

# Daily Current Affairs





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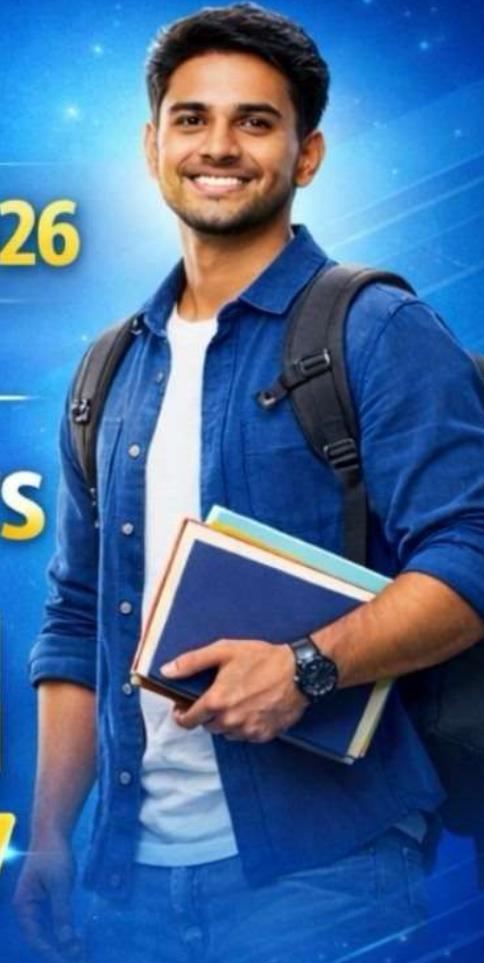
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**SIZZLING START**

## Kohli and Padikkal star for RCB

The defending champion proves too hot to handle for Sunrisers in the IPL opener in Bengaluru

**SPORT PAGE 13**



**Pedro Sanchez: Europe's only anti-war Prime Minister**

**Heart disease in India compounded by erratic treatment access**

**BJP will get historic mandate in Assam; poll party in charge**

**PROFILER > PAGE 9**      **SCIENCE > PAGE 16**      **ASSEMBLY POLLS > PAGE 6**



# Early March economic data shows slowing growth

Finance Ministry's new report suggests 'moderation in economic momentum' due to the West Asia war | Export-oriented sectors, including textiles, leather, and gems & jewellery, face reduced competitiveness | Reserve Bank of India estimates show at least 35% of India's annual remittances come from the region

**V.C.A. Sharda Bagavan**  
NEW DELHI

Economic indicators are beginning to show signs of slowing growth in response to the constraints created by the war in West Asia, the Ministry of Finance has said in a new report.

The Monthly Economic Review for March, released on Saturday by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), noted that the evolving conflict has "introduced a complex and multi-layered set of risks" for India, which is a major energy importer with strong trade, investment, and remittance linkages with West Asia.

"Early high-frequency indicators for March 2023 suggest a moderation in economic momentum, reflecting the initial impact

**Israel reports missile attack from Yemen**

JERUSALEM Israel's military reported a first missile launch from Yemen since the West Asia war began, after it hit southern Haifa. There were no reports of any casualties in Israel. > PAGE 12

**Slow but steady**

The Department of Economic Affairs has released its monthly Economic Review for 2023.

The report states that India's economy is showing signs of moderation in growth, with a 5.45% increase in GDP in the first quarter of 2023. The report also notes that the economy is facing challenges due to the war in West Asia, which has led to a decline in remittances and investment from the region.

**Two Indian LPG ships cross Strait of Hormuz**

GENERAL Two Indian oil tankers, the *Indian Navy's* *INS Vikramaditya* and *INS Tatyasaheb Kore*, crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, as per tanker operators. A Greek-owned ship chartered by Pakistan has also crossed the strait. > PAGE 13

ing goods, textile, leather, and gems & jewellery - are facing reduced competitiveness due to rising logistic costs and weakening demand from Gulf markets," the report said.

Airplane closures and higher aviation fuel prices are increasing operational costs, reducing connectivity, and dampening demand for the aviation sector, it added.

The DEA highlighted in its report the higher petroleum import bills, reduced exports and potential reduced remittances.

It also noted that the impact of the war in West Asia is being felt in various sectors, including textiles, leather, and gems & jewellery. The report also mentioned that the Indian government is taking steps to mitigate the impact of the war, such as providing financial assistance to affected businesses and ensuring the smooth flow of goods and services.

the Ministry of External Affairs showed that an estimated 5.2 million Indians live and work in West Asia, with the Reserve Bank of India estimating that at least 35% of India's annual remittances originate from the region.

"This implies that India's exposure to remittances from the region is around \$40 billion annually," the report said.

"These factors, alongside portfolio capital outflows, have contributed to depreciation pressures on the Indian rupee, necessitating calibrated policy responses."

"On the fiscal side, higher subsidy requirements for fertilisers and fuel and potential revenue shortfalls may widen the fiscal deficit, undercutting the need for expenditure prioritisation," it added.

## Avalanche toll rises to seven; Srinagar-Leh highway shut

**Prasad Ashu**  
SRINAGAR

The death toll in the Zojila Pass avalanche touched seven on Saturday, even as operations were raised over traffic regulations along the Ladakh-Kashmir axis, one of the most dangerous and unpredictable highways in the country.

The civilian deaths in Friday's avalanche have brought the traffic management on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway under a scanner.

**FULL REPORT ON PAGE 5**

## Sky salute



In Chandigarh on Saturday. > PAGE 11

## Ex-Nepal PM arrested over Gen Z protest killings

**Sandeep Satishwa**  
KATHMANDU

A new government installed in Nepal after earlier this month's general election has stoked political tensions with the arrest of former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli.

The police on Saturday arrested Mr. Oli and former Home Minister Ramkrishna Lekha on charges of culpable homicide during September last year's Gen Z protests.

The arrests came a day after the new government led by Balendra Paudyal of the Kastaurya Socialist Party (KSP) was sworn in, six months after the protests in which 76 people lost their lives, including 19



uprising. Mr. Oli was taken into custody from his residence in Gandaki, while Mr. Lekha was arrested in the city of Kathmandu.

The Gen Z protests overthrew the Oli government, in which Mr. Lekha, a Nepali Congress leader, served as Home Minister.

"Tensions ran high in various parts of Kathmandu on Saturday as members of Mr. Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) took to the streets. Protesters demanding Mr. Oli's release clashed with police in Matighat, the designated protest site in the capital.

Police stepped up security in and around Singha Durbar, the government complex.

**Commission findings**

The commission formed to investigate the incidents of September 8 and 9 recommended that Mr. Oli and Mr. Lekha be prosecuted for negligent killings, stating that they failed to prevent lethal police firing during the protests.

The first cabinet meeting of the new government, formed after the BSP's landslide victory in the March 8 election, on Friday decided to implement the commission's report. Home Minister Sandhu Guring then moved quickly, holding a meeting with the chiefs of Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force late Friday night to implement the commission's recommendations.

On Saturday, after police arrested the two leaders, Mr. Gaurung posted on Facebook: "Aayo Gorkhali," which translates to "Gorkhali has arrived" but carries the connotation of courage and bravery.

The move to arrest the two leaders, however, has raised questions, with critics saying it reeks of vendetta politics.

The commission also recommended prosecution of Chandra Ramesh Khazung, who was chief of Nepal Police at the time of the protests, along with other high-ranking officials. However, they have not been arrested.

## Solely a conversation between Modi and Trump, says Centre

**Induashil Bahbar**  
NEW DELHI

A day after *The New York Times* reported that U.S. businessman Ron Musky was present during a call between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump on March 24, India on Saturday clarified that the conversation was only between the two leaders.

However, the government did not deny or confirm Mr. Musky's presence during the call, in which the two leaders discussed the West Asia conflict.

On Saturday, *The New York Times* published a story quoting two unnamed U.S. officials who said that Mr. Musky, who no longer holds any official assignment, and is the owner of Tesla, Starlink and X, participated in the call phone call on Tuesday, calling it "an informal, private conversation" without denying the story.

When asked by *The New York Times* about Mr. Musky's role in the phone call, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said that "President Trump has a great relationship with Prime Minister Modi, and this was a productive conversation" without denying the story.

**SEE PAGE QUESTIONS > PAGE 3**



U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a meeting in New Delhi in 2020. > PAGE 11

## INSIDE



## NCR gets second airport flights to commence soon

**NEW DELHI** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the National Capital Region's second airport, the Indira International Airport, four years after the foundation stone was laid in 2017. The start of operations are yet to be announced. > PAGE 8

## Notify Amaravati as sole capital, A.P. urges Centre

**VIJAYAWADA** The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Saturday passed a resolution, requesting the Union government to declare and notify Amaravati as the sole capital city. YSRCP MLA, including C.S. Jagan Reddy, were absent during the session. > PAGE 2

## Six leaders from Uttarakhand BJP join Congress

**NEW DELHI** Six leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), including three former MLAs, from Uttarakhand joined the Congress on Saturday in the presence of party general secretary and state in-charge Raman Singh. > PAGE 4

# Early March economic data shows slowing growth

Finance Ministry's new report suggests 'moderation in economic momentum' due to the West Asia war

Export-oriented sectors, including textiles, leather, and gems & jewellery, face reduced competitiveness

Reserve Bank of India estimates show at least 35% of India's annual remittances come from the region

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

Economic indicators are beginning to show signs of slowing growth in response to the constraints created by the war in West Asia, the Ministry of Finance has said in a new report.

The Monthly Economic Review for March, released on Saturday by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), noted that the evolving conflict has "introduced a complex and multi-layered set of risks" for India, which is a major energy importer with strong trade, investment, and remittance linkages with West Asia.

"Early high-frequency indicators for March 2026 suggest a moderation in economic momentum, reflecting the initial impact

of these global developments," the report said.

"E-way bill generation declined by 5.3% on a month-on-month basis up to March 22, indicating some moderation in goods movement, although it remained higher by 9.4% on a year-on-year basis."

"Flash PMI [Purchasing Managers' Index] estimates for March 2026 point to a softening in output growth following the energy price shock," it added.

However, the report noted that demand appears "relatively resilient".

Vehicle registrations grew by 19.1% YoY up to March 24, and digital payment volume up to March 22 continued to expand in double digits, it said.

The March 2026 round of the Rural Economic Conditions and Sentiments

## Israel reports missile attack from Yemen

JERUSALEM

Israel's military reported a first missile launch from Yemen since the West Asia war began, after Iran's Houthi allies threatened to join the fighting. There were no reports of any casualties in Israel. » PAGE 12

Survey indicates some softening in rural sentiment; however, consumption growth strengthened.

This survey was conducted during the last week of February 2026 and the first week of March 2026.

The report pointed out that India continues to have relatively strong macroeconomic fundamentals, which provide resi-

## Slow but steady

The Department of Economic Affairs has released its Monthly Economic Review for 2026



■ The report states that developments in West Asia may cause a **slowdown in economic momentum for India**

■ It cites deceleration in indicators such as **e-way bill generation, Purchasing Managers' Index, and rural sentiment indicators**

■ Macroeconomic impact include **higher petroleum import bills, reduced exports and potential reduced remittances**

■ Sectors such as **textiles, leather, and gems & jewellery** are facing reduced competitiveness

lience, but added that the evolving situation warrants continued close monitoring and calibrated policy responses.

### Sectors at risk

The report included a section on the macroeconomic impact of India's dependence on imports, especially from West Asia, to meet its oil, LPG, and LNG needs. It also dis-

cussed the impact on particular sectors.

"In several segments, particularly MSMEs and continuous-process industries like glass or ceramics, the inability to switch fuels or inputs has led to production curtailment and temporary shutdowns," the report said.

"The dual impact of non-availability and cost escalation is amplifying

## Two Indian LPG ships cross Strait of Hormuz

CHENNAI

BW Tyr and BW Elm, two Indian-flagged LPG carriers, crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, as per tracker websites. A Greek-owned ship chartered by Pakistan has also crossed the strait. » PAGE 11

stress on margins and output."

Further, it noted that shipping disruptions, re-routing, and war-risk premiums have significantly increased freight and insurance costs, while transit delays have lengthened delivery cycles, hurting both imports of critical inputs and export commitments.

"Export-oriented sectors – including engineer-

ing goods, textiles, leather, and gems & jewellery – are facing reduced competitiveness due to rising logistics costs and weakening demand from Gulf markets," the report said.

Airspace closures and higher aviation fuel prices are increasing operational costs, reducing connectivity, and dampening demand for the aviation sector, it added.

The DEA highlighted in its report that higher petroleum import bills, combined with increased logistics costs and reduced exports to West Asia, could exert pressure on India's current account.

"Additionally, potential moderation in remittance inflows – given that a significant share originates from the Gulf – poses a downside risk," the report said.

It added that data from

the Ministry of External Affairs showed that an estimated 9.2 million Indians live and work in West Asia, with the Reserve Bank of India estimating that at least 35% of India's annual remittances originate from the region.

"This implies that India's exposure to remittances from the region is around \$40 billion annually," the report said.

"These factors, alongside portfolio capital outflows, have contributed to depreciation pressures on the Indian rupee, necessitating calibrated policy responses."

"On the fiscal side, higher subsidy requirements [for fertilizer and fuel] and potential revenue shortfalls may widen the fiscal deficit, underscoring the need for expenditure prioritisation," it added.

