations to boost efficiency.

As the sector expands, regional growth trends have also emerged. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are leading solar energy production in India, and house the majority of the country's solar power plants.

Moreover, government initiatives such as the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM KUSUM, and the Solar PV Module PLI Scheme

have been instrumental in driving the growth of the renewable energy sector.

"However, the challenge lies in addressing high attrition and skill gaps through structured workforce planning," Subburathinam said.

To build sustainable talent, he urged organisations to "integrate vocational training, digital skill development, and retention strategies".

"Moving forward, businesses that prioritise workforce innovation and adaptability will lead the industry's next phase of growth, positioning India as a global leader in clean energy employment," Subburathinam added.-- IANS

## Indian qualifier Sankar Subramanian stuns world no. 2 Anders Antonsen in Swiss Open

Basel

**I**ndian qualifier S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian pulled off an upset win over world number two, Denmark's Anders Antonsen and sail into the quarterfinals of the Swiss Open, a BWF World Tour Super 300 tournament, on Friday.

Subramanian, ranked 64th in the world, secured the biggest win of his career at St. Jakobshalle by overcoming three-time World Championship medalist Antonsen 18-21, 21-12, 21-5 in an hour and six minutes.

Subramanian will next

play Christo Popov, the World No. 31 from France, who won the German Open and Hylo Open last year. Popov was also the German Open runner-up this year.

Previously, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, the Commonwealth Games bronze medal-winning women's doubles pair, advanced to the quarterfinals after defeating Germany's Selin Hubsch and Amelie Lehmann.

The ninth-ranked women's doubles badminton pair of Treasa and Gayatri cruised to a 21-12, 21-8 victory over

Germany's world No. 119 pair, Selin and Amelie, in a 38-minute round of 16



match. Their next match is against the eighth-seeded Hong Kong pair, Yeung Nga Ting and Yeung Pui Lam, with a chance of advance to the BWF Super 300 tournament semifinals on the line.

In the men's singles category, former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth went down to current world No. 6 Li Shifeng of China 21-15, 21-11, while Priyanshu Rajawat lost to France's Toma Junior Popov 21-15, 21-17.

Meanwhile, India's women's singles challenge in the competition ended with losses suffered by

Anupama Upadhyaya and Isharani Baruah. Isharani lost to China's Han Qian Xi 19-21, 21-18, 18-21, while Anupama suffered a 21-17, 21-19 defeat to Indonesian fourth seed Putri Wardani.

In mixed doubles, the Indian duo of Sathish Karunakaran and Aadya Variyath were defeated by Taipei's Liu Kuang Heng and Jheng Yu Chieh 14-21, 16-21. PV Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, along with Malvika Bansod and rising star Anmol Kharb, had already exited the competition after first-round losses on Wednesday.-- IANS

## Haryana launched new Toll-Free Helpline 104 for doctor appointments

Chandigarh/HNS

**H**aryana Health Department has launched a toll-free helpline 104 to help patients book appointments with doctors in government hospitals. Health and Medical Education Minister Kumari Arti Singh Rao inaugurated this portal today.

Meanwhile addressing the media, she said that helpline will also allow people to register complaints related to healthcare services, which will be addressed within five days. Besides this, the helpline will provide information about medicines

## Former Gujarat minister visits Maa Bhadrakali Shaktipeeth

Kurukshetra/HPC

**G**ujarat's former minister Bhubender Singh Chudasama visited the Bhadrakali Shaktipeeth in Kurukshetra, Haryana, along with his family to seek the blessings of Maa Bhadrakali. He was welcomed with a bouquet of flowers by the temple staff.

Chudasama performed a ritualistic puja at the Devikoop and offered prayers to the goddess. He also donated a pair of clay horses to the temple, a tradition believed to have been started by the Pandavas after their victory in the Mahabharata war.

Chudasama expressed his desire to dedicate his life to

serving the nation with renewed strength and sought the goddess's blessings. He also mentioned that he had been visiting the Bhadrakali temple in Ahmedabad and had always wanted to visit the Kurukshetra temple.

After the darshan, he felt a sense of divine experience.

The temple's head, Pt. Satpal Sharma, welcomed Chudasama with a red chunari and a garland of flowers.

He also offered Chudasama the goddess's prasad and blessings for a successful and service-oriented life. It is noteworthy that the temple's head, Pt. Satpal Sharma's son, Devanshu Sharma, is working as a judge in Gujarat itself.

## Teaching Ethics in Schools Helps Children Distinguish Between Right and Wrong : Shalu

Kurukshetra/HPC

**A** training session for teachers was organized at Navyug Senior Secondary School, Mohan Nagar, Kurukshetra, on the topic "Ethics and Integrity." The session began with the lighting of the lamp by Director B.D. Gaba and Resource Person Shalu Sharma. Shalu Sharma provided information about ethics, saying that ethics is a set of standards that determine what is right or wrong.