

## News

## Brief

## Elections scheduling done for convenience of BJP, says Priyanka Vadra

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Opposition leaders, including Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Monday raised concerns over the conduct and timing of Assembly elections.

"The way elections are scheduled, phases are created, and dates are set, I feel all of this is done for the convenience of the BJP," Priyanka Gandhi said.

Similarly, Akhilesh Yadav alleged that administrative changes are often made ahead of elections in states where the ruling party at the Centre does not control the government.

"Whenever elections take place, if the Delhi government or the state government is not theirs, the first thing they do is remove the DGP, the Chief Secretary, and other officials. At that time, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is against the government, deliberately colluded with the government here in Delhi and with the Election Commission to remove officials."

## India's WPI inflation edges up to 2.13 per cent in February

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) India's inflation rate, based on the wholesale price index, edged up to 2.13 per cent during February, compared to the same month of the previous year, primarily due to the increase in prices of manufactured goods, basic metals, food articles, and textiles, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday.

The WPI inflation for February was higher than the corresponding figure of 1.81 per cent recorded in January this year. The price of food articles declined by (-) 1.33 per cent in February compared to January, while the prices of minerals fell by (-) 1.21 per cent. However, the price of crude petroleum and natural gas rose 4.17 per cent, and non-food articles turned costlier by 0.83 per cent during the month compared to the previous month.

## Suspected liquor trader injured in Police encounter in Bihar's Saran

Patna, March 16 (IANS) A suspected liquor trader was injured and arrested during a police encounter in Bihar's Saran district, officials said on Monday.

The incident occurred in the border area of the Mashrakh police station and Panapur police station late on Sunday night.

According to an official, the accused has been identified as Suraj Mahto (26), son of Muni Mahto and a resident of Mithwa village under the Panapur police station area. Suraj Mahto had been under police scrutiny for allegedly supplying toxic liquor and had been absconding since then.

Police later took the accused to the Mashrakh-Panapur border area to conduct raids to recover illegal liquor stock and identify other members of the network.

# India's trade deficit narrows to \$27.1 billion in Feb.

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) India's merchandise trade deficit narrowed to \$27.1 billion in February from \$34.68 billion in the previous month, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday.

The country's merchandise exports rose to \$36.61 billion from \$36.56 billion in January, while imports fell to \$63.71 billion from \$71.24 billion, the figures showed.

India's merchandise exports stood at \$402.93 billion for April-February

2025-26, up from \$395.66 billion in the same period last year, which represents a 1.84 per cent increase, according to official data.

The data comes against the backdrop of the escalation in the Iran war, which broke out on February 28, leading to a choking of the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East through which 20 per cent of the world's oil and gas exports transit. The blocking of the Strait has also hit India's exports of commodities such as rice to the Middle East countries. Earlier, around 50 per

cent of India's energy imports came through the Strait of Hormuz, but these have now been diversified, with a big chunk coming from Russia.

India's strategic oil reserves and diversification of energy imports across 40 supplier countries have transformed the country's capacity to absorb global energy shocks. This resilience has ensured that there is no energy crisis in India due to the disruption caused by the Iran war, as the government is tackling the situation with supply-side management, a se-

nior official said.

India is also in direct touch with Iran to allow its merchant ships to sail through Hormuz. Indian-flag vessel Jag Laadki sailed safely from the UAE's Fujairah port on Sunday, carrying about 80,800 metric tonnes of Murban crude oil and is bound for India. The vessel and all Indian seafarers onboard are safe, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Shipping and Ports.

All Indian seafarers in the region are safe, and no shipping incident involving Indian seafarers has been reported in the past 24 hours, the statement said.

Two Indian-flag LPG carriers, Shivalik and Nanda Devi, carrying about 92,712 MT of LPG, which had crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, are currently on passage to India and are scheduled to reach Mundra Port on Monday and Kandla Port on Tuesday, respectively.

At present, 22 Indian-flagged vessels with 611 seafarers remain west of the Persian Gulf region.

India has robust macroeconomic fundamentals with ample forex reserves to cover 11-12 months of imports. These are also enough to cover the country's oil import bills for 5 years. The strategic stocks of crude and petroleum products are sufficient to cover more than 70 days of market demand, while imports have been diversified to reduce the country's dependence on the Middle East, the official pointed out.

## Govt. has claimed \$2.81 bn from Reliance, BP for allegedly siphoning ONGC gas: Minister

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) The government has made a claim of \$2.81 billion from Reliance Industries Limited and UK oil giant BP for allegedly siphoning out gas from ONGC's fields in India's eastern offshore KG basin, the Parliament was informed on Monday.

"The Government has made a claim of \$2.81 billion from Reliance Industries Limited and BP. The matter is presently sub judice before the Supreme Court of India," Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi said in a written answer to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

The minister's reply came in answer to a question raised by Rajya Sabha member Deepak Prakash, who asked: "Whether it is a fact that

the Government has claimed more than \$2.00 billion from private companies for alleged gas pilferage/theft from ONGC's blocks off the eastern coast"

The MP also asked for "complete details thereof with the names of private companies involved and the latest status of payment received from these private companies so far".

As of March, the Indian government has demanded approximately \$2.81 billion (around Rs 25,983 crore) from Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and its partner BP following a February 2025 Delhi High Court ruling, which set aside a 2018 arbitration award that initially cleared RIL of liability for alleged migration of gas from ONGC fields in

the KG basin.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has alleged that between 2004 and 2013-14, RIL's KG-D6 block drew gas from adjacent ONGC blocks, amounting to an "unjust enrichment" of over \$1.55 billion (plus interest).

A division bench of the Delhi High Court on February 14, 2025, ruled in favour of the government, overturning a previous single-judge ruling that favoured RIL, calling the demand "unsustainable".

Reliance maintains that the gas was "migratory" (naturally moved across boundaries) and that they are not liable for extracting it. The company has challenged the Delhi HC judgment in the Supreme Court.

-IANS



MANGALURU, The Bhandara (sacred articles) of Sri Bhagavati, Sri Bhadrakali and Arasu deities are brought back across the Phalguni River by boat with traditional rituals after the formal programme at Palali Sri Raja Rajeshwari Temple, marking the conclusion of the ceremonial proceedings in Mangaluru on Monday. UNI

## Gujarat: Preparations begin for 30-day 'Narmada Parikrama' starting March 19

Gandhinagar, March 16 (IANS) The Gujarat government has begun extensive preparations for the upcoming Uttarvahini Panchkoshi Narmada Parikrama, scheduled to start on March 19 and continue until April 17. The month-long pilgrimage, regarded as a significant spiritual journey in Indian culture, will see thousands of devotees circumambulating the Narmada River.

Officials emphasised the government's approach of combining faith with security. The state administration is focusing on providing comprehensive facilities to ensure the journey is both safe and convenient for participants.

The Gujarat Pavitra Yatratham Vikas Board (GPVVB) has been entrusted with implementing the arrangements along the entire 30 km route. Temporary and permanent infrastructure, costing an

estimated Rs 10 crore, has been put in place.

Temporary facilities, funded at approximately Rs 5.41 crore, include dome shelters, mobile toilets, water stations, medical units with 24-hour ambulances, seating arrangements with cots and mattresses, bathing facilities, changing rooms, and cloakrooms. Service centres and shops have also been set up along the route.

Permanent facilities, developed at a cost of Rs 5.07 crore, include paved pathways, facility centres, solar-powered lighting, toilets, drinking water provisions, drainage systems, and renovated pilgrim accommodations at key locations such as Shri Madhi Devasthan, Shri Sidhatekari Ram Kund, and Shri Balbala Kund.

The government has taken measures to maintain cleanliness and hygiene throughout the pilgrimage. Separate toilets and bathing areas for men and women, continuous water supply, proper drainage, and regular house-keeping in multiple shifts have been arranged to ensure a safe and sanitary environment.

Security arrangements have been strengthened in anticipation of large crowds. Police booths, security cabins, and watchtowers have been installed, and trained personnel will operate in

shifts.

Modern technology, including infrared and RFID-based headcount systems, will monitor movement along the route. Extensive lighting using LEDs and floodlights, sound systems, wireless communication, and CCTV surveillance will also be in place to ensure the safety and smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

The preparations reflect the government's commitment to preserving Gujarat's cultural and religious traditions while providing modern facilities for devotees.

## Why didn't Cong confer Bharat Ratna on other Dalit leaders: BJP

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Congress of not thinking about other Dalit leaders like Babu Jagjivan Ram, after a controversy erupted following the Congress' demand for Bharat Ratna for Bahujan leader late Kanshi Ram. Notably, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging that Kanshi Ram be conferred the Bharat Ratna posthumously. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati also urged the Centre not to delay ho-

nouring the Dalit icon with the country's highest civilian award.

Speaking to reporters outside the Parliament, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, claimed that late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi wanted to confer Bharat Ratna on Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed because of Emergency, due to which Babu Jagjivan Ram had resigned from the Congress.

Dubey added that the Congress should have demanded Bharat Ratna for its own leaders first. "Babu Jagjivan Ram who had made a lot of contributions in the country's freedom struggle, they are

not talking about him," he said.

He said, "Why was Bharat Ratna during Congress' own regime? He died in 2006 while the Congress was in power till 2014." "They (the Congress) kept running the government with his (Kanshi ram) support," he claimed. The BJP MP further added, "Why would Ram Vilas Paswan not be awarded the Bharat Ratna. If your criteria is this, all these people should be awarded the Bharat Ratna. They have made immense contribution, along with Kanshi Ram."



NEW DELHI, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey with the Congress leaders protesting in the Parliament premises over reports of commercial LPG cylinders in New Delhi on Monday. UNI

## Uninterrupted CNG and PNG supply continuing for users, no gas shortage: Govt

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) The supply of piped natural gas (PNG) and compressed natural gas (CNG) continues uninterrupted across the country, the government said on Monday, adding that efforts are on to move households away from LPG where gas pipelines are available.

In an inter-ministerial briefing, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas's Joint Secretary, Marketing and Oil Refinery, Sujata Sharma, said that fuel pumps supplying CNG and household PNG connections are operating normally. "Supply to both CNG

users and PNG consumers is being maintained fully. Authorities have also begun enforcement actions to prevent hoarding. Raids have been carried out in several states as part of checks on fuel storage and supply," she said.

The senior government official further said that crude is also available in sufficient quantity. "All refineries are operating at the highest capacity. Our petrol pumps operate normally. No dry outs have been reported so far," she said.

Gas distribution firms have also rolled out incentives for new PNG users.

Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) has announced free gas worth Rs 500 for consumers registering for PNG connections before March 31. Meanwhile, there has been a decline in LPG bookings as panic eased among consumers over the availability of domestic gas, while raids are being conducted across states to check hoarding and black marketing. Raids are being conducted across states to check hoarding and black marketing, and 22 states and Union Territories (UTs) have established control rooms to monitor the situation.

## K.C. questions poll schedule for Kerala: Congress fully prepared

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Congress General Secretary, Organisation, K. C. Venugopal, on Monday criticised the Election Commission of India over the schedule announced for the Kerala Assembly elections, claiming that the time provided between the filing of nominations and the vote is too short, but asserted that his party is fully prepared for the polls. Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Venugopal stressed the party has already finalised its strategy and remains confident of victory.

"We are ready and fully prepared. We are going to win the election. Our entire strategy has been finalised, and we are fully geared to achieve victory. We do not have any problem regarding preparedness," he said. Referring to the election schedule, he pointed out that the timeline leaves little room for campaigning. "You can see the pattern of dates announced by the Election Commission. Yesterday (Sunday), they declared the election dates, and today, the notification has been issued."



NEW DELHI, Parliament security personnel walk inside the premises during the ongoing Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday. UNI

From Editor's Desk



Russia claims interception of Ukrainian drones, missiles and rockets

Moscow, March 16 (IANS) Russia said on Sunday that it shot down 605 drones, 12 US-made HIMARS rockets, two Neptune long-range missiles and four guided aerial bombs fired by the Ukrainian armed forces.

Meanwhile, Russian forces raided energy and transport infrastructure used by Ukrainian troops, sites involved in Ukraine's training and launch of long-range drones, and temporary deployment points of Ukrainian armed formations and foreign mercenaries, Russia's Defence Ministry said in a statement.

Earlier on Sunday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said on social media that Russia's air defence systems had intercepted 28 Ukrainian drones heading toward Moscow, Xinhua news agency reported.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday that Russia launched about 430 drones and several ballistic missiles towards Ukraine and underlined the importance of air defence system as a "daily necessity" for the country.

He made the remarks in a post on X and said, "Russians launched around 430 drones of various types and a significant number of missiles. There were 13 ballistic missiles alone, and the total number of missiles in this attack was 68. According to preliminary data, 58 of them were intercepted by our air defence system."

The post further noted that such strikes are a reminder of the importance of air defence and said, "Every such night of Russian strikes is a reminder to all our partners that air defences and the missiles for them are effectively a daily necessity. Every agreement on missile supplies cannot wait -- everything must be implemented as quickly as possible. Our agreements to increase the production of air defence missiles are a critical direction, and this direction requires one hundred per cent attention. Russia will try to exploit the war in the Middle East to cause even greater destruction here in Europe, in Ukraine. This is why we must be fully aware of the real level of the threat and prepare accordingly, namely: in Europe, we need to develop the production of air defence missiles -- especially those capable of countering ballistic threats -- as well as all other systems necessary to truly protect lives, regardless of what may be happening in any other part of the world. Europe is able to ensure this level of reliable protection. Thank you to everyone who is helping!"

President Murmu condoles loss of lives in Cuttack hospital fire

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) President of India, Droupadi Murmu on Monday expressed deep distress over the loss of lives in a tragic fire incident at a hospital in Cuttack, Odisha, and extended her heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

The incident occurred in the early hours of Monday when a major fire broke out in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the trauma care centre at SCB Medical College and Hospital. According to reports, at least 10 patients lost their lives, while several others suffered serious burn injuries in the blaze.

Taking to social media platform X, the President expressed her grief over the tragic incident.

"Deeply distressed by the loss of lives in the tragic fire incident at a hospital in Cuttack, Odisha. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. I wish a speedy recovery to those injured," she wrote.

As per sources, the inferno erupted at around 2.30 AM to 3 AM due to suspected electric short circuit.

After meeting the injured patients at the hospital and reviewing the situation, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh each for the family members of the deceased patients.