- Early March economic indicators show some moderation in India's growth momentum.
  - मार्च के शुरुआती आर्थिक संकेतकों ने भारत की विकास गति में कुछ नरमी दिखाई है।
  - The Finance Ministry linked this partly to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.
  - वित्त मंत्रालय ने इसे आंशिक रूप से पश्चिम एशिया में जारी संघर्ष से जोड़ा है।
  - India is highly connected to West Asia through oil imports, trade, shipping routes, and remittances.
  - भारत पश्चिम एशिया से तेल आयात, व्यापार, समुद्री मार्गों और प्रेषण के माध्यम से गहराई से जुड़ा हुआ है।
- 

## 2. Main Takeaway from the Article

- India's economy is not collapsing, but early signs show slowing momentum.
- भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था गिर नहीं रही है, लेकिन शुरुआती संकेत गति में नरमी दिखा रहे हैं।
- The biggest concern is external shock, not internal structural weakness.
- सबसे बड़ी चिंता आंतरिक संरचनात्मक कमजोरी नहीं, बल्कि बाहरी झटका है।
- The conflict may raise oil prices, logistics costs, insurance costs, and shipping delays.
- यह संघर्ष तेल कीमतों, लॉजिस्टिक लागत, बीमा लागत और शिपिंग देरी को बढ़ा सकता है।
- This can hurt growth, inflation control, exports, and the current account.
- इससे विकास, मुद्रास्फीति नियंत्रण, निर्यात और चालू खाते पर असर पड़ सकता है।

### 3. What the Report Said

- High-frequency indicators for March suggest moderation in economic momentum.
- मार्च के उच्च-आवृत्ति संकेतक आर्थिक गति में नरमी का संकेत देते हैं।

#### Important signs mentioned

- E-way bill generation declined on a month-on-month basis.
- ई-वे बिल जनरेशन में माह-दर-माह गिरावट दर्ज की गई।
- Flash PMI showed some softening in output growth.
- फ्लैश PMI ने उत्पादन वृद्धि में कुछ नरमी दिखाई।
- Rural sentiment indicators also showed some weakening.
- ग्रामीण भावनात्मक संकेतकों में भी कुछ कमजोरी दिखाई दी।

#### But some demand indicators remained strong

- Vehicle registrations remained strong.
- वाहन पंजीकरण मजबूत रहे।
- Digital payments continued to grow.
- डिजिटल भुगतान में वृद्धि जारी रही।
- Consumption did not collapse and stayed relatively resilient.
- उपभोग में गिरावट नहीं आई और यह अपेक्षाकृत मजबूत बना रहा।

## 4. Why West Asia Matters for India

### A. Energy security

- India is a major importer of crude oil, LPG, and LNG.
- भारत कच्चे तेल, LPG और LNG का बड़ा आयातक है।
- A large share of these supplies is linked to West Asia.
- इन आपूर्तियों का बड़ा हिस्सा पश्चिम एशिया से जुड़ा हुआ है।

### B. Trade linkage

- India exports goods to Gulf and West Asian markets.
- भारत खाड़ी और पश्चिम एशियाई बाजारों को वस्तुओं का निर्यात करता है।
- India also imports key energy products and inputs from the region.
- भारत इस क्षेत्र से प्रमुख ऊर्जा उत्पाद और इनपुट भी आयात करता है।

### C. Diaspora and remittances

- Millions of Indians live and work in West Asia.
- लाखों भारतीय पश्चिम एशिया में रहते और काम करते हैं।
- A significant share of India's remittances comes from this region.
- भारत के प्रेषण का एक बड़ा हिस्सा इसी क्षेत्र से आता है।

### D. Strategic sea routes

- Important shipping routes for oil and trade pass through this region.
- तेल और व्यापार के महत्वपूर्ण समुद्री मार्ग इसी क्षेत्र से गुजरते हैं।
- Any conflict here affects global shipping and India's import bill.
- यहाँ का कोई भी संघर्ष वैश्विक शिपिंग और भारत के आयात बिल को प्रभावित करता है।

## 5. Major Economic Impacts on India

### 1. Higher oil import bill

- If crude prices rise, India has to spend more on imports.
- यदि कच्चे तेल की कीमत बढ़ती है, तो भारत को आयात पर अधिक खर्च करना पड़ता है।
- This worsens the current account deficit.
- इससे चालू खाते का घाटा बढ़ता है।

### 2. Imported inflation

- Costlier oil makes transport, production, and electricity costlier.
- महँगा तेल परिवहन, उत्पादन और बिजली को महँगा बना देता है।
- This increases inflation in the domestic economy.
- इससे घरेलू अर्थव्यवस्था में मुद्रास्फीति बढ़ती है।

### 3. Export pressure

- Higher freight and insurance costs reduce export competitiveness.
- मालभाड़ा और बीमा लागत बढ़ने से निर्यात की प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता घटती है।
- Slower Gulf demand can reduce India's exports.
- खाड़ी क्षेत्र में मांग घटने से भारत का निर्यात कम हो सकता है।

### 4. Remittance risk

- If conflict affects jobs in Gulf countries, remittances may slow down.
- यदि संघर्ष खाड़ी देशों में रोजगार को प्रभावित करता है, तो प्रेषण कम हो सकते हैं।
- This affects India's external stability and household incomes.
- इससे भारत की बाह्य स्थिरता और परिवारों की आय प्रभावित होती है।

### 5. Rupee pressure

- Higher imports and weaker flows can put pressure on the rupee.
- अधिक आयात और कमजोर बाहरी प्रवाह रुपये पर दबाव डाल सकते हैं।
- A weaker rupee again makes imports more expensive.
- कमजोर रुपया आयात को और महँगा बना देता है।

## 6. Sectors Most at Risk

### Export-oriented sectors

- Textiles
- वस्त्र
- Leather
- चमड़ा
- Gems and jewellery
- रत्न एवं आभूषण
- Engineering goods
- इंजीनियरिंग सामान

### Domestic vulnerable sectors

- MSMEs
- सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यम
- Glass industry
- काँच उद्योग
- Ceramics industry
- सिरेमिक उद्योग

### Why these sectors are vulnerable

- High logistics dependence
- लॉजिस्टिक पर अधिक निर्भरता
- Thin profit margins
- कम लाभ मार्जिन
- High fuel and input dependence
- ईंधन और इनपुट पर अधिक निर्भरता
- Difficulty in quick substitution of raw materials or fuel
- कच्चे माल या ईंधन का त्वरित विकल्प बदलना कठिन

**Consider the following statements:**

**निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**

1. A rise in crude oil prices can worsen India's current account deficit.
2. कच्चे तेल की कीमतों में वृद्धि भारत के चालू खाते के घाटे को बढ़ा सकती है।
3. Remittances are an important support for India's external sector.
4. प्रेषण भारत के बाह्य क्षेत्र के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण सहारा हैं।
5. Strait of Hormuz is important for global energy trade.
6. स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज़ वैश्विक ऊर्जा व्यापार के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(a) केवल 1 और 2

(b) 2 and 3 only

(b) केवल 2 और 3

(c) 1 and 3 only

(c) केवल 1 और 3

(d) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1, 2 और 3

# Vijay calls on CEO, given nod to hold public meeting

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Tamilaga Vetti Kaabigan (TVK) founder actor C. Joseph Vijay on Saturday submitted a petition to Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik at the Secretariat of Chennai, alleging that there "exists a serious, credible, and widespread apprehension" that the administrative machinery is being used selectively, denying Opposition parties equal campaign opportunities.



TVK chief Vijay

In the petition, Mr Vijay said law and order mechanisms were not being applied uniformly and alleged that "the officers are functioning under pressure". He cited a series of incidents that, he said, had affected the party, including denial of permission for a rally in Perambur, arbitrary refusal to grant crowd control, selective enforcement of procedural rules, the attempted closure of a party office in Villupattam, and last-minute denial of permission.

He sought the immediate transfer of key officials, including the Director General of Police, Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai, ADGP (Law and Order), senior intelligence officials, and the head of the Arise India.

Special police observers He also urged the Election Commission to appoint independent observers, bring deployment under strict supervision, ensure a transparent and uniform enforcement system, and scrutinise decisions taken during the Model Code of Conduct to prevent misuse of state machinery.

# DMK releases list of candidates for 164 Assembly constituencies in T.N.

Incumbent Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to represent sitting Kolathur constituency; former AIADMK CM O.Panneerselvam set to contest from Bodinayakanur, while former Minister V. Senthilbalaji has been shifted from Karur to Coimbatore South

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The Dravidia Munnetra Kazhagam on Saturday announced the list of its candidates for the coming Tamil Nadu Assembly election. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin will since again contest from the Kolathur and Cherpunk Tiruvallur seats, respectively.



Tamil Nadu CM and DMK chief M.K. Stalin, right, and Minister Durai Murugan at the party's headquarters in Chennai on Saturday. PTI

Mr. Stalin has been representing the Kolathur constituency since its creation following delimitation. He won the seat in 2011, 2016, and 2021, and will now be contesting from the seat for the fourth time.

Karthik Mohan, son of the DMK's Anna Nagar MLA M.K. Mohan, is set to contest from Villupattam, while he is likely to face Aadil Arjuna, formerly a close associate of Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin. Mr. Arju-

nam was previously worked as a strategist for the DMK before entering full-time politics, is now with actor C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vetti Kaabigan (TVK).

A. Vetraraghavan, grandson of the late K. Anbaudhan, former general secretary of the DMK, had won the Villupattam seat in the 2021 election. The party has also fielded Vinodh Gandhi, son of Tondaim and

contest from the Anna Nagar constituency. Former Minister V. Senthilbalaji has shifted from Karur to Coimbatore South, where he will face Anwarul Karim of the AIADMK in a direct contest.

The DMK's senior-most Minister and general secretary, Duraimurugan, has been shifted from the Chinnambudhav Assembly constituency for the seventh time.

The DMK has rewarded former Chief Minister AIADMK leader G. Palaniappan and his supporters, who recently joined the party, by allotting them ticket to contest the upcoming election.

Mr. Panneerselvam will contest from the Bodinayakanur Assembly constituency. Former Minister R. Gandhi, however, has not been allotted a constituency. Similarly, senior DMK leader K. Ponnudurai's son, Karthikeyan Sivanandan, has been fielded from the Thirubalur constituency. Mr. Ponnudurai has also been denied a seat this time. DMK leader N. Chitravenu will

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# DMDK chief Premallatha to fight from Vriddhachalam

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

DMDK chief Premallatha Velupillai and the party's youth wing secretary V. Vijayarajabakaran will contest from Vriddhachalam and Virudhunagar Assembly constituencies respectively in the coming Tamil Nadu Assembly election.

Mr. Premallatha was looking to win the constituency from which her husband and DMK founder Vijayarajabakaran was first elected to the Assembly in 2006, a party release on Saturday said.

Mr. Vijayarajabakaran will hope to turn his fortunes around in Vriddhachalam in 2026 after he fought and lost a close contest in Virudhunagar Lok Sabha constituency by a margin of 4,179 votes in 2024. He had polled 52,855 votes in the Vriddhachalam Assembly segment alone.

The party was allotted 10 Assembly constituencies and a Rajya Sabha seat by the in the alliance led by the ruling DMK.

# J&K House condemns attack on Abdullah

The Hindu Bureau  
BIRMINGHAM

Jammu & Kashmir legislators, cutting across the political divide, on Saturday condemned the recent assassination attempt on ruling National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah and demanded that the investigation report be made public.

"I thank the House for condemning the assassination attempt on Dr. Farooq Abdullah (at a wedding party) on March 11 in Jammu... The investigating agencies, J&K Police and the Home Department are silent over the issue? Minister Bakula too said. She made the statement in response to People's Democratic Party MLA Wajid ul Rehman. Party's demand to jointly condemn the assassination attempt. Many legislators, however, flagged the thinning of security cover to Opposition leaders in J&K.

# Cong. questions Elon Musk 'joining' Trump-Modi call

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday raised questions over the reported presence of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk on the call during a recent telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump.

The party said the government must clarify the circumstances under which a businessman was part of a discussion between two national leaders. In a post on social media, the Congress cited a report in the Wall Street Journal which said that Mr. Musk joined the phone call. "Was this truly about the West Asia crisis, or was there another 'BISNIS' agenda? Why did the Modi government not disclose Musk's presence?" the party asked in a post on X. Referring to reports that U.S.

# Six leaders from Uttarakhand BJP join Cong. as party steps up attack on Dharm-led govt.

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Six leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), including three former MLAs, from Uttarakhand joined the Congress in New Delhi on Saturday in the presence of party general secretary and Union Minister Kumar Selja.

The former MLAs are Rajkumar Thakral, Narayan Pal, and Bhimlal Arya, while the other three are Ganraj Govil, Lakhan Singh, and Anil Gupta. Addressing a press conference, Mr. Selja said the leaders had rejoined faith in the leadership of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, who he claimed that the public's trust in the Congress was rising amid a growing disaffection with the BJP government in the State.



Switching sides: Leaders from Uttarakhand BJP joined the Congress in New Delhi on Saturday. [www.newindianexpress.com](#)

the ruling dispensation "was on the back foot" following protests by Congress workers that had received public support. She said attempts to "poison" the image of Chief Minister Prakash Singh Dharam had failed, with the "reality" of the leadership getting exposed before the people.

