

## BRIEF NEWS

## Ananda Bose Bids Farewell to WB With Open Letter, Calls State His 'Second Home'

**Kolkata:** Former West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose, who resigned from his post last week, on Wednesday issued an "open letter" to the people of the state, expressing a deep emotional attachment to the region, and said that his association with West Bengal would remain unbreakable even after he departs from the Lok Bhavan. In the letter, posted on the official social media handle of Lok Bhavan, formerly Raj Bhavan, in Kolkata, Bose described the state as his "second home" and said his association with its people would remain strong. "Though my term has come to a close, my journey in West Bengal is far from over. I shall continue to be associated with West Bengal — my second home — as its integral part," Bose wrote. Explaining his deep attachment to the state, he referred to a remark by Mahatma Gandhi. "Several decades back, Mahatma Gandhi had said: 'I am not able to leave Bengal, and Bengal will not let me go.'

## AI Summit Protest Case: Delhi Court Grants Protection From Arrest to T-shirt Designer

**New Delhi:** Patiala House Court on Wednesday granted interim protection from arrest to a T-shirt designer in connection with the AI Summit protest case, which took place on February 20 and was allegedly organised by Indian Youth Congress workers at Bharat Mandapam. Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Amit Bansal granted protection to Umesh Chandra Padala, who allegedly designed T-shirts worn by the protesters. The court directed Padala to cooperate with the ongoing investigation being carried out by the Delhi Police. The court further instructed the Delhi police to give 7 days' notice to Umesh Chandra Padala, a resident of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, in case of his arrest. Padala has been attributed the role of designing the T-shirts allegedly used in the protest and is stated to have aided the alleged main conspirators in planning the demonstra-

## SC Allows Passive Euthanasia for Harish Rana After 13 Years in Coma

■ CTNN

**New Delhi:** In its first-ever order allowing passive euthanasia, the Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted the withdrawal of artificial life support of a 32-year-old man who has been in a comatose condition for more than 12 years.

Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep him alive.

Ghaziabad native Harish Rana, who was a student of Panjab University, suffered head injuries after falling from the fourth floor of his paying guest accommodation in 2013 and has been in a coma for over a decade.

On Wednesday, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and K V Viswanathan directed All India Institute of Medical Sciences-Delhi to grant admission in palliative care to Rana so that the medical treatment can be withdrawn.

It must be ensured that it is withdrawn with a tailored plan so that dignity is main-



## Next Steps and Broader Guidelines

The court directed that Harish Rana be moved to the palliative care unit of AIIMS, where doctors will monitor his condition and ensure appropriate end-of-life care after withdrawal of medical treatment.

It also clarified that withdrawal of treatment does not mean abandoning

the patient. Proper palliative and end-of-life care must be ensured, and such care can also be provided outside hospitals.

"Palliative and end-of-life care need not be restricted to hospitals. It can be provided at home or at any place chosen by the family, as long as the patient is not deprived of medical

care," the bench said.

The Supreme Court also directed all states and Union territories to create lists of registered medical practitioners who can serve on primary and secondary medical boards for evaluating such requests. A Judicial Magistrate First Class may receive and approve the medical

board's report for withdrawal of treatment.

The order allowing passive euthanasia is in terms of its 2018 Common Cause judgment, which was modified in 2023, recognising the fundamental right to die with dignity.

In the 2018 judgement, a constitution bench had recognised passive euthanasia and the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21.

The court had held that passive euthanasia could be carried out using 'Advance Medical Directives'.

## Japan First G7 Nation to Announce Release of Oil Reserves Amid Gulf Conflict



■ CTNN

**New Delhi:** Japan will release part of its oil reserves as early as March 16, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Wednesday, as governments move to stabilise energy markets amid rising geopolitical tensions.

Speaking in Tokyo, Takaichi said Japan plans to release 15 days' worth of private-sector oil reserves and one month's worth of state oil reserves to help ease supply concerns. The move comes as global energy markets remain on edge due to escalating tensions linked to the conflict involving Iran, which has raised fears of disruptions to crude oil shipments from the Middle East.

Japan's decision follows discussions among major energy-consuming nations

on possible emergency measures to prevent supply shortages and curb volatility in oil prices.

Strategic oil reserves are maintained by governments to cushion economies from sudden disruptions in global oil supply, particularly during geopolitical crises or natural disasters that affect production and transportation. The planned release is expected to inject additional oil into the market and help stabilise prices if supply flows from key producing regions are affected. Japan, which relies heavily on imported crude oil, closely monitors developments in global energy markets. Much of the country's oil imports come from the Middle East, making it particularly sensitive to disruptions in the region.

## Reliance to Invest in New Oil Refinery in Texas: Trump

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi:** President Donald Trump said the US will get its first new oil refinery in 50 years with the help of investment from India's Reliance Industries Ltd.

"I am proud to announce that America First Refining is opening the FIRST new US Oil Refinery in 50 YEARS in Brownsville, Texas," Trump said Tuesday in a post on Truth Social.

The announcement came as the White House sought to quell concerns about rising energy prices due to the war in Iran. Trump is weighing several possible options to lower the cost of oil and gasoline, including the release of inventories from emergency reserves, as well as military escorts for tankers through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Texas refinery is the same project that was being developed by Element Fuels, which announced in June 2024 it had completed site preparation and received the necessary permits to construct a plant capable of processing about 160,000 barrels of oil daily. Element Fuels' web address now redirects to the website for America First Refining, the company Trump said will



open the new refinery.

The company plans to break ground on the new refinery in the second quarter of this year and has already signed a 20-year agreement to sell the fuels it produces, according to a Tuesday statement from America First Refining. The sales deal was made with Reliance. Representatives for Reliance couldn't immediately be reached for comment. The Energy Department referred questions to the White House, which didn't immediately respond to a request for more details. The Trump administration is pursuing a policy of US energy dominance, which promotes increased production of oil, natural gas and coal. But while US oil output has surged over the past decade and a half on the back of the shale revolution, the nation relies on an aging array of refineries. Several of the plants have also shut down in recent years, adding to tightness in processing capacity.

## Authors of NCERT Judiciary Chapter Unfit to Write for Next Generation: SC

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has passed a stringent order against three authors involved in drafting a controversial chapter on "corruption in the judiciary" in a Class 8 NCERT textbook, stating that they are unfit to be associated with the preparation of curriculum or textbooks for future generations.

The individuals named were -- Professor Michel Danino, Suparna Diwakar and Alok Prasanna Kumar. Taking serious note of the content and the process followed in preparing the chapter, the

Court directed the union government, state governments, universities and all institutions receiving public funds to disassociate from the three authors and refrain from engaging them in any publicly funded academic work.

The matter arose from a suo motu case initiated by the Supreme Court regarding a section on corruption in the judiciary in a Class 8 NCERT political science textbook. The Court examined whether the content misrepresented the functioning of the Indian judiciary and whether proper



procedures were followed during its drafting and approval. During the hearing, the Court also reviewed the steps taken by NCERT to revise the chapter.

## Air India Express Jet Stuck on Phuket Runway After Losing Nose Wheel During Landing

■ CTNN

**New Delhi:** An Air India Express flight from Hyderabad made a hard landing at Phuket International Airport in Thailand on Wednesday, damaging the aircraft's nose landing gear and forcing authorities to shut the runway for nearly six hours.

All 133 passengers on board flight IX938 were safely deplaned, and no injuries were reported in the incident. Airport officials said the run-



way was closed until around 6 pm local time to allow for inspection and clearance after the incident.

Initial reports indicated that the aircraft's nose landing gear was damaged during the landing, which resulted in the hard touchdown on the

runway. Airport authorities temporarily suspended operations while teams assessed the situation and ensured the runway was safe for further flights. Responding to the incident, Air India Express said its Hyderabad-Phuket flight experienced a nose wheel issue at Phuket Airport, but all passengers were safe. "We confirm that on 11 March, our Hyderabad-Phuket flight encountered an issue with the nose wheel at Phuket Airport.

## 'Won't Leave Them Stranded': PM Modi Assures Indians Stuck in Gulf Region

■ CT Bureau

**Ernakulam:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday assured that the Indian government is providing security and all facilities to Indians stuck in the Gulf region amid the West Asia conflict.

Addressing a rally in Ernakulam, PM Modi asserted that the new India doesn't leave its people in trouble and has always used all its strength to protect them.

"It's natural for all of

you to be concerned about what's happening in West Asia today. Millions of our brothers and sisters work there. But you must remember that the BJP-NDA government is in power today. Whenever any of our countrymen has been in trouble, we have used all our strength to protect them. Today's India doesn't leave its people in trouble. We are providing security and all facilities to Indians stuck in the war," he said.

## Gas Shortage Crisis Leaves Hotels Worried, Many Eateries Shut, Others Slash Menu, Hike Prices

■ CTNN

**Hyderabad:** Shortage of commercial LPG amid a global hike in oil prices due to the ongoing crisis in West Asia has hit hotels and restaurants across Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Visakhapatnam. While many eateries have shut down, others are slashing their menus or increasing prices to cope with the problem. Hoteliers said if the situation persists, more establishments may be forced to close down in the coming days.

The impact is clearly visi-



ble in Hyderabad's eateries, where popular breakfast items such as vada, dosa, and puri have been temporarily removed from the menus in many places. Since these dishes require more cooking time and consume a significant amount of oil and gas,

preparing these are difficult amid the shortage. The Hyderabad IT Corridor Hotels Association has also announced that tea and coffee are being temporarily stopped in some hotels due to LPG shortage.

From roadside tiffin carts

to hotels, almost all food outlets depend on LPG for cooking. Hotel owners said the current cylinder stocks may last for only a day or two and if fresh supplies do not arrive soon, they will have to close. They also explained that switching to alternative cooking methods like firewood stoves or electric induction systems are not practical for large-scale cooking. Many hotels have increased prices, citing higher transportation costs and rising prices of essential commodities. Snacks have become around 10 percent costlier. Dosa, puri, and vada

prices have gone up by at least Rs 15, while idli and upma prices have risen by around Rs 10. The larger hotel chains and restaurants have reportedly raised their prices by nearly 15 percent.

K Narayana, who runs a hotel in Uppal, said his establishment had not received commercial cylinders for the past three days following which it was closed down. "We have been running this hotel for 22 years, but this is the first time we have faced such a situation. Without gas, we had to shut down the hotel," he said. Even PG accommodations and mess services across Hyderabad have

been hit as over 90 percent of cooking is done using gas. Thus, many hostels have already slashed dishes that require long cooking time and for the time being, meals are being limited to items like rice, sambar, dal, and soup. Hyderabad has nearly 20,000 hotels, 25,000 tea stalls and small food outlets, apart from nearly 11,000 PG hostels accommodating around 10 lakh residents and 1,000 mess facilities. Nearly five lakh people are directly employed in the hotel sector with around one lakh people working in the food delivery services and nearly five lakh daily commuters relying on hotels and eateries for their meals.

## LPG Shortage in Country; 1 Crore People to Be Unemployed: Kejriwal

AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday slammed the Centre for 'heavy LPG shortage' affecting people across the country and questioned the prime minister's "support" for Israel and the US. The former Delhi chief minister said, "There is a chance that almost 1 crore people would be unemployed because of the power shortage situa-

tion emerging," he said. "There is a heavy shortage of LPG in the country. The reason behind this is that 90 percent of the LPG imported in India is from the Strait of Hormuz. Restaurants and hotels are facing shortages. In the next two days, 50 per cent of hotels are on the verge of shut-down, news is coming from Delhi NCR, Bihar," Kejriwal said.