He also ordered a judicial inquiry into the tragic incident and assured stringent action against anyone found guilty of negligence in duty leading to the

inferno. Speaking to media persons, CM Majhi said, "A few hours ago, a major fire broke out in the trauma care unit of SCB Medical College and Hospital due to a suspected



short circuit. As a result, the patients undergoing treatment in the Trauma Care ICU, an adjoining ICU and ward were affected.

"After the fire broke out, 23 patients undergoing treatment on the first floor of the Trauma Care ICU were shifted to safer locations. Seven critically-ill patients died during

the shifting process, while three others succumbed after being moved to other ICUs. It is very unfortunate."

He offered condolences to the family members of deceased patients and offered his prayers to the Lord Jagannath for the speedy recovery to injured patients. Majhi also informed that he had instructed the Health Department to ensure advanced treatment for those who sustained severe injuries and are currently undergoing treatment in other ICUs and wards.

The Chief Minister further noted that as many as 11 hospital staff members, including security personnel, risked their lives to help rescue patients. Many of them also sustained injuries due to smoke inhalation and flames during the shifting of patients, but they are now stable and undergoing treatment in a ward on the ground floor.

"After our government came to power, I had earlier directed the department to inspect and take action regarding fire safety measures

at all hospitals across the state. In the current budget for 2025-26, we have allocated Rs 320 crore for strengthening fire safety measures, and the work is being carried out on a war footing.

"In the coming financial year 2026-27, Rs 400 crore has been allocated for this purpose," the Chief Minister said. Chief Minister Majhi instructed officials of all departments to ensure the installation of advanced fire-extinguishing systems in hospitals across the state. "I have instructed the Director General of the Odisha Fire and Emergency Services (Sudhanshu Sarangi) to personally inspect the fire safety measures and ensure compliance at SCB Medical College and Hospital." "I have also ordered a judicial enquiry into the incident. If the fire is found to have resulted from any negligence, the government will take stringent action after receiving the judicial inquiry report," he said.--IANS

Attorney General calls for new framework for plea bargaining at seminar on 'Delivering Justice In Time'

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) R. Venkataramani, Attorney General for India, has called for a new framework for plea bargaining based on social, cultural, economic theories and practices at the inaugural session of the seminar on "Delivering Justice in Time: Global Practices and Indian Experiences", jointly organised by O.P. Jindal Global University and the National Law University Delhi.

"Plea bargaining is becoming universal. There's a new need for a national protocol for plea bargaining, a national protocol that can be evolved and which can, in a very healthy way, advise, guide, and counsel practitioners as well as victims of justice, so that the protocol can work more transparently and objectively. The legal and civil authorities should be prepared to play important roles. The Chief Justice of India has consented to have a strong internal discussion on it. Existing legal mechanisms will also be made ready to look through a new lens, and there is a concession for the defense and the resource management for the state. The resource management for the state is not only relevant for the plea bargaining aspect. It is a resource value for the state, essentially, like an economic principle that should run through the entire administration of justice. This is why I have been thinking about a National Institute for Criminal Justice Administration, which will also have an everyday index where we watch the measurement and performance. Those who practice in the trial court will find out how painful it is for people to simply waste their resources for governments, institutions, people, lawyers, and judges, as well as time!" Venkataramani said.

"A Legal Health Index is important for our coun-

try. The Legal Health Index will probably identify factors that will include preventative and predictable procedures, the ease of justice, what roles each one of us can play, and what kind of resource investment we require. Therefore, a Legal Health In-



dex should be properly conceived, identified, and then operationalized. And who should do that? I do not think it needs to be necessarily in the hands of governance institutions, but it is a role for law schools and universities in conceiving and maintaining the Legal Health Index. It's important also for the community to get intellectually involved and to give a different point of view," the

Attorney General added.

In his Keynote Address, Dr Abhishek M. Singhvi, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India & Member of Parliament, spoke about the large pendency of cases in India. "It is the paradox of India's legal system, capable of producing some of the world's most sophisticated jurisprudence, while simultaneously struggling with a massive backlog of cases. We need to deal with the 'ABCD' -- the access, backlog, cost, and delay issues and the obvious step is to appoint court judges. We need to fill judi-

cial vacancies, adopt multi-track case management systems, resolve very old cases through dedicated mechanisms, strengthen mediation and revive Gram Nyayalayas, and improve coordination across courts, police, and prisons. We need synergy and focus to deal with the high number of pending cases, which is also holistic. We need a curative and preventive approach, and an uncon-

ventional, bold new methodology to address the issue. The other extreme, which is a big failure, is arbitration. Arbitration has become pre-litigation litigation, which is just adding one more separate limb to the process, but the reality is that there are not enough trained mediators, and this needs to be addressed on a war footing. There is also the issue of human infrastructure. The criminal law justice system includes the criminal hearing judge, the police, and the prison staff, and all locally coordinated. He also called for recent age disparity between the High Courts and the Supreme Court and emphasized long-term consistency in reform implementation. "I highlight India's pendency crisis -- with over 5 crore pending cases -- where there is a need for systemic reforms, and I propose five pillars for transforming justice delivery. These include strengthening judicial capacity; procedural reform and active case management; technology and artificial intelligence in courts; expansion of plea bargaining and pre-trial mechanisms; and data-driven justice governance.--IANS

India's latest Maritime Doctrine responds to strategic environment: Report

Canberra, March 16 (IANS) India's 2025 Maritime Doctrine underscores its ambition to be a "preferred security partner" and "first responder" in the region, marking a notable shift from repeated use of these terms in diplomatic statements to their formal inclusion in a naval policy.

According to a report in Australia-based independent think tank Lowy Institute's "The Interpreter", the doctrine's geographic imagination has also expanded, with earlier versions focused mainly on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as the "core theatre for India's maritime strategy". The 2015 doctrine broadened India's maritime outlook by outlining primary and secondary areas of interest beyond the region.

The doctrine, the report said, presented India, the Indian Ocean Region and the Indo-Pacific as an interconnected continuum rather than a "hierarchy of operational priorities". The shift is significant because it integrates the Indo-Pacific concept within the doctrinal framework that shapes India's naval planning.

"Most notably, the new doctrine is an acknowledgement that con-

temporary conflict rarely conforms to a clear line between peace and war. The document repeatedly refers to a condition described as "No War No Peace" -- the space where countries pursue their objectives without crossing the threshold of open armed conflict. Rather than treating war as a discrete event, the doctrine situates it along a continuum of cooperation, competition, confrontation, and conflict," the report detailed.

"Maritime rivalry today seldom erupts into open conflict. It unfolds through forms of pressure, such as ships shadowing one another, increased patrols, and competing legal claims. The doctrine's attention to such dynamics suggests that the Indian Navy sees maritime competition as an ongoing contest for advantage," it added.

The report stressed that the doctrine responds to the strategic environment by addressing "grey-zone operations", a concept that has become prominent over the past decade, especially in the South China Sea context. Such activities typically exploit legal and political ambiguity, employ proxies or indirect instruments, and seek to impose pressure

on adversaries without provoking conventional retaliation.

"By explicitly defining grey-zone operations, the doctrine attempts to bring conceptual clarity to an area where terms such as hybrid or irregular warfare are used interchangeably. This shows that the Indian Navy views such activities as a persistent feature of the maritime environment rather than an exceptional circumstance," the report mentioned.

The doctrine, it said, emphasises that modern naval operations go beyond direct fleet physical engagements and incorporate a "cognitive" element.

"It involves influencing how adversaries perceive situations and make decisions. This focus appears in the discussion of "manoeuvre warfare", traditionally associated with mobility and surprise, but also as a method of disrupting an adversary's cohesion and decision-making processes. Such thinking points to a change in Indian military doctrine -- acknowledging that the battle for influence also unfolds in the realm of narratives and interpretation," the report noted. --IANS

NAR-India organises the annual event in Mumbai expecting a business of 3000 crore with top developers retail brands

Mumbai, NAR-India, the country's leading body representing real estate professionals, is set to organise its annual national convention in Mumbai this year, bringing together key stakeholders from across the real estate ecosystem. The event is expected to generate business transactions worth approximately 3000 crore, with participation from leading national retail brands including those from the Reliance, Tata and Birla groups.

The convention will bring together over 1,800 participants, including Realtors, developers, investors, landlords, retailers, financial institutions and corporate occupiers from across India. The platform aims to facilitate meaningful networking, strategic collaborations and large-scale real estate transactions across residential, commercial and retail segments.

India's real estate story is no longer just about buildings; it is about trust, networks and the ability to create value through collaboration. Platforms like this convention bring the entire ecosystem -- brokers, developers, investors and corporates -- into one room, where conversations turn into partnerships and ideas turn into transactions. At NAR-India, our goal is to strengthen this ecosystem and

ensure that Indian realtors play a central role in shaping the future of the industry," said Mr. Sumanth Reddy, Chairman- NAR India.

Adding to this, Mr. Chandresh Vithalani, President-Elect- NAR India, said the convention reflects the growing professionalism of India's real estate brokerage community and highlights the role of organised realtors in enabling transparent and large-scale property transactions across the country. He noted that bringing together industry leaders, corporate brands and real estate professionals on one platform will help unlock new business opportunities and strengthen collaboration within the sector.

A key highlight of the convention will be the participation of major national corporates exploring large-scale investments across different real estate sectors, further strengthening the role of organised brokerage in driving property transactions and partnerships.

The event will also witness the presence of several distinguished guests and personalities including renowned actor Boman Irani and spiritual speaker Jaya Kishori, who are expected to address and interact with the attendees. Among the distinguished dignitar-

ies expected to attend are Dr. Niranjan Hiranandani, noted architect Mr. Hafeez Contractor, Mr. Shekhar Patel from CREDAI, and Padma Shri awardee SavjiBhai Dholakia.

Speaking about the convention, Mr. Ashish Mehta, Convention Chair, said the annual gathering will provide a strong platform for real estate professionals to connect with developers, corporates, retailers and investors from across the country. He added that the convention is expected to create significant business opportunities for members of NAR-India as well as the wider real estate fraternity, by enabling partnerships, transactions and collaboration across the industry. The event leadership team includes Mr. Jayesh Vyas, Convention Co-Chair, Mr. Ram Prasad Padi, Program Chairman, and Mr. Raju Achpilai, Convention Secretary, who are jointly working to create a comprehensive platform that enables networking, deal-making and knowledge sharing across the industry.

The convention will host a series of industry discussions, networking sessions and business matchmaking opportunities, enabling participants to exchange insights on emerging trends, investment opportunities and the evolving landscape of Indian real estate.

His efforts improving lives of countless citizens: PM Modi wishes CR Paatil on his birthday

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday extended birthday wishes to Union Minister of Jal Shakti C.R. Paatil and praised his efforts in enhancing water management and promoting the 'Har Ghar Jal' initiative.

Taking to X, PM Modi said, "Warm birthday greetings to Union Minister Shri C.R. Paatil Ji. His dedicated efforts towards strengthening water management and advancing the vision of 'Har Ghar Jal' are helping improve the lives of countless citizens. Wishing him a long, healthy and fulfilling life in the service of the nation."

Thanking the Prime Minister, Paatil said, "Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sir, I am deeply grateful for your warm wishes. "Your visionary leadership continues to inspire me to work with renewed commitment towards strengthening water governance

and further advancing the mission of 'Har Ghar Jal', contributing meaningfully to the vision of a Viksit Bharat and improving the quality of life for every citizen," the Jal Shakti Minister posted on X.



ter Amit Shah also wished Paatil on his birthday and said, "Under the leadership of Modi ji, you are doing commendable work in the direction of conservation and management of water resources and providing clean drinking water to every household. I pray to God for your good health and long life."

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, extending best wishes to the Jal Shakti Minister, said, "Heartfelt birthday wishes to my colleague in the Union Cabinet, Shri C.R. Paatil ji. I pray to God for your excellent health, long life, and a blissful life."

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal also extended birthday wishes to Paatil. Taking to X, Goyal said, "Your efforts towards the better utilisation of water resources and advancing the objective of Jal Jeevan Mission are highly commendable. May God bless you with good health and a long life.--IANS

195 cases against senior officials show extent of corruption in Karnataka: BJP

Bengaluru, March 16 (IANS) BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, R. Ashoka, on Monday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government, alleging that corruption has become widespread under its rule.

In a statement, Ashoka said that when the entire government, starting from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to ministers and officials, is steeped in corruption, it is natural for senior officers to follow the same path. Ashoka claimed that corruption cases registered against 195 senior-ranking officers, including IAS, IPS and Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officials, over the past three and a half years highlight the scale of alleged irregularities under the present government.

Quoting a Kannada proverb, Ashoka said that between September 2022 and February 2026, the Karnataka Lokayukta registered 195 cases against senior government officials, including IAS, IPS and Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officers. Of these, 104 cases involve

raids on disproportionate-asset cases, and 91 officials were allegedly caught red-handed accepting bribes.

Using another Kannada saying, he alleged that ministers and MLAs



of the ruling party, who he claimed believe the Congress will be defeated in the next election in Karnataka, are indulging in plunder without hesitation. He further alleged that the bureaucracy, too, has become part of the corruption.

Ashoka quoted a report stating that between September 2022 and February 2026, 195 cases were registered against senior government officials with the Karnataka Lokayukta. Of these, 104 cases relate to raids over disproportionate as-

sets, while in 91 cases, government officials were caught red-handed while accepting bribes.

The report also states that none of the officials has either been convicted or cleared of the charges so far. Investigations in 89 cases are still in the preliminary stages. An IAS officer and an IPS officer are also facing corruption charges. In addition, cases have been registered against 12 officials attached to the Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS).

Turning to farmers' issues, LoP Ashoka criticised the government for failing to ensure timely payment to sugarcane growers. He said sugar factories are mandated to clear dues within 15 days of procurement, but in Belagavi district alone, around Rs 1,554 crore remains unpaid even after the 2025-26 sugar season, forcing farmers to protest once again.

"Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, instead of securing the livelihoods of farmers in the state, if you spend your time only securing your chair, who will respond to the hardships of the farmers? Is your government alive or dead?" Ashoka questioned.

## Soha Ali Khan says her mother Sharmila Tagore's house is the 'only home where she's still someone's baby girl'

Mumbai, March 16 (IANS) Actress Soha Ali Khan, on Sunday, shared a heartwarming glimpse of her beautiful time with her mother, veteran actor Sharmila Tagore.



Sharing a picture alongside her mother, Soha mentioned that it is the only home where she's still somebody's baby girl, highlighting the warmth of her maternal house.