Mr. Selja said the Congress expected positive electoral gains in the state as public support continues to rise.

The induction of the leaders took place at the party headquarters in the presence of the State's Congress leaders, including Pradesh Congress Committee president Ganesh Gokhale. Leader of the Opposition Vasupal Arya, election campaign committee chairman Prithvi Singh, election management committee head Harak Singh Rawat, and former PCE president Karan Mishra.

Alleging widespread corruption under the BJP government in Uttarakhand, the ruling dispensation "was on the back foot" following protests by Congress workers that had received public support. She said attempts to "poison" the image of Chief Minister Prakash Singh Dharam had failed, with the "reality" of the leadership getting exposed before the people.

# BJP conspiring to loot and destroy West Bengal, says Mamata Banerjee

The Hindu Bureau  
KOLKATA

The BJP is trying to "loot" West Bengal and take over the State, said Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee at an election rally on Saturday.



Mamata Banerjee

"They [BJP] will change our food habits, snatch our land, bulldoze and destroy everything... They are conspiring to end Bengal and make the State cease to exist," she said. Mamata Banerjee said that she had been left powerless and could not take any action as all the officers working under her had been changed by the Election Commission (EC) after the polls were announced.

"Please don't blame me for the law and order situation. I don't have any power left with me since all the officers have been changed. The BJP has cherry-picked officers for the State," Ms. Banerjee said at a news conference in Park Road, her father's residence. She further said that she will not buy any of the assets of the long run, and will hold them accountable "involvement of law". Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal said the State Election Commission

had received a report of the incident and confirmed that 29 people were arrested in relation to the violence.

In an appeal to the audience, Ms. Banerjee said if they vote for the BJP, it will force them to sit vegetarian food, take away their freedom to choose clothes, destroy the education system, and stop all the social schemes that were started by her government. "If you do not want these things to stop, do not vote for anyone other than Trinamool," she added. At the press rallies she addressed on Saturday, the Trinamool Congress sharpened her attacks on the EC and the special police retention (SPR) process. Alleging large-scale "targeted" defections, she wanted to know how the deleted voters would seek redressal if the supplementary lists are not made public. She also said

that women, Muslims, Adivasi, and other marginalised community voters had been targeted in the SPR process.

The supplementary lists with the names of 60 lakh voters who were put under adjudication are being published in phases. Two lists have been published till now. Though the polls are only three weeks away, lakhs of voters in multiple districts are still uncertain about their voting rights.

# Only the BJP can stop demographic change in West Bengal, says Shah

The Hindu Bureau  
BIRJEETA

Sharpening the attack on the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, Union Home Minister and BJP leader Anril Shah on Saturday released a "charge-sheet" against the Mamata Banerjee government, accusing it of ignoring illegal infiltration of voters in multiple districts and a deterioration in law and order.

At a rally in Birjeeta, the crucial corridor is a narrow strip of land in the north east to the rest of the country as a whole. "This election is not just about bringing Mamata Banerjee to power for a fourth term, but about ensuring the security of the Siliguri corridor is being threatened," the Union Minister said, addressing a press conference in Siliguri.



Union Home Minister Anril Shah releases a charge-sheet against the West Bengal Trinamool government in Kolkata on Saturday. ANI

He also complained about the 600 kilometres of unfenced borders with Bangladesh, a former AIADMK Minister and supporter of Mr. Panneerselvam, will contest from the Orathanadu constituency.

The DMK has fielded Manoj Pandian, another supporter of Mr. Panneerselvam, in the Alangulam constituency. He had defeated DMK candidate Porugothal Alali Aruna in the 2021 Assembly election.

Mr. Manoj, son of former speaker P.H. Pandian and Rajya Sabha member, had earlier represented the Chinnambudhav Assembly constituency. Former Higher Education Minister P. Palaniappan, another former AIADMK leader, had also been given a DMK ticket to contest from the Pappireddi constituency. He was previously with the Anna Madhav Ammanur Kazhagam, founded by Mr. Dhinakaran, before joining the DMK.



Vijayapriya Singhania

Singhania expanded her portfolio to include textiles, steel, and hospitality.

Mr. Singhania took over the company in 1990 and expanded its portfolio to include leather, steel, and hospitality.

He held the world record for highest altitude gained in a hot air balloon and winning the gold medal in an around-the-world air race.

retirement and handed over the reins of Raymond to his son Ganesh Singhania in 2018, their relationship soured, leading to a public feud.

Since then he and his wife had been living in a rented apartment.

His last ride will be performed on Saturday.

Referring to the incumbent Chief Minister's repeated attacks against the Election Commission (EC), Mr. Shah said, "Mamata Banerjee has always played the politics of victim card". He added: "Sometimes she talks about her inquiry, sometimes she accuses the Election Commission. But the people of Bengal must understand Mamata Banerjee's victim card politics very well."

The Trinamool Congress leadership condemned Mr. Shah's charges, asking why the Union Home Ministry completely ignores identity and deport illegal immigrants.

"They want to blur the line between Bengal and Bangladesh so they can import their hateful Assam-style detention camp model into Bengal," the Trinamool Congress posted on social media.

# Former Raymond Group chairperson passes away at 87

**The Hindu Bureau**

MUMBAI

Vijaypat Singhania, recipient of Padma Bhusan, former chairman of Raymond Group and former Sheriff of Bombay, passed away in Mumbai on Saturday evening.

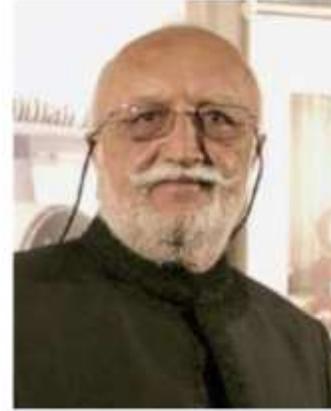
“A visionary leader, philanthropist, and an inspiring personality, whose legacy will continue to guide and inspire generations,” the Raymond Group said in a statement.

He was best known for transforming the Raymond Group into a global fashion powerhouse.

Mr. Singhania took over the company in 1980 and expanded its portfolio to include textiles, steel, and hospitality.

He held the world record for highest altitude gained in a hot air balloon and winning the gold medal in an around-the-world air race.

Once he decided to take



Vijaypat Singhania

**Singhania expanded the company's portfolio to include textiles, steel, and hospitality**

retirement and handed over the reins of Raymond to his son Gautam Singhania in 2015, their relationship soured, leading to a public feud.

Since then he and his wife had been living in a rented apartment.

His last rites will be performed on Sunday.

- Vijaypat Singhanian, former chairman of Raymond Group, passed away at the age of 87.
  - रेमंड ग्रुप के पूर्व चेयरमैन विजयपत सिंघानिया का 87 वर्ष की आयु में निधन हो गया।
  - He was a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian awards.
  - उन्हें पद्म भूषण से सम्मानित किया गया था, जो भारत के उच्च नागरिक सम्मानों में से एक है।
  - He played a major role in transforming Raymond into a global fashion brand.
  - उन्होंने रेमंड को वैश्विक फैशन ब्रांड बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई।
- 

## 2. Key Highlights (Life & Career)

- Full Name: Vijaypat Singhanian
- पूरा नाम: विजयपत सिंघानिया
- Former Chairman of Raymond Group
- रेमंड ग्रुप के पूर्व चेयरमैन
- Took over Raymond in 1980
- 1980 में रेमंड का कार्यभार संभाला
- Expanded company into multiple sectors
- कंपनी को कई क्षेत्रों में विस्तारित किया

### Expansion areas

- Textiles (core business)
- वस्त्र (मुख्य व्यवसाय)
- Steel
- स्टील
- Hospitality
- हॉस्पिटैलिटी

Category	Brand	Country	Parent Company	Key Specialisation	Key Fact (Exam/Business)
Luxury	Louis Vuitton	France	LVMH	Luxury bags, fashion	World's most valuable luxury brand
Luxury	Gucci	Italy	Kering	Premium fashion	Strong global youth appeal
Luxury	Chanel	France	Independent	Haute couture	Iconic brand, privately owned
Luxury	Hermès	France	Independent	Ultra-premium goods	Known for exclusivity
Fast Fashion	Zara	Spain	Inditex	Fast fashion retail	Fastest supply chain model
Fast Fashion	H&M	Sweden	H&M Group	Affordable fashion	Global retail presence
Fast Fashion	Uniqlo	Japan	Fast Retailing	Basics & innovation	Tech-based fabrics
Fast Fashion	Shein	China	Shein	Online fashion	Ultra-fast production cycle
Sportswear	Nike	USA	Nike Inc.	Sportswear	Largest apparel brand globally
Sportswear	Adidas	Germany	Adidas AG	Shoes & apparel	Strong European brand
Sportswear	Puma	Germany	Puma SE	Sportswear	Originated from Adidas split
Sportswear	Under Armour	USA	Under Armour	Performance wear	Innovation-driven

Category	Brand/Company	Type	Key Focus	Key Fact (Exam/Business)
Textile + Apparel	Raymond	Brand	Suiting fabric, formal wear	“Complete man” branding
Ethnic Wear	Fabindia	Brand	Handloom, sustainable	Promotes rural artisans
Ethnic Wear	Manyavar	Brand	Wedding clothing	Leader in ethnic segment
Ethnic Wear	Biba	Brand	Women ethnic wear	Affordable segment
Retail	Reliance Retail	Company	Trends apparel chain	Largest retail player India
Retail	Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail	Company	Pantaloons, Van Heusen	Multi-brand giant
Manufacturing	Arvind Limited	Company	Denim, fabrics	Major exporter
Manufacturing	Vardhman Textiles	Company	Yarn, fabric	Large spinning capacity

## Leadership lessons

- Vision-driven expansion of business
- दृष्टि-आधारित व्यवसाय विस्तार
- Diversification strategy (textiles → multiple sectors)
- विविधीकरण रणनीति (वस्त्र → बहु-क्षेत्र)
- Brand building over commodity production
- वस्तु उत्पादन से ब्रांड निर्माण की ओर ध्यान

## Corporate governance issue

- Family dispute over Raymond leadership (with Gautam Singhanian)
- रेमंड नेतृत्व को लेकर पारिवारिक विवाद (गौतम सिंघानिया के साथ)
- Highlights importance of succession planning
- उत्तराधिकार योजना के महत्व को दर्शाता है
- Shows governance challenges in family-run businesses
- पारिवारिक व्यवसायों में शासन संबंधी चुनौतियों को दर्शाता है

**IN BRIEF**



**HC judges inspect Bhogshala Temple-Kamal Maula complex**

Two Madhya Pradesh High Court judges inspected the Bhogshala Temple-Kamal Maula complex in Dhar on Saturday ahead of a hearing on April 2 related to the disputed 18th-century site. While Hindus consider it to be a temple of Yagadeti (Dattatreya), the Muslim community calls it Kamal Maula Mosque. Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla and Anil Anandhi of the Indore Bench visited the premises under tight security, accompanied by district officials. "The judges had directed during the March 18 hearing that no petitioner should be present at the site during their visit. So we did not go," petitioner Ashok Goyal said.

**5 killed, 30 injured as tourist bus overturns in Odisha**

At least five persons were killed and 30 injured when a tourist bus overturned in Odisha's Nayagarh district in the early hours of Saturday, the police said. The accident took place around 2 a.m. when the bus, carrying 35 passengers, overturned on the Hanuman Ghati road at Daapalla. "Speeding is suspected to be the reason for the accident. The bus overturned on Hanuman Ghati road while negotiating a curve," the police said. The deceased were all residents of Bhubaneswar. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has announced ₹4 lakh ex gratia for the next of kin of the deceased.

**Tiger poisoned to death near Satpura Reserve; five arrested**

A tiger from Madhya Pradesh's Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR) has been allegedly poisoned to death leading to arrest of five people in the case, officials said on Saturday. According to officials, the decomposed body of the female tiger was found buried outside the Reserve's boundary after which the forest officials swung into action. Satpura Field Director Rakhi Nanda said that the tiger had been rehabilitated from the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in 2018 and had set up its territory outside the STR boundary. Mr. Nanda said that the tiger had killed the main accused's own area which he was along with some other local rangers in the kill.

**Great Indian Bustard hatches in Gujarat after a decade**

A Great Indian Bustard (GIB) chick was born in Gujarat's Kutch after a decade through the pangolin-approved nature conservation initiative, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Patel announced on Saturday. In a major trans-State conservation effort, a captive-bred egg from Rajasthan was replaced in the nest of a female GIB in Kutch of Gujarat, where there was no possibility of having a fertile egg with only three female GIBs surviving. The chick successfully hatched on March 26, and a field monitoring team is observing the young chick in its natural habitat, the Minister said. He described this as a significant achievement in the recovery of the critically endangered species.

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

*Relation to yesterday's Sudoku*

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

**Avalanche toll hits 7; Zojila Pass traffic comes under scrutiny**

Body of a missing person recovered on Saturday while one dies in hospital; authorities issue avalanche warnings, officials question traffic timing, mixing of light and heavy motor vehicles in one of the most dangerous highways in the country

**Poorada Ashu SHINAGAR**

The death toll in the Zojila Pass avalanche touched seven on Saturday, even as questions were raised over traffic regulations along the Ladakh-Kashmir axis, one of the most dangerous and unpredictable highways in the country at an elevation of 2,528 metres. The body of a missing civilian, identified as Ali Akbar Shadab, was recovered on Saturday during the search operation which resumed at 8 a.m. before concluding late in the day. Two women were among the dead, officials said.