# BJP seeks dedicated data centre park in Bengaluru, Priyank Kharge flags subsidy issue

**Bengaluru (Agency):** Bharatiya Janata Party MLA and BJP Yuva Morcha president Dheeraj Muniraju on Wednesday urged the Congress-led Karnataka government to set up dedicated data centre parks in Bengaluru and its outskirts. He cited reports that a Google data centre project had moved to Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh instead of Bengaluru. Responding to the demand, Karnataka Minister for IT and Biotechnology Priyank Kharge said the Andhra Pradesh government had offered substantial subsidies for the project and stressed that Karnataka would pursue a more sustainable approach. "Data centres are important, but there are better ways to do it," he said. Raising the issue during the Question and Answer session in the Assembly, Muniraju said Bengaluru, widely known as the IT capital, lacked dedicated parks for colocation and enterprise data centres. "Bengaluru is known as the IT capital of the world. The IT boom is shifting to the northern part of the city. However, the same cannot be said when it comes to data centres. The government has not allotted dedicated data centre parks. Because of this, companies are forced to depend on private players and are facing several issues," he said. Muniraju pointed out that major companies were moving to other cities. "The largest number of data centres are in Mumbai, while Chennai is in second position, and Delhi is in fourth position. Bengaluru has slipped to the fifth position. Whether it is social media, streaming platforms, AI systems or cloud computing, Bengaluru is number one in all these sectors. For all this, large data centres are required," he said. He proposed establishing a major data centre park in Doddaballapur, north of Bengaluru, where large tracts of land have already been acquired for the Quin City project. "Major companies such as Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Oracle and Alibaba



have their headquarters in Bengaluru. They should also have their data centres here. Hence, one data centre park should be allocated in Doddaballapur," he said. Muniraju also pointed to developments in other cities. "Hyderabad is similar to Bengaluru, and several data centres have come up there. According to media reports, Google's data centre project has gone to Visakhapatnam. A \$13-billion investment involving three Amazon projects has gone to Hyderabad, with those facilities set up on the outskirts of the city. Hence, efforts should be made to accommodate data centres in Doddaballapur," he said. Replying to the concern, Kharge said the project in Visakhapatnam had been supported by major incentives. "Everyone talks about Google moving to Visakhapatnam, but no one speaks about the cost at which it has gone there. The Andhra Pradesh government has given a subsidy of Rs

22,000 crore for the Google project. The land subsidy is 25 per cent. They have offered a Re 1 reduction in power tariff per unit for 15 years, a 10 per cent GST exemption for 10 years, 100 per cent exemption on stamp duty, and a 10 per cent capital subsidy on plant and machinery. The number of jobs being generated is only about 1,500," he said. Kharge also highlighted the heavy resource requirements of data centres. "Data centres are extremely power-sensitive. For a one-megawatt plant, we require around Rs 70 crore. In one acre of land, only a one-megawatt plant can be set up. We also need about 25 million litres of water per megawatt every year to run a data centre," he said.

"If one asks five questions on ChatGPT, about 500 ml of water is consumed. That is the scale of consumption. Now, with new technology, companies are using liquid cooling and treated water. That is why we will relook at our policy and come up with a sustainable data centre policy," he added.

According to the minister, 32 data centres are currently operating privately in Karnataka. "We already have a Data Centre Policy and we are reviewing it. It is necessary to have data centres for AI, machine learning and other emerging technologies. But data centres are also major consumers of water and energy. In this background, our government is examining whether sustainable data centres can be promoted," he said. Kharge said the revised policy would also encourage development beyond Bengaluru.

"Since the existing policy is two to three years old, we are planning to make the new policy more sustainable. Apart from Bengaluru, our focus is also on Mangaluru and the coastal areas. We are in discussions with private companies. Regarding land allotment in Doddaballapur, there is no shortage of land and under the policy, we will focus on bringing in as many data centres as possible.

## Cabinet approves 2 multitracking projects covering 5 Districts of West Bengal, Jharkhand

**Special Correspondent ■** will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities.

**New Delhi:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved two projects of Ministry of Railways with a total cost of Rs. 4,474 crore (approx.). These projects include Sainthia - Pakur 4th line and Santragachi - Kharagpur 4th line.

The increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion. The projects are in line with the PM's vision of a New India, which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of a comprehensive development in the area which

The two projects covering five districts across the states of West Bengal and Jharkhand will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 192 Kms. The approved multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approx 5,652 villages, which have a population of about 147 lakhs.

## Sincere effort to forge alliance with Akhil Gogoi failed, says Gaurav Gogoi

**Guwahati (Agency):** Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday said the party had made sincere efforts to forge an electoral alliance with Rajior Dal ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, but discussions between the two sides could not lead to a favourable outcome. In a post on social media, Gogoi said the Congress had attempted to build a united opposition platform in line with the aspirations of the people of Assam, who wanted opposition forces to contest the elections together. "Keeping in mind the wishes of the people of Assam, we wanted to form an alliance with Rajior Dal so that the oppo-

sition could contest the upcoming Assembly elections in a united manner," he said. Gogoi, however, noted that despite several attempts and discussions, the two parties could not create what he described as a "conducive and hopeful environment" for an alliance. He said the primary objective of any electoral alliance is to maximise the realistic chances of winning seats and strengthening the opposition against the ruling dispensation. "While keeping this principle in mind, we approached the seat-sharing discussions with a broad and flexible perspective and tried to move forward through mutual adjustments," Gogoi said. Despite those

efforts, he added, several issues prevented the two parties from shaping the alliance in the manner expected by the people of the state. "As a result, we have decided to take a temporary pause from the process of forming an alliance with Rajior Dal. We will review the matter again in the future," he said. Earlier, Rajior Dal president and Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi had also indicated that talks between the two parties had not reached a final agreement. Gogoi had maintained that his party was keen on forming a united opposition front but differences over seat-sharing and political strategies made it difficult to finalise the alliance at this stage.

## 'Open attack on democracy': KTR on Speaker's clean chit to defectors

**Hyderabad (Agency):** Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday termed Telangana Assembly Speaker's clean chit to MLAs Danam Nagender and Kadiyam Srihari in the anti-defection case as an open attack on democracy. He took to 'X' to react strongly to Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar dismissing petitions for disqualification of Nagender and Srihari, who were elected to Assembly on BRS tickets in



2023 but later defected to the ruling Congress party. Rama Rao criticised the Speaker for giving clean chit to Nagender, who contested for Lok Sabha on Congress party's symbol in 2024 by disrespecting the people's verdict. The BRS leader said that the Speaker's decision will encourage defections and termed it a dark day in democratic history. "This is not a judgment. This is an example of how Constitutional system is used to favour those in power. If elected positions won

stamp of approval for it where do democratic values stand," he asked. "Such decisions erode people's trust. The people of Telangana are watching everything. They will give the answer at the right time," KTR added. Earlier, pronouncing the orders on the petitions for the disqualification of Kadiyam Srihari and Danam Nagender, the Speaker said the petitioners have failed to provide evidence that the two MLAs defected to the Congress party.



## Rajasthan Assembly adjourned sine die, House functioned for 184 hours across 24 sittings

**Jaipur (Agency):** The fifth session of the 16th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly was adjourned sine die on Tuesday at 6.06 p.m. Speaker Vasudev Devnani announced this on Wednesday morning. Reviewing the session, Devnani said the Assembly held 24 sittings, during which discussions and legislative business continued for about 184 hours. The Speaker said extensive discussions were held on the Motion of Thanks on the

Governor's Address. Members of the BJP participated in the debate for 13 hours, 14 minutes, while the Congress spoke for 10 hours, 52 minutes. Legislators from other parties contributed 1 hour and 37 minutes. During the general discussion on the Budget Estimates for 2026-27, BJP members spoke for 9 hours 42 minutes, Congress members for 8 hours 19 minutes, and other parties for 1 hour 21 minutes. On the Demands for Grants, BJP legisla-

tors participated for 36 hours 56 minutes, Congress members for 21 hours 26 minutes, and other parties for 4 hours 25 minutes. Devnani said the Assembly received 8,919 questions during the session. These included 4,311 starred questions, 4,603 unstarred questions, and five short-notice questions. Of the starred questions, 440 were listed, and 232 were answered orally in the House. A total of 451 unstarred questions were also listed. He noted that during the past four sessions of the 16th Assembly, the state government responded to 22,074 out of 22,735 questions, achieving a response rate of about 97 per cent, which he described as a record for the Assembly. Under Rule 50, notices for 371 adjournment motions were received. Of these, 84 were admitted for discussion, and 77 members presented their views. Under Rule 295, 339 notices for special mentions were received, out of which 309 were either read out in the House or deemed to have been read. The Assembly also received 850 calling-attention notices, of which 33 were listed on the House

agenda. A total of 10 bills were introduced and passed during the session. The House received 171 amendment proposals, of which 17 were ruled inadmissible, and 154 were accepted. The Assembly held a four-day general discussion on the 2026-27 Budget, with 84 MLAs participating. Out of 64 demands for grants, 16 were discussed over eight days. A total of 3,935 cut motions were submitted, of which 3,599 were presented in the House. Devnani said the Assembly received 226 petitions, of which 52 were presented in the House. In addition, 37 reports of various committees were tabled during the session. On the conclusion of the session, Devnani thanked all legislators for their cooperation in ensuring the smooth functioning of the House. He also acknowledged the support of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Leader of Opposition Tikaram Jolly, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Jogaram Patel, Government Chief Whip Jageshwar Garg, and Opposition Chief Whip Rafiq Khan.

## Class 11 student stabbed to death in Kota

**Jaipur (Agency):** A student of Class 11, Shubham, was brutally stabbed to death by some miscreants in the Udhog Nagar Police Station area in Kota, Rajasthan, officials said on Wednesday. Police officials suspect that a rivalry linked to social media may have triggered the murder. According to reports, Shubham was returning home from a wedding ceremony with friends late on Tuesday night. After reaching Kota from Gadepan, the group dispersed and headed toward their respective homes. While Shubham was alone in the area under the jurisdiction of

Udhog Nagar Police Station, unidentified miscreants who were allegedly hiding in nearby bushes ambushed him. The attackers reportedly stabbed him multiple times in the chest and waist. Severely injured and bleeding profusely, Shubham was rushed to a private hospital in Vigyan Nagar. However, doctors said he succumbed to his injuries on the way due to excessive blood loss. Statements from Shubham's friends and family have given investigators a new lead. His friend Hazrat Ali told police that Shubham was very active on social media and had

a large following. According to him, some local youths were reportedly jealous of his popularity, which may have led to hostility against him. Family members said Shubham had no known personal disputes with anyone, strengthening the suspicion that the attack could be linked to rivalry stemming from social media popularity. After receiving information about the incident, Jitendra Singh Shekhawat, the station house officer of Udhog Nagar police station, reached the spot with a police team and began an investigation.

## Woman Dies After Delivery, Family Alleges Medical Negligence at Ramgarh Private Hospital

**Special Correspondent ■** **Ramgarh:** A case of alleged medical negligence has surfaced in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district after a young woman died following a delivery at a private hospital, prompting demands for a thorough investigation and strict action against those responsible.

The deceased, Deepika Kumari, daughter of BJP leader Shambhu Lal Thakur, had been admitted to Pulse Hospital on Ranchi Road in Ramgarh on March 2, 2026, for delivery. According to family members, doctors initially assured them that the delivery would be normal. However, the hospital later performed

a surgical operation, following which she gave birth to a baby boy. In a written complaint submitted to the authorities, the family alleged that serious negligence occurred during the operation. They claimed that an anaesthetist, identified as Dr. Pankaj Kumar Mandal of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), administered anaesthesia improperly, after which Deepika's condition deteriorated and excessive bleeding began. The family further alleged that for nearly four hours after the operation, hospital authorities did not allow them to meet the patient or the newborn and did not provide clear informa-

tion about their condition. Later, the hospital reportedly informed them that the condition of both the mother and the baby had become critical and advised shifting her to Ranchi. Deepika was subsequently referred to Medica Hospital in Ranchi. According to the family, she was transported in an ambulance that lacked adequate medical facilities, including oxygen support and medical staff. She was admitted to the Ranchi hospital around 2 a.m. on March 3, but doctors declared her dead about two hours later. Doctors at the Ranchi hospital reportedly informed the family

that the patient might have survived if she had been brought earlier, suggesting possible lapses in the earlier treatment. The newborn child is reportedly in critical condition and is currently on ventilator support. Former Hazaribagh MP Dr. Yadunath Pandey visited the bereaved family and expressed condolences. Speaking to reporters, he alleged that the woman's death was the result of medical negligence and urged the government to take strict action against the doctors involved. He also demanded that hospitals found guilty of negligence should face strict penalties and that licenses should not be issued

without proper verification. Deepika's family has appealed to the Union Health Ministry, the Jharkhand Health Department, the district administration, and the Indian Medical Council to conduct a detailed inquiry into the incident. They have demanded cancellation of the licenses of the doctors involved and strict action against the hospital management. Local residents and family members have also called for stronger legal safeguards to protect patients' rights and prevent similar incidents in the future. Authorities have yet to issue an official statement regarding the allegations.