Taking to her social media account, Soha posted a carousel post featuring her pictures along with Sharmila Tagore and her daughter Inaaya Kemmu. She captioned the post as, "The only home where I'm still someone's baby girl."

In the pictures, Soha can be seen dressed elegantly in a red saree paired with traditional jhumkas and a small bindi. She is seen standing beside her mother Sharmila Tagore, with both of them smiling warmly at the camera.

Another picture in the carousel post shows her daughter Inaaya hugging her grandmother Sharmila Tagore. Adding a nostalgic touch to the post, Soha used her mother's timeless song, 'Taarif Karoon Kya Uski', as the background track, originally sung by legendary playback singer Mohammed Rafi. The song was a part of Sharmila Tagore's debut movie Kashmir Ki Kali where she starred opposite legendary actor Shammi Kapoor.

For the uninitiated, Soha Ali Khan comes from the illustrious Pataudi family and is the daughter of Sharmila Tagore and late cricket legend Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi. She is also the sister of actor Saif Ali Khan and the sister-in-law of actor Kareena Kapoor Khan. On the professional front, Soha made her Bollywood debut with the film Dil Maange More and later appeared in films like Rang De Basanti, Tum Mile and many more.

## Oscars 2026: Michael B. Jordan honoured with Best Actor for 'Sinners'

Los Angeles, March 16 (IANS) Hollywood actor Michael B. Jordan bagged the trophy for Best Actor at the ongoing 98th edition of the Academy Awards for



his performance in the film 'Sinners'. The win marked the first Oscar of his career and represented a major milestone after years of acclaimed performances in both independent and blockbuster films.

In 'Sinners', Jordan portrayed a complex central character navigating moral conflict and personal redemption. Critics highlighted the emotional depth and physical intensity of the performance, noting how Jordan carried much of the film's dramatic weight. The role required a combination of psychological nuance and commanding screen presence, which contributed to the film's strong reception during the awards season.

He first gained wide recognition for his role in the television series Friday Night Lights before transitioning successfully into film. His notable performances include Fruitvale Station, Creed, and Black Panther. Over time, he established himself as one of the most prominent actors of his generation.

## Rajpal Yadav opens up on staying strong during emotional times amid legal challenges

Mumbai, March 16 (IANS) Actor Rajpal Yadav recently spoke about maintaining emotional strength amid life's tough challenges he had been facing, including his ongoing legal battles and personal turmoil.

In an exclusive conversation with IANS, the actor addressed whether such circumstances affect his work as a performer or even disturb his emotional balance.

Responding strongly to the question, Rajpal Yadav emphasised his outlook towards life and work. He said, "Every day is a beginning day. Every day is a working day. Every day is a new day."

The actor further explained that he believes in starting fresh every day and focusing on his craft rather than letting difficulties weigh him down.

He further added a touch of positivity and gratitude, saying, "God bless you all. Live freely."

The actor has been facing many turmoil in the past few months in his life and had even been put behind bars after he allegedly failed to repay a certain loan amount.

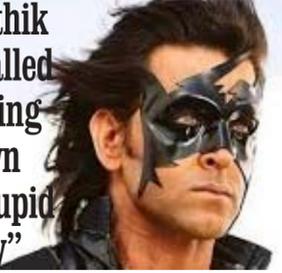
The actor was recently bailed out. On the professional front, Rajpal Yadav is touted as one of Bollywood's most recognizable comic actors.

The actor who has been a part of the entertainment industry for almost two decades, has appeared in several popular films and created iconic characters that audiences continue to remember.

From movies like Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, Garam Masala, Phir Hera Pheri to Chupke Chupke, Bhoole Bhooley, Hungama, Rajpal Yadav has carved a niche for himself in Bollywood.

The movie stars Akshay, Wamiqa Gabbi, Paresh Rawal, Tabu, alongside Rajpal Yadav.

## When Hrithik Roshan called actors doing their own stunts "stupid and silly"



Mumbai, March 16 (IANS) Actor Hrithik Roshan, had once shared his firm thoughts on the concept of a few actors opting to perform their own stunts, during an old interview with Lehren TV.

During the interaction, Hrithik, without mincing words, spoke about the risks involved in stunt sequences and explained why he believes actors should firmly rely on trained professionals instead of attempting dangerous action themselves.

Speaking about it, Hrithik said, "I don't believe

in doing your stunts yourself. I think it is stupid. It should be banned."

He added, "The reason I say that is that it should not be about an ego trip. You're an actor, you're creating a magical world, a fantasy world. And there are a lot of things that go into creating that fantasy. Even your makeup, your dialogues, your hair, your clothes, it's all made to make the unreal look real."

"People are specialised in doing certain specific jobs to help you create that entire world bit by bit in different pieces."

"A stuntman's job is to do stunts. He comes into that space, does his job, and creates one more piece of that big picture, and then you carry on. If you have an ego there, it's like saying I will write my own dialogues. It's silly," he further added.

Talking about Hrithik, the actor himself has been part of several action-heavy films throughout his career. His superhero franchise began with Koi... Mil Gaya, which later expanded into the popular Krrish series including Krrish 3.

All of the films featured a lot many high-octane action sequences, many of which were performed with the help of professional stunt doubles. In an old interview, filmmaker and Hrithik's father Rakesh Roshan had revealed that the sequence nearly turned dangerous when the harness suddenly snapped, causing Hrithik to fall directly onto the ground from a considerable height.

## From festivity to family moments: Sony SAB artists celebrate the spirit of Gudi Padwa



Mumbai, Gudi Padwa is celebrated with joy, tradition, and the promise of new beginnings. From raising the traditional Gudi outside homes to preparing festive delicacies and gathering with loved ones, the festival carries a sense of renewal that brings families and communities together. While each household celebrates it in their own way, the spirit of Gudi Padwa often lies in the small rituals that make the day special, decorating homes, sharing festive meals, and taking a moment to welcome the year ahead with hope and gratitude.

This Gudi Padwa, Sony SAB artists Akshaya Hindalkar, Shrenu Parikh, Rishi Saxena, Deeksha Joshi and Rajat Verma share how they connect with the spirit of the festival and the traditions or memories that make the

occasion meaningful for them.

Akshaya Hindalkar, playing Rashi Patel in Pushpa Impossible, shares, "This Gudi Padwa feels special for me as it marks my first one after marriage. Growing up, the festival always symbolised new beginnings, positivity, and the joy of welcoming a fresh chapter. This year, that sentiment feels even more meaningful as I celebrate it with my new family and embrace new tra-

ditions, love and togetherness. There is something very heartwarming about waking up early, helping decorate the house, preparing festive dishes together and watching the Gudi being hoisted with so much faith and happiness. I am excited to create new memories and continue the traditions that make this festival so meaningful. I wish everyone a very happy and prosperous Gudi Padwa."

Shrenu Parikh, playing Goddess Parvati in Ganesh Kartikey, shares, "Gudi Padwa has become a very special festival for me over the last few years. Being a Gujarati, I grew up celebrating our own beautiful traditions, but after getting married into a Maharashtra family, I've had the chance to experience the joy and significance of Gudi Padwa up close.

## Hiten Teiwani says he once worked 18-19 hours daily, now values work-life balance

Mumbai, March 16 (IANS) Actor Hiten Teiwani, recently reflected on the intense work schedules during the peak era of daily soaps and also highlighted how the experience shaped his approach towards work and life.

While speaking to IANS in an exclusive conversation, the actor recalled the years of his early career when he would often work for extremely long hours, and hardly prioritised sleep or anything else.

During the interaction with IANS, he said, "There was a time when I used to work for eighteen to nineteen hours a day. Back

then, I was extremely passionate about my work and did not think about anything else. I hardly slept. I just kept working. That hard work is the reason I am sitting here today and giving this interview."

He further added mentioned that now after more than two decades of being in the industry, said, "However, after working like that for many years, you reach a st value balance. Today, I prefer working within reasonable hours because I also want time for rest, family, and other aspects of life. But I still give my best during those working hours."



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## Fee factor: 48 PG seats vacant in pvt med colleges

Ahmedabad: Postgraduate seats in medical courses such as MD and MS are highly coveted. However, this year, 48 seats in private medical colleges for courses ranging from radiology to gynaecology and orthopaedics to paediatrics are vacant. Experts say fees at private colleges are among the chief reasons for the vacancies.

The fees for some courses for vacant seats include Rs 61 lakh for radiology, Rs 47 lakh for dermatology, Rs 45 lakh for orthopaedics, Rs 45 lakh for gynaecology, Rs 44 lakh for paediatrics, Rs 44 lakh for surgery, and Rs 28 lakh for emergency medicine. According to experts, the current figure represents one of the highest numbers of vacant PG seats in recent years.

All the seats are in privately run medical colleges, said officials. The de-

tails of vacant seats under the all-India quota in Gujarat will be released soon. The state's admission committee has already completed four rounds of admission, and the admission process was officially declared over on Feb 28, said sources.

This year, the process continued for about two months. Experts point to the addition of seats at various medical colleges — both govt and private — after the second rounds of admissions, following directives from the National Medical Commission (NMC). Those who were behind in the merit list got to choose from govt colleges and courses with relatively higher merit compared to those who had already locked in their selection in the first two rounds based on the available seats both time and money in terms of transfer fees.

## Gujarat CM urges new recruits to work for welfare of people

Policies and rules for good governance and not for harassment of people, Patel says. Stating that "policies and rules have been formed for good governance and not for the harassment of people," Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Sunday advised the new recruits to work for the welfare of people.

He was addressing a gathering to felicitate the candidates who have cleared recruitment examinations of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Gujarat Public Service Commission (GPSC).

The programme was organised by Sardarham-run Sudha Jashvant Ambalal Civil Service Centre to felicitate 1,342 candidates, who were trained at the centre. Five of them have cleared the UPSC. The CM indicated



that government jobs are very limited and it cannot be increased beyond a point. "Only 5 to 7% of people get government jobs and the rest of the people go for private service," he said and advised the selected candidates to make good use of the opportunity for the benefit of people. The CM said many officers delay people's work either the latter not coming at the given time

or there being paucity of time.

Urging the selected candidates to keep people's welfare in their mind, he said, "All the policies and rules have been framed for good governance. It has not been framed for the harassment of the common people." The CM recollected his recent meeting with a group of candidates selected for civil services.

## AAP to contest all 12,000 seats in Gujarat local body polls

Gandhinagar, March 16 (IANS) The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday announced that it will contest all 12,000 seats in the upcoming local self-government elections in Gujarat.

The first list of candidates is expected to be released after a three-day screening process currently underway. The announcement was made by the party's Gujarat president, Imdad Gadhvi.

Gadhvi said the party has decided to field candidates in every seat across municipalities, taluka panchayats, district panchayats and municipal corporations in the state.

"In the upcoming local self-government elections, the Aam Aadmi Party has decided to contest all 12,000 seats," he said.

According to the party, Gujarat has been divided into seven zones for the candidate selection process, with zonal election committees formed in each area. These committees comprise a zone president, central zone president, observers and assembly in-charges tasked with evaluating potential candidates.

Gadhvi said interviews of aspirants from constituencies under the state's 26 Lok Sabha segments were conducted between March 10 and 15.

Following the interviews, candidates are being categorised into A, B and C grades as part of the screening and assessment process.

"The state election committee will deliberate on the names received from different zones for three days -- March 16, 17 and 18. After the screening process, the first list of candidates will be announced shortly," he said.

He added that the party had received applica-

tions from a wide range of individuals, including social workers, political leaders and party workers.

Gadhvi said the party has adopted an "open to all" approach in candidate selection. The party said the tickets will be given to ordinary citizens.

The party also referred to the by-election in the Umreth Assembly constituency, which fell vacant following the recent death of sitting MLA Govind Parmar.

Gadhvi said the party would finalise its strategy for the bypoll after consultations with both the state and national leadership.

"In the elections announced yesterday in five states, the by-election for the Umreth Assembly constituency has also been declared. We will discuss the matter with the state and national leadership before making a decision," he said. rc/rad

## Gujarat govt drops plan to move Bill on private coaching centres, framing policy

The Gujarat government has dropped its plan to move a Bill — the Gujarat Coaching Institute (Management) Bill — in the Legislative Assembly's budget session to regulate and control the private coaching centres, officials privy to the matter told The Indian Express. In place of the Bill, a policy for the same is being framed which will be implemented soon, they added.

While similar Bills have been passed by other states — for instance, the Rajasthan Coaching Centres (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2025, which was being analysed by officials — the government has decided to go with the policy now. Following a number of student suicide cases, fire incidents, lack of facilities and alleged malpractices in the field, the Gujarat government had planned to control and regulate coaching centres across the state under law, with focus on student safety, mental well-being and transparency.

"The earlier plan of moving a Bill in the Assembly to regulate private coaching centres has been dropped. A committee is working on forming rules and regulations for the new policy," Mukesh Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Education Department, told The Indian Express.

## Deportee files Rs 3.2cr cheating case against agents over illegal US entry

Ahmedabad: A man who was deported to India after allegedly being taken to the US through an illegal immigration network on Saturday filed a criminal complaint at Adalaj police station, claiming he was cheated of crores of rupees and forced to work under exploitative conditions. The complainant alleged that four 'agents' lured him with promises of legal migration and employment in the US but instead subjected his family to financial exploitation and coercion. The complainant also told police that the main accused in this case is linked to the tragedy in which four of a family from Dingucha froze to death trying to enter the US illegally.

According to the complaint, the man wanted to travel to the US for business opportunities when he came into contact with a "network" that claimed it could arrange his journey. In the complaint, the victim quoted one of the accused saying that the total cost for him and his parents would be Rs 3.20 crore, and that he would have to pay the accused 1% interest on that amount every month. The complainant said he agreed, believing the process would be legitimate and that he would be provided work in the US to repay the amount.

## 'Gestational diabetes turns into Type 2 in 50% of women'

Ahmedabad: Gestational diabetes, a condition in which pregnant women experience a rise in blood sugar levels, has a relatively higher prevalence in India at about 22% compared with a global average of about 15%, according to some reports. The condition, however, is not temporary for many women, as they become prone to developing diabetes mellitus, or Type 2 diabetes.

A study based in Ahmedabad city encompassed 247 women with known gestational diabetes, who were tracked for three years continuously from 2023 to 2026 to understand whether the women developed Type 2 diabetes. The results indicated that about 50% of these women still had elevated blood sugar levels three years after childbirth. The study was led by diabetologist Rutul Gokalani and IIPH Gandhinagar associate professor Komal Shah, along with Kashvy Morakhia and Aakashsha Shukla.