A total of 13 people were impacted in the avalanche. Five people were reported dead on Friday. One critically injured was transported to the Karge hospital, but died on Saturday. The accident body was recovered from the avalanche site in the morning. Six people remain under treatment," said Mr. Sajjad Hussain, Block Medical Officer, Dams. Officials said the rescue operation was carried



A snow-cutter mower clearing snow following multiple avalanches that hit the Srinagar-Leh national highway near Zojila Pass, in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ganderbal district, home to the Zojila Pass, and in Baramulla district. The advisory issued by the Ganderbal District Commissioner warned that "there was a medium intensity risk of avalanches above 2400 metres in Ganderbal". "People have been strictly advised to avoid venturing into avalanche-prone areas, including steep slopes, hilly terrain, and shooting stones for the most part of the year. Authorities in Kashmir on Saturday warned of a potential avalanche risk over the next 24 hours in

as appealed to residents, tourists and nomadic communities to adhere to official guidelines and mix of motor vehicles with light motor vehicles." The advisory said. "The civilian deaths in Friday's avalanche have brought the traffic management on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway, which remained closed for traffic on Saturday, under a scanner. The avalanche was apparently triggered due to a rise in the temperature

due to the hot sun at noon. The accident took place between half past noon and 1 p.m., officials said.

"March is an avalanche-prone month. We local people understand that although traffic around 5.30 a.m. from the Karge side for two hours, and then from 8 a.m. up to 10 a.m. from the Kashmir side makes it safe. Because chances of avalanche during the morning hours are minimum," said Mohammad Jaffer Akhison, Chief Executive Councillor, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Karge. At present, traffic along the

28-kilometre stretch is allowed after 9 a.m. Mr. Akhison also flagged the issue of mixing up heavy motor vehicles with light motor vehicles. "Advisory suggests that heavy motor vehicles are only allowed after the light motor vehicles. However, both were present when the avalanche hit on Friday," he said. The CEC said the issue will be raised with Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinod Kumar Sawara and officials in Jammu and Kashmir.

**PM inaugurates Noida International Airport; operations yet to begin**

**Anshu Chandra NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday formally inaugurated the National Capital Region's second airport, the Noida International Airport. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Modi said the launch signalled the beginning of a transformative phase for both the State and the country. "Today we are starting a new chapter for a developed Uttar Pradesh and a developed India," he said.

Though flights were earlier slated to begin in October 2025, the start of operations at the airport is yet to be announced. Saturday's inauguration comes just four years after the foundation stone was laid in November 2020. The concession deal for the project was signed in 2020 with Swiss firm Zurich Air-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and others at the Noida International Airport in Uttar Pradesh.

port International AG. "The project involves an investment of ₹1,200 crore. In its first phase, it will handle 12 million passengers annually with a single runway, while the long-term plan envisages a capacity of 70 million per annum per year and up to six runways. He said the project would unlock fresh opportunities for farmers, small and medium enterprises, and the youth in western Uttar Pradesh. "Right from here, we will connect directly to the world, and the airport will stand as a symbol of a developed Uttar Pradesh taking flight," he said. The airport will serve a vast catchment area, including Ghazabad, Meerut, Etawah, Bulandshahr and Faridabad, significant

ly expanding connectivity across the region.

Mr. Modi said the ongoing global situation remains a cause for concern, pointing to the conflict in West Asia that has resulted in over a month and disrupted supplies of essential commodities such as food, petrol, diesel, gas and fertilisers in several countries. "Noting that India imports a significant share of its crude oil and gas from the region, he said, "Every possible step is being taken to ensure that the burden of this crisis does not fall on ordinary families and farmers."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the airport would help develop a dedicated institutional cargo hub, enabling the State to attract more investments of being landlocked and connect more easily with global markets.

**Defeat makes one lose control, says SP on PM Modi's jibe**

**Mayank Kumar LUCKNOW**

"When defeat becomes apparent, a person loses control over their words," the Samajwadi Party (SP) said on Saturday, taking out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for accusing the party of turning Noida into an "ATM for loss".

Mr. Modi was speaking after inaugurating Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport in Greater Noida, Nagar of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The Opposition party said Noida had evolved as an economic engine because of planned industrial clusters, affordable housing and opportunities for small and medium enterprises initiated by the previous SP government. "He comes to our State

**Odisha BJP MLA fires his security officer's gun**

**The Hindu Bureau BUDAPEST**

Odisha Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Nabin Kumar Jain allegedly fired gunshot in the air reportedly as part of celebratory firing on the occasion of Ram Navami.

A large crowd had gathered by the western town of Titlagarh for the festivities when Mr. Jain is said to have taken a pistol from his personal security officer (PSO) and discharged several rounds.

A Ram Navami procession in Krishna Temple, with people of all ages—including children—dressed as Ram, Sita, Lakshman, and Hanuman—traversed the town. "While some did not hear the gunshot, others were left shocked by the incident. Barampur Superintendent of Police has sought a report from the PSO. The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) took strong exception to the alleged firing by a sitting BJP MLA. Addressing a press meet here, senior BJP leader and Titlagarh MLA Tukun Sabu strongly criticised the State government over the detouring law and order situation."



as a guest, we will treat him as a guest and send him off with respect. The words of those who are leaving are not taken unkindly. When defeat becomes apparent, a person loses all respect for their position and control over their words. Respecting age and position is in our culture and will always be. Respectful farewell," SP president Akhlesh Yadav wrote on X.

**NMC launches online feedback system for UG medical students**

**The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI**

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has for the first time launched an online feedback system for undergraduate medical students to anonymously register complaints or evaluate their colleges' infrastructure and faculty. In an order, the NMC said it has made for an online "Student Feedback Form," seeking inputs from undergraduate students of medical colleges and institutions under its purview. "This feedback aims to gather valuable information feedback on various aspects of your medical college and institution's education experience. The form covers aspects such as quality of teaching and lecture, faculty availability

and adequacy, clinical training, and patient exposure, lab infrastructure, skills and practical training components, medicine and rural training, campus culture/student welfare etc.," it said. The commission said the responses would remain confidential. "The feedback is being collected solely for internal academic review and quality improvement purposes." The online form can be accessed through the NMC website. Communication from the NMC has been sent to Additional Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries of medical education departments of all States and Union Territories, and directors, deans and principals of all medical colleges. The notice was issued on Thursday.

**CRPF officer who lost leg in line of duty battling pain, stagnant career**

**Vishal Singh ANWAR**

Anand Singh says his son is barely able to sleep these days. With doctors stopping his painkillers, every day now seems a battle for him. On March 1, his son Ajay Malik, an Assistant Commandant with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), lost one of his legs when he stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED), while leading an anti-Maoist operation in the Saranda forest in Bharkhand. He was afflicted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) when the doctors advised amputation of the left leg. After Under Secretary Anil Shihab announced that his wife and son would be reintroduced from the country by March



Anand Singh, father of Assistant Commandant Ajay Malik.

31, the security forces had stepped up anti-Maoist operations to meet the deadline. Since 2015, at least 10 CRPF personnel have lost their limbs in anti-Maoist operations. "Doctors have taken my son of painkillers as his prolonged usage can harm his organs. He sleeps barely for 15-20 mi-

utes at a stretch before he is woken up by searing pain," said Mr. Singh, who settled as a supervisor from the Department of Posts.

Mr. Singh said his son joined the CRPF in 2011 and received the President's Police Medal for gallantry in 2022, but is yet to see a single promotion. "That has not affected his morale. Given a chance, he would go back to join the security operations," he said. The CRPF and six other security organisations from the NMC have the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF). But CRPF personnel say that for officials, most times, the first promotion comes only after 18 years of service. "They have been appointed a Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha on March

25 that will enable reservation of a substantial number of key posts in the CAPF to Indian Police Service (IPS) officers on deputation. Mr. Malik is a Group A officer of the CRPF. Both the CAPF and the IPS are under the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The retired personnel and also Opposition parties have said that despite leading operations from the front and several of them killed in the line of action, CAPF officials face career stagnation. Mr. Singh said, "When they are not promoted it hurts my family members protested at Jantar Mantra on Delhi a few days ago against the imposition of CAPF personnel. My son's friends who joined the Army the same year as him, are Colonel now."

# PM inaugurates Noida International Airport; operations yet to begin

**Jagriti Chandra**

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday formally inaugurated the National Capital Region's second airport, the Noida International Airport.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Modi said the launch signalled the beginning of a transformative phase for both the State and the country. "Today we are starting a new chapter for a developed Uttar Pradesh and a developed India," he said.

Though flights were earlier slated to begin in October 2025, the start of operations at the airport is yet to be announced. Saturday's inauguration comes just four years after the foundation stone was laid in November 2021. The concession deal for the project was signed in 2020 with Swiss firm Zurich Air-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, and others at the Noida International Airport at Jewar. PTI

port International AG.

The project involves an investment of ₹11,200 crore. In its first phase, it will handle 12 million passengers annually with a single runway, while the long-term plan envisages a capacity of 70 million passengers per year and up to six runways. He said that the project would unlock fresh opportunities for farmers, small and medi-

um enterprises, and the youth in western Uttar Pradesh. "Flights from here will connect directly to the world, and the airport will stand as a symbol of a developed Uttar Pradesh taking flight," he said.

He said the airport will serve a vast catchment spanning Agra, Mathura, Aligarh, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Etawah, Bulandshahr and Faridabad, significant-

ly expanding connectivity across the region.

Mr. Modi said the ongoing global situation remains a cause for concern, pointing to the conflict in West Asia that has persisted for over a month and disrupted supplies of essential commodities such as food, petrol, diesel, gas and fertilizers in several countries.

Noting that India imports a significant share of its crude oil and gas from the region, he said, "Every possible step is being taken to ensure that the burden of this crisis does not fall on ordinary families and farmers."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the airport would help develop a dedicated multimodal cargo hub, enabling the State to overcome the limitations of being landlocked and connect more easily with global markets.

- Prime Minister inaugurated Noida International Airport in Uttar Pradesh.
  - प्रधानमंत्री ने उत्तर प्रदेश में नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे का उद्घाटन किया।
  - It is the second international airport in NCR after Delhi.
  - यह दिल्ली के बाद NCR का दूसरा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा है।
  - Operations are yet to begin, though inauguration has taken place.
  - उद्घाटन हो चुका है, लेकिन संचालन अभी शुरू नहीं हुआ है।
  - The project is seen as a major infrastructure and economic boost for the region.
  - इस परियोजना को क्षेत्र के लिए बड़ा बुनियादी ढांचा और आर्थिक प्रोत्साहन माना जा रहा है।
- 

## 2. Key Facts (Direct for PPT)

- Location: Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh
- स्थान: जेवर, गौतम बुद्ध नगर, उत्तर प्रदेश
- NCR's second international airport
- NCR का दूसरा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा
- Executed by Zurich Airport International AG
- ज्यूरिख एयरपोर्ट इंटरनेशनल AG द्वारा विकसित
- Investment: ~₹11,200 crore
- निवेश: लगभग ₹11,200 करोड़

### 3. Project Details

#### Phase 1

- Capacity: 12 million passengers annually
- क्षमता: 12 मिलियन यात्री प्रति वर्ष
- Runway: Single runway
- रनवे: एक रनवे

#### Long-term plan

- Capacity: 70 million passengers annually
  - क्षमता: 70 मिलियन यात्री प्रति वर्ष
  - Up to 6 runways planned
  - 6 रनवे तक की योजना
- 

### 4. Timeline

- Concession agreement signed: 2020
- कंसेशन एग्रीमेंट: 2020
- Foundation stone: November 2021
- शिलान्यास: नवंबर 2021
- Inauguration: 2026 (operations pending)
- उद्घाटन: 2026 (संचालन शेष)

### 5. Importance for India

#### A. Infrastructure Development

- Strengthens aviation infrastructure in North India
- उत्तर भारत में विमानन ढांचे को मजबूत करता है
- Reduces congestion at Delhi airport
- दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे का दबाव कम करेगा

#### B. Economic Growth

- Creates jobs and boosts regional economy
- रोजगार सृजन और क्षेत्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा
- Supports MSMEs and local industries
- MSMEs और स्थानीय उद्योगों को समर्थन

#### C. Connectivity

- Enhances domestic and international connectivity
- घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाता है
- Connects western UP with global markets
- पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश को वैश्विक बाजारों से जोड़ता है

## Core Points

- Improves connectivity and trade
- कनेक्टिविटी और व्यापार सुधारता है
- Reduces regional imbalance
- क्षेत्रीय असमानता कम करता है
- Generates employment
- रोजगार उत्पन्न करता है
- Strengthens logistics and supply chain
- लॉजिस्टिक्स और आपूर्ति श्रृंखला मजबूत करता है

## Challenges

- Land acquisition issues
- भूमि अधिग्रहण की समस्याएँ
- Environmental concerns
- पर्यावरणीय चिंताएँ
- Delay in operationalisation
- संचालन में देरी