## PM to flag off inaugural run of 2 new trains

**CTNN ■** **Kolkata:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the inaugural run of Purulia-Anand Vihar Terminal Express on Saturday and Podanur-Dhanbad Amrit Bharat Express on Wednesday. 04020 Purulia-Anand Vihar Terminal Special will leave Purulia at 14:30 hrs on Saturday and will reach Anand Vihar Terminal at 20:35 hrs the next day. Date of introduction of regular run of Purulia-Anand Vihar Terminal-Purulia Express will be notified later. On the other hand, 06619 Podanur-Dhanbad Amrit Bharat Special will leave Podanur at 17:30 hrs on Wednesday and will reach Dhanbad at 12:30 hrs on the third day. Date of introduction of regular run of Podanur-Dhanbad-Podanur Amrit Bharat Express will also be notified later.

# PL filed at Calcutta High Court demanding violence-free polls in West Bengal

■ CTNN

**Kolkata:** A public interest litigation had been filed at a division bench of the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday seeking free and fair and violence-free polls in West Bengal in the crucial Assembly elections in the state scheduled later this year. The petition had been admitted by the division

bench of the Calcutta High Court, Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen, and the matter is expected to come up for hearing in the second half of Wednesday. The publication interest litigation had been filed just a day after the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) told media persons in Kolkata on Tuesday that the Election Commission of

India (ECI) this time will move with a zero-tolerance policy towards poll-related violence, be it before the polls, during the polls, or after the polls. "The Commission had decided to act in this matter very strongly and take strong action against anyone involved in the matter," the CEC said. In the public interest litigation filed on Wednesday, the peti-



tion referred to instances of poll-related violence in the past election, including intimidation of voters and opposition party agents, and even instances of outrage of modesty of women by the "political hooligans" in the state. The other demands in the public interest litigation include immediate deployment of central armed police forces (CAPF) in highly sen-

sitive pockets in the state, installation of CCTVs, and arrangement of videography in all booths this time. The petitioner had also referred to unprecedented bloodshed and violence in the elections for the three-tier panchayat system in West Bengal both in 2018 and 2023, which resulted in loss of several lives in both these years. The ECI, this time, is specially

focusing on curbing instances of pre-poll and post-poll violence in West Bengal, which made the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections murky. Even recently, there were allegations of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s 'Parivartan Yatra' being attacked at several places in the state, allegedly by the Trinamool Congress activists.

## ED raids residence of police officer in Durgapur in coal smuggling probe

■ CTNN

**Kolkata:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday carried out a fresh raid at the residence of police officer Manoranjan Mondal in Durgapur of West Burdwan district, West Bengal, in connection with the ongoing coal smuggling investigation. This is the second time the ED has searched Mondal's residence. Earlier, the central agency had raided his house on February 3 and questioned him for several hours. On Wednesday morning, central forces surrounded Mondal's house located in the City Centre area of Durgapur, following which ED officials began a search operation. Upon arriving at the residence, the officials pasted a notice at the gate directing Manoranjan Mondal to appear at the ED office on March 13 between 12 noon and 1 p.m. This is the third summons issued to Mondal in the case. He had failed to appear before the agency despite being summoned twice earlier. During the raid, ED officials reportedly questioned members of his family. However, it remains unclear whether Mondal himself was present at the house during the operation. ED sources said the agency is probing Mondal's alleged role in the coal smuggling network. Investigators suspect that he may have been linked to the collection of "protection money" related to illegal coal operations. He is also alleged to have received money from individuals associated with the coal trade. In February, ED officials had also raided his residence. At that time, Mondal had just been appointed as the Officer-in-Charge of Budbud police station and was expected to formally assume charge within a few days. However, before he could take charge, he was removed from the post and transferred to the Special Branch. The officer also has a controversial past. In 2024, he was suspended on corruption charges. During that period, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had made strong remarks on the coal smuggling issue. At a meeting at the state secretariat, she had said that although allegations were being levelled against the Trinamool Congress, a section of the security forces and police personnel were actually aiding and abetting the smuggling in exchange for money. She had asserted that such irregularities would not be tolerated. Following the Chief Minister's remarks, Manoranjan Mondal, who was then serving as the Officer-in-Charge of Barabani police station, was suspended and a judicial inquiry was initiated against him. At present, he is once again under the ED's scanner. Investigators indicated that if he fails to appear before the agency this time as well, strict legal action may be initiated against him.



## Political Tension Escalates Over NIA Notice in BJP Leader Murder Case in Moyna

■ CT Bureau

**Medinipur:** Political tensions have intensified between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) following notices issued by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the murder of a BJP leader in Moyna of East Medinipur district. The controversy gained momentum after reports surfaced on Monday evening that notices had been served to several individuals in the case. Since Wednesday morning, leaders from both parties have been engaged in a war of words, accusing each other of politicizing the investigation. According to local sources, BJP booth president Bijoykrishna Bhuiyan was abducted and murdered on May 1, 2023, in Bakchar Ghoramahal village under the Moyna police station area. Following the incident, the victim's wife, Lakshmirani Bhuiyan, filed a written complaint with the Moyna police station. In her complaint, she named 34 leaders and workers associated with the Trinamool Congress as accused in the case. Later, following directions from the court, the investigation into the case was handed over to the NIA. During the course of its probe, the agency has already arrested several individuals linked to the crime. The issuance of fresh notices by the NIA has now triggered fresh political controversy in the region. Trinamool Congress leader Chandan Mondal, who reportedly received a notice in connection with the case, has alleged that he is being harassed for political reasons. He claimed that attempts are being made to implicate him in the case because he left the BJP and joined the Trinamool Congress. According to him, the move is part of a politically motivated campaign to target him. The Trinamool Congress has also raised questions about the role of the central government and central investigative agencies. Addressing a gathering on Tuesday evening, Sujit Roy, the Tamluk organizational district president of the Trinamool Congress, alleged that the BJP has been using central agencies for political purposes for a long time. He claimed that when Chandan Mondal was associated with the BJP, his name never surfaced in the case, but after he joined the Trinamool Congress, he was served with a notice by the NIA. The BJP, however, has strongly rejected these allegations. On Wednesday morning, Sukanta Choudhury, general secretary of the BJP's Tamluk organizational district unit, said that if an investigation agency summons someone for questioning, there is no need to view it through a political lens. He maintained that the investigation would proceed in accordance with the law and that anyone found guilty would face legal action. Meanwhile, the developments have sparked intense debate in the region, with both parties continuing to accuse each other of politicizing the issue. The NIA investigation into the murder case is still ongoing, and authorities are expected to continue questioning individuals as part of efforts to uncover the full extent of the conspiracy behind the killing.

## Foreign servers, VPNs used in Bengal bomb scares; email ID 'racket' under lens

■ CT Bureau

**Kolkata:** The police investigation into the recent wave of bomb threats targeting courts, post offices, and passport offices across West Bengal has revealed that the perpetrators utilised Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and foreign servers to conceal their identities. Investigators on Wednesday said that the digital trail behind the hoax bomb threats points to servers outside India. A senior intelligence officer with the West Bengal Police said that the mastermind behind the panic remains at large, and a search is underway to arrest the perpetrators behind the incident.

**NOTICE**  
My client Sri Surajit Mondal, Son of Tulusi Mondal, reside at Simla Kalitala, Malikipara, Serampore, Hooghly, property registered on 20 November 2024 in A.D.S.R. Srirampur, deed No. 1-5275/2024 from the seller Sri Sumit Kumar Choubey, resident of Tardih Rupsa, Amarpur, Banka, Bihar, registered in Mouza J.L. 18, Hall I.R. Khatian No. 970, L.R. Dag No. 956, land measuring more or less than 1 catla or 1.65 sata of the property in Serampore B.L.R.O. Serampore Hooghly office has applied for mutation, my client has purchased the said land from whom he has purchased the said land registered in A.D.S.R. office on 12th October 2018, deed no. 1-3924/2018 from the Annoktar of smt. Anjana Ash, power of attorney (Annoktar name) in the original of the deed Shri Partha Das, father Late Lakshman Das and Shri Bhaskar Ghosh, father Late Panchanan Ghosh both resident of Ghoramahal Paschimpara Serampore Hooghly (Annoktar's registration no. 19/01/2018 A.D.S.R. Serampore, Hooghly. If the donor of the said Annoktar or any other person has any complaint, then it should be reported to the said B.L.R.O. office within the next 01 month from the date of advertisement, otherwise action will be taken as per law after that time.  
Sd/-  
Anand Nath  
Advocate, Serampore  
Mob-7980793533

## Simlagarh Vitasin Gram Panchayat

**Champahati, Simlagarh, Pandua, Hooghly**  
**E-NIT**  
e-NIT are invited by the Prodhon SVGP, from reliable and bonafied Tenderer for work vide e-NIT No. 43/APAS/SV/25-26 (7th Call) & 44/APAS/SV/25-26 (7th Call), Fund : APAS & e-NIT No. NIT/39/2025-26/SVGP (3rd Call), NIT/40/2025-26/SVGP (2nd Call), NIT/41/2025-26/SVGP (2nd Call), Fund : 15th FC. Bid Submission Closing date : 14/03/2026 at 05:00 PM. For details visit <https://wbenders.gov.in> & Gram Panchayat Office.  
Sd/-  
Prodhon  
Simlagarh Vitasin Gram Panchayat

## Kodalii-II Gram Panchayat

**Kodalii, Bandel, Hooghly**  
**Notice Inviting Re e-Tender**  
Re e-Tender is invited from reputed bonafied Tenderer for execution of development works under 15th CFC (Tied) Fund vide e-NIT No.: 1172/KGP-II/2025-2026, (Sl. 1), Date: 11.03.2026. Period and Time for Downloaded of Bidding Documents: From 11.03.2026 at 06:55 PM to 16.03.2026 up to 01:00 PM. Bid Opening Date & Time: 18.03.2026 at 11:00 PM. For detailed information visit [www.wbenders.gov.in](http://www.wbenders.gov.in) & undersigned GP Office.  
Sd/-  
Prodhon  
Kodalii-II Gram Panchayat

## Bank of India BOI

**Krishnagar Branch, Nadia, West Bengal Pin - 741101**  
To  
**Ms Lipika Chakraborty Majumder (Borrower/Mortgagor)**, W/o. Pradip Kumar Majumder and **Mr Sunil Chakraborty (Guarantor)**, S/o. Chittaranjan Chakraborty, both at 123 Road Station, Ruipukur, P. S. - Kotwali, Dist. - Nadia, Pin - 741101  
**NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002**  
1. At the request made by you, the Bank has granted to you various credit facilities aggregating to an amount of ₹ 8,00,000/- . We give hereunder details of various credit facilities granted by us and the outstanding dues thereunder as on the date of notice :-

Nature of Facility	Sanctioned Limited	Outstanding Dues
a) Loan Against Property (Term Loan)	₹ 8,00,000/-	₹ 7,70,955.53 Dr. + uncharged Interest

- The aforesaid credit facilities granted by the bank are secured by the following assets/securities (particulars of properties/assets charged to Bank).  
a. Equitable Mortgage of Two storied building situated at Mouza - Ruipukur, J. L. No. 52, Hal Touzi - 07, Pargana - Ukhra of RS Dag No. 2878, LR Dag No. 7988, LR Khatian No. 3449, Present LR Khatian No. 6484 at Road Station, under Ruipukur Gram Panchayat, P. O. - Krishnagar, P. S. - Kotwali, Dist. - Nadia, PIN - 741101, WB admeasuring 6 Decimal or 2616 sq.ft. in the name Lipika Chakraborty Majumder.
- As you have defaulted in repayment of your dues to the Bank under the said credit facilities, we have classified your account as **Non-Performing Asset with effect from 05.03.2026** in accordance with the direction / guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India.
- For the reasons stated above, we hereby give you notice under section 13(2) of the above noted Act and call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities by paying to the Bank sum of ₹ 7,70,955.53 (contractual dues up to the date of notice) with interest @10.00% compounded with monthly rests, and all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank, till repayment by you within a period of 60 days from the date of this notice, failing which please note that we will entirely at your risks as to costs and consequences exercise the powers vested with the Bank under Section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, against the secured assets mentioned above.
- While we call upon you to discharge your liability as above by payment of the entire dues to the Bank together with applicable interest, all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank till repayment and redeem the secured assets, within the period mentioned above, please take important note that as per section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, the right of redemption of secured assets will be available to you only till the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets.
- The amounts realized from exercising the powers mentioned above, will firstly be applied in payment of all costs, charges and expenses which are incurred by us and / or any expenses incidental hereto, and secondly in discharge of the Bank's dues as mentioned above with contractual interest from the date of the notice till the date of actual realization and the residue of the money, if any, after the Bank's entire dues (including under any of your other dues to the Bank whether as borrower or guarantor) are fully recovered, shall be paid to you.
- If the said dues are not fully recovered from the proceeds realized in the course of exercise of the said powers against the secured assets, we reserve our right to proceed against you and your other assets including by filing legal/recovery actions before Debts Recovery Tribunal/Courts for recovery of the balance amount due to along with all costs etc. incidental thereto from you.
- Please take note that as per Sub-section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise.
- The undersigned is a duly authorized officer of the Bank to issue this notice and exercise powers under section 13 aforesaid Act.
- Needless to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the Bank.