Experts said that gestational diabetes occurs as the placenta produces hormones such as oestrogen, cortisol and lactogen to help the foetus grow, but it also causes insulin resistance that results in a blood sugar spike. Some of the signs include increased thirst, blurred vision, and the need for frequent urination.

## Rs 1,100 cr projects for 2 tribal districts

Gandhinagar: The state govt on Sunday sanctioned Rs 1,100 crore for several development projects in the tribal districts of Panchmahal and Dahod. An official statement said that chief minister Bhupendra Patel laid the foundation stones and inaugurated 112 projects worth Rs 732 crore in Panchmahal district and over 1,200 projects worth Rs 367 crore in Dahod district.

The CM inaugurated a lift irrigation pipeline project costing Rs 406 crore to deliver Panam reservoir water to 130 ponds in 79 villages of Shehra, Godhra, Kalol, and Ghoghamba in Panchmahal district. As a result of this project, approximately 86,000 hectares will receive irrigation facilities. Water from the Panam reservoir will be lifted from a height of 236 feet and distributed through a 205-kilometre-long pipeline. Irrigation facilities to 2.23 lakh acres of land at a cost of Rs 3,160 crore. He added that govt made an allocation of Rs 485 crore in the 2026-27 budget for lift irrigation to provide irrigation facilities in tribal areas. Patel also laid the foundation stones and inaugurated projects for health, education, road networks, and water facilities in Panchmahal and Dahod districts.

## Fake policeman stole Rs. 8 lakh by ordering drugs in Himmatnagar, real police caught the thieves

Himmatnagar, For the past few years, the activity of selling fake drugs and other items, including food items, has been increasing in Sabarkantha district, misleading the public and the administration and compromising the future of the youth. In February, three people, giving a false identity of a policeman, ordered opium from a young man living in Parishram Society in the cooperative Jin area of Himmatnagar and made him sit in a vehicle and threatened to file a case, demanding a ransom of Rs. 50 lakh. However, after that, a complaint was registered at Himmatnagar A-Division Police Station on Sunday that one person and another person from Sonasan village of Himmatnagar and Prantij taluka had demanded a ransom of Rs.



8 lakh. In this regard, a resident of Parishram Society According to the complaint filed by Surendra Satyanarayan Suthar, on the night of February 10, while he was at home, a resident living behind Swaminarayan Mandir Kankanol called him on his mobile and said that his brother-in-law Ratan Kishanlal Suthar had been caught by the police with opium poppy husks and that the police were demanding Rs. 10 lakh to settle the matter. He asked him to talk to Surendra Suthar. After that, the person living behind the Swaminarayan Mandir had said that he should come to the society and initially demanded Rs. 10 lakh to save Ratan. After that, Surendra

## Against whom the complaint was filed

- Vipul Revabhai Wankar (Resident of Sonasan, Ta. Prantij)
- Virendra Roshanlal Khatik (Resident behind Swaminarayan Mandir, Kankanol Road, Himmatnagar)
- and another unknown person

Suthar informed other acquaintances about the whole truth. After that, Surendra came to meet the young man who had called with Rs. 8 lakh. However, since the whole matter was very serious, a demand of Rs. 50 lakh was made earlier. However, after taking the ransom of

Rs. 8 lakh, the man living behind the Swaminarayan temple and a young man from Sonasan village of Prantij taluka together with Rs. 8 lakh reached under the bridge in Motipura area where, as per the previous arrangement, both of them told Surendra Suthar that we will release your brother-in-law Ratan and I will return with Ratan after giving Rs. 8 lakh to the police. After saying that, both of them got into a white car and left for Ahmedabad. Then on the same day, Surendra Suthar went to pick up Surendra's brother-in-law Ratan, saying on the phone that he had come to Himmatnagar that night. After coming home, Surendra Suthar's brother-in-law Ratan informed him of the whole truth and said that a young man living behind Swaminarayan Society had called me and said that he needed opium and called me to the cooperative area where another man on a bike had come and said that he was bringing milk. After that, an unknown man who got out of a car parked on the side said that we are in the police, we are coming from Gandhinagar and said that your name is Ratan and took me to the car. However, the remaining Rs. 2 lakh was repeatedly demanded. After that, Ratan said that he did not have the money, both these men threatened that if he did not give Rs. 2 lakh, he would be put in jail. After that, Ratan

said that he would go to the police station himself and the person in front hung up the phone. Finally, Surendra Suthar, a resident of the cooperative Jin area of Himmatnagar and a young man from Sonasan village, filed a complaint against three unknown persons at the A-Division Police Station on Sunday, PSI N.B. Vaghela of A-Division has registered a case under sections 140(2), 308(2), 319(2), 204 and 54 of the Indian Penal Code and has taken further action. (Maganjit vanzara)

## Minor fire outside aircraft movement area at SVPI

Ahmedabad: A small fire involving a temporary cabin structure was reported outside the aircraft movement area at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA) in Ahmedabad on Sunday afternoon, airport authorities said. The incident took place in a temporary cabin structure, as is learnt from sources. According to an official spokesperson, the incident was reported at 2.43pm and was swiftly handled by the airport's emergency response teams. Authorities confirmed that no injuries were reported in the incident and the fire was contained quickly.

## Economic growth in Surat has led to rise in cyber crime cases: DGP

Ahmedabad, The details of crimes that took place in January and February were discussed in the meeting and reviews were taken from the respected police officials and suggestions were given by DGP to the cops in the meeting, said police sources.

DURING his first visit to Surat after taking charge as Gujarat Director General of Police (DGP), K L N Rao on Saturday convened a Regional Crime Conference with all Deputy Commissioners of Police and other senior officers in Surat city and five districts in the Surat Range. He urged the officers to work on the undetected cases, especially those related to crime against women and children. He said, "In the coming days, we are going to start Regional Cyber Crime centres in all commissionerates across the state." The details of crimes that took place in January and February were discussed in the meeting and reviews were taken from the respected police officials and suggestions were given by DGP to the cops in the meeting, said police sources. After the meeting, Rao told mediapersons, "There is economic growth in Surat and its nearby dis-

trict, which has also led to a rise in the cases of cyber crimes and special economic offences. We told the police officers how to handle such cases, detect and prevent such offences, and get the active organised gang behind bars."

He added, "There are 18 types of offences that fall into cybercrime cases and a detailed discussion was done. There are 39 cybercrime police stations in different districts and cities across the country. The state government started the State Cyber Crime Centre of Excellence last year where an IG (Inspector General) rank officer and SP (Superintendent) rank officer have been deputed. These headquarters will keep an eye on the cy-

ber crime incidents happening across the state. We will also start Regional Cyber Centres of Excellence in all major cities (commissionerates) across the state. Under 'Tera Tujko Arpan' we have returned an amount of Rs 50 crore to the victims of cyber crimes across the state." In the conference, 12 presentations were made in connection with the traffic problems and their solutions and how to reduce them. "The 12 presentations include coastal security, marine task force, absconders squad and traffic woes. Under the 'Spandan' programme of the state government, an academic study has been carried out by SVNIT (Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Institute

of Technology) to develop special mobile applications for the health conditions of police personnel and to identify traffic hotspots and accident-prone areas in Surat and south Gujarat. This will also help us while developing policies related to the Traffic rules and regulations in the coming days," said the DGP.

## 9 LPG cylinders stolen

Ahmedabad: Amid concerns over LPG shortage in parts of the city, Gompipur police registered a theft complaint after nine filled LPG cylinders were stolen from delivery vehicles at different locations.

According to the complaint filed on March 15 by an employee of a gas agency, the thefts took place during cylinder deliveries in residential areas. On Feb 18,

three cylinders were stolen from a delivery rickshaw at Balabhai Chhagan ni Chali. On Feb 26, four cylinders were stolen from a vehicle near Suvapankhni Chali on Usha Road. In another incident on Saturday, two cylinders were stolen near Hojwali Masjid. Police said the stolen Indane cylinders were worth about Rs 28,800 in total, and further investigation is under way.

## Two athletes from Sabarkantha won 3 gold medals in National Pera Athletics

Himmatnagar, The 21st National Athletics Championship for Cerebral Palsy was recently organized at Patliputra Sports Complex in Patna, Bihar. In which more than 300 athletes from 19 different states participated in the national level competition. In which 40 athletes from Gujarat participated. In which two cerebral palsy athletes from Sabarkantha district won 3 gold medals and brought glory to Sabarkantha district in the state. The details regarding this are that the 21st National Athletics Championship for Cerebral Palsy was recently organized at Patliputra, Bihar. In which Dharma Jigarbhai

Sagar of Sabli village of Idar taluka of Sabarkantha participated in the sub-junior category of the age limit of 12 to 15 years. He has



achieved double success by winning gold medals in both the shot put and javelin throw competitions by showing extraordinary sportsmanship. Apart from this, Vijaynagar taluka player Ajay Modiya has also

proven his talent at the national level. Ajay Modiya has won the gold medal by securing first place in the shot put competition in the F-35 category. Thus, these two gems of Sabarkantha have together added 3 gold medals to the district's bag. The achievements that such players have achieved at the national level despite having physical conditions like cerebral palsy have become a source of inspiration for other disabled children and youth. These winners have been felicitated by the district administration and the Youth Disabled Organization Mandal, Sabarkantha. (Maganjit vanzara)

## Over 13.98 lakh cases resolved in Gujarat's first National Lok Adalat of 2026

Ahmedabad, The First National Lok Adalat of the year 2026 was successfully organized on March 14 across the State of Gujarat under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

The event witnessed remarkable success and overwhelming participation from litigants throughout the state. Under the visionary leadership of the Chief Justice of the High Court of Gujarat and Patron-in-Chief of the Gujarat State Legal Services Authority, Justice Sunita Agarwal, and with the guidance of Justice Alpesh Y. Kogje, Senior-most Judge and Executive Chairman.

All district and taluka legal services authorities made concerted efforts to ensure maximum public benefit from this Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism.

During this Lok Adalat, a massive total of 6,67,858 pending cases including

motor accident compensation, civil suits, negotiable Instruments act complaints, matrimonial disputes, and industrial matters were taken up for settlement.

Out of these, 5,77,579 cases were successfully disposed of through mutual agreement, resulting in awards amounting to Rs. 30,93.02 crores. The progress in pre litigation Lok Adalats was equally significant, with 8,21,208 cases amicably settled involving a settlement amount of Rs. 116.78 crores. Additionally, the resolution of 6,48,375 traffic E-Challan cases led to the recovery of Rs. 50.48 Crores.

The Lok Adalat also played a pivotal social role by resolving 3,581 matrimonial disputes, providing immediate relief to several families and ending prolonged emotional and legal battles. Overall, the day concluded with the disposal of 13,98,787 cas-

es (combining pre-litigation and post-litigation), with total settlement awards reaching Rs. 3209.80 crores.

This massive resolution substantially contributes to the ongoing efforts to reduce case pendency within the judicial system across Gujarat. A key highlight of this session was the special focus on long-standing litigation. Under specific arrangements made for cases pending for more than ten years, 764 such decade-old matters were settled.

Furthermore, 6,655 targeted cases were successfully resolved, marking a significant step toward clearing backlogs. The first National Lok Adalat of 2026 has thus reaffirmed its position as an effective, speedy, and cost-efficient platform for justice, reflecting the commitment of Gujarat's legal institutions to enhancing access to justice for all citizens.

## GUJPEDICRITICON 2.0: Gujarat Hosts Landmark ECMO Simulation Training with Over 250 Pediatric Specialists

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Pediatric Critical Care Chapter, in collaboration with AOP Gujarat, AOP Ahmedabad, and SGVP Holistic Hospital, successfully organized a two-day national conference titled "GUJPEDICRITICON 2.0" in Ahmedabad on March 14 and 15, 2026. This significant medical event focused specifically on the advanced treatment and management of critically ill children. The main proceedings on March 15 at SGVP Holistic Hospital saw the participation of approximately 250 pediatricians from across the country, including various regions of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Delhi, with the presentation of 34 insightful research papers.

The first day of the conference was dedicated to specialized clinical workshops held across three major hospitals in the city. At Apollo Hospital, doctors underwent rigorous training in life-saving ventilator therapy for complex pulmonary diseases. Simultaneously, SGVP Holistic Hospital hosted a pioneering simulation-based training program, marking the first time such a large-scale initiative has been held in Gujarat. This session featured 16 modern simula-

tion stations and specialized ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) training, designed to upgrade doctors' technical skills and improve real-time emergency responses through high-fidelity medical scenarios. Additionally, KD Hospital hosted a targeted training workshop for nursing staff to enhance their role in critical care.

The successful execution of the conference and its educational objectives were highlighted by a distinguished medical committee. This team included Dr. Jitesh Raval, Dr. Amit Chitaliya, Dr. Vaibhav Patel, Dr. Jay Shah, Dr. Snehal Patel, Dr. Khanjan Shah (Ahmedabad), Dr. Hiren Patel (Deesa), Dr. Krutika Shah (Vapi), Dr. Krutika Tandon (Karamsad), Dr. Himanshu Tadvii and Dr. Pratik Shah (Surat).



## France being targeted in regional escalation 'unacceptable': Macron

Paris, March 16 (IANS) French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday said that it is 'unacceptable' for France to be targeted amid the regional escalation following joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Macron made the remarks in a post on X after speaking by phone with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

"I have just spoken with Iranian President Massoud Pezeshkian. I called on him to put an immediate end to the unacceptable attacks Iran is carrying out against countries in the region, whether directly or through proxies, including in Lebanon and Iraq," he said.

He said France acts strictly within a defensive framework aimed at protecting its interests, safeguarding its regional partners and supporting freedom of navigation, adding that he had called on Iran to immediately end the attacks it has carried out against countries in the region, whether directly or through proxies.

"I reminded him that France is acting within a strictly defensive framework aimed at protecting its interests, its regional partners, and freedom of navigation, and that it is unacceptable for our country to be targeted," he said. "The unchecked escalation we are witnessing is plunging the entire region into chaos, with major consequences today and for the years to come. The people of Iran, like those across the region, are paying the price. Only a new political and security framework can ensure peace and security for all."