## Way Forward

- Timely execution
- समय पर कार्यान्वयन
- Integration with multimodal transport
- मल्टीमॉडल परिवहन से एकीकरण
- Sustainable airport development
- सतत हवाई अड्डा विकास

## Top 10 Busiest Airports in the World (Passenger Traffic)

Rank	Airport	Country	Annual Passengers (Approx)	Type	Key Fact
1	Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta (ATL)	USA	108+ million	Domestic hub	World's busiest airport <a href="#">Encyclopedia...</a>
2	Dubai International (DXB)	UAE	92+ million	International hub	#1 international airport <a href="#">Encyclopedia...</a>
3	Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW)	USA	87+ million	Transit hub	Major US connector
4	Tokyo Haneda (HND)	Japan	~85 million	Mixed	Closest airport to Tokyo
5	London Heathrow (LHR)	UK	~84 million	International	Europe's busiest hub <a href="#">Reuters</a>
6	Denver International (DEN)	USA	~78 million	Domestic	Largest airport area-wise
7	Istanbul Airport (IST)	Türkiye	~76 million	Global hub	Fastest growing hub
8	Chicago O'Hare (ORD)	USA	~74 million	Transit	Major US hub
9	Los Angeles (LAX)	USA	~70 million	International	Hollywood gateway
10	Indira Gandhi International (DEL)	India	~65–70 million	Mixed	India's busiest airport <a href="#">The Times of India</a>

**Consider the following statements:**

**निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**

1. Noida International Airport is located in Haryana.
2. नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा हरियाणा में स्थित है।
3. The project is being developed under PPP model.
4. यह परियोजना PPP मॉडल के तहत विकसित की जा रही है।
5. Zurich Airport International AG is associated with the project.
6. ज्यूरिख एयरपोर्ट इंटरनेशनल AG इस परियोजना से जुड़ा है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 2 and 3 only

(a) केवल 2 और 3

(b) 1 and 2 only

(b) केवल 1 और 2

(c) 1 and 3 only

(c) केवल 1 और 3

(d) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1, 2 और 3

## • USAGE TO IMPACT: HOW LPG DIFFERS FROM LNG

The Strait of Hormuz closure has hit a large chunk of India's energy supply — crude oil, and, to greater degrees, LPG and LNG. Here's what they are used for and how they differ.

### MEANING

**LNG, OR LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS**, is primarily a natural gas — mainly methane. It is cooled to below -160 degrees Celsius and cryogenically turned into a liquid for storage or ease of transportation



**LNG is regasified into natural gas and is called:**

- PNG, or piped natural gas, when supplied to households
- CNG, or compressed natural gas, when used to power vehicles

### USE

**LPG:** Cooking, heating and limited industrial applications

**LNG:** Regasified into natural gas, it is used in transportation, industrial applications such as power generation and machinery operations, cooking

**LPG, OR LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS**, primarily comprises propane and butane. LPG is a byproduct of the crude oil refining process. Under relatively low temperatures or moderate pressure, LPG becomes a liquid, allowing it to be bottled in cylinders.

### The dependency is greater for LPG...

- **33 million** tonnes India's annual consumption
- **13 million** tonnes is the share of domestic production in annual consumption
- **60%** India's import dependency
- **90%** of these imports came via the now-closed Strait of Hormuz
- **54%** the effective hit to total supplies

### ...than for LNG

- **71 billion** cubic metres India's annual consumption
- **35.6 billion** cubic metres is the share of domestic production in annual consumption
- **50%** India's import dependency
- **60%** of these imports came via the now-closed Strait of Hormuz, mainly from Qatar and the UAE
- **30%** the effective hit to total supplies

**India is the world's 6th biggest LPG producer and the 3rd biggest LPG consumer**

### TOP LPG PRODUCERS (IN THOUSAND TONNES)

COUNTRY	2023
1. US	104,732
2. China	51,658
3. Saudi Arabia	25,538
4. Russia	17,344
5. Canada	16,556
6. India	12,777

### TOP LPG CONSUMERS (IN THOUSAND TONNES)

COUNTRY	2023
1. China	81,647
2. US	47,993
3. India	31,317
4. Saudi Arabia	17,560
5. Russia	13,627

SOURCE: STATISTICAL REVIEW OF GLOBAL LPG

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**INSIDE**



**Stalin unveils the DMK manifesto for TN election**

**CHENNAI**  
Unveiling what he described as a "superstar" manifesto for the coming Tamil Nadu Assembly election, DMK president and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday promised a ₹5,000 coupon to all "non-income tax paying" homemakers to buy any electronic home appliance of their choice. ■ PAGE 8

**Congress names 284 candidates for Bengal polls**

**KOLKATA**  
The Congress on Sunday named 284 candidates, which included several teenagers for the coming West Bengal Assembly election. The list includes former party leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and former Rajya Sabha member Mousumi Banerjee. ■ PAGE 8

**Telangana House crumps on illegal mining charges**

**HYDERABAD**  
The subject of illegal mining of sand, granite and other minerals in parts of Telangana rocked the Legislative Assembly, leading to suspension of over a dozen Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) members from the House on Sunday. ■ PAGE 8

**Will bring back the era of social justice: SP chief**

**GHAZIABAD**  
Launching his election campaign for the 2013 U.P. Assembly polls, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said on Sunday that *pardha* (suffering) is the threat that connects the PDS (an acronym for backward, Dalit, and minorities). ■ PAGE 8

**Ajay-politician Vijay to contest in 22 constituencies**

**CHENNAI**  
Tamilaga Vetti Kathagam (TVK) president and actor C. Joseph Vijay on Sunday announced candidates for all 224 constituencies in Tamil Nadu for the Assembly election scheduled for April, with Vijay making his electoral debut from Perambalur and Tiruchi. ■ PAGE 8

# Iranians warn U.S. against ground invasion

**'Waiting for Americans to start their ground attack to set them on fire,' says Iran Speaker**

**Pakistan says it will soon host U.S. Iran talks after regional Ministers meet in Islamabad**

**Islamabad talks are a cover for U.S. to deploy more troops to West Asia, the Speaker says**

**ISLAMABAD**  
Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever", Iranian state media reported on Sunday after Iranian Parliament Speaker Mehdi Karubi said on Sunday while warning the United States against a ground invasion. The remarks came as Pakistan announced on Sunday that it will soon host talks between the United States and Iran.



Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey meet in Islamabad on Sunday. REUTERS

**NEW DELHI**  
Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday, in his monthly Manmohi 60th address, noted that the situation in West Asia had created "challenging times" and called for those "pursuing" the issue to refrain from doing so. He added that he was "deeply grateful" to the Gulf countries for providing assistance to more than one crore Indians there. ■ PAGE 4

Pakistan is very happy that both Iran and the U.S. have expressed their willingness in Pakistan's facilitation of the talks, which will happen in the "coming days", Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said in a televised speech after top diplomats from regional countries met in Islamabad. There was no immediate word from the United States or Iran.

Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt were in Islamabad on Sunday for talks with U.S. or Israeli participation in a move to broker an end to the month-long war. The Iranian Speaker also issued Sunday's talks as a cover while the U.S. dispatches additional troops to West Asia.

Challenging times, says PM on West Asia crisis

## BJP is the actual 'A team' of Kerala, says Modi at NDA campaign meet

**Abdul Latheef Pathan**  
PALAKKAD

**Left's record in Bengal and Tripura and the Congress's performance nationwide. He stressed the BJP's focus on a winners-led development model.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday intensified the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)'s campaign for the April 9 Kerala Assembly election with a sharp attack on both the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) as he visited the southern State that has been the heart of the BJP's alliance.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets supporters during a public gathering in Palakkad on Sunday. ANI

Alleging that the two fronts had abandoned their power for decades while "sacking" the State through corruption and misgovernance, Mr. Modi said their policies had deprived the people of Kerala of resources, opportunities, and growth. The Prime Minister alleged that both the LDF and the UDF were misleading the public by lauding each other as the B-team of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "That is an inadvisable attitude by both fronts that the BJP is the real A team in Kerala," he said.

Positioning the BJP-led NDA as a decisive alternative, the Prime Minister said that an NDA government would advance the vision of "Viksit Kerala", promising faster development and measures to curb the migration of educated youth by creating opportunities within the State. "It is Modi's guarantee to you. The NDA's guarantee is Modi's guarantee," he said while addressing a rally of 12 NDA candidates from Palakkad district at Fort grounds.

## Ex-Nepal PM remanded in custody as protests continue

**Prasanna Prasad of India**  
KATHMANDU

**including around two dozen youth, were killed. The arrests came a day after the newly formed Bharendra Shah government decided to implement the report of the probe commission into the Gen 2 protests in its first Cabinet meeting.**

Nepal's former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli was remanded in judicial custody for five days by the Kathmandu District Court on Sunday, even as protests continue in various parts of the country over the arrests.



Nepal's former Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli is escorted by police during a protest in Kathmandu, Nepal, on Sunday. REUTERS

Mr. Oli and former Home Minister Ramchandra Lakshmi were arrested on Saturday for their alleged involvement in suppressing the Gen 2 movement on September 8 and 9 last year, in which 70 people, including around two dozen youth, were killed.

One more held  
Meanwhile, Nepal police on Sunday remanded in custody the district court session judge at the district court. Mr. Oli is currently on

## 'Think of me as the candidate in every seat for the Assembly election,' Mamata tells voters

**Shihabuddin Chatterjee**  
KOLKATA

**Mamata Banerjee**

Urging the West Bengal electorate to have faith in her, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said people should consider her as the candidate contesting in all 294 seats of the State Assembly.



Mamata Banerjee

"Mothers and sisters, will you vote for us or not? For whom is your candidate, I am the candidate everywhere. We will be the force behind the government," the Trinamool Congress chairperson told a gathering in Purulia district.

During her speech at Manbazar in Purulia, Ms. Banerjee referred to the remarks made by Union Home Minister Anil Kumar Singh on Friday when he had said that the Chief Minister always played the "victim card".

Mr. Banerjee is the heart and soul of the Trinamool Congress and the campaign of the party had on Sunday when faced with the voters at the crowd expressing displeasure over candidate selection. "If anyone is dissatisfied with the candidate, then think that I, Abhishek Banerjee, am contesting from here," he said.

"Sometimes the talks about her injury, sometimes she abuses the Election Commission, but the people of West Bengal understand her victim card politics very well," Mr. Shah had said.

## Workers hit as MGNREGS jobs dry up

**Sahana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

**Nearly 12,000 workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGS) in Uttar Pradesh district in Bihar have not received work for the past three or four months. For the past 87 days, workers have been protesting at the district headquarters.**

Khadika in connection with a money laundering case, local media reported. During the Gen 2 protest last year, images and videos had surfaced showing burnt fragments of banknotes at the residences of the Prime Minister and Union Minister Manmohan Singh.

Mr. Khadika was accused of receiving financial benefits in exchange for facilitating licences and contracts for projects while serving as the Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.

One more held  
Meanwhile, Nepal police on Sunday remanded in custody the district court session judge at the district court. Mr. Oli is currently on

FULL STORY ON PAGE 8

# Iranians warn U.S. against ground invasion

'Waiting for Americans to start their ground attack to set them on fire,' says Iran Speaker

Pakistan says it will soon host U.S.-Iran talks after regional Ministers meet in Islamabad

Islamabad talks are a cover for U.S. to deploy more troops to West Asia, the Speaker says

**Associated Press**  
ISLAMABAD

Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever", Iranian state media reported Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf as saying on Sunday while warning the United States against a ground invasion.

The remarks came as Pakistan announced on Sunday that it will soon host talks between the United States and Iran.

"Pakistan is very happy that both Iran and the U.S. have expressed their confidence in Pakistan's facilitation" of the talks, which will happen in the "coming days," Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said in a televised speech after top diplomats from regional countries

met in Islamabad. There was no immediate word from the United States or Iran.

Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Egypt were in Islamabad on Sunday for talks without U.S. or Israeli participation in a push to broker an end to the month-long war.

The Iranian Speaker dismissed Sunday's talks as a cover while the U.S. dispatches additional troops to West Asia.

The visiting Ministers have endorsed Pakistan's peace efforts, Mr. Dhar said without specifying whether the proposed talks would be direct or indirect. The Ministers are expected to meet again on Monday.

## **Ships cross Hormuz**

Iran, which eased some restrictions on ships passing through the Strait of



Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkiye meet in Islamabad on Sunday. REUTERS

Hormuz, agreed late on Saturday to allow 20 more Pakistani-flagged vessels to transit the critical passage-way, Pakistani officials said, adding to the select few it has let through as Iran works to choke but not cut off the strait

entirely.

Egypt's Badr Abdelatty, who was part of the talks with Turkiye's Hakan Fidan, Saudi Arabia's Prince Faisal Bin Farhan, and Pakistan's Ishaq Dar, said the meetings were aimed at opening a "direct dia-

logue" between the United States and Iran, which have largely communicated through mediators during the war.

Yet there were few signs of progress as Israel and the United States kept up strikes on Iran, and Tehran

## **Challenging times, says PM on West Asia crisis**

**NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, in his monthly *Mann Ki Baat* address, noted that the situation in West Asia had created "challenging times" and called for those "politicising" the issue to refrain from doing so. He added that he was 'deeply grateful' to the Gulf countries for providing assistance to more than one crore Indians there. » PAGE 4

responded by firing missiles and drones across the region.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps warned in a statement that it would consider Israeli universities and branches of U.S. universities in the

region "legitimate targets" unless offered safety assurances for Iranian universities, state media reported after Israeli strikes hit several universities, including ones claimed to have been used by the Islamic Republic for nuclear research and development.