Your faithfully  
Sd/-  
Authorised Officer  
Date : 07.03.2026  
Place : Krishnagar

## Man Killed in Car Collision on National Highway

■ CTNN

**Jalpaiguri:** A 55-year-old man died in a tragic road accident after being hit by a speeding car on a national highway in the Rajganj area of Jalpaiguri district on Wednesday morning, police said. The incident occurred near Hathimor in the Balaigach area under Rajganj block. The deceased has been identified as Biren Roy (55), a resident of Balaigach village. According to local sources,

Roy had left his house early in the morning to graze his cattle. While attempting to cross the highway, a speeding car reportedly struck him with great force. The impact left him critically injured and also killed one of the cattle accompanying him on the spot. Residents of the area rushed to the scene immediately after the accident and found Roy lying seriously injured on the roadside. They quickly arranged for transportation and took him to the Rajganj



Rural Hospital for treatment. However, doctors at the hospital declared him dead on arrival. The accident triggered anger among local residents, who blamed reckless driving on the busy highway for the tragedy. Soon after the incident, people in the area managed to catch the driver of the car involved in the acci-

# Political Clash Intensifies Over BJP's 'Parivartan Yatra' in West Medinipur

■ CTNN

**Medinipur:** A sharp political confrontation has erupted in West Medinipur district of West Bengal over the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) ongoing 'Parivartan Sankalp Yatra'. The political temperature in the district has risen significantly as the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the main opposition BJP trade accusations over the impact and purpose of the campaign ahead of upcoming elections. The BJP has launched the 'Parivartan Yatra' across several parts of the district as part of its strategy to strengthen its organizational network and mobilize grassroots support. The campaign includes a series of chariot rallies, roadshows and public meetings aimed at energizing party workers and reaching out to voters in rural and semi-urban areas. Senior BJP leaders have been actively participating in the campaign, including Union

Minister Giriraj Singh, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari, state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya and senior leader Rahul Sinha. Through rallies and public gatherings, the party leadership has been highlighting its political agenda and appealing to voters to support a change in the state's political landscape. In a significant development during the yatra, influential Kurmi community leader Rajesh Mahato joined the BJP. Political observers believe that his induction could have an impact on local caste equations and may strengthen the party's position in certain rural pockets of the district where the Kurmi community has a notable presence. During the public meetings held as part of the campaign, BJP leaders have also made a series of promises aimed at attracting voters. These include



increasing the financial assistance under the 'Lakshmi Bhandar' scheme to 3,000, providing annual financial support of 18,000 to farmers, and ensuring transparent and corruption-free recruitment of teachers in the state. Party leaders have claimed that these commitments reflect their vision for governance and development in West Bengal. However, the Trinamool Congress has strongly criticized the BJP's campaign and dismissed the 'Parivartan Yatra' as a failure. According to TMC leaders, the BJP has failed to attract significant public participation in its rallies and meetings, which they claim demonstrates that the people of West Bengal have rejected the campaign. Citing police reports, TMC leaders alleged that the turnout at most of the BJP's programs has been very low and that the party is exaggerating the level of public support for the yatra. They argue that the lack of large crowds reflects the declining popularity of the BJP in the state. The BJP leadership, howev-

er, has rejected these claims. Party leaders insist that the main objective of the yatra is not merely to display strength through large crowds but to reconnect with grassroots workers and rebuild the party's booth-level structure.

According to BJP leaders Gourishankar Adhikari and Arup Das from Narayangarh, the campaign has generated fresh enthusiasm among party workers, particularly in rural areas. They said that many villagers have been eagerly waiting for the campaign chariot even late at night, which they believe reflects the growing interest and support for the party among local residents. BJP leaders maintain that the response on the ground is far more encouraging than what their political rivals are claiming. Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress has also intensified its counter-campaign. Ghatol organizational district TMC president Ajit Maity accused the BJP of ignoring the real concerns of voters and misleading the public through unrealistic promises. As part of its strategy to counter the BJP's campaign, the Trinamool Congress has directed its local units to organize counter rallies and public outreach programs in different parts of the district. Political observers believe that these developments could lead to heightened political confrontations in the coming days. With both parties aggressively trying to consolidate their support bases in rural regions, the 'Parivartan Yatra' has become a major focal point of political activity in West Medinipur. As the political battle intensifies, the campaign is expected to play a significant role in shaping the political narrative in the district ahead of future electoral contests.

## Recurring frauds signal failing oversight

The Rs-590 crore fraud in the IDFC First Bank is a reminder that malpractices at this scale can still happen in banks and financial institutions that operate with stated claims of best practices. Measures implemented following the scams in Yes Bank, Punjab National Bank, etc., were believed to have ensured strong deterrence. The IDFC incident, reported in its Chandigarh branch, breaks this notion.

The issue surfaced when the bank disclosed in a regulatory filing that it had detected fraud involving certain accounts linked to the Haryana government. The bank traced the fraud to unauthorised and fraudulent activities carried out by some employees at the branch, possibly aided by other individuals, and announced plans for a forensic audit.

A financial fraud of this nature cannot be seen as a minor, branch-level aberration. It reflects a systemic problem for which the bank is to be held responsible. The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank, V Vaidyanathan, said it was an isolated case with no involvement of the senior management and that the process of recovery was initiated. He also noted that the bank had initiated counter-measures, including filing a police complaint. But these are still reactive steps that should not distract from the fact that the bank failed to prevent the fraud.

In a system where continuous monitoring of processes is possible, this is a failure that places the protocols of the management under scrutiny. The response should not be limited to action against the errant staff because the senior management of the bank is morally and substantially accountable.

Law enforcement agencies under the Haryana government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are investigating the scam. The state government is reported to have recovered most of the funds diverted from the bank. At least eight people have been arrested in connection with the scam, which involved forgery, violation of procedures, and other malpractices.

According to the investigators, the case would require sustained and in-depth investigation to unearth the entire nexus of public servants, bank officials, and the beneficiaries, and to understand the complex conspiracy and its execution. The probe would also require the analysis of extensive amounts of digital data. It should not leave any possibility open for the offenders. All those involved in the scam need to be held accountable. The outcome should prove a true example of deterrence and help establish trust in the banking system.

## Indian Railways: Running late for 2047?

Avay Shukla

I've said it before and I'll say it again for the doubtful benefit of this hearing-impaired government - putting old wine in new bottles doesn't change the wine for the better. A prime example is the Indian Railways and its slew of hyped-up new trains - Vande Bharat, Tejas, Namo Bharat and others - along with the claim that they have transformed the way Indians travel. They haven't. They have just made travel more expensive.

Last month I had to go to my hometown, Kanpur, to revitalise my withering roots and decided to travel by the Delhi-Varanasi Vande Bharat, touted as the last word in luxury, speed and punctuality. It was my first time on a Vande Bharat. It turned out to be none of these.

The fallacy began to unravel on platform 16 of New Delhi railway station itself, where I arrived at 2.30 pm for the 3.00 pm departure. The train arrived two hours late and finally left at 5.20 pm - two-and-a-half hours behind schedule. So much for punctuality.

Worse, there was almost no information shared with the hundreds of waiting passengers. Every now and then a bored announcement would inform us that the train "is delayed by 15 minutes". It was always 15 minutes - not a minute

less or a minute more.

This instalment-style announcement of delays, copied from the airline industry, is inexplicable in this age of real-time information when a train's actual location can be tracked minute by minute. Why not share that information with the passengers who trusted the Railways' bloated hype? And isn't it ironic that the railway minister is also the IT minister, yet the Railways appear not to know where their own train is at any given moment? The stranded passengers were treated like dirt in other ways too. They had to stand for two hours; there were barely half-a-dozen dirty benches on the platform for more than a thousand people. If there were elderly passengers, the sick or the disabled, that was just too bad - collateral damage on the country's journey to Vishwaguru status. The platform where India's supposedly most magnificent train was to arrive resembled a Sadar Bazaar trading yard. Every now and then, a policeman would come and shoo passengers away for causing overcrowding. Where exactly were they supposed to go? It was no better inside the train when it finally arrived.

The entrance foyer was jammed with food cartons, garbage bags and crates of bottled water.

## Economic Debacle in Bangladesh During Yunus's Regime

Syed Mozammel Ali

Bangladesh's economy grew significantly during the Awami League's 15-year regime and has achieved significant progress in promoting economic growth. Through a mix of government-supported infrastructure projects, SME financing, and focused industrial policies, the country proved that self-reliance was achievable.

Over that 15-year period, Bangladesh maintained an average GDP growth rate of 6.3%. Bangladesh was also set to graduate from LDC list in 2026, meeting all three conditions. Extreme poverty reduced to single digit; social sector indicators were the best among the South Asian countries. Bangladesh has ranked highest among Muslim-majority countries in terms of women's empowerment.

However, that progress has now been systematically undermined. In August 2024, under a unique political circumstance, an interim government was formed in Bangladesh led by Dr. Muhammad Yunus. Upon its formation, the government promised to reduce political tensions through a neutral administrative process and pave the way for a

credible election. However, the interim government failed to reflect even a minimal sense of this intent in political, social, or economic domains. Instead, the economic situation quickly worsened to an unprecedented level.

This discussion will present evidence demonstrating how the interim government has damaged what was once a thriving economy, led to the collapse of hundreds of industries, caused millions to



lose their jobs, and brought hardship to ordinary people.

The average GDP growth rate from FY2009-10 to FY2023-24 was 6.24%. Per capita income increased almost fourfold to \$2,728 in FY24 from \$759 in FY09. However, GDP growth has reduced to only 3.49% in FY25, which is lowest since FY1991-92. The real wages of general people also decreased compared to last year

due to higher inflation. From FY2009-10 to FY2023-24, the poverty rate consistently declined at an average annual rate of 0.75%. But we have seen a reverse phenomenon in the following year. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has estimated that poverty increased to 27.93% in 2025 from 18.7% in 2022, with 3 million more people at risk of falling into poverty. Due to labour unrest, political turmoil and closure of industrial

units owned by entrepreneurs close to the previous government, exports dropped for four consecutive months by late 2025. Over 100 factories closed between August 2024 and May 2025, causing roughly 60,000 job losses. The Interim Government commenced measures targeting business individuals associated with the previous administration. Consequently, most leading business figures either left the country or chose to go

into hiding. As a result, most of them were unable to pay either the principal or the interest on their loans. Non-performing loans (NPLs) have increased to more than 35% of total credit, significantly limiting lending activity and resulting in private investment declining to its lowest point in ten years. It should be noted that non-performing loans accounted for just 12.6% at the end of June 2024.

### Unemployment

Bangladesh's unemployment rate is projected to be around 4.6% to 5.0% in 2025, driven by a rising number of jobless individuals and a challenging labour market, especially for youth and graduates. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) noted that 2.62 million people were unemployed by December 2024, with figures rising, indicating sustained pressure on the job market in 2025.

### Poverty

Poverty increased in 2025 due to high inflation and economic shocks, with estimates indicating the national poverty rate has increased to over 27% from 18.7% in 2022, according to the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC).

## Inside Iran's Military Mosaic

Rahul Pawa

On the morning of March 8, 2026, black rain fell on Tehran. The Iranian capital was engulfed in a cloud of toxic smoke that unleashed oil-tainted rainfall dozens of miles away after overnight Israeli strikes hit several fuel depots, causing fires to burn for hours.