## Iran not asking for ceasefire or negotiations, ready to defend itself as long as it takes: Iranian FM

Tehran, March 16 (IANS) Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi has said that the country is not asking for a ceasefire or negotiations with the United States, stating that Tehran is prepared to defend itself "as long as it takes" against what he described as an "illegal war."

In an interview with CBS News aired Sunday, Araghchi rejected claims that Iran has sought an end to hostilities, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We never asked for a ceasefire, and we have never asked even for negotiations. We are ready to defend ourselves as long as it takes," said the minister.

He noted that Iran will continue its operations until US President Donald Trump "comes to the point that this is an illegal war with no victory."

Speaking about the nuclear issue, Araghchi reiterated that Tehran has never sought nuclear weapons.

Revealing that Iran had agreed to dilute its enriched uranium during pre-attack talks with the United States, the minister said that those enriched materials are now "under the rubble" following strikes on its nuclear facilities. "Everything is under the rubble," he said, adding that Iran has no current plans to recover enriched uranium stockpiles from the damaged sites.

Earlier on Sunday, Araghchi said that Tehran has information that the US and Israel are launching attacks against Arab states in the West Asia region.

He made the remarks in an interview with pan-Arab news outlet Al-Arabiya Al-Jadeed, parts of which were published, questioning the origin of attacks on regional Arab states that have been blamed on Iran.

Araghchi said Iran is ready to meet with regional states and form a joint committee to investigate the nature of the attacked targets.

Iran's strikes only targeted US bases and interests in retaliation for attacks launched from those sites, he added.--IANS



the second time," Araghchi added.

As for the Strait of Hormuz, the minister stressed that Iran has not closed this waterway. "This is up to our military to decide, and they have already decided to let a group of vessels belongs to different countries to pass," he noted.

He noted that Iran will continue its operations until US President Donald Trump "comes to the point that this is an illegal war with no victory."

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## OSCARS UPSET

Timothee Chalamet saw his years-long Oscars dream go up in smoke on Sunday - as he was brutally snubbed for Michael B. Jordan in the Best Actor category. The 30-year-old earned the nomination for his performance in Josh Safdie's ping-pong drama film Marty Supreme. This year's Best Actor category was stacked. Chalamet was up against Jordan (Sinners), Leonardo DiCaprio (One Battle After Another), Ethan Hawke (Blue Moon), and Wagner Moura (The Secret Agent).

## Fire near Dubai airport contained after drone crash, no injuries reported

Dubai, March 16 (IANS) A fire caused by a drone crash near Dubai International Airport has been brought under control, with no injuries reported, local authorities said Monday.

Flights, however, were temporarily suspended as a precaution to ensure the safety of passengers and staff.

Authorities said the fire broke out after a drone fell near the airport, affecting a fuel tank. Dubai Civil Defence said it successfully contained the blaze.

Gulf states have been hit by waves of missile and drone attacks since the outbreak of the US-Israeli war on Iran on February 28, with the United Arab Emirates reporting interception of over 1,500 drones so far, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier, on March 14, a fire broke out in Fujairah, an emirate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), after debris fell following the



interception of an unmanned aerial vehicle by air defence systems. No injuries had been reported.

Officials did not provide details on the drone's origin, the exact location of the incident, or the extent of any damage. Dubai has temporarily suspended all flights at Dubai International Airport as a precautionary safety measure, the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority said following the drone incident. "Dubai Civil Aviation Authority announces the temporary suspension of flights at Dubai International Airport as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of all passengers and staff. Travellers are advised to contact their respective airlines for the latest updates regarding their flights. Further updates will be announced through official channels as soon as they become available," the Dubai Media Office wrote on X. Meanwhile, the UAE's defence ministry has reported six deaths since the conflict began - four civilians and two military personnel. The soldiers died in a helicopter crash that was linked to a technical issue.--IANS

## 6 killed, 142 injured in UAE amid escalating regional tensions: Defence Ministry

Abu Dhabi, March 16 (IANS) Six nationals of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh have been killed and 142 residents of multiple nationalities have suffered minor to moderate injuries in the UAE amid the recent escalating regional tensions, the UAE's Defence Ministry said on Sunday.

Since the start of what the Ministry described as Iranian attacks, the UAE's air defence systems have intercepted 298 ballistic missiles, 1,606 drones, and 15 cruise missiles, the Ministry said in a statement.

It said the air defence systems intercepted four ballistic missiles and six drones launched toward the country on Sunday alone, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on Sunday, authorities in Dubai confirmed that loud explosions heard in the Marina and Al Sufouh areas were the result of air defence interceptions.

## Iran's supreme leader reiterates demand for compensation from 'enemy'

Tehran, March 16 (IANS) Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei reiterated his country's demand for compensation from its "enemy."

"We will obtain compensation from the enemy, and if he refuses, we will take as much of his property as we determine, and if that is not possible, we will destroy the same amount of his property," read a post on the supreme leader's Telegram account, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier on Thursday, new Supreme Leader in his first message to the country, called for continued resistance and said that the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed.

In a written message, Mojtaba Khamenei vowed revenge for those killed in the conflict, insisting that Tehran "will not refrain from avenging the blood of its martyrs". The message, local media reported, was read by a female presenter on Iranian state television. It also said "the tool of closing the Strait of Hormuz must be preserved" and warned that Iran could open "other fronts, if necessary". The message added that Iran seeks friendly relations with neighbouring countries and would target only bases from which attacks are launched against it.

## South Korea: Unification minister urges North Korea not to miss chance for talks with Trump

Seoul, March 16 (IANS) South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dong-young called on North Korea on Monday not to miss an opportunity to resume dialogue with the United States after President Donald Trump expressed interest in meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

"The government's position on a North Korea-US summit does not depend on how likely it is, but it believes the meeting must take place," "I hope North Korea will not miss the opportunity (for talks with Trump) created by Trump's expression of interest," the minister noted.

Chung's remarks came after Trump reiterated his interest in meeting Kim again, during a meeting with South Korean Prime Minister Kim Min-seok in Washington last Friday.



RECAP: Follow the latest developments on the US-Israel war with Iran as the IDF predicts the conflict will last another six weeks.

## Zelensky warns Iran war may divert Ukraine aid

New York, March 16 (IANS) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has warned that the war with Iran could divert global attention and military resources away from Ukraine's fight against Russia.

In an interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria GPS, Zelensky said Kyiv faces growing risks if the conflict in West Asia continues. "Yes, of course, we have big risks," Zelensky said. He said Ukraine could face shortages of air defence systems and missiles if military resources are redirected to the new conflict. "I think that we can have a deficit with air defence, especially PAC-3, PAC-2, for Patriot systems, for defending our sky," he said.

Ukraine has relied heavily on Western air defence systems to counter large-scale Russian missile and drone attacks. "If the war continues, of course, we will have these challenges, and the challenges will only increase," he said.

## Iran war rattles Washington as oil fears surge

Washington, March 16 (IANS) The war with Iran is rattling Washington and pushing oil prices higher. Fighting in the Strait of Hormuz is disrupting global energy flows. The conflict is also widening political divisions in the United States.

The conflict, now in its third week, has disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz and triggered sharp debate across the US political spectrum over the strategy and consequences of the war.

Speaking on CNN's State of the Union, US Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz said



the United States had inflicted severe damage on Iran's military capabilities.

"Militarily, the US military has decimated Iran's air force, their air defenses, their missile capability, their missile production capability," Waltz said in the interview with CNN anchor Jake Tapper. "This has been a dominant victory, the likes of which we haven't seen in modern American military history."

Waltz also argued that Iran was becoming increasingly isolated diplomatically, citing support at the United Nations for condemning Iranian attacks on civilian infrastructure.

"The Iranian regime has never been more diplomatically isolated," he said.

President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has

suggested the conflict could continue until Washington decides its objectives have been met.

Asked about when the war might end, Trump said in remarks aired by Fox News: "I can't touch that. I mean, I have my own idea. It'll be as long as it's necessary."

Iran has sought to leverage its position in the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy chokepoint, raising fears of prolonged disruption to oil supplies and shipping routes.

Waltz said the disruption affects Asia most directly.

"Eighty percent of the oil coming out of the Gulf heads to Asia," he said on CNN, arguing that countries dependent on the energy flow should help secure the waterway.

## Australia will not send navy ship to Strait of Hormuz, official says

Canberra, March 16 (IANS) Australia will not send navy ships to protect oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, a senior government minister said on Monday. Australia is well-prepared for the "economic crisis" caused by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and would not be sending a warship to the region, said Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Catherine King, also a member of Prime Minister

Anthony Albanese's Cabinet, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio.

King said that Australia's fuel stockpile was sitting at 37 days of petrol, 30 days of diesel and 29 days of jet fuel as of Monday after the government reduced minimum stockholding obligations and temporarily amended fuel quality standards to allow higher sulfur levels.

"We're well-prepared here in this country to weather the economic crisis that is occurring as a result of the Middle East," she said. The federal government on Saturday issued a warning to citizens not to transit through Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

## Pakistan: Police arrests over 300 illegal Afghan refugees during raids in Swabi

Islamabad, March 16 (IANS) Over 300 illegal Afghan refugees have been detained by police during raids carried out in various parts of Swabi district in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, local media reported on Monday.

A crackdown had been launched after the district administration and police officials' decision to deport illegal Afghans, daily Dawn reported, citing sources.

The police had ordered Station House Officers (SHOs) to keep data of all illegal Afghans in the jurisdictions of their police stations. According to sources, 341 Afghan refugees were arrested during raids conducted in Topi, Razaar, Chota Lahor tehsils and other parts of Swabi on Sunday. They mentioned that the raids will continue and all Afghan refugees, who are illegally residing in Swabi, will be detained and deported to Afghanistan.

Around 30,000 Afghan refugees still live in various parts of Swabi, with most of them having proper documentation, while others stay illegally. The sources revealed that



"We operate from a place of love!" yelled rapper Bobby Vylan to appreciative nods from the crowd below him. Moments later, he emphasised the point: "Everything we do stems from love!" At which point, he rounded off his sermon on a suitably tender note. "I'd just like to conclude with this: Death! Death! To the IDF! The crowd around me gleefully joined in with Vylan's loving call for the slaughter of the Israeli Defence Forces over and over, waving, in equal measure, Palestinian flags, Iranian flags and posters of recently-terminated Iranian leader Ali Khamenei, billed as 'The Great Martyr. Our Leader'. A group of teenage girls in front of me were literally jumping up and down for joy.

## Indian travellers turn to Japan and South Korea for spring travel

Mumbai, Klook has released its Spring Readiness Index, offering a snapshot of how Indian travellers are planning for the spring travel season across Japan and South Korea. The Spring Readiness Index is based on insights from 900 travellers across nine Asia markets, Japan remains the top spring destination, with 78% of respondents naming it as their preferred choice, followed by South Korea at 52%.

For Indian travellers, the main draw during the March-April travel window is seasonal attractions, reinforcing a broader shift toward experience-led travel shaped by natural spectacles, cultural moments, and limited-time opportunities. This is reinforced by Search interest on Klook's platform for spring-related terms such as "cherry blossom" and "sakura" rose 57% from December 2025 to February 2026, highlighting strong momentum for seasonal travel.

"Today, real-life experiences and moments of discovery are shaping how and why people travel," said Shivam Tyagi, Head of Marketing - India, Klook. "Cherry blossom season is increasingly becoming one of those once-in-a-lifetime moments that Indian travellers are ac-

tively planning for. What we're seeing is not just demand for destinations, but demand for timely, seasonal experiences that make each trip feel more meaningful." Rather than choosing only major gateway cities, many travellers are increasingly using them as starting points for broader itineraries that include less traditional destinations.

"Spring travel today reflects a more intentional mindset," said Marcus Yong, Vice President, Global Marketing, Klook. "Through the Spring Readiness Index, we see how travellers are infusing greater flexibility into their planning while prioritizing experiences that matter most, from cultural sight-seeing to trying local food. These insights help shape how Klook supports travellers, both online and on the ground, throughout the season."

As part of its spring campaign, Klook launched its Chief Spring Officer initiative in February 2026. After receiving more than 150 applications from 43 cities, the company expanded the role into a council of 25 Chief Spring Officers, who will be deployed across Japan, South Korea and Mainland China from 20 March 2026 to 10 April 2026 to share live travel insights and on-

the-ground recommendations. Japan-based Indian creators Ankit Purohit, Taba Yam Ana and Nikhil Tripathi will serve as in-destination Klook Creators, sharing on-ground insights, while Harjinder Kukreja will travel across the country documenting practical travel experiences for Indian audiences.

"With Klook's curated spring offerings and Chief Spring Officer initiative, Indian travellers can navigate the season like a personal guidebook," adds Shivam Tyagi.

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# Raphinha hat-trick keeps Barcelona 4 clear in La Liga

Madrid, March 16 (IANS) Raphinha scored a hat-trick as FC Barcelona maintained its four-point lead over Real Madrid at the top of La Liga with a 5-2 home win over Sevilla on Sunday afternoon.



Barcelona coach Hansi Flick rested Lamine Yamal and Fermin Lopez ahead of next Wednesday's Champions League tie at home to Newcastle United, but his side quickly took control thanks to two penalties from Raphinha. The first came after Joao Cancelo had his shirt pulled in the Sevilla penalty area after seven minutes, while the second followed a handball after another Cancelo run into the box. Dani Olmo made it 3-0 in the 38th minute after an assist from Marc Bernal, before Oso pulled a goal back for the visitors in injury time. Raphinha completed his hat-trick with a shot that took a big deflection early in the second half, and Cancelo got the goal his display deserved after cutting inside his marker and scoring with an accurate shot with half an hour still to play. Djibril Sow scored Sevilla's second with a header in virtually the last action of the game. Betis and Celta Vigo, Spain's two representatives in this season's Europa League, drew 1-1 in Seville. Ferran Jutgla opened the scoring for Celta in the fourth minute with a long-range shot that Betis goalkeeper Alvaro Valles should have kept out. Betis full-back Hector Bellerin equalized three minutes into the second half with a finish from a narrow angle after a good pass from Aitor Ruibal.