Israel announced waves of incoming strikes from Iran on Sunday and explosions could be heard throughout Tehran.

IRGC also said that they launched missile and drone strikes on aluminum plants in Bahrain and the UAE over the weekend, targeting what they described as industries linked to the U.S. military.

Iranian authorities say more than 1,900 people have been killed in the Islamic Republic, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel.

(With AFP inputs)

IN BRIEF



31 arrested for Ram Navami clashes in Bengal district

Two days after clashes during Ram Navami processions, the situation in the Jangipur area in Murshidabad district of West Bengal is now peaceful, police sources said. Prohibitory orders have been imposed under Section 144 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The police said 31 people had been arrested and 21 were injured in the clashes. "The situation is now peaceful. We are analysing CCTV footage to identify more people and arrest them," a senior police official told The Hindu on Sunday. Clashes broke out on March 27 during a Ram Navami rally in the Jaghmesherang area. Tensions escalated as stone throwing and arson were reported.

BJD MP quits panel over remarks against Biju Patnaik

Biju Janata Dal Rajya Sabha member Samit Patra on Saturday resigned from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT and Communications, protesting against chairperson Nishant Dubey's remarks against Biju Patnaik. Mr. Dubey on Friday alleged that the former Odisha Chief Minister (Biju Patnaik) was a "link" between the U.S. government, NSA, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He further alleged that Patnaik provided patronage to the Chhetria tribe in Odisha, which was used by the U.S. Mr. Patra said he was attempting to distort history and malign a "revered leader" for political gains.

Despite assurance from Centre, MGNREGS workers denied work

From Bihar to Rajasthan, thousands of rural workers say work has been halted as the Centre continues talks with the States on the VB-G RAM G Act, some district officials say they have been directed not to start new work under the old scheme

Sobhana K. Nair NEW DELHI



held on. The scheme under the VB-G RAM G Act, 2023 is yet to be rolled out. SHANTHINI

For the past 87 days, MGNREGS workers have been protesting at the Mazafarpur district headquarters in Bihar. The Union government had assured them that within the Vikram Bharat Guarantee for Roogar and Aeevika Mission (GRAM G Act, 2023, passed by Parliament in December), is rolled out, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) will continue unchanged. But on the ground, workers say the story is very different. The protest in Mazafarpur began on January 2. Nearly 12,000 workers in the district have not received work for the past three or four months, even before the new rural employment law was introduced.

Uncertainty continues. There is no clarity on when the new scheme under the VB-G RAM G Act will be implemented on the ground, as the Centre is still hold-

ing talks with the States to establish the necessary framework. Usually, no work is given during the rain. We waited for the monsoon to start, then for the water-logged areas to drain. By December, the MGNREGS season normally begins. But despite repeated demand, no work has been provided. This is a blatant violation of the law," said Sanjay Sahni of MGNREGS Watch-Bihar, an organisation working with rural

workers. Facing repeated rejections, around 16,000 workers — most of them women — gathered at the district headquarters to demand work. A delegation led by Sanjay Sahni on March 25 to meet senior officials in the Rural Development Ministry. "The district officials claim they have instructions not to start any new work, but the Ministry officials insist that no such order exists," Mr. Sahni said. He wonders whether it is

of clarity. On Saturday, they were told that the MGNREGS had been discontinued and no further work would be available under the scheme.

At Padmaurhi Mowarha panchayat, nearly 30 women workers sat for four hours last Friday, demanding work for the first week of April. Local officials initially claimed that directions had been issued not to start new MGNREGS works. After the women refused to leave, their applications were eventually accepted, but uncertainty continues whether any work will actually be assigned.

For each household, MGNREGS work brings in about ₹25,000 to ₹26,000 annually, in some women-led households. MGNREGS and government pensions are the only sources of income," said Manjulika of the Rajasthan Aanganwadi Mahabhoj Union.

"There are no formal orders. The VB-G RAM G Act clearly states that until it is implemented, MGNREGS will continue, but on the ground, we are being told otherwise," she said.

Four killed as NSCN cadres open fire on compatriots

The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

Members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) allegedly killed four compatriots in Manipal's Kamjong district over what is seen as a clash of business interests.

The NSCN was formerly known as the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Mukho). According to a statement issued by the Eastern Flank of the NSCN, members of the outfit's Wung Region ambushed and killed four of its soldiers while they were returning from "monitoring tin mines and other business activities" along the India-Myanmar border. The incident happened on the night of March 28.

The Wung Region refers to the Ukhrul district, adjoining Kamjong. The Eastern Flank comprises a stretch along the Saguing Region and Chin State of Myanmar.

The statement, signed by "Lt. Gen." A. Ramas, named two "second Lieutenants" of the Wung Region as the leaders of the assault, who fired indiscriminately after declaring that they had orders to shoot.

Curb unauthorised expenditure on projects, Railways directs officials

S. Vijay Kumar CHENNAI

Expressing serious concern over the increasing instances of unauthorised expenditure running to thousands of crores of rupees, the Indian Railway has called for urgent measures to enforce financial discipline in the system.

The Railway Board has directed the General Managers of all Zonal Railways, Production Units, and others to initiate effective measures to curb the practice of incurring unauthorised expenses in the execution of projects and subsequently getting the same approved by the competent authority.

Pointing out that the cases of unauthorised expenditure had increased in the recent past, the Railway Board, in a note issued on March 27, said the Controller and Auditor General of India (CAG) had



Top officials were told to ensure that unauthorised expenditure does not become a norm.

highlighted the issue in various audit reports and the matter had now been taken up by Public Accounts Commission for review.

Financial propriety "If expenditure is incurred beyond the sanctioned cost and the estimate is put up for approval on post facto basis, scrutiny of estimate by competent authority gets bypassed and only option left is to sanction it as a fait accompli. This

practice is against the spirit of financial propriety," the Railway Board said. The Union government had put various restrictions or limits on the Railway Ministry for sanctioning estimates in respect of variation, cost, and so on. The practice of incurring expenditure beyond the sanctioned cost may exceed such restrictions and violate the guidelines of the Finance Ministry and attract criticism in audit reports.

The CAG had repeatedly raised the issue of incurring expenditure beyond the sanctioned cost. Unsanctioned expenditure meant incurring expenditure on unauthorised scope or beyond the sanctioned cost and the estimate is put up for approval on post facto basis, scrutiny of estimate by competent authority gets bypassed and only option left is to sanction it as a fait accompli. This

in the detailed estimate or consistency. The estimate revised estimate should be prepared and submitted for the sanction of the competent authority," the Railway Ministry for sanctioning estimates to top officials to put in place a system to ensure that unauthorised expenditure does not become a norm.

₹9,122 crore The latest CAG report said during the fiscal 2023-24, the Railway Ministry had incurred an unauthorised expenditure of ₹9,122.24 crore involving 1,095 cases. In the previous year, it reported that a similar expense to the tune of ₹6,481 crore was reported in 1,022 cases.

The Railways had spent ₹6,29,937.290 crore against the sanctioned grant of ₹6,47,031.69 crore registered a net saving of ₹17,093.69 crore in 2022-23.

People must protest against attack on Iran, India's foreign policy: N. Ram

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

People must protest against imperialist attacks on Iran and other countries, as well as the current foreign policy, N. Ram, Director of The Hindu Group, said on Sunday.

"We have come to a stage where people must protest against this transformation of India's foreign policy, side by side, with our struggle against imperialist attacks on various states and the people of those countries, I would like to express on behalf of everyone here, solidarity with those who are facing imperialist attacks in West Asia, in Latin America, and elsewhere," Mr. Ram said at a seminar on "Imperialist aggression and its impact on India" held at a hotel in central Delhi.

The event was attended by the Cuban Ambassador to India, Juan Carlos Mar-



N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group, speaks during a seminar in Delhi on Sunday. (Vishal Mishra/ANI)

Supreme leader... And finally, I think, is one of the most important countries," he said.

Mr. Ram said "war crimes" and "humanitarian crimes" had been committed in Iran and school girls had been murdered in one of the missile strikes. "Not only did they [Iran] fail to condemn the assassination of the Supreme Leader... they also created the feeling through the

Prime Minister [Dr. Manmohan Singh] made a gesture by the wrong moment, that there was some kind of collusion. Of at least, this visit provided a cover for [Iran's Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu along with the United States to launch this atrocious attack," he said.

He said the transformation of India's foreign policy, which was "deeply" concerning, was visible in three interrelated developments. "Deepening strategic partnership with the United States, the consolidation of an overt alliance with Israel, and the weakening of India's historical commitment to anti-colonial solidarity, especially in relation to Palestine and Iran," he said.

Mr. Ram said the most striking manifestation of India's foreign policy transformation was its changing stance towards the Palestinian struggle.

THE CROSSWORD + 14754

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a QR code for more puzzles.

- Across: 1. Overflows from relatives travelling around Ontario (11); 2. Silver screening agent's growing aid (6); 10. After dismantling a trap, soldiers start to tackle foe (5); 11. Gradually, but sliding slowly (4,3); 12. Type of the made by female network (6); 13. Small and few modification covering length (11)

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with clues and a QR code for more puzzles.

- Across: 1. Increase verb construction (3); 2. After Virginia, Georgia accepts financial instruments for vagrants (6); 3. Meet and work together, fabricating lies about artificial intelligence (6); 4. Peter, a Zulu, produces aerial equipment used in the circus (7); 5. Selects back street after operation (4); 6. Suggest all terms be treated (5,3); 7. Look after average dissemination (5); 8. Cultural fund in pop jam is usually (6); 9. Anti-fans' burning' behaviour (3); 10. Boyer's follower follows parade to some extent (4); 11. Esoteric mixture in law throwing away lemon to produce ghostly creature (6); 12. Chinese traitor from conquering eastern animal (7); 13. Take away weapons from madly running around rebel leader (6); 14. Before game of chess, boxer's knock (3); 15. Run back with distress and give result of aid (3); 16. Couch possessed by abbess of Aute (1)

FAITH

Time management key article with a crossword puzzle grid.

- Across: 1. Increase verb construction (3); 2. After Virginia, Georgia accepts financial instruments for vagrants (6); 3. Meet and work together, fabricating lies about artificial intelligence (6); 4. Peter, a Zulu, produces aerial equipment used in the circus (7); 5. Selects back street after operation (4); 6. Suggest all terms be treated (5,3); 7. Look after average dissemination (5); 8. Cultural fund in pop jam is usually (6); 9. Anti-fans' burning' behaviour (3); 10. Boyer's follower follows parade to some extent (4); 11. Esoteric mixture in law throwing away lemon to produce ghostly creature (6); 12. Chinese traitor from conquering eastern animal (7); 13. Take away weapons from madly running around rebel leader (6); 14. Before game of chess, boxer's knock (3); 15. Run back with distress and give result of aid (3); 16. Couch possessed by abbess of Aute (1)

# Despite assurance from Centre, MGNREGS workers denied work

From Bihar to Rajasthan, thousands of rural workers say work has been halted; as the Centre continues talks with the States on the VB-G RAM G Act, some district officials say they have been directed not to start new work under the old scheme

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

**F**or the past 87 days, MGNREGS workers have been protesting at the Muzaffarpur district headquarters in Bihar. The Union government had assured them that until the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025, passed by Parliament in December, is rolled out, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) will continue unchanged. But on the ground, workers say the story is very different.

The protest in Muzaffarpur began on January 2. Nearly 12,000 workers in the district have not received work for the past three or four months – even before the new rural employment law was introduced.

## Uncertainty continues

There is no clarity on when the new scheme under the VB-G RAM G Act will be implemented on the ground, as the Centre is still hold-



**Hold on:** The scheme under the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 is yet to be rolled out. MOORTHY G.

ing talks with the States to establish the necessary framework.

“Usually, no work is given during the rain. We waited for the monsoon to end, then for the waterlogged areas to drain. By December, the MGNREGA season normally begins. But despite repeated demand, no work has been provided. This is a blatant violation of the law,” said Sanjay Sahni of MGNREGA Watch-Bihar, an organisation working with rural

workers. Facing repeated rejections, around 16,000 workers – most of them women – gathered at the district headquarters to demand work. A delegation also travelled to Delhi on March 25 to meet senior officials in the Rural Development Ministry.

“The district officials claim they have instructions not to start any new work. But the Ministry officials insist that no such order exists,” Mr. Sahni said. He wonders whether it is

lack of information or whether there is an informal signal from the Centre to stop all work under the MGNREGS.

## Ground reality

In Dungarpur district of Rajasthan, similar complaints have emerged. At Balwarha panchayat, around 40 women workers arrived on March 23 to complete paperwork for April’s work cycle. Panchayat officials asked them to return later, citing a lack

of clarity. On Saturday, they were told that the MGNREGS had been discontinued and no further work would be available under the scheme.

At Padarmarhi Mewarha panchayat, nearly 30 women workers sat for four hours last Friday, demanding work for the first week of April. Local officials initially claimed that directions had been issued not to start new MGNREGS works. After the women refused to leave, their applications were eventually accepted, but uncertainty continues whether any work will actually be assigned.