Four oil depots and a petroleum products transfer centre in the Tehran and Alborz provinces were under Israeli fire and damaged, and four personnel, including two oil tanker drivers, were killed. By 10:30 in the morning, cars on Valiasr Street, Tehran's main north-south artery, still needed their headlights on to navigate the darkness. It was a catastrophic image, and it was designed to be one.

But here is what the architects of this air campaign may be miscalculating: Iran was not built to survive this war

tissue that holds this organism together. Established in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini as a people's volunteer force and now operating as a subsidiary arm of the IRGC, its estimated one million members form the paramilitary backbone beneath the Revolutionary Guard's 150,000 professional troops. In the coastal provinces, "Ashura" and "Imam Hussein" battalions are organised in towns to operate autonomously, defending designated geographic areas, leveraging proximity to logistics centres and coastal road networks to ensure flexible, rapid movement of combat assets between sectors. These are not conscript armies waiting for radio orders. They have pre-assigned mission packages. They know their terrain the way a farmer knows his field. The strategic calculation



from the top. It was built to survive it from the bottom. This is the Mosaic Defence, and it is arguably the most consequential military framework to emerge from the Middle East in the past two decades.

Its origins trace back to 2009, when then-IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari formally reorganised the Revolutionary Guards around a single, haunting lesson drawn from watching American military power eviscerate two neighbouring states. Afghanistan fell in weeks. Baghdad collapsed in three. In both cases, destruction of centralised command produced almost immediate systemic failure. Tehran incorporated those lessons: don't fight the enemy's preferred war. The US advantage is high-end airpower, precision strikes, and intelligence dominance. Mosaic Defence tries to make those strengths less decisive by ensuring there is no single headquarters, city, or leader whose loss collapses the fight.

The architecture that emerged is methodical. Each of Iran's 31 provincial IRGC commanders operates with his own weapons arsenal, logistics chains, intelligence services, and Basij militias, explicitly trained to make independent military decisions, plan attacks, and wage guerrilla warfare without consulting Tehran. The formal language inside IRGC operational culture refers to this as the "operational autonomy protocol," triggered automatically when central command goes dark. Iranian Deputy Defence Minister Reza Taleainik confirmed publicly that each figure in the command structure has named successors stretching three ranks down. You kill the general, his brigadier already has orders. You kill the brigadier, the colonel carries on.

On March 1, after Israeli strikes killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi posted on X in direct, unflinching terms: "Bombings in our capital have no impact on our ability to conduct war. Decentralised Mosaic Defence enables us to decide when, and how, the war will end." It was not bravado alone. It was a precise articulation of a deeply embedded strategic posture.

The Basij is the human

tion is brutally simple: to defeat Iran, you do not take Tehran. You take 31 separate, motivated, geographically embedded armies simultaneously.

Operationally, this manifests in ways that have already unnerved American planners. In February's "Smart Control" exercises in the Strait of Hormuz, IRGC fast-attack craft swarmed in coordinated patterns, electronic warfare systems blinded radars, and decentralised orders were executed without central authorisation. This is the rehearsal. The Strait, through which roughly a fifth of the world's traded oil passes, is now overseen not by a single naval command in Tehran but by distributed coastal units that can independently initiate harassment, mining, or blockade operations. The UAE's Ministry of Defence reported intercepting over 1,400 drones, eight cruise missiles, and 238 ballistic missiles from Iran in under a week of conflict. Some of that volume reflects this posture, not desperation: swarm the adversary's interception capacity until something gets through.

The darker edge of this framework is its unpredictability under pressure. While disciplined elite units will sustain coherent operations, less experienced units will fall victim to confusion and disorder, raising the risk of uncoordinated strikes and navigation errors that could trigger unintended escalation. The Iranian drone that reportedly struck Oman, a country actively mediating ceasefire talks, illustrated exactly this: autonomous units operating on pre-issued orders with no one in Tehran in a position to call them back in real time.

The oil rain over Tehran, apocalyptic as it appeared, does not break this system. Iran's oil distribution company confirmed that despite the strikes, sufficient gasoline reserves remained. Fuel disruption to a city of ten million is a genuine hardship and a psychological blow. But Mosaic Defence was never designed around keeping Tehran's refineries lit. It was designed around the premise that even if Tehran burns, Khuzestan fights, Isfahan launches, and the IRGC navy at Bandar Abbas decides on its own when to close the Hormuz chokepoint.

## Diplomacy Over Rhetoric: Why Modi's Approach to Trump Matters

Peter Dash

The Congress party-led Opposition to the BJP government is trying to create a political firestorm by accusing the government of being essentially gutless with Donald Trump and failing to speak up, particularly against several US actions involving Iran. They argue that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, through his "silence", has refrained from criticising Trump to such an extent that it is damaging Indian interests. But does this claim amount to little more than opportunistic political point-scoring? In reality, Prime Minister Modi has been restrained and diplomatically responsible, acting in a manner that serves India's strategic and economic interests. Rather than remaining silent, he has avoided incendiary rhetoric that could further inflame tensions surrounding the war in Iran - something the Opposition appears keen for him to do. Taking an overtly confrontational stance against Trump could risk undermining an emerging and potentially productive trade deal with the United States, one that could generate jobs across sectors. The kind of aggressive rhetoric that the Congress appears eager to deploy

against Washington could instead provoke hostility, jeopardising relief on oil prices and potentially tightening sanctions on Russian oil purchases - a source India continues to rely on. Such an approach could also place additional pressure on strategic arrangements like the Quad, which



remains critical to safeguarding India's sovereignty and maintaining stability in the region, particularly in the event of major conflicts with neighbouring states. Prominent figures within the dynastic leadership of the Opposition have launched a strong verbal offensive against the government over Iran and various issues involving Trump. For instance, according to early March 2026 reports, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Modi for his alleged silence over the targeted assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader,

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Similarly, a Times of India headline read: "Iran crisis: Rahul Gandhi questions PM Modi's 'silence' on warship sinking in 'our backyard'." Another headline in The Federal stated: "Congress questions PM's 'silence' on Trump's ceasefire claims" during a previ-

ous India-Pakistan conflict. Would the Opposition prefer abandoning India's strategic autonomy and balanced diplomacy in favour of publicly confronting Washington with rhetorical grandstanding? Such an approach could undermine crucial trade negotiations with the US administration and potentially worsen tariff regimes. Moreover, if the Opposition's more confrontational strategy prevailed, India might struggle to secure waivers against sanctions on Russian oil - waivers that help shield India's poor and middle classes from rising energy prices and turmoil in

the Gulf. Congress also appears to overlook Washington's own strategic concerns regarding the Iranian regime and the possibility that the United States sees a rare opportunity to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. This does not necessarily mean that all US actions are fully justified under international law or universally acceptable. Nevertheless, the strategic calculations behind them cannot simply be dismissed.

Prime Minister Modi, in contrast, has adopted a balanced and approach. Ironically, what the Opposition seems to demand is not genuine debate but silence from the Prime Minister regarding his efforts to promote stability. It is not that Modi has been silent on Iran, as some Opposition leaders suggest; rather, they appear dissatisfied with the substance of what he has said. At the same time, some Opposition voices have increasingly pushed for a more combative stance towards the United States, even as they accuse the government of excessive nationalism. The contradiction is striking.

# Hormuz oil flow priority in Iran war: White House



**Washington (Agency):** The White House said that the United States is determined to keep the Strait of Hormuz open as the war with Iran intensifies, stressing that President Donald Trump will not allow Tehran to disrupt global energy supplies. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the administration has made protecting the vital shipping lane a central objective of Operation Epic Fury, the US military campaign against Iran. "President Trump reiterated his commitment toward keeping oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz so the United States and all of our allies can receive their energy needs," Leavitt told reporters during the daily press briefing. She warned that Iran would face overwhelming military consequences if it attempted to block the key waterway. "If they do anything to stop the flow of oil or goods within the Strait of Hormuz, they will be hit by the world's most powerful military 20 times harder than they have been hit thus far," she said. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints, carrying a large share of global oil shipments. Any disruption there can rapidly push up oil prices and destabilise international markets. Leavitt said the Trump administration anticipated that Iran might try to disrupt energy markets during the conflict and had prepared measures in advance to protect shipping. "President Trump fully expected the rogue Iranian regime to try and disrupt the global markets," she said. As part of those contingency plans, the administration has taken steps to support commercial

can confirm that the US Navy has not escorted a tanker or vessel at this time, though of course that's an option," she said. Leavitt added that the administration continues to review additional steps to secure the vital waterway and calm energy markets. "The President and his energy team are closely watching the markets, speaking with industry leaders, and the US military is drawing up additional options following the President's directive to continue keeping the Strait of Hormuz open," she said. The White House also sought to reassure Americans worried about rising fuel prices following the conflict. "Rest assured, to the American people, the recent increase in oil and gas prices is temporary, and this operation will result in lower gas prices in the long term," Leavitt said. She argued that once the military campaign achieves its objectives, energy prices could fall again. "Once the national security objectives of Operation Epic Fury are fully achieved, Americans will see oil and gas prices drop rapidly, potentially even lower than they were prior to the start of the operation," she said. The United States launched Operation Epic Fury to dismantle Iran's missile capabilities, weaken its naval forces, and prevent Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, according to the White House. The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to international shipping lanes and carries a significant portion of the world's seaborne oil trade. Because of its strategic importance, any threat to the waterway is closely watched by major energy consumers, including India, China, Japan, and European economies.

tankers operating in the Gulf. "Thus far, the Trump administration has offered political risk insurance to tankers operating in the Gulf," Leavitt said. The US government has also temporarily eased certain restrictions to stabilise supply during the crisis. "The Treasury temporarily waived certain oil-related sanctions," she said. In addition, the White House said the US Navy could escort oil tankers through the narrow passage if required. "The commander in chief has offered the US Navy to escort tankers when necessary," Leavitt said. However, she clarified that no such escort operation has taken place so far and addressed a social media post by the Energy Secretary that suggested otherwise. "I was made aware of this post, I haven't had a chance to talk to the Energy Secretary about it directly. However, I know the post was taken down pretty quickly, and I

## Sheinbaum says 1,009 Mexicans have left conflict zone in Middle East



**Mexico (Agency):** Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said that 1,009 Mexican nationals have left the conflict zone in the Middle East. At her daily press conference on Tuesday, Sheinbaum said that the Mexican nationals traveled by land and Turkey is one of the countries with flights. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that consular efforts by Mexican embassies in the Middle East have facilitated the evacuation of the Mexican nationals from Israel, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Bahrain, Lebanon and Qatar. Travel to the Middle East is not recommended while the conflict situation persists, the ministry said, adding the Mexican embassies in the region remain attentive to requests for consular assistance and protection, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on March 4,

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum had announced that 279 Mexican nationals had been evacuated by land from various Middle Eastern countries amid the ongoing military conflict in the region. "Most have departed by land to Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey, countries that have open airspace," Sheinbaum had said during her daily press conference at the National Palace. Earlier on March 1, the Mexican government would always advocate for world peace, the country's President Claudia Sheinbaum had said, referring to the recent military attacks launched by the United States and Israel against Iran.

## UN says fuel shortages push Cuba into humanitarian crisis



**United Nations (Agency):** Fuel shortages in Cuba have triggered a humanitarian crisis with the island nation's health system approaching a critical point, a UN spokesman said. "We remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation, driven by the inability to import fuel," said Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "This has triggered an energy crisis." The world body is engaging with member states, including the United States, so aid can be delivered unimpeded, Dujarric said during a briefing on Tuesday. The UN Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that hospitals face frequent power outages, shortages of essential medicines, the inability to operate critical equipment, as well as major disruptions to oncology care, dialysis, emergency services, infant and maternal

shortages. Ambulances are struggling to obtain fuel, delaying urgent care. OCHA said that nearly one million people depend on water delivered by tanker trucks, which require fuel. More than 80 percent of water-pumping infrastructure relies on electricity, resulting in widespread and prolonged service disruptions, Xinhua news agency reported. "Food supply chains -- from production to storage to distribution -- are increasingly impacted, with cold-chain systems failing, transport routes increasingly interrupted, and reductions in the availability of basic food items across the country," the office said.