## Ish Sodhi ruled out of remainder of T20I series against SA

Hamilton, March 16 (IANS) New Zealand have suffered a blow with spinner Ish Sodhi being ruled out of the remainder of T20I series against South Africa due to a broken thumb. Sodhi hurt his thumb while bowling at training on Saturday and scans have since revealed a break in the affected area and a rehabilitation period of up to four weeks. That will see the right-arter that played three matches at the recent ICC Men's T20 World Cup miss the remainder of the home series against South Africa. However, New Zealand haven't named a replacement for Sodhi, with speedster Lockie Ferguson to join the team for the second and third matches of the series following an easy seven-wicket victory for the Spith Africa in the opening fixture in Mount Maungani on Sunday. It will leave Mitchell Santner and Cole McCoinchie as the main spin options in New Zealand's squad and head coach Rob Walter believes they have enough depth to cover the loss of Sodhi. "Ish is very passionate about playing for New Zealand and we know he was looking forward to turning out in front of home fans after the (T20) World Cup campaign," Walter said. "He is hugely experienced in the T20 format and so will be a big miss for the remainder of the series."

## Kumble congratulates Dravid, Binny and other BCCI Naman Awards winners

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) successfully hosted another edition of 'Naman,' the annual awards ceremony that recognises the top performers and trailblazers of Indian cricket and former India cricketer Anil Kumble penned a note to congratulate his 'dear friend' Rahul Dravid on receiving the lifetime achievement award.



The awards ceremony took place on Sunday night in the presence of all the BCCI office bearers, as well as the former secretary of the board and the current chairman of the International Cricket Council, Jay Shah. Also present at the gala night were the winning members of the five recent ICC tournaments - U19 Men's World Cup, U19 Women's World Cup, Champions Trophy, Women's ODI World Cup, and Men's T20 World Cup. The centre of attraction were former India cricketer and head coach Rahul Dravid, 1983 World Cup winner and former BCCI president Roger Binny, and former India captain Mithali Raj as the three veterans were honoured with the Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award.

"A special awards night celebrating the journey of Indian cricket. Wonderful to see five ICC title-winning teams together at the BCCI Naman Awards. Delighted for my dear friend Rahul Dravid on receiving the Best International Cricketer (Women) award for the fifth time as well as the award for the top run-getter in ODIs. Her teammate, all-rounder Deepti Sharma, received the award for being the highest wicket-taker (2024-25) in ODIs."



## LEGENDS AT LOGGERHEADS

Roy Keane has reaffirmed his beliefs that Michael Carrick is not the right man for Manchester United long-term, despite their impressive 3-1 win over Aston Villa on Sunday. The Red Devils boosted their hopes of a top-four finish and Champions League qualification next season thanks to goals from Casemiro, Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko. The result sees United remain third in the Premier League but move three points clear of fourth-placed Villa, five above fifth-placed Liverpool and six ahead of sixth-placed Chelsea with eight games remaining.

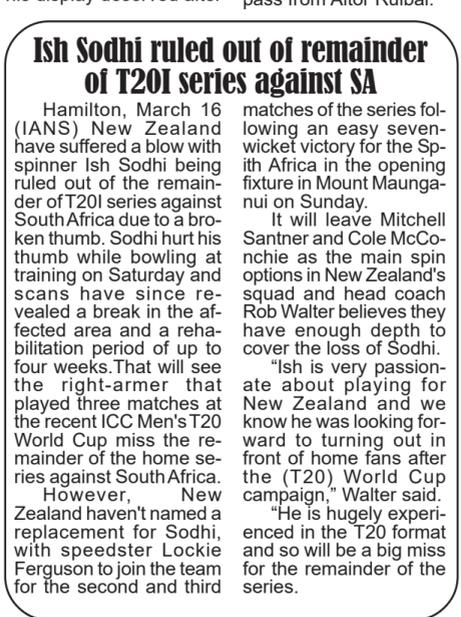
## You plan to steal the ICC trophy?' Akmal lambasts Pakistan after 2-1 loss to Bangladesh

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Former Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Karam Akmal launched a scathing criticism of the national side after their defeat to Bangladesh in the three-match ODI series. Pakistan, led by Shaheen Afridi, lost the series 2-1 after suffering an 11-run defeat in the deciding match in Dhaka on Sunday.



"Pakistan entered the series without several senior players, including Babar Azam and Fakhar Zaman, as the team management opted to give younger players opportunities. It was later revealed that the duo had been dealing with injuries sustained during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. However, the relatively inexperienced lineup struggled to make the most of the opportunity and failed to handle the pressure in crucial moments. "For god's sake, think about Pakistan cricket. Just see the levels we have gone down to. The Netherlands must be thinking that if they get to play a three-match ODI series against Pakistan, they can attain Test status, as they can also beat us."

"You have made a mockery of your cricket. You people just don't care." Akmal said on the 'Game Plan' show. Akmal also criticised the team's tactical decisions during the decisive encounter, stating, "You have lost the match. What experiments are you doing? It was a good pitch. Why did you choose to bowl? Why didn't you bat? They would have scored 350. Litton Das was slow in the end, that's why Bangladesh got restricted to 290. It was a series decider. When you do not win the series against teams, how will you progress? ICC trophy chori karke leke aani hai? ( You plan to steal the ICC trophy?)" Pakistan's struggles have not been limited to the bilateral series in Bangladesh. The team also endured a disappointing campaign at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, failing to progress to the semi-finals. During the tournament, the Men in Green lost their group-stage clash against India and later suffered another defeat to England in the Super 8 stage. Their Super 8 fixture against New Zealand was washed out due to rain. Pakistan still had a mathematical chance of advancing before their final Super 8 encounter against Sri Lanka, where they required a victory by at least 65 runs to secure a semi-final berth. Although Pakistan won the match by five runs, the margin proved insufficient to keep their hopes alive.



## Samson reveals Sooryavanshi's hilarious conversation with Dravid on IPL debut

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) India's T20 World Cup-winning cricketer Sanju Samson recently recounted a humorous incident from the Rajasthan Royals camp involving former head coach Rahul Dravid and 14-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Samson recalled Dravid's interaction with the youngster ahead of his Indian Premier League debut last season and revealed the amusing response Sooryavanshi gave when asked about his approach going into his first match. Sooryavanshi went on to impress in his debut season, scoring 252 runs in seven matches for Rajasthan Royals at an impressive strike rate of 206.56. His standout performance came against the Gujarat Titans, where he produced a sensational innings of 101 off 38 balls, reaching his century in just 35 deliveries. Just as Sooryavanshi began speaking, Samson interrupted and revealed exactly how the conversation went between Dravid and Sooryavanshi as he said, "I was actually in a meeting at the time. Rahul Sir called him into the room and told me, 'Sanju, we need to talk to him. He's just a young kid; Then he asked 'What is your game plan? and Vaibhav was like 'Agar hume agar pehla mila to hum pehla hi uda denge (If I get the first ball, I'm just going to smash it), and I was like yeh alag video game hi khel raha hai (He is playing a completely different video game)." Samson's distinctive take on Sooryavanshi caused a burst of laughter in the hall, even making the typically reserved Dravid lose control.



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# Business & Technology



## Vaping lower risk than smoking- What It means for India's tobacco harm reduction strategy

Mumbai, The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Safety and Health (ANSES) recently released a comprehensive scientific assessment affirming that vaping carries significantly fewer health risks than conventional smoking, while highlighting that it's not risk-free. The conclusion is based on a review of more than 2,500 studies examining the toxicological impact of vaping. Jonathan Livingstone-Banks, PhD, a Lecturer and Senior researcher in evidence-based healthcare at the University of Oxford said, "Our research has found that there is very strong evidence that e-cigarettes are an effective way to help people quit smoking tobacco. While e-cigarettes are unlikely to be completely safe, we can be confident that they are far safer than smoking tobacco." The agency stresses that the primary distinction between vaping and smoking lies in the absence of tobacco combustion. Traditional cigarettes burn tobacco, generating high levels of toxic and carcinogenic compounds. In contrast, e-cigarettes heat a liquid to produce an aerosol containing far fewer harmful substances and in much lower concentrations. The report notes that 98% of adult vapers in France are current or former smokers, and 61% engage in dual use. Daily vaping prevalence stands at 6.1%, while daily smoking has dropped to 18.2%, its lowest level since the late 1990s. These figures reinforce that vaping remains primarily a harm reduction tool for smokers, not a recreational product for non smokers. For India, where smoking related disease remains a major public health challenge, the ANSES review offers valuable scientific insight for policymakers and health professionals to evaluate the role of alternative nicotine delivery systems. While complete cessation is always the safest option, however, evidence increasingly shows that regulated e-cigarettes expose users to fewer harmful chemicals than combustible tobacco. For a subset of adult smokers, such products may provide a limited, transitional pathway to reducing toxic exposure, provided they are used responsibly, within a cessation framework. ANSES underscores that while vaping is less toxic than smoking, evidence on the long term effects of sustained e-cigarette use remains limited. It therefore categorises vaping risks as "possible" or "probable," compared with the well established, high risks of conventional smoking.

Mumbai, As online scams like digital arrests, impersonation fraud and AI voice cloning evolve into direct threats against the security of Indian households, Truecaller, the leading global communications platform, is shifting the narrative from simple identification to proactive family immunity with the launch of Family Protection in India. This follows its successful rollout in several global markets, including Sweden, Chile, Malaysia and Kenya. Truecaller's Family Protection is a sophisticated digital shield, designed to protect the entire household, especially elders, from the rapidly evolving landscape of predatory scams. Every family has a tech-aware individual or CTO (chief technology officer) who manages the digital well-being of their parents, elders and children. Family Protection gives the CTO real-time fraud alerts and a remote call hang-up feature, allowing them to end suspicious calls for any member of the group instantly. It also includes shared block lists, customizable security levels and a dashboard to monitor device safety settings, ensuring seamless protection across both Android and iOS devices. Importantly, Family Protection is free to use, allowing people to begin safeguarding their family members immediately. "Just knowing who is calling is no longer enough. Today, the real question is whether the call is safe to answer," said Rishit Jhunjhunwala, CEO, Truecaller. "As scams become more sophisticated and emotionally manipulative, protection needs to move beyond the individual to the entire household. With Family Protection in India, we're empowering the most digitally aware member of the family to act as a safety anchor, helping ensure that everyone in their circle benefits from the same level of trusted communication". "Just knowing who is calling is no longer enough. Today, the real question is whether the call is safe to answer," said Rishit Jhunjhunwala, CEO, Truecaller. "As scams become more sophisticated and emotionally manipulative, protection needs to move beyond the individual to the entire household. With Family Protection in India, we're empowering the most digitally aware member of the family to act as a safety anchor, helping ensure that everyone in their circle benefits from the same level of trusted communication".

## Truecaller Launches Family Protection in India, Bringing Shared Safety Against Scams to Households

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Mumbai, DP World's Mundra Int. Container Terminal (MICT) has delivered strong performance in CY25, with throughput rising 13.6% to nearly 1.5 million TEUs. Momentum extended into early 2026, with January volumes reaching 1,46,063 TEUs and February hitting 1,32,590 TEUs, both surpassing prior year levels and solidifying DP World Mundra's role as a premier gateway for India's EXIM trade. DP World Mundra's growth was driven by a 5.7% rise in vessel calls to 762 in CY25, while higher container volumes on rail have strengthened the terminal's multimodal connectivity to India's hinterland. Infrastructure upgrades, including the commissioning of a new quay crane along with new electric rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTGs) continue to support this growth momentum by enhancing berth productivity and operational efficiency. Commenting on the performance, Alok Mishra, CEO, Ports & Terminals, DP World Mundra, said, "Sustained double-digit growth through CY25 and continued momentum into 2026 demonstrate our ability to efficiently manage rising vessel calls and rail volumes, even amidst global volatility. We remain committed to delivering reliable, efficient operations that support India's expanding EXIM trade." With direct links to the Far East, Southeast Asia, Middle East, East and West Africa, US East Coast and the Mediterranean, DP World Mundra plays a vital role in supporting Gujarat's ambition of becoming a global trade powerhouse in the sub-continent. The terminal is also advancing its sustainability agenda. DP World is accelerating electrification across Mundra operations, deploying E-LMVs, electric forklifts, and upcoming e-ITVs. The terminal has also achieved Zero Waste to Landfill certification by the National Productivity Council (NPC) of India.

## DP World Mundra handles 1.5Mn Teus in CY25

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## Kotiyark Industries receives final listing & trading approval from NSE and BSE for Migration

Mumbai, Kotiyark Industries Limited has received the Final Listing and Trading Approvals from both the National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) for the listing and trading of its equity shares on the Main Board platforms of NSE Limited and BSE with effect from March 12, 2026, marking a significant milestone in the Company's growth journey. The Company was previously listed on the NSE Emerge Platform, and this migration to the Main Board of NSE Limited, along with the Direct Listing on the Main Board of BSE, reflects Kotiyark Industries Limited's continued progress, expanding scale of operations, and commitment to enhancing shareholder value. The Main Board listing on NSE Limited and BSE is expected to enhance the Company's market visibility, improve liquidity in its shares, and enable wider participation from institutional as well as retail investors. The migration will further strengthen the Company's presence in the Indian capital markets and support its future growth initiatives. Commenting on Listing, Gaurang Shah, Chairman cum Managing Director, said, "The approval for listing and trading of our equity shares on the Main Boards of NSE Limited and BSE marks an important milestone in Kotiyark Industries Limited's growth journey. This transition reflects the Company's operational progress and our commitment to creating long-term value for shareholders. We believe that the Mainboard listing will enhance the Company's visibility and broaden our investor base as we continue to focus on sustainable growth in the renewable energy sector."

## Specta targets Western India growth with showcase of X-ellence Collection at Ace Reflect Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad, Specta Quartz Surfaces, India's leading luxury quartz brand by ARL Group, has expanded its focus on Western India with its participation at Ace Reflect Ahmedabad. The move reflects Specta's long-term strategy to engage urban centres witnessing growing demand for premium housing, upgraded lifestyles, and contemporary design sensibilities. Ahmedabad has steadily emerged as a modern cultural and design hub, boasting India's largest stadium, a buzzing community of modern architects and designers, and now, increasing investment in luxury real estate by private players. The UNESCO World Heritage City is being supplied with \$692.2 million to develop a world-class sports enclave as part of an ambitious plan to bid for the 2036 Olympics. Together, these cultural, infrastructural, and real estate developments are laying the foundation for a growing demand for premium interior surfaces that match the city's evolving lifestyle aspirations. Commenting on the brand's focus on Western India, Ankit Jain, Founder, Specta Quartz Surfaces, said, "We are consciously investing in emerging markets where premium surface brands have traditionally had limited presence, and we believe these cities will deliver strong long-term growth. Homeowners in cities like Ahmedabad are more design-aware and quality-conscious than ever before. Our participation at Ace Reflect allows us to connect directly with the city's design community and showcase surfaces that align with this lifestyle upgrade. Our collections are curated and designed for modern Indian homes—where durability, performance, and refined aesthetics are equally important." Specta's participation at Ace Reflect underscores its broader expansion strategy of building presence in emerging metropolitan, as well as, tier-2 hubs through design forums, exhibitions, and local partnerships. As global trade continues to face periodic disruptions from geopolitical tensions to tariff fluctuations, the company is strengthening its focus on the domestic market while expanding across Western, Southern, and North-Eastern India.