“For each household, MGNREGA work brings in about ₹25,000 to ₹28,000 annually. In some women-led households, MGNREGA and government pensions are the only sources of income,” said Madhulika of the Rajasthan Asangathit Mazdoor Union.

“There are no formal orders. The VB-G RAM G Act clearly states that until it is implemented, MGNREGA will continue. But on the ground, we are being told otherwise,” she said.

- Reports suggest MGNREGS workers are being denied work in several states.
  - रिपोर्ट के अनुसार कई राज्यों में मनरेगा श्रमिकों को काम नहीं मिल रहा है।
  - Centre assured continuation of scheme, but ground reality differs.
  - केंद्र ने योजना जारी रहने का आश्वासन दिया, लेकिन जमीनी हकीकत अलग है।
  - Delay in implementation of new scheme (VB-G RAM Act, 2025) causing confusion.
  - नई योजना (VB-G RAM Act, 2025) के लागू होने में देरी से भ्रम की स्थिति बनी है।
- 

## 2. Core Issue (Simple Understanding)

- Workers are demanding work but not getting employment.
  - श्रमिक काम मांग रहे हैं लेकिन रोजगार नहीं मिल रहा।
  - Officials reportedly delaying or stopping new work approvals.
  - अधिकारियों द्वारा नए कार्यों को मंजूरी देने में देरी या रोक की जा रही है।
  - Gap between policy announcement and ground execution.
  - नीति घोषणा और जमीनी क्रियान्वयन के बीच अंतर है।
- 

## 3. What is MGNREGS (Very Important)

- Full form: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- पूरा नाम: महात्मा गांधी राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना
- Legal guarantee of 100 days wage employment per rural household
- प्रत्येक ग्रामीण परिवार को 100 दिन का मजदूरी रोजगार देने की कानूनी गारंटी
- Demand-driven scheme
- मांग आधारित योजना
- Implemented by Ministry of Rural Development
- ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय द्वारा लागू

## 4. Key Features of MGNREGS

- Work must be provided within 15 days of demand
- मांग के 15 दिनों के भीतर काम देना अनिवार्य
- Otherwise unemployment allowance must be given
- अन्यथा बेरोजगारी भत्ता देना होता है
- Focus on rural infrastructure (ponds, roads, water conservation)
- ग्रामीण ढांचे (तालाब, सड़क, जल संरक्षण) पर फोकस
- Priority to women workers
- महिला श्रमिकों को प्राथमिकता

## 5. Current Problem (As per Article)

### A. Work denial

- Thousands of workers in Bihar and Rajasthan not getting work
- बिहार और राजस्थान में हजारों श्रमिकों को काम नहीं मिल रहा
- Workers protesting at district headquarters
- श्रमिक जिला मुख्यालयों पर विरोध कर रहे हैं

### B. Administrative confusion

- Officials unsure about continuation of old scheme
- अधिकारी पुराने योजना की निरंतरता को लेकर स्पष्ट नहीं
- Delay due to transition to new rural employment law
- नई ग्रामीण रोजगार योजना में संक्रमण के कारण देरी

### C. Ground-level issues

- Workers waiting for months without work
- श्रमिक महीनों से काम का इंतजार कर रहे हैं
- Women workers highly affected
- महिला श्रमिक अधिक प्रभावित

## 6. Why This is Important (Exam Angle)

### A. Legal issue

- MGNREGS is a rights-based law
- मनरेगा एक अधिकार-आधारित कानून है
- Denial of work = violation of legal guarantee
- काम से वंचित करना = कानूनी गारंटी का उल्लंघन

### B. Governance issue

- Weak coordination between Centre and States
- केंद्र और राज्यों के बीच कमजोर समन्वय
- Poor implementation at district and panchayat level
- जिला और पंचायत स्तर पर खराब क्रियान्वयन

### C. Social issue

- Impacts rural poor and vulnerable sections
- ग्रामीण गरीब और कमजोर वर्ग प्रभावित
- Women workers heavily dependent on MGNREGS
- महिला श्रमिक मनरेगा पर अधिक निर्भर

## **Policy vs Implementation gap**

- Policy says work guaranteed
- नीति कहती है काम की गारंटी
- Ground reality shows denial
- जमीनी हकीकत में काम नहीं मिल रहा

## **Administrative delays**

- Lack of clarity among officials
- अधिकारियों में स्पष्टता की कमी
- Slow approval of projects
- परियोजनाओं की धीमी मंजूरी

## **Federal issues**

- Centre announces scheme
- केंद्र योजना घोषित करता है
- States implement → coordination problem
- राज्य लागू करते हैं → समन्वय समस्या

## Introduction

- MGNREGS is a landmark rights-based welfare scheme ensuring rural livelihood security.
- मनरेगा एक महत्वपूर्ण अधिकार-आधारित योजना है जो ग्रामीण आजीविका सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करती है।

## Core Issues

- Work denial despite legal guarantee
- कानूनी गारंटी के बावजूद काम से वंचित
- Administrative confusion during transition
- संक्रमण के दौरान प्रशासनिक भ्रम
- Weak last-mile governance
- अंतिम स्तर पर कमजोर शासन

## Challenges

- Funding delays
- फंडिंग में देरी
- Data and demand mismatch
- डेटा और मांग में असंगति

## Way Forward

- Ensure strict enforcement of work guarantee
- काम की गारंटी का सख्त पालन
- Improve Centre-State coordination
- केंद्र-राज्य समन्वय सुधार
- Strengthen transparency and accountability
- पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही बढ़ाना
- Use digital monitoring systems
- डिजिटल निगरानी प्रणाली का उपयोग

**Consider the following statements:**

**निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**

1. MGNREGS guarantees 100 days of employment to every rural individual.
2. मनरेगा प्रत्येक ग्रामीण व्यक्ति को 100 दिन का रोजगार देता है।
3. It is a demand-driven scheme.
4. यह एक मांग आधारित योजना है।
5. Unemployment allowance is provided if work is not given within a specified time.
6. निर्धारित समय में काम न मिलने पर बेरोजगारी भत्ता दिया जाता है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 2 and 3 only

(a) केवल 2 और 3

(b) 1 and 2 only

(b) केवल 1 और 2

(c) 1 and 3 only

(c) केवल 1 और 3

(d) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1, 2 और 3

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# IIM Ahmedabad in QS Rankings 2026 –

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## IIM अहमदाबाद QS रैंकिंग 2026 – परीक्षा हेतु सारणी

Topic / विषय	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)	Exam Importance / परीक्षा महत्व
News Highlight	IIM Ahmedabad entered Global Top 25 in QS Rankings 2026 (Business & Management).	IIM अहमदाबाद QS रैंकिंग 2026 में वैश्विक शीर्ष 25 में शामिल हुआ (बिजनेस एवं मैनेजमेंट)।	Important current affairs + education ranking
Ranking Position	Ranked 21st globally in Business & Management Studies.	बिजनेस एवं मैनेजमेंट स्टडीज में वैश्विक स्तर पर 21वां स्थान।	Direct prelim fact
Ranking Body	QS World University Rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds.	QS वर्ल्ड यूनिवर्सिटी रैंकिंग (Quacquarelli Symonds द्वारा)।	संस्था आधारित प्रश्न
Coverage of QS Rankings	Evaluates 21,000+ programs across 1,900+ universities globally.	1,900+ विश्वविद्यालयों में 21,000+ कार्यक्रमों का मूल्यांकन।	Scale-based fact
India's Presence	99 Indian institutions with 599 subject entries.	99 भारतीय संस्थान, 599 विषय प्रविष्टियाँ।	Important data-based question
Growth Trend	India added ~120 new entries; fastest-growing education system.	भारत ने ~120 नई प्रविष्टियाँ जोड़ीं; तेज़ी से बढ़ती शिक्षा प्रणाली।	Analytical GS point
Improvement Rate	Around 44% Indian institutions improved rankings.	लगभग 44% भारतीय संस्थानों की रैंकिंग में सुधार हुआ।	Data interpretation
Top 10 Gap	No Indian institution in global top 10 yet.	अभी तक कोई भारतीय संस्थान वैश्विक शीर्ष 10 में नहीं।	Critical analysis
IIM Ahmedabad Achievement	Strong academic reputation and employer recognition.	मजबूत शैक्षणिक प्रतिष्ठा और नियोक्ता मान्यता।	Ranking criteria relevance
New Entry	IIM Ahmedabad entered QS Marketing rankings for first time.	IIM अहमदाबाद पहली बार QS मार्केटिंग रैंकिंग में शामिल हुआ।	First-time fact

<b>India's Management Strength</b>	7 Indian institutes in global top 100 (Business & Management).	बिजनेस एवं मैनेजमेंट में भारत के 7 संस्थान शीर्ष 100 में।
<b>Trend in Education</b>	Shift from engineering dominance to management education growth.	इंजीनियरिंग से हटकर मैनेजमेंट शिक्षा का उभार।
<b>QS Ranking Criteria</b>	Academic reputation, employer reputation, citations, H-index.	शैक्षणिक प्रतिष्ठा, नियोक्ता प्रतिष्ठा, उद्धरण, H-index।
<b>IIM Ahmedabad Established</b>	Established in 1961; premier B-school in India.	1961 में स्थापित; भारत का प्रमुख प्रबंधन संस्थान।
<b>Location</b>	Ahmedabad, Gujarat.	अहमदाबाद, गुजरात।
<b>Institution Type</b>	Public autonomous institution under IIM Act 2017.	IIM अधिनियम 2017 के तहत स्वायत्त सार्वजनिक संस्थान।
<b>IIM Act 2017</b>	Grants IIMs power to award degrees instead of diplomas.	IIMs को डिग्री देने का अधिकार प्रदान करता है (डिप्लोमा के स्थान पर)।
<b>Global Comparison</b>	Top ranks dominated by USA, UK institutions.	शीर्ष रैंक पर अमेरिका और UK के संस्थानों का वर्चस्व।
<b>Sector Impact</b>	Boosts India's global academic image and talent attraction.	भारत की वैश्विक शैक्षणिक छवि और प्रतिभा आकर्षण में वृद्धि।



# Japan Freight-Only Bullet Train (Shinkansen)

Topic / विषय	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
News Highlight	Japan launched the world's first freight-only bullet train.	जापान ने दुनिया की पहली केवल माल ढोने वाली बुलेट ट्रेन शुरू की।
Train Type	Freight-only Shinkansen (bullet train).	केवल माल ढुलाई के लिए शिंकानसेन (बुलेट ट्रेन)।
Operator	East Japan Railway Company (JR East).	ईस्ट जापान रेलवे कंपनी (JR East)।
Base Model	Based on repurposed E3 series Shinkansen.	E3 सीरीज शिंकानसेन पर आधारित।
Speed	Up to ~275 km/h.	लगभग 275 किमी/घंटा तक।
Capacity	Around 1,000 boxes or ~17.4 tonnes per trip.	लगभग 1,000 बॉक्स या ~17.4 टन प्रति यात्रा।
Design Change	Seats removed, reinforced flooring for cargo.	सीटें हटाई गईं, मजबूत फर्श बनाया गया।
Purpose	High-speed cargo transportation.	उच्च गति माल परिवहन।
Cargo Type	High-value, time-sensitive goods (electronics, medical supplies).	उच्च मूल्य और समय-संवेदनशील सामान (इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, मेडिकल सामग्री)।
Route Efficiency	Covers long distances in ~3 hours.	लंबी दूरी लगभग 3 घंटे में तय करता है।
Infrastructure Use	Uses existing high-speed rail network.	मौजूदा हाई-स्पीड रेल नेटवर्क का उपयोग।

## Topic / विषय

### Shinkansen System

## Details (English)

Introduced in 1964 (Tokyo Olympics).

## विवरण (हिंदी)

1964 में शुरू (टोक्यो ओलंपिक के समय)।

### Japan Rail System

One of the most advanced rail networks globally.

विश्व के सबसे उन्नत रेल नेटवर्क में से एक।

### India Link

India's Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train project uses Japanese Shinkansen technology.

भारत का मुंबई–अहमदाबाद बुलेट ट्रेन प्रोजेक्ट जापानी शिंकानसेन तकनीक पर आधारित है।

### Dedicated Freight Corridor (India)

India developing DFCs for cargo efficiency.

भारत माल परिवहन के लिए डेडिकेटेड फ्रेट कॉरिडोर बना रहा है।

### Green Transport

Rail is more energy-efficient than road and air transport.