## North Korea defector-turned-journalist officially recognised by govt as South Korean detainee in Pyongyang



**Seoul (Agency):** Ham Jin-woo, a North Korean defector-turned-journalist who went missing in 2017 in border areas between North Korea and China, has been officially recognised by the government as one of seven South Koreans detained in the North, officials said on Wednesday. The unification ministry has newly added Ham to the list of South Koreans held captive in North Korea after consulting with relevant government agencies, according to a ministry official. North Korea has detained seven South Koreans -- three missionaries of Kim Jung-wook, Kim

Kook-kie and Choi Chun-gil, as well as four North Korean defectors who obtained South Korean nationality, according to the unification ministry's website. The names of the four defectors were not disclosed on the

December last year, Unification Minister Chung Dong-young unveiled a plan to add Ham to the list of the South Korean detainees in the North. Kim Jung-wook and the two other missionaries have been detained in North Korea since 2014 on anti-state charges for what Pyongyang called spying for Seoul's spy agency. The whereabouts of the three other North Korean defectors are not known since they were held captive in 2016. Yonhap news agency reported. Ham Jin Woo, a reporter was abducted on May 29, 2017, while he was reporting on the Chinese side.

## Deterrence posture against North Korea won't be hindered regardless of potential shift of USFK's assets



**Seoul (Agency):** The deterrence posture against North Korea will not be hindered regardless of a potential shift of military assets owned by the US military stationed in South Korea, a senior official at Cheong Wa Dae said Wednesday, amid media reports that the US Forces Korea (USFK) has shipped out some of its air defense assets from the Korean Peninsula. "Given our level of military capability, defence spending, defence industry capacity and the high morale of our troops, there is no problem with deterrence against North Korea regardless of whether some USFK assets are relocated

overseas," the official said. The official, however, declined to comment on media reports that parts of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and other air defense units owned by the USFK were moved from South Korea amid a raging war in the Middle East. "It is not appropriate for our government to comment on military operations between Korea and the US," the official said. The official

tribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region," the official said. "To that end, the two countries will continue close communication and coordination." Earlier, on March 10, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said that a potential relocation of military assets owned by the US military stationed in South Korea will not affect the deterrence posture against North Korea.

## Animals in distress: Amid West Asia conflict people abandon pets as they flee Dubai



**Dubai (Agency):** As rising tensions and missile threats push residents to leave parts of the Middle East, animal rescue groups in Dubai say they are witnessing a troubling increase in abandoned pets, with many dogs, cats, fish and turtles being left behind as families scramble to evacuate the region. According to reports, shelters and rescue organisations across the city are struggling to manage a sudden spike in the number of animals being deserted. The growing crisis has become particularly concerning for groups such as K9 Friends, which say they have been flooded with requests from pet owners seeking to surrender their animals or asking for

help rehoming them before departing the country. Animal welfare organisations say the surge appears to be linked to residents making hurried plans to leave amid uncertainty in the region. Many owners, they claim, are finding it difficult to navigate the complex procedures required to relocate pets internationally. Animal rescue experts say the best thing for people to do is to

board their pets in the commercial boarding facilities available throughout the UAE and keep the pet there till they return to the country or till they can arrange for their travel overseas. Veterinarians in Dubai have also reported a noticeable increase in inquiries from pet owners about euthanising their animals. Some owners, faced with expensive relocation costs, extensive paperwork requirements and limited availability of pet-friendly flights, have allegedly approached clinics asking for even healthy pets to be put down instead of taking them along. Images circulating on the social media platform X appear to show the scale of the problem.

## India sends medical aid, relief material to cyclone-hit Madagascar

**Antananarivo (Agency):** India dispatched humanitarian assistance comprising 12 tonnes of medical aid and 18 tonnes of disaster relief material to Madagascar on Wednesday, following the widespread destruction caused by Tropical Cyclones Fytia and Gezani earlier this year, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. Sharing the information in a post on X, the MEA said India stood firmly with the people of Madagascar during the diffi-

cult period. "India stands in solidarity with the people of Madagascar. Following the widespread devastation caused by Tropical Cyclones Fytia and Gezani earlier this year, India dispatched humanitarian assistance to support ongoing relief efforts," the ministry said. According to the MEA, an Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft carrying the relief material landed in Antananarivo with the humanitarian consignment.

## US bill targets foreign legal harassment



**Washington (Agency):** Two senior US senators have introduced bipartisan legislation to prevent foreign governments and their proxies from using American courts to intimidate critics and dissidents through costly legal battles. Introduced by Senators Jeanne Shaheen, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Bill Cassidy, the End Foreign Abuse of United States Courts Act seeks to curb the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation, commonly known as SLAPP suits, by foreign actors targeting individuals in the United States. Authoritarian governments are increasingly using legal tactics to silence dissent abroad, they

actors to file such claims in American courts, forcing critics and dissidents to spend significant time and resources defending themselves. Shaheen said the proposed legislation aims to prevent US courts from being misused as tools of political pressure. "American courts shouldn't be working in the service of authoritarian regimes," she said. "Our legislation would put a stop to these malicious suits and put the power back where it belongs, in the hands of the people." The bill would create what lawmakers

describe as a Foreign Sovereign Anti-SLAPP statute, designed to raise the legal burden on foreign government plaintiffs and speed up the dismissal of meritless cases. Under the proposal, defendants would be allowed to file a special motion seeking dismissal of lawsuits brought by foreign governments or their agents if the claims are tied to political speech or public participation. Courts would be required to dismiss such cases if the plaintiff fails to establish a credible legal basis for the claim or if there is no genuine issue of material fact. The legislation would also pause other legal proceedings once a motion to dismiss is filed and require courts to rule

on the motion within 90 days. If the defendant prevails, courts could award attorney's fees and costs. Judges would also have the authority to impose punitive damages if they determine the lawsuit was filed to harass or deliberately increase the cost of litigation. The bill further specifies that foreign states would not be immune from such penalties if they are found to have pursued abusive litigation in US courts. The proposed law would apply to lawsuits brought by governments of countries designated as foreign adversaries, as well as individuals or entities substantially controlled by them, particularly when the cases target protected speech or political activity.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, ANJANI KUMAR BANKA (OLD NAME), SON OF SUSHIL KUMAR BANKA, RESIDING AT 106 BANGUR AVENUE, BLOCK-C, KOLKATA-700055, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS ANJANI BANKA (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE 1ST CLASS METROPOLITAN MAGISTRATE AT KOLKATA ON 24/06/2021. ANJANI KUMAR BANKA AND ANJANI BANKA BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, DINESH AGARWAL (OLD NAME), SON OF LATE N. A. G. R. M. L. AGARWAL, RESIDING AT FLAT-3B, BLOCK-B SHREE APARTMENT RAJARHAT, KOLUPUKUR HATIARA, NORTH 24 PARGANAS-700157, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS DINESH KUMAR AGARWAL (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 11/03/2026. DINESH AGARWAL AND DINESH KUMAR AGARWAL BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, OBAIDULLAH MANDAL (OLD NAME), SON OF LIYAKAT MANDAL, RESIDING AT VILL & PO PUNISOLEPS ONDA, BANKURA, 722101, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS OBAIDULLA MANDAL (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 11/03/2026. OBAIDULLAH MANDAL AND OBAIDULLA MANDAL BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, SABRAKHATUN ANSARI (OLD NAME), WIFE OF IZHAR HUSSAIN, RESIDING AT NEW BASTI LICHUBAGAN, PO DANESH SK LANE, PS-SANKRAIL, HOWRAH-711109, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS SABRA KHATUN (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 11/03/2026. SABRAKHATUN ANSARI AND SABRA KHATUN BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, VIKASH BENGANI (OLD NAME), SON OF LATE BABULAL BENGANI, RESIDING AT 196 D/2 PIONIC GARDEN ROAD, TILJALA, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL, 700039, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS VIKASH KUMAR BENGANI (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 11/03/2026. VIKASH BENGANI AND VIKASH KUMAR BENGANI BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, SAFIYAR RAHAMAN (OLD NAME), SON OF LATE KHEJER AHAMMED, RESIDING AT VILL-GAJBANDA, PO-SADHANPUR, PS-AMDANGA, NORTH 24 PARGANAS-743221, WEST BENGAL, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS SK SAFIYAR RAHAMAN (NEW NAME) VIDE AN AFFIDAVIT SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA ON 11/03/2026. SAFIYAR RAHAMAN AND SK SAFIYAR RAHAMAN BOTH ARE THE SAME AND ONE IDENTICAL PERSON.

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# Over 10 lakh standalone solar pumps installed, 13 lakh grid-connected pumps solarised

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi :** Under the PM-KUSUM scheme, more than 10 lakh standalone solar agricultural pumps have been installed, and over 13 lakh grid-connected agricultural pumps have been solarised across the country, according to Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi. Addressing an event here, Joshi highlighted the growing role of renewable energy in strengthening India's rural economy and enhancing farmers' incomes. He said renewable energy is increasingly reaching India's farms and households, helping farmers access reliable power while reducing irrigation costs and improving farm productivity. "A farmer irrigating his field today may be doing so using solar



power, and a household that once worried about electricity bills may now be producing its own electricity through rooftop solar. This is not just an energy transition, it is also a transformation of the rural economy," the minister noted. Renewable energy technologies are playing an increasingly important role in agriculture, particularly through solar irrigation pumps, which enable farmers

to reduce dependence on diesel and access reliable daytime irrigation. Diesel irrigation can cost nearly Rs 6,790 per acre for wheat and over Rs 8,000 per acre for crops such as cotton. Solar pumps can help farmers save between Rs 5,000 and Rs 6,500 per acre annually, while also reducing emissions. The minister informed that the government is preparing PM-KUSUM 2.0,

which will include a dedicated 10 GW Agri-PV component to promote the co-location of solar panels with crops. This initiative will enable farmers to generate electricity while continuing agricultural activities on the same land, creating a new model for decentralised renewable energy generation in rural India. Joshi said that combining solar power generation with agricultural cultivation can significantly improve land productivity and provide farmers with an additional source of income. Estimates indicate that India's agrivoltaic potential could range from 3,000 GW to nearly 14,000 GW, reflecting the scale of opportunity in integrating renewable energy with agriculture. Joshi also highlighted the progress of

the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana. More than 31 lakh households have already benefited from rooftop solar installations under the scheme, enabling families to generate their own electricity and reduce electricity bills, he said. The country's non-fossil fuel capacity has increased from about 81 GW in 2014 to nearly 275 GW today, with more than half of India's installed electricity capacity now coming from non-fossil sources. Solar capacity expanded from about 2.8 GW in 2014 to nearly 143 GW, wind capacity increased from around 21 GW to about 55 GW, and biopower capacity rose from 8.1 GW to about 12 GW, reflecting the rapid scale-up of renewable energy deployment in the country.

## BoM opens 68th branch in West Bengal, 71st in Kolkata Zone

CTNN ■

**Kolkata:** Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) inaugurated its 68th branch in West Bengal and 71st in the Kolkata zone. The branch would offer state-of-the-art banking services and would also contribute to the overall development of the local economy.

The bank aims to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in West Bengal. The new branch was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Pritam Paul, Officer in Charge, Ukhra Police Station, in the presence of Mohammad Shahzeeb, Zonal Manager Kolkata Zone, Rakesh Kumar, Branch Manager, Ukhra, staff members, and the esteemed customers were present on the occasion.

Speaking at the recent branch expansion in West



Bengal, Mohammad Shahzeeb, Zonal Manager, Kolkata Zone, said, "Our aim is to bring banking services closer to the people and help them avail all the banking services with ease. By establishing a network of 71st branches across the Kolkata Zone, we are poised to create opportunities for economic growth and development. The total business of the Kolkata Zone currently stands at 6,800 crore, and

we aspire to elevate it to 8,000 crore by the end of the year."

Further to this, he added that our customers would be benefitted with a suite of digital services. The onboarding of customers has been made quick and simple with the introduction of the Video-KYC facility. Retail loans have been designed with a host of benefits accompanied by salary savings accounts with multiple offers.