## HSBC MF launches maiden ETF offerings in India with HSBC Gold ETF and HSBC Gold ETF FoF

Mumbai, HSBC Mutual Fund announced the launch of HSBC Gold ETF, investing in physical gold or gold related instruments, and HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund (FoF), investing in units of HSBC Gold ETF. The launch marks the first ETF offerings from HSBC Mutual Fund in India. The New Fund Offer (NFO) schemes open for subscription this week. NFO Period: HSBC Gold ETF - 16 to 18 March 2026, HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund - 19 to 25 March 2026. Both funds will be managed by Dipan Parikh, HSBC Mutual Fund. HSBC Gold ETF will invest in physical gold, and the performance of the scheme will be benchmarked against the domestic price of gold. HSBC Gold ETF Fund of Fund will invest in the units of HSBC Gold

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Waaree Energies Announces India's Largest 10 GW Integrated Ingot and Wafer Manufacturing Facility in Nagpur

Mumbai, Waaree Energies Limited, a leading global clean energy transition company, today marked a significant milestone in India's journey toward energy security and manufacturing self-reliance with the groundbreaking ceremony for its upcoming integrated solar ingot and wafer manufacturing facility at Butibori, Nagpur.

The facility will house 10 GW capacity each for solar ingots and wafers, establishing it as India's largest integrated ingot and wafer manufacturing complex. The project represents a major step toward strengthening India's upstream solar manufacturing ecosystem and building a more resilient domestic supply chain for the country's rapidly expanding solar sector.

The announcement was marked by a ceremonial event attended by senior government leaders and industry stakeholders, including Shri Devendra Fadnis ji, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and Shri Nitin Gadkari ji, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, who joined Waaree's leadership to mark the beginning of this landmark project. Speaking on the occasion, Hitesh Doshi, Chairman and Managing Director, Waaree Energies Limited, said: "India's clean energy transition will be powered not only by renewable deployment but also by building strong domestic manufacturing capabilities across the solar value chain. The groundbreaking of our integrated ingot and wafer facility in Nagpur marks an important step in strengthening India's upstream solar manufacturing ecosystem. By developing large-scale domestic capacity for these critical components, we aim to contribute to India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, reduce import dependence, and enhance the resilience of the country's solar supply chain. Nagpur's strategic location, strong industrial ecosystem, and connectivity across India make it an ideal destination for a project of this scale. We are grateful for the continued support from the Government of Maharashtra in

enabling this important initiative. Beyond manufacturing, the project will contribute to local employment, skill development, and industrial growth in the region. As India progresses toward the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, building globally competitive clean energy manufacturing infrastructure will play a crucial role in establishing the country as a global hub for renewable energy technologies."

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from KHOLYAWALA MOHAMMADSIRAJ IRFAN to new name SIRAJ IRFAN KHOLYAWALA. Add. 407, Trikarnji Nu Mandir, Astodia, Jamalpur, Ahmedabad-01 5266

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from AJAYBHAI CHANDULAL MISTRY to new name AJAY CHANDULAL MISTRY. Add. 9, Ashirwad Bungalows, Prahladhgar, Ahmedabad-380015 5273

UPI dominated retail digital payments with 81 pc share in FY25: Govt

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said that the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) accounted for around 81 per cent of total retail digital payment transactions in FY25 and has emerged as the largest real-time retail payment system in the world. In a written reply to separate questions in the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the total volume of retail digital payment transactions increased from 7,176.9 crore in FY22 to 22,167.9 crore in FY25. Retail digital payment transactions in India have witnessed exponential growth in recent years due to coordinated efforts by the government, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). "In value terms, digital payment transactions rose from Rs 457.44 lakh crore in FY22 to Rs 849.12 lakh crore in FY25," she said. According to the minister, the growth trajectory suggests that the volume of digital payments rose by 58.42 per cent in FY23, followed by 44.39 per cent in FY24 and 35.04 per cent in FY25. In terms of value, transactions grew by 28.41 per cent in FY23, 22.47 per cent in FY24 and 18.04 per cent in FY25. "The growth in retail digital payments, including UPI, is driven by several factors such as smartphone penetration, Aadhaar-enabled authentication, e-KYC, wider financial inclusion and expansion of merchant acceptance infrastructure across both urban and rural areas," Sitharaman said. Meanwhile, she also expressed concern that the rise in digital payments has brought certain challenges, including cybersecurity risks, digital adoption gaps, literacy and awareness issues, and network-related constraints.

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from BALOCH ADNBAI MOHAMMADKHA to new name ADANBAI MAHAMADKHA BALOCH. Add. 36/1 Jamaivas Mahekubpura Mahesana 5268

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from JAIN MEGHABEN MUKESHBHAI to new name JAIN MEGHA MIHIRKUMAR. Add. N/4 Ghanshyam Apartment Opp Rameshwar Mahadev Meghaninagar Ahmedabad-380016 5265

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from SHAHNAZ SARFARAZ MEMON to new name SHENAZ SARFARAZ MEMON. Add. Res. 238, A/F.F, Khwaja Palace, Patel Vas, Vishnuabaug Society, Danilimda, Ahmedabad-380028 5267A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from SARFARAZ IQBALBHAI MEMON to new name SARFARAZ MOHAMMEDIQBAL MEMON. Add. Res. 238, A/F.F, Khwaja Palace, Patel Vas, Vishnuabaug Society, Danilimda, Ahmedabad-380028 5267

Dunes College Kutch (Promoted By Jagatsinh Jadeja Educational Foundation) (Approved by AICTE & Affiliated to GTU)

Address : Survey No. 496/42/2, Opposite Police Quarters, Shinay, Gandhidham, Kutch - 370205

Recruitment

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Designation, MBA, BCA, BBA. Rows include Principal, Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor.

Qualification: As per the AICTE and GTU norms. Applications are also invited for the post of Librarian, Admin Officer, Accounts Officer and IT Officer. Eligible candidates may submit their application via email at info@dunescollegekutch.com / jjeducationalfoundation@gmail.com or via post on or before 23/03/2026. Candidates should carry all original documents, experience certificates, identity proof (Aadhar Card and PAN Card), and two passport-size photographs at the time of the interview. Contact Numbers: 9512722222 / 9512733333 | Website: dunescollege.edu.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

Registered Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara - 390007. Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex Mumbai - 400051. GOLD AUCTION & INVITATION NOTICE. The Borrower(s) mentioned below was/were issued a notice to pay off the outstanding amount towards the loan availed against gold ornaments, from ICICI Bank Limited. Due to failure in repayment of dues, auction of the pledged gold ornaments will be conducted on April 16, 2026 in case of a deceased borrower, all the Terms and Conditions will be applicable to the respective legal heir(s).

Vadodara Institute of Engineering

Vadodara Institute of Computer Application. National Robococon Winner. 1st Rank in Vadodara in GTU Result. Learning is always given first priority.

Faculty Recruitment for Following Positions

Table with 3 columns: Discipline, Degree Engineering, Diploma Engg. Rows include Mechanical Engg., Electrical Engg., Civil Engg., Computer Engg., Information Tech., Chemical Engg., EC Engg., Management (MBA), Physics, Chemistry, English.

Qualification & Eligibility: As per AICTE / GTU / State Govt. Norms. Nos. of required candidates for each position may vary. Eligible candidates are invited to send resume along with all relevant documents (hard copies) to Vadodara Institute of Engineering, Vadodara-Halol Toll Road, At Kotambai, Dist. Vadodara-391510 within 21 days from date of Advertisement.

India has tax buffer to avoid retail fuel price hike up to \$110 a barrel: Report

New Delhi, March 15 (IANS) India still has a meaningful tax buffer to absorb crude shocks, as excise duties of Rs 19.9 per litre on gasoline and Rs 15.8 per litre on diesel can be cut to protect retail prices until about \$110 per barrel crude, a report said on Monday. The report from Elara Capital said retail gasoline and diesel prices "could be fully protected through excise cuts until roughly \$110/bbl, beyond which price hikes on diesel and gasoline would become inevitable". It estimated India can absorb a \$40-45 crude shock via tax, adding that beyond \$110/bbl, the burden would shift from the government to consumers, the report added. For every \$10 per barrel rise in crude, oil marketing companies' diesel and gasoline margins would fall by Rs 6.3 per litre and LPG losses would rise by Rs 10.2 per kg. The dynamics implies about Rs 328 billion in annual LPG under-recovery, the report further said. Gross refining margins of OMCs could rise by about \$5/bbl for every \$10/bbl crude move, but that would not fully offset their marketing and LPG losses, the report added. At current Brent of \$100/bbl, earnings could drop sharply around 90-190 per cent absent retail price hike, tax cut, or higher LPG subsidy, it said. IOCL is better placed among OMCs due to higher refining share, but still vulnerable if crude stays high and retail price unchanged.

Gujarat Water Supply & Sewerage Board, Gandhinagar

Executive Engineer, Public Health Works Division, Nakhtrana Kutch e-tendering system in Work for Providing, Supplying, Lowering, Laying And Joining of PVC Pipe Line at Umarsar to Guneri Pipeline, Ta.-Lakhpur (Under M & R Programme 2024-25) (2nd Attempt) Estimated Cost Rs.29,89,090.96 (Tender I.D.No.-286212) Tender can be downloaded after Dt.16/03/2026 & Last Date of online Submission is till Dt.08/04/2026 at 18:10 Hours. Further details are available on the Website https://tender.nprocure.com

Gujarat Urban Development Company Limited

E-Tendering Notice Ref.No. GUDC/e-TENDERING/SJMSVY/SOLAR/A08,A09,A10,G05. P05,P06 & P07/2026 Gujarat Urban Development Company Ltd. invites online tenders by e-tendering for TOTAL 7 nos. of clusters, comprising 52 locations in 31 ULBs for installation of total capacity of 4884.00 kW@ Rs.33.74 Crore Solar Panel under SJMSVY, on epc basis. Tender documents will be available on the web site http://gudc.nprocure.com from 17/03/2026. All subsequent information,notification, changes and amendments would be posted only on the aboveside website INF/2830/2025-26

E-Tender Public Notice Year: 2025-26 Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation

Sealed e-tenders are invited from eligible agencies for the following approved work under the jurisdiction of Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation. Tender No. name of work Tender Fee E.M.D. 179/2025-26 Construction of RCC Road At Indroda Village Under GMC Area, Gandhinagar Rs.14,160/- Rs.5,85,000/- The tender form can be downloaded and submitted online through the website www.nprocure.com from 17/03/2026 to 01/04/2026 up to 18:00 hours. All required supporting documents must be scanned and uploaded in electronic format during the online submission process. The Technical Bid, Tender fee, and E.M.D. (in the form of Demand Drafts) must be sent to the office via Registered Post between Dt.02/04/2026 and 10/04/2026, before 16:00 hours. Only the offers received within this period will be considered for opening. The online bid opening will be conducted after Dt.13/04/2026. Place: Gandhinagar Dt.17/03/2026 Signature/- Municipal Commissioner Gandhinagar INF/2820/2025-26

Gujarat Sports Infrastructure Development Company Limited (GSID)

Recruitment Notice - Managerial Positions (Contract Basis) GSID, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Government of Gujarat, Invites applications from dynamic, experienced, and visionary professionals for 13 posts on contractual basis at GSID, Gandhinagar, Vacancies and place of deployment may vary as per workload:

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Post, No., Qualification, Experience, Remuneration (p.m). Rows include DGM-Project Planning & Coordination, DGM-Finance & Accounts, DGM-Legal & Compliance, DGM-Engineering & Construction, DGM-Human Resources, DGM-Sports, Manager-Planning & Coordination, Manager-Finance & Accounts, Manager-Legal & Compliance, Manager-Engineering & Construction, Manager-Human Resources, Manager-Environment, Manager-Information Technology.