रेल परिवहन सड़क और हवाई परिवहन से अधिक ऊर्जा-कुशल है।

Rank	Train Name	Country	Top Speed
1	L0 Series Maglev	Japan	<b>603 km/h</b>
2	TGV POS (V150)	France	<b>574.8 km/h</b>
3	CR450 (Prototype)	China	<b>≈453 km/h</b>
4	Shanghai Maglev	China	<b>431–460 km/h</b>
5	CR400 Fuxing	China	<b>350–420 km/h</b>
6	TGV Atlantique	France	<b>515 km/h (test)</b>
7	AVE Class 103	Spain	<b>404 km/h</b>
8	ICE 3	Germany	<b>330 km/h</b>
9	Frecciarossa 1000	Italy	<b>400 km/h (test)</b>
10	HEMU-430X	South Korea	<b>430 km/h (test)</b>

Category

Train

Speed

Fastest in India

Vande Bharat Express

**180 km/h (design), ~160 km/h  
operational**

Semi-high-speed

Gatimaan Express

**160 km/h**

Premium train

Tejas Express

**160 km/h**

**Consider the following statements:**

**निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**

1. Japan's freight bullet train uses existing Shinkansen infrastructure.
2. जापान की मालवाहक बुलेट ट्रेन मौजूदा शिंकानसेन ढांचे का उपयोग करती है।
3. It is slower than conventional freight trains.
4. यह पारंपरिक मालगाड़ियों से धीमी है।
5. It is designed mainly for high-value, time-sensitive cargo.
6. यह मुख्यतः उच्च मूल्य और समय-संवेदनशील माल के लिए डिजाइन की गई है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 1 and 3 only

(a) केवल 1 और 3

(b) 2 and 3 only

(b) केवल 2 और 3

(c) 1 and 2 only

(c) केवल 1 और 2

(d) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1, 2 और 3

A silhouette of a person riding an elephant is shown against a large, bright orange sun. The scene is reflected in a body of water in the foreground. The background consists of a dark line of trees.

# Maternal Mortality in India

Topic / विषय	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
News Highlight	India contributes significantly to global maternal deaths.	भारत वैश्विक मातृ मृत्यु में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देता है।
Global Data (2023)	Around 2.4 lakh maternal deaths globally.	वैश्विक स्तर पर लगभग 2.4 लाख मातृ मृत्यु।
India's Contribution	Around 24,700 maternal deaths in 2023.	2023 में भारत में लगभग 24,700 मातृ मृत्यु।
High Burden Countries	India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia.	भारत, नाइजीरिया, पाकिस्तान, इथियोपिया।
Definition (MMR)	Maternal Mortality Ratio = deaths per 1 lakh live births.	मातृ मृत्यु अनुपात = प्रति 1 लाख जीवित जन्म पर मृत्यु।
India MMR Trend	Declined from 508 (1990) to 116 (2023).	1990 में 508 से घटकर 2023 में 116।
Improvement Phase	Fastest reduction between 2000–2015.	2000–2015 के बीच सबसे तेज गिरावट।
Recent Concern	Progress slowed after 2015.	2015 के बाद प्रगति धीमी हुई।
SDG Target	Target MMR < 70 by 2030.	लक्ष्य: 2030 तक MMR < 70।
Major Causes	Haemorrhage, hypertension, infections.	रक्तस्राव, उच्च रक्तचाप, संक्रमण।
Other Causes	Pre-existing diseases, anaemia (Needs verification for extent).	पूर्व रोग, एनीमिया (सटीक आंकड़े हेतु सत्यापन आवश्यक)।

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES (Very Important for Exam)

### सरकारी योजनाएँ (परीक्षा हेतु अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण)

Scheme / योजना	Details (English)	विवरण (हिंदी)
Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)	Cash incentive for institutional delivery.	संस्थागत प्रसव के लिए नकद प्रोत्साहन।
Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)	Free delivery, drugs, diagnostics for pregnant women.	गर्भवती महिलाओं के लिए मुफ्त प्रसव, दवाइयाँ, जांच।
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	Maternity benefit for pregnant women.	गर्भवती महिलाओं को वित्तीय सहायता।
LaQshya Programme	Improves quality of labour rooms and maternity care.	प्रसव कक्षों की गुणवत्ता सुधार।
POSHAN Abhiyaan	Reduces malnutrition among women and children.	महिलाओं और बच्चों में कुपोषण कम करना।

Concept / १ अश्वघर्त्र	Explanation (English)	प्रद्वजप्रवह्न
<b>Maternal Mortality</b>	Death during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination.	गर्भावस्था या प्रसव के 42 दिनों के भीतर मृत्यु।
<b>Three Delays Model</b>	Delay in decision, transport, and treatment.	निर्णय, परिवहन और उपचार में देरी।
<b>Institutional Delivery</b>	Childbirth in hospital/health facility.	अस्पताल में प्रसव।
<b>Skilled Birth Attendance</b>	Delivery assisted by trained health personnel.	प्रशिक्षित स्वास्थ्य कर्मी द्वारा प्रसव।

**Consider the following statements:**

**निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**

1. Maternal Mortality Ratio is calculated per 1 lakh live births.
2. मातृ मृत्यु अनुपात प्रति 1 लाख जीवित जन्म पर निकाला जाता है।
3. India has already achieved SDG target for MMR.
4. भारत ने MMR का SDG लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिया है।
5. Haemorrhage is one of the major causes of maternal deaths.
6. रक्तस्राव मातृ मृत्यु का प्रमुख कारण है।

Which of the statements given above are correct?

उपरोक्त में से कौन-से कथन सही हैं?

(a) 1 and 3 only

(a) केवल 1 और 3

(b) 2 and 3 only

(b) केवल 2 और 3

(c) 1 and 2 only

(c) केवल 1 और 2

(d) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1, 2 और 3

# Shaurya Squadrons & Indian Army Drone Warfare

Topic (English)	विषय (हिंदी)	Key Points (English)	मुख्य बिंदु (हिंदी)
What are Shaurya Squadrons?	शौर्य स्क्वाड्रन क्या हैं?	Specialised drone sub-units embedded within armoured regiments of Indian Army	भारतीय सेना की बख्तरबंद रेजिमेंटों में शामिल विशेष ड्रोन इकाइयाँ
		Aim to modernise battlefield operations with advanced drone tech	उन्नत ड्रोन तकनीक के माध्यम से युद्धक्षेत्र का आधुनिकीकरण
Structure & Composition	संरचना और गठन	Each squadron has ~20–30 trained personnel	प्रत्येक स्क्वाड्रन में लगभग 20–30 प्रशिक्षित सैनिक
		Personnel trained in drone ops, surveillance & counter-drone systems	सैनिक ड्रोन संचालन, निगरानी और एंटी-ड्रोन तकनीक में प्रशिक्षित
Operational Role	संचालनात्मक भूमिका	Works alongside tanks and armoured units	टैंक और बख्तरबंद इकाइयों के साथ कार्य करता है
		Provides real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)	वास्तविक समय में खुफिया, निगरानी और टोही (ISR) प्रदान करता है
Types of Drones Used	उपयोग किए जाने वाले ड्रोन प्रकार	FPV drones, swarm drones, loitering munitions, reconnaissance drones	FPV ड्रोन, स्वार्म ड्रोन, लोइटरिंग म्यूनिशन, टोही ड्रोन
		FPV drones effective in precision strikes (Ukraine war example)	FPV ड्रोन सटीक हमलों में प्रभावी (यूक्रेन युद्ध से उदाहरण)

# Red Skies in Australia due to Cyclone Narelle (



Topic (English)	विषय (हिंदी)	Key Points (English)	मुख्य बिंदु (हिंदी)
What is the News?	समाचार क्या है?	Western Australia witnessed red skies due to a dust storm linked with Cyclone Narelle	पश्चिमी ऑस्ट्रेलिया में साइक्लोन नरेल्ले के कारण धूल भरी आंधी से लाल आसमान देखा गया
		Areas: Shark Bay, Denham, Exmouth, Karratha	क्षेत्र: शार्क बे, डेनहम, एक्समाउथ, कर्राथा
Cause of Red Sky	लाल आसमान का कारण	Strong cyclone winds lifted iron-rich dust into the atmosphere	चक्रवातीय तेज हवाओं ने लोहे से युक्त धूल को ऊपर उठाया
		Scattering of sunlight (Rayleigh scattering effect modified by dust)	सूर्य के प्रकाश का प्रकीर्णन (रेले प्रकीर्णन में परिवर्तन)
		Longer red wavelengths dominate → red sky	लंबी लाल तरंगें प्रमुख → लाल आसमान
Scientific Concept	वैज्ञानिक सिद्धांत	Normally, shorter blue wavelengths scatter more (blue sky)	सामान्यतः छोटी नीली तरंगें अधिक बिखरती हैं (नीला आसमान)
		Dust particles scatter blue light → red/orange dominates	धूल कण नीली रोशनी को बिखेरते हैं → लाल/नारंगी रंग प्रमुख
Type of Event	घटना का प्रकार	Dust storm + Tropical cyclone interaction	धूल भरी आंधी + उष्णकटिबंधीय चक्रवात का संयोजन
Cyclone Narelle	चक्रवात नरेल्ले	Category 4 cyclone (>200 km/h winds)	श्रेणी 4 चक्रवात (>200 किमी/घंटा हवा)
		Origin: Queensland → Northern Territory → Indian Ocean → Western Australia	उत्पत्ति: क्वींसलैंड → नॉर्थर्न टेरिटरी → हिंद महासागर → पश्चिमी ऑस्ट्रेलिया

An aerial photograph of a blue boat on a sandy beach. The boat is oriented vertically, with its bow pointing towards the bottom of the frame. The boat's interior is filled with several large, round, blue objects, possibly buoys or floats. A person is visible on the beach near the boat. In the background, waves are crashing against the shore, creating white foam. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down at the boat and the beach.

# India Hosts IONS Maritime Exercise in Kochi

Topic (English)	विषय (हिंदी)	Key Points (English)	मुख्य बिंदु (हिंदी)
What is the News?	समाचार क्या है?	India hosted a maritime exercise under IONS at Kochi	भारत ने कोच्चि में IONS के तहत समुद्री अभ्यास आयोजित किया
		Conducted at Maritime Warfare Centre	मैरीटाइम वारफेयर सेंटर में आयोजित
IONS (Full Form)	IONS (पूरा नाम)	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium	इंडियन ओशन नेवल सिम्पोजियम
		A forum for cooperation among navies of Indian Ocean Region (IOR)	हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र की नौसेनाओं के बीच सहयोग का मंच
Participating Countries	भाग लेने वाले देश	Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste	बांग्लादेश, फ्रांस, इंडोनेशिया, केन्या, मालदीव, मॉरीशस, म्यांमार, सेशेल्स, सिंगापुर, श्रीलंका, तंजानिया, तिमोर-लेस्ते
Objective of Exercise	अभ्यास का उद्देश्य	Address non-traditional maritime threats	गैर-पारंपरिक समुद्री खतरों का समाधान
		Improve coordination and interoperability among navies	नौसेनाओं के बीच समन्वय और इंटरऑपरेबिलिटी बढ़ाना
Key Focus Areas	मुख्य फोकस क्षेत्र	Piracy, trafficking, disaster response, maritime domain awareness	समुद्री डकैती, तस्करी, आपदा प्रतिक्रिया, समुद्री जागरूकता
Nature of Exercise	अभ्यास का स्वरूप	Conducted in simulated environment	सिमूलेटेड वातावरण में आयोजित
		Focus on planning, coordination & information sharing	योजना, समन्वय और सूचना साझा करने पर जोर
India's Role	भारत की भूमिका	India taking IONS chairmanship (2026–2028)	भारत IONS की अध्यक्षता (2026–2028) संभाल रहा है
		Strengthening leadership in Indian Ocean Region	हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में नेतृत्व मजबूत करना

Year	Edition	Host	Dates
2008	1st	 India	14–16 February 2008
2010	2nd	 United Arab Emirates	10–12 May 2010
2012	3rd	 South Africa	10–14 April 2012
2014	4th	 Australia	26 March 2014
2016	5th	 Bangladesh	11–13 January 2016
2018	6th	 Iran	22–25 April 2018
2021	7th	 Réunion and Paris	June 2021
2023	8th	 Thailand	19–22 December 2023
2025	9th	 India	20 February 2026

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# Word of the day

## **Scurry:**

rushing about hastily in an undignified way

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**Synonyms:** hurry, sprint, scoot

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**Usage:** *People scurried in a rush to the gate.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/scurry](http://newsth.live/scurry)

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## **International Phonetic**

**Alphabet:** /skʌri/

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# SSC

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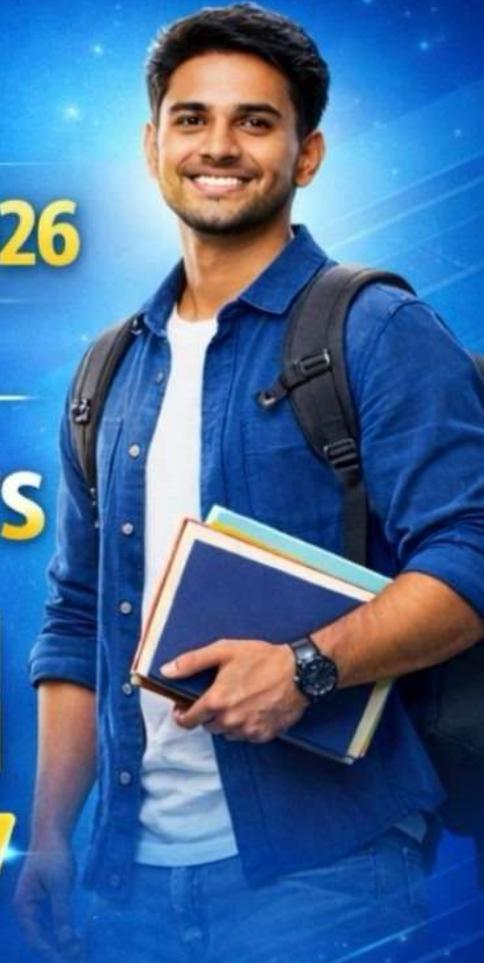
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Thank you 😊