## India's private market deals hit USD 207 billion in 5 years

**New Delhi (Agency):** India is approaching towards 'toppick' in Asia Pacific private markets, providing global investors scale and resilience as activity in the Asia-Pacific slows, according to a report. According to an analysis by McKinsey & Company highlighted that about 31 per cent of the more than 50 limited partners surveyed ranked India first and 76 per cent placed it in their top three picks. This indicates a shift in regional capital flows as investors reassess Asia and look beyond China for long term growth, according to the report. "More than half expect to increase allocations to India-focused funds," it said. Moreover, private markets already account for about 64 per cent of limited partner allocations to India and investors expect buyout and growth strategies to draw the most interest over the next five years, reflecting a preference for approaches that offer more con-

trol. The report also said from 2021 to 2025, private equity and venture capital deal value in India has risen over one-and-a-half times to USD 207 billion compare to the previous five-years, with exits more than doubling to around USD 120 billion. Sector-wise, technology, IT and financial services, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, and consumer sectors accounted for nearly three-quarters of private capital deployed between the aforesaid period. The report also noted that India's Asia Pacific private equity and venture capital deployment jumped around 21 per cent in 2020-24 which was about 12 per cent in 2015-19. According to research by McKinsey & Company, investors are increasingly leaning into private markets with growing confidence and are seeking deeper, more strategic partnerships, said Kunal Sood, a partner at private equity firm Pantheon.

## APEDA showcases India's growing capabilities in high-quality agricultural production

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi :** APEDA showcased India's growing capabilities in high-quality agricultural production, value addition and export-oriented supply chains at the 'AAHAR 2026'. The pavilion brought together exporters, startups, State agencies and producer organisations, highlighting opportunities to expand India's presence in international markets, it was announced on Wednesday. The 40th edition of AAHAR 2026 -- inaugurated by the minister -- is being held from March 10 to March 14 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. APEDA presented a dedicated pavilion bringing together exporters, state representatives and industry stakeholders on a common platform to promote India's diverse agri-export basket. Organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), the landmark edition



of the event features Italy as the country partner, the government said.

Exports of processed foods, fruits, pulses and vegetables have grown significantly over the past decade, reflecting the strength and diversity of farmers, fishermen and food processors across the country. India's expanding network of free trade agreements is opening new avenues for agricultural exports, according to the government. During the event,

research reports on cucumber, cashew, pineapple and pomegranate, prepared by APEDA in collaboration with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), were also released. APEDA further announced the launch of packaging design solutions and technical standards for selected region-specific agricultural products developed with the Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP). The initia-

tive focuses on GI-tagged and organic products to enhance product protection, shelf life and export presentation. The products covered under the initiative include Karbi Anglong Ginger from Assam, G4 Chilli and Jalgaon Banana from Maharashtra, Assam Kaji Nemu and Prayagraj Surkha Guava from Uttar Pradesh. According to the government, major export segments showcased at the pavilion included basmati rice, non-basmati rice, organic products and emerging plant-based foods, reflecting India's expanding portfolio in global agri-food markets. The ministry also said several states, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, set up pavilions showcasing region-specific products and export-ready agricultural produce.

## Air India Express flight from Hyderabad faces nose-wheel problem at Phuket International Airport

**New Delhi (Agency):** An aircraft operated by Air India Express faced a technical issue after landing at Phuket International Airport on Wednesday, leading to a temporary suspension of flight operations at the airport. The airline said that its Hyderabad-Phuket flight experienced a problem with the aircraft's nose wheel after landing in Thailand. The flight, IX 938, had taken off from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and was headed to Phuket. In a statement, Air India Express confirmed that the aircraft encountered an issue with the nose wheel upon arrival at Phuket Airport on March 11. The nose wheel is a key part of an aircraft's landing gear system and helps the plane move and steer while on the ground. "We confirm that our Hyderabad-Phuket flight on 11 March experienced an issue with the nose wheel at Phuket Airport," the airline stated. "The crew followed all standard protocols, and guests were deplaned. We thank our guests, the Phuket airport authorities, and all stakeholders for their cooperation," an Air India Express spokesperson noted. According to flight tracking website Flightradar24, the flight departed from Hyderabad at 6:42 a.m., slightly later than its scheduled departure time of 6:20 a.m. The aircraft landed safely at Phuket International Airport at 11:40 a.m. local time. Reports said flight operations at the airport were temporarily suspended after the incident because the aircraft remained stuck on the runway. Authorities halted other flights as a precaution until the situation could be handled. The airline said that the crew followed all standard safety procedures and all passengers were safely deplaned after the aircraft came to a halt.

## Indian Bank organises Credit Outreach Programme

Staff Reporter ■

**Kolkata:** Indian Bank, one of the premier public sector banks, through its Field General Manager Office, Kolkata, has organised a Mega Retail, Agriculture, and MSME Credit Outreach Programme on Tuesday to accelerate growth in Retail, Agriculture, and MSME credit.

The Mega Retail, Agriculture and MSME Credit Outreach Programme was presided over by Sujay Mallik, Chief General Manager (Retail Assets & MSME), Corporate Office, Chennai in the presence of R K Singh, Field General Manager Kolkata and Zonal Heads of all Seven Zones of FGMO Kolkata.

During the Credit Outreach Programme, total credit proposals amounting to 1,798 crore under Retail, Agriculture, and MSME segments were canvassed, out of which sanctions of 1,020 crore were accorded, and remaining sanctions will be accorded within 31st March 2026.

In the Credit Outreach Programme, sanction tickets were distributed by Sujay Mallik, demonstrating the bank's commitment to timely credit delivery and customer service. Mallik empha-



sized the importance of customer-centric lending, faster processing, and bank's continuous endeavour on digitisation and launch of mobile applications viz IndSMART and IndSMART BIZ. Customers have shown keen interest in the Bank's mobile applications and its usages.

This Mega Retail, Agriculture and MSME Credit Outreach Programme reaffirmed the bank's commitment to strengthening credit delivery across MSME, Agriculture, and Retail segments, promoting MSME and Self-Help Group (SHG) financing, supporting farmers, entrepreneurs, and individual customers, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable business growth.

## Union Health Ministry proposes to remove duplicate viral testing of blood products

**New Delhi (Agency):** The government has issued a draft Gazette Notification proposing amendments to avoid duplicate viral testing of blood products and invited public comments on it, an official statement said on Wednesday. The amendment aims to align regulatory requirements for testing of blood products with internationally accepted pharmacopoeial standards and to remove additional testing requirements on products that are not warranted under global best practices, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said in the statement. The amendments were proposed to "Para G (Testing of Blood Products), Part XII C, Schedule F of the Drugs Rules

1954". The ministry described the move as a step toward regulatory harmonisation, scientific rationalisation of testing requirements and reduction of avoidable compliance burden while continuing to uphold patient safety. Under harmonised standards cited in the draft, the first homogeneous pool of human plasma for fractionation must be tested for Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C virus RNA and antibodies to HIV, and pooled plasma must test negative for these viral markers before fractionation. The draft noted that only plasma pools meeting these safety requirements should be used to manufacture plasma derived medicinal products.

## India remains key real estate investment destination in Asia Pacific: Report

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi :** India continues to strengthen its position as a key investment destination within the Asia-Pacific region, recording one of the strongest growths in real estate investments among the nine major APAC markets in 2025, a report showed on Wednesday. Colliers' report found that total real estate investment volumes across nine key Asia Pacific markets reached USD 162 billion in 2025, marking an 8 per cent year on year increase, with momentum building in the second half of the year as buyers and sellers moved closer on pricing expectations. Interestingly, Singapore and India recorded the strongest year on year growth, at 35 per

cent and 29 per cent respectively, reflecting improving market fundamentals and expanding investment opportunities, said



the report. While domestic capital continues to drive investment activity across most APAC markets, India has seen relatively stronger cross-border capital movement, with foreign investors accounting for 43 per cent of the USD 8.5 billion inflows during the year, said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Colliers India. By sec-

tor, office assets remained dominant across Asia Pacific investment activity, supported by sustained occupier demand for

high quality, well located assets and limited new supply in prime CBD locations. Retail investments gained momentum, rising 15 per cent year on year as improving asset performance and consumer sentiment renewed investor confidence. Alternative asset classes emerged as the fastest growing sector, led by strong institutional demand. Looking ahead, institutional investments in Indian real estate are expected to remain robust through 2026, supported by the strong economic growth prospects and sustained demand for high-quality assets.

## Experts call for easing pressure on LPG demand as Induction cooker makers' shares rise

■ CT Bureau

**Mumbai :** Shares of home appliance makers traded higher on Wednesday as e-commerce platforms witnessed a surge in purchases of electric stoves and induction cooktops amid the Middle East conflict, over reports of potential LPG shortages. Moreover, quick commerce platforms were selling Inductions stoves at discounts of more than 50 per cent. Butterfly Gandhimathi Appliances shares climbed about 4 per cent to Rs 630.5, hitting an intraday high in

early trade on the BSE. Meanwhile, shares of V-Guard Industries logged an intraday high of Rs 326, up 3 per cent from the previous close on the same exchange. The sharpest surge came from major induction cooktop producers. Stocks of Stove Kraft and TTK Prestige rose more than 10 per cent. The Pigeon' parent firm's stock jumped 7.32 per cent to Rs 523.55 on the BSE, while shares of Prestige induction cooktop maker TTK Prestige surged 14.63 per cent to Rs 556. Meanwhile, industry

experts said that urban households should be encouraged and incentivised to cook with electric induction stoves amid the LPG crisis. Abhishek Kar, Fellow, CEEW, said India imports about two-thirds of its LPG, with more than 90 per cent coming from countries in West



Asia such as the UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

"Invoking the Essential Commodities Act to ensure that would ease the pressure on domes-

LPG supply is prioritised for domestic cooking is an important first step. The government should now emulate the 'Give It Up' campaign for LPG subsidy with a new 'Give It Up' campaign on LPG use, targeted at households that have, or can afford, electric induction stoves. This

ongoing electric induction cooking wherever feasible. "The geopolitical develop-

ments have led to severe disruption in the supply chain of commercial LPG. If the situation escalates further and availability tightens significantly, the restaurant industry may face serious operational challenges," the NRAI said in an advisory to restaurant owners across the country. "In order to safeguard business continuity, employment, and the stability of our sector, NRAI urges all members to immediately adopt these fuel conservation and operational continuity measures," the advisory said.

# "I don't agree to that" Gambhir dismisses criticism that Indian wickets are 'tailored' to suit home team

■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi** : Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir dismissed criticism that Indian pitches are "tailored" to suit the home team, asserting that such claims are often made to create controversy and attract views. Defending India's high-scoring performances during the recently concluded ICC Men's T20 World Cup, the Indian head coach said the team has posted similar totals in overseas conditions like Australia and South Africa, adding that in ICC events, the wickets are controlled by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and not the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). He emphasised that modern T20 cricket is largely a batter-friendly format and big scores are a global trend rather than a result of home advantage. "I don't agree to that. Why

would you tailor something? And honestly, India is too good a team to be even thinking about something like that and in the T20 format, whether you look in Australia or South Africa, we made 200 runs. If we make 200 runs in India, then the wickets get tailored. So I think some people, they want to create a controversy. That's why I say, the statements given for views and TRPs should not be acceptable," Gambhir said in an interview with ANI. Gambhir also emphasised India's 175 runs total on a turning track in Colombo against Pakistan in the group stages of the T20 WC, noting that the rest of the teams were making 140, but no one questioned the pitch there. "Because sometimes it is important to give players a lot of credit as well, because it's not like we made such big



scores only in Indian conditions. We went to Australia, South Africa and other places too. We had nothing in our hands, but this criticism used to happen for Australia and England too, that they make their pitches to suit their bowlers. But in ICC tournaments, they control the wickets. It's not the BCCI that controls the wickets, and in bilaterals, especially in the T20 format, it is a batter's

game. No one wants to come and watch a 120-run T20 game. Everyone wants to watch that high-scoring game. This is not the case here. It is a worldwide phenomenon. Take Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and England. They also make the same big runs in T20. We even played a match in Colombo. We played a match against Pakistan, where we made 180 runs and

the rest of the teams made 140 runs. We defeated Pakistan with 80 or 90 runs, no one said that there, it wasn't in our hands, it was Colombo," he added. Gambhir lauded India's T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav, calling him a phenomenal leader. He highlighted that Surya keeps the atmosphere within the team very light, and having them in the squad makes his task easy. "I think he's a phenomenal leader. I think he's made my life a lot easier in this format (T20) because the way he keeps the atmosphere really light, the way he handles the boy and has conversations with them, I think that is fantastic to have because then you can actually, someone like me, can focus on the tactical things. Surya and I worked together for a long time when I was captain with KKR, and he was the vice captain. So I

know how he operates. So he has made my life a lot easier in this format," Gambhir concluded. India became the first team to win the T20 WC title at home, the first team to win it back-to-back, and the first team to win the three T20 WC crowns. Indian skipper Suryakumar Yadav, after this emphatic win in the final, surpassed former skipper and batting heavyweight Rohit Sharma to become a captain with the best winning percentage in T20Is. He now has an 80.77 winning percentage. Under his leadership in 52 matches, India have won 42 fixtures, lost eight, and 2 ended in no result. Indian skipper also emerged as the 10th-highest run-getter in the tournament with 242 runs in nine matches at an average of 30.25 and a strike rate of over 136, with one half-century against the USA, in the group stage fixtures.