Eligibility: DGM Posts: PG in relevant field; 10 years' experience (3 yrs senior management). Manager posts: Bachelor's in relevant field; minimum 4 yrs' experience, Government/PSU experience preferred. Tenure & Pay: 3-year contract (1-year probation), renewable annually on performance. Attractive consolidated remuneration as above. No PF or Gratuity. How to Apply: Submit CV and supporting documents to hr.gsid.guj@gmail.com on or before 27 March 2026, 12:00 PM. Visit Sports Authority of Gujarat website for detailed job descriptions. Disclaimer: GSID reserves the right to increase/decrease positions, not fill any post, modify job descriptions, or withdraw this advertisement without assigning any reason. Place: GSID, Administrative Building, Sector-13/B, KH-3 Circle, Near Vavol Railway Crossing, Near EVM Ware House Office, Gandhinagar-382016 Date: 16/03/26 Sd/- General Manager-Planning & Coordination GSID INF/2824/2025-26

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from KUMBHAR BHAVIKKUMAR BUDHABHAI to new name PRAJAPATI BHAVIK BUDHABHAI. Add. D-404, Satva Balaji Haridarshan Nikol Road, Ahmedabad 5269

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from HARSHADKUMAR NAVNITLAL SHAH to new name HARSHAD NAVNITLAL SHAH. Add. 14, Bhuyangdev Society, Ghatlodia, Ahmedabad-380061 5270D

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from PANNABEN HARSHADKUMAR SHAH to new name PANNA HARSHAD SHAH. Add. 14, Bhuyangdev Society, Ghatlodia, Ahmedabad-380061 5270B

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from PANNABEN HARSHADKUMAR SHAH to new name PANNA HARSHAD SHAH. Add. 14, Bhuyangdev Society, Ghatlodia, Ahmedabad-380061 5270A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from HARDIK HARSHADKUMAR SHAH to new name HARDIK HARSHAD SHAH. Add. 14, Bhuyangdev Society, Ghatlodia, Ahmedabad-380061 5270

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from AJMERI PINJARA AYAZ AIYUBBHAI to new name AYAZ AIYUBHAI AJMERI. Add. 213-1-56, 1st Floor, Tarachand Gandhini Chali, Calico Mill, Behrampura, Ahmedabad-22 5271

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from GORI SAMIRBHAI ALLARAKHABHAI to new name PATTAN SAMIRBHAI ALLARAKHABHAI. Add. 38, Mohammad Road Park Society, Nandasan Road Kadi, Mahesana-382715 5272A

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from ISHAQ DARUWALA to new name ISHAQUE IBRAHIM DARUWALA. Add. C-704, Seventh Heaven, Makarba, Ahmedabad-380055 5272

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from I ARMY NO.15159164P HAV VAGHELA JIGNESHKUMAR S/O VAGHELA BABUBHAI R/O BHILODA, T.A. BHILODA, DIST. ARAVALLI (GUJARAT) IN MY ARMY RECORD MY WIFE NAME IS V PARULBEN WHICH IS INCORRECT CORRECT NAME IS VAGHELA PARULBEN JIGNESHKUMAR

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from I ARMY NO.15159164P HAV VAGHELA JIGNESHKUMAR S/O VAGHELA BABUBHAI R/O BHILODA, T.A. BHILODA, DIST. ARAVALLI (GUJARAT) IN MY ARMY RECORD MY DAUGHTER NAME IS TANVI WHICH IS INCORRECT CORRECT NAME IS TANVI JIGNESHKUMAR VAGHELA

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my old name from I ARMY NO.15159164P HAV VAGHELA JIGNESHKUMAR S/O VAGHELA BABUBHAI R/O BHILODA, T.A. BHILODA, DIST. ARAVALLI (GUJARAT) IN MY ARMY RECORD MY DAUGHTER NAME IS TANVI WHICH IS INCORRECT CORRECT NAME IS TANVI JIGNESHKUMAR VAGHELA

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Bharuch Nagarpalika Dist: Bharuch Tender Invitation Notice. Bharuch Nagarpalika invite online tender for 02 approved Understate Govt Grant/ULB Fund Their Estimate Cost Is Rs.53,74,800/- For Details regarding tender bidders can download the tender from www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in & www.nprocure.com. Bidders must bid the tender Document by online tender process. Nagarpalika will accept physical tender document through RPAD/Speed post and Hand to Hand at Nagarpalika. Note:- GST, EPF & ESIC numbers are Mandatory for participation. 1. Last date of tender Submission: 24/03/2026 2. Date of receipt of documents from RPAD Speed Post by the office here: 26/03/2026 upto 18:00 hrs 3. Date of Opening of Technical Bid.: 27/03/2026 at 11:00 am

SATSANG SHIKSHA PARISHAD STAFF RECRUITMENT (1) Shree Swaminarayan Institute of Technology (Degree-Engineering) Near EDI & Sardar Patel Ring Road Circle, Gandhinagar Ahmedabad Airport Highway, Bhat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat-382428 Website: www.ssiit.co.in Email: recruitment@ssiit.co.in (2) Shree Swaminarayan Polytechnic (Diploma Engineering) Shree Swaminarayan Campus, Opp. Traffic Police Station, Sector-22, Gandhinagar-382022. Website: www.sspolytechnic.co.in Email: sspolytechnic@gmail.com (3) Shree Swaminarayan Institute of Technology (MCA) Near EDI & Sardar Patel Ring Road Circle, Gandhinagar to Ahmedabad Airport Highway, Bhat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat 382428 Website: www.ssiit.co.in Mobile No: 9099063433 Email: ssiit.bhatdirector@gmail.com (4) Shree Swaminarayan Institute of Technology (BCA) Near EDI & Sardar Patel Ring Road Circle, Gandhinagar to Ahmedabad Airport Highway, Bhat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat 382428 Website: www.ssiit.co.in Email: ssiit.bhatdirector@gmail.com

Bharuch Municipality-Bharuch Dist: Bharuch Online Short-Term Public tender. Bharuch Municipality is inviting an online tender to carry out the following detailed works under various scheme. Table with 3 columns: No, Name of Work, Estimated Value. (Lacs). 1. Construction Work of Community Hall at Samasta Kshatriya Gyan Panch at Bharuch, Dist Bharuch Under M.L.A Grant 5.62 2. Construction Work of Paver Block and Protection Wall at Various Location at Bharuch, Dist.Bharuch Under M.L.A Grant Year 2025-26 5.03 3. Construction Work of Storm Drainage Line at Meldi Mata Temple and Construction Work of Gate and Miscellaneous Work at GYM Cum Yoga Hall at Bharuch, Dist: Bharuch Under Swarnim Jayanti Mukhyamantri Shaheer Vikas Yojna Year 2024-25. (Second Call) 48.37 4. Construction Work of R.C.C. Road, Weight Bridge and Box Culvert, At Various Location in Bharuch Under Vyavsay Vera Grant Year 2024-25. (Third Call) 131.70

## News in a Nutshell

### Uncertainty over transfer of bureaucrats, cops in Bengal ordered just before polling dates

Kolkata, March 16 (IANS) Uncertainty is looming over the transfer of several bureaucrats and police officers in West Bengal, ordered just around an hour before the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the two-phase polling dates in the state on Sunday afternoon.

Uncertainty is looming because the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has been enforced in the state since the announcement of the polling dates, barring the West Bengal government from taking any administrative decision without the ECI's permission. In this case, although the transfer of 11 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers and 109 West Bengal Civil Service (W.B.C.S.) officers was ordered before the announcement of the polling date by ECI and the enforcement of the MCC, certain legal complexities might act as a barrier for implementing the transfer of some of these bureaucrats and police officers.

### Delhi's AQI improves after rainfall, AQI in 'satisfactory' category

New Delhi, March 16 (IANS) Air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) improved significantly after the region experienced a change in weather conditions. Driven by cool winds and clear skies, the Air Quality Index (AQI) reached 'improved' levels across most parts of Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad. Coming as a relief for residents, the AQI was recorded within the 'Green' and 'Satisfactory' categories at several locations. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and allied agencies, the AQI remained at 'satisfactory' levels at multiple monitoring stations across Delhi. An AQI of 74 was recorded at Alipur, 92 at Ashok Vihar, 87 at Aya Nagar, and 86 at Burari Crossing. Additionally, the AQI stood at 95 at the Commonwealth Sports Complex and 72 at CRRI, Mathura Road.

### IDBI Bank stock tumbles nearly 16 pc after govt halts disinvestment plan

Mumbai, March 16 (IANS) Shares of IDBI Bank plunged almost 16 per cent in early trade on Monday after the Centre cancelled the disinvestment process for the lender.

At around 10.30 a.m., the banking stock traded at Rs 77.56 apiece on the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), down 15.86 per cent from its previous close of Rs 92.18, hitting an intraday low of Rs 77.40.

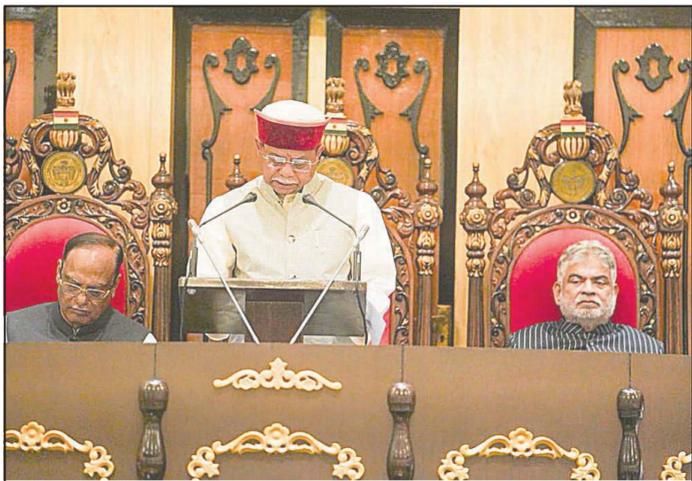
The government called off the disinvestment process after the bids received did not meet expectations. The two bids submitted by Fairfax Financial Holdings and Emirates NBD were reportedly below the reserve price.



Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla unveils the Telangana Thalli statue at the Legislative Assembly premises ahead of his address to the Budget Session in Hyderabad on Monday. Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukender Reddy, Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, along with several ministers, were present on the occasion. UNI

### Kerala polls: Expelled CPI-M leader Kunhikrishnan enters Payyannur fray

Kannur (Kerala), March 16 (IANS) A dramatic political contest is unfolding in the northern Kerala constituency of Payyannur after expelled veteran Left leader V. Kunhikrishnan announced on Monday that he will contest the upcoming Assembly elections as an Independent candidate. Kunhikrishnan, once a hugely popular grassroots leader of the Communist Party of India-Marxist in Kannur district, had been locked in a prolonged and bitter confrontation with the party's local leadership over alleged misappropriation of funds meant for a martyrs' memorial account. The dispute had simmered for months before reaching a flashpoint when Kunhikrishnan published a book detailing his version of events and accusing certain party leaders of manipulating the issue. Following the controversy, he was expelled from the party, ending decades of association with the CPI-M in one of its traditional strongholds.



HYDERABAD, Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla addresses the joint session of the State Legislature at the Assembly in Hyderabad on Monday, marking the start of the Budget Session. UNI

### 10 dead, several injured in ICU fire at SCB Medical College Hospital in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, March 16 (IANS) In a tragic incident, at least 10 patients died while several others sustained serious burn injuries after a major fire broke out in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the trauma care centre at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Odisha, in the wee hours of Monday.

As per sources, the inferno erupted at around 2.30 AM to 3 AM due to suspected electric short circuit.

After meeting the injured patients at the hospital and reviewing the situation, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh each for the family members of the deceased patients.

He also ordered a judicial enquiry into the tragic incident and assured stringent action against anyone found guilty of negligence in duty leading to the inferno.

Speaking to media persons, CM Majhi said, "A few hours ago, a major fire broke out in the trauma care unit of SCB Medical College and Hospital due to a suspected short

circuit. As a result, the patients undergoing treatment in the Trauma Care ICU, an adjoining ICU and ward were affected.

"After the fire broke out, 23 patients undergoing treatment on the first floor of the Trauma Care ICU were shifted to safer locations. Seven critically-ill patients died during the shifting process, while three others succumbed after being moved to other ICUs. It is very unfortunate." He offered condolences to the family members of deceased

patients and offered his prayers to the Lord Jagannath for the speedy recovery to injured patients. The Chief Minister further noted that as many as 11 hospital staff members, including security personnel, risked their lives to help rescue patients.

Many of them also sustained injuries due to smoke inhalation and flames during the shifting of patients, but they are now stable and undergoing treatment in a ward on the ground floor.

### After top bureaucrats, EC now replaces Bengal's acting DGP, Kolkata Police chief

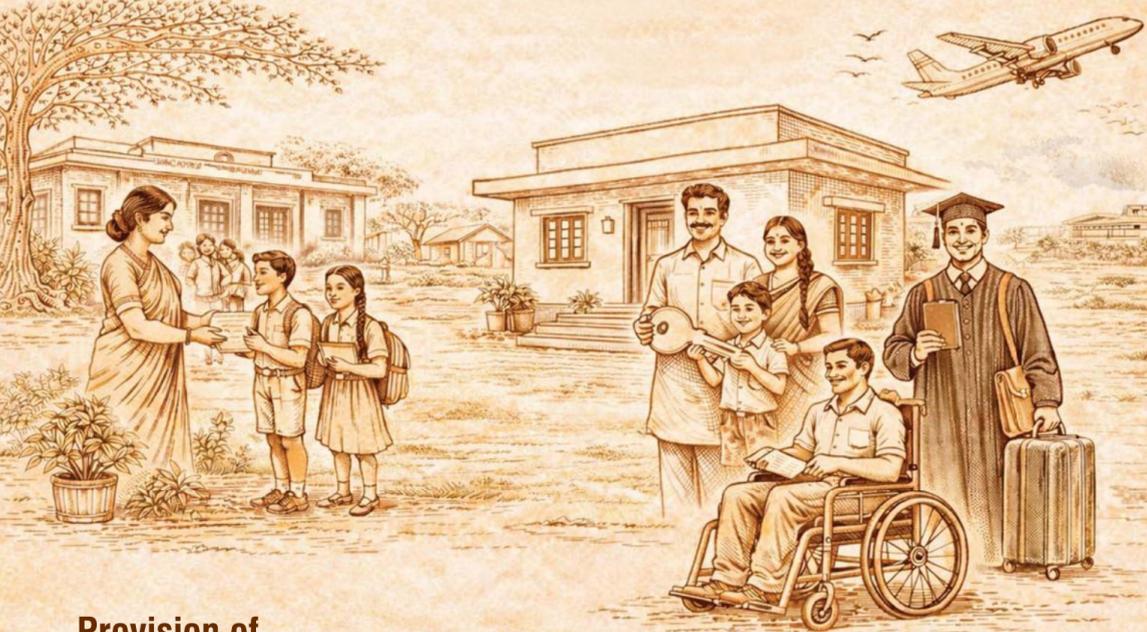
Kolkata, March 16 (IANS) The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday announced the replacement of key police officers in West Bengal, including the acting Director General of Police (DGP) Peeyush Pandey and Kolkata Police Commissioner Supratim Sarkar. As per the Commission's order, Siddh Nath Gup-

ta, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the 1992 batch, has been made the new DGP, replacing acting DGP Pandey. Similarly, Ajay Kumar Nand, a 1996-batch IPS officer, had been made the new Commissioner of Kolkata Police, in place of Sarkar.

Both Pandey and Sarkar were appointed on January 30.



## Towards a Viksit Gujarat Built on Equal Opportunities and Social Harmony



### Provision of ₹7,086 Crore for the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment

- Allocation of **₹617 crore** for scholarships and uniform assistance to Scheduled Castes and Developing Castes students studying in primary schools
- **₹375 Crore** Planned for housing assistance under various housing schemes
- Provision of **₹249 crore** under Sant Surdas Scheme and other financial assistance schemes
- Allocation of **₹135 crore** for loans up to ₹15 lakh per person at 4% interest under Videsh Abhyas Loan Yojana
- Provision of **₹143 crore** under the Free Nutrition Medical Assistance Scheme
- Allocation of **₹296 crore** for the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme, benefiting about 1.45 lakh Scheduled Castes students








"Dignity, education, and economic upliftment of every section of society is the core mantra of our government. This budget for the Social Justice and Empowerment Department will empower the marginalized and accelerate the creation of a 'Harmonious and Viksit Gujarat!'"

**- Shri Harsh Sanghavi, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Gujarat**