## ICC confirms phased departures of SA, WI teams amid Middle East conflict

**New Delhi (Agency)**: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday provided an update on the departure of teams following the conclusion of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, confirming that members of the South Africa and West Indies contingents are returning home amid ongoing travel disruptions. Some of the teams remained stuck in India after the T20 World Cup campaign due to ongoing airspace restrictions in the wake of the conflict in the Middle East and West Asia. The West Indies played their final match of the tournament on March 1 but were still in India, while South Africa have also been unable to leave after their semifinal defeat to New Zealand on March 4. The ICC said four South African players along with five family members have already boarded flights and are on their way home, while the remaining 29 members of the contingent are scheduled to depart within the next 24 hours. On the other hand, nine members of the West Indies camp have already departed for the Caribbean, with the remaining 16 set to leave India within the next 12 hours. "Four South Africa players and five family members have boarded flights and are making their way home, with all 29 remaining members of their contingent scheduled to depart in the next 24 hours. "Of the West Indies contingent, nine members have departed for the Caribbean, while the remaining 16 are booked on flights departing India in the next 12 hours," the ICC said in a release. The ICC said it is continuing to manage all additional logistics arising from the unexpected travel disruptions, including accommodation arrangements for the affected teams. "The ICC again thanks the two members, their players, families and staff for their patience as we ensure their safe transit home," it added.

# 3 Australians Are the Powerhouse of Mohun Bagan SG's Unstoppable ISL Campaign

Rabindranath Choudhury

**Kolkata**: Mohun Bagan SG did not send the team to Iran as per the schedule set for the AFC Champions League-2. At that time, Mohun Bagan's Australian footballers got into a verbal altercation with the fans. The embassy of that country always advises Australian citizens not to travel to Iran. The Australians, therefore, did not want to go to Iran for technical and safety reasons.

Mohun Bagan officials should have written a letter to the AFC for a neutral venue after the schedule for the Championship-2 was published. But Mohun Bagan SG chief Vinay Chopra did wrong by not sending the letter at the appropriate time. Mohun Bagan fans do not want to bother with technical matters and diplomatic complications. They protested strongly against the Australians. Cummins and Dimitri got into a verbal altercation with the



fans during that tense period. The situation became complicated during the IFA Shield as emotions ran high among supporters.

But those incidents are now in the past. Mohun Bagan has been finishing strongly in the ISL for the last few years, and it seems that the momentum has started once again from here this season. The team in the league has already won three matches in succession. Cummins, Dimitri, and Jamie McLaren played a very



big role in this impressive victory run.

Three Australian footballers are now the driving force of Mohun Bagan. Jamie-Dimitri-Cummins reminds older fans of the famous Igor-Stephen-Barreto combination of the 1999-2000 season. Among them, McLaren is currently at the peak of his form and confidence. McLaren scored four goals against Odisha FC in a sensational display. He has already scored seven goals alone in the ISL this season. So far, he has

scored 12 goals in 25 matches wearing the Mohun Bagan jersey.

Jamie is naturally very excited after scoring the goals and helping the team dominate matches. He even took the hat-trick ball home as a special souvenir. He plans to take that memorable ball to his country as well. Jamie said, "It is very beneficial if the coach plays the three of us together regularly in every match. It becomes beneficial for me if Cummins is present inside the box. If I am the only



striker, the opponent defenders get more space and time to cover me properly. It is up to the coach to decide if he keeps all three of us regularly in the first eleven. It is not enough to just attack well; we have to emphasize defensive discipline as well. However, if we all play together in some more matches, Mohun Bagan will win by a huge margin."

Dimitri is the most experienced member of the Mohun Bagan attacking trio. He has scored 28

goals in 73 matches in the last three and a half years wearing the famous green and maroon jersey of the club. At the beginning of the season, Dimitri had gained quite a lot of weight. He often returns from Australia every year with a little excess weight. That has been his weakness over the years. It took Dimitri a few days to lose that weight and get back into proper rhythm again.

Apart from that issue, Dimitri does not have any other weaknesses in his game. The ISL has started

two and a half months after the Super Cup this year. Dimitri returned to Australia after the Super Cup and worked hard to lose weight there. Lobera replacing Molina as coach has clearly benefited Dimitri's performance. He himself has admitted that the change of coach is a big reason for his return to top form. He is now playing as a roaming midfielder in the middle of the field. Those who watch the game on television will often not notice this type of hard work done by Dimitri. That is because the eight TV cameras usually follow the ball most of the time. Dimitri is currently the pivot of Mohun Bagan's midfield and controls the rhythm of play.

Liston Colaco is playing as a right-wing-half in the present system. The Goan footballer's performance in his new role has not been too bad so far this season. Many supporters are not able to accept Manvir Singh's

absence from the first eleven. But Manvir has not been in that impressive form this season.

Liston is now playing as a right winger in several matches as well. The Goan footballer's performance in his adjusted role has been reasonably effective. Many supporters cannot easily accept Manvir's absence from the starting lineup. But Manvir is not in that kind of sharp form this season. Robson is actually a natural left winger. Lobera does not want him to play only 15-20 minutes like Molina used him earlier. That is why Liston is being brought in on the right flank, and Robson is being used more regularly on the left half position. However, the Brazilian footballer injured his back after the Mohammedan Sporting match. Because of that injury, he did not play in the Odisha match. He is also not likely to play against Bengaluru FC next Saturday.

## Abhishek Sharma retains top spot in ICC T20I batting rankings after T20 WC final heroics



■ CT Bureau

**New Delhi** : Left-handed batter Abhishek Sharma has retained the top position in the latest ICC Men's T20I batting rankings, which were updated by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday. The latest ICC T20I rankings were updated after Suryakumar Yadav's side cruised to a 96-run triumph over New Zealand in the final in Ahmedabad on March 8. With the win, India clinched back-to-back titles and became the first team to win three Men's T20 World Cup trophies since the tournament's inception. Abhishek Sharma played a crucial role in the final, delivering a match-defining knock after a difficult start to the tournament. The young batter had struggled during the early stages of the T20 World Cup 2026 campaign, registering three consecutive ducks. The young batter played a match-defining knock of 52 runs off just 21 balls, smashing six boundaries and three sixes to provide India with a strong start in the first innings after being put in to bat. After scoring a blistering half-century in the T20 World Cup final in Ahmedabad, Sharma retained his top spot with 875 rating points to his name. His teammate Ishan Kishan is now his closest rival after he moved up two places to second overall after his 317 runs at the tournament. The left-handed batter Kishan earned a new career-high rating, while New Zealand's Tim Seifert (up four places to sixth) and England's Jacob Bethell (up 17 rungs to 16th) also improved to the best marks of their career following some dominant knocks during the T20 World Cup. In the Men's T20 bowling rankings, India's mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy, who scalped 14 wickets in the T20 World Cup, lost his number spot to Afghanistan's Rashid Khan. Chakaravathy now has 740 rating points, whereas Rashid has 753 points.

## Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship returns for second edition

**Ahmedabad (Agency)**: Indorama Ventures and the DP World Professional Golf Tour of India (DP World PGTI), the official governing and sanctioning body of men's professional golf in India, will be jointly staging the second edition of the Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship from March 12 to 15 at the Kalhaar Blues & Greens Golf Club in Ahmedabad. The tournament offers an enhanced prize purse of US 300,000 (INR 2.76 crore) this year. It is the DP World PGTI's highest ever prize money event to be staged in Gujarat. The tournament will have a field of 143 players. The event will be played in the stroke-play format consisting of four rounds of 18 holes each. The top 60 players



and ties will make the cut after two rounds. The par for the course is 72. The stellar field at the tournament features leading Indian professionals Yuvraj Sandhu (2025 DP World PGTI Order of Merit Champion) Veer Ahlawat, Om Prakash Chouhan, Manu Gandas, Ajeetesh Sandhu, Shaurya Bhattacharya, Honey Baisoya and Angad Cheema, to

name a few. The prominent Ahmedabad-based professionals participating are Anshul Patel, Krish Patel and Aditya Raj Kumar Chauhan. There is also a strong foreign presence in the field with leading international professionals such as Jhared Hack (USA), Matthias Schwab (Austria), Clement Sordet (France), Joshua Grenville-

Wood (UAE) and Maxence Giboudot (France), Christoph Bleier (Austria), Bastien Amat (France), Tiger Christensen (Germany), Vince Van Veen (Netherlands), Pierre Pineau (France), Christofer Rahm (Sweden) and Per Langfors (Sweden), participating, to name a few. Kapil Dev, President, PGTI, said, "The second edition of the Indorama Ventures Open represents a significant stride forward for the DP World PGTI following the historic signing of DP World as Title Sponsor of the DP World PGTI. Partnerships with global organizations like Indorama Ventures help enhance the stature of the Tour while creating valuable playing opportunities for our professionals."

## Sinner, Zverev and Sabalenka advance to next round at Indian Wells

**California (Agency)**: Top players continued their strong runs in the ongoing Indian Wells Open, with Alexander Zverev, Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka advancing to the next stage after impressive victories in their respective Men's Singles and Women's Singles matches. Italy's Sinner secured a hard-fought win against Joao Fonseca to advance to his

third quarter-final in Indian Wells. In a 7-6(6), 7-6(4) victory, Sinner was pushed to his limits before the Italian ultimately clinched the win with a late surge in the second-set tie-break. The World No. 2 Sinner in the PIF ATP Rankings has now advanced to the quarter-finals in 11 of the 12 ATP Masters 1000s he's played since the start of 2024, according to ATP. Germany's

Zverev delivered a solid performance to defeat American Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4 in the men's singles clash. The German star maintained control throughout the contest with powerful serving and baseline dominance to seal his place in the quarter-finals. Zverev will next face France's Arthur Fils, who secured his spot in the last eight after defeating Canada's Felix

Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 7-6 (11-9) in a tightly contested match on March 19. Fils showed composure in the second-set tie-break to close out the encounter and continue his impressive campaign at the tournament. On the women's side, world number one Sabalenka showcased her dominance by defeating Japan's Naomi Osaka 6-2, 6-4 in straight sets.

## Indian women's hockey team to face Wales with semis spot at stake in FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers



■ CT Bureau

**Hyderabad** : After two exciting games, the Indian Women's Hockey Team is ready to face Wales in their final Pool B match of the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers, Hyderabad, Telangana, on March 11. With a semifinal spot on the line, India currently sits at the top of the points table with four points and a strong goal difference, according to a release. The top two teams from the pool will go through. If India wins or draws against Wales, they will qualify for the semifinals. If India loses, they will stay on four points, and their qualification will depend on the match between Scotland and Uruguay, and their spot could come down to goal difference. The Indian Women's Hockey Team have had a strong campaign so far. They opened the tournament with a massive 4-0 win over Uruguay on March 8 and then fought hard for a 2-2 draw against Scotland yesterday. Young forward Sunelita Toppo has been in top form, scoring in both matches. Attackers Lalremisiami, Navneet Kaur, and Rutuja Dadaso Pisal have also been excellent, finding the net and creating multiple scoring opportunities. At the back, the defence has held firm, with goalkeeper Bichu Devi making crucial saves consistently. Playing in front of a cheering home crowd in Hyderabad has also given the hosts a wonderful boost of energy. Reflecting on the team's performances so far, Captain Salima Tete said, "After the opening two games, there is positivity in the team. The young players are taking their opportunity and have been doing very well. The team is relishing playing freely, and that is a very good thing for us."



Government of India



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