



Narmada-Parikrama:



Gandhinagar (GNS) The Gujarat government has started grand preparations for the Narmada Parikrama. The state government for the sages and devotees in Indian culture, for centuries, Narmada Parikrama is not just a journey but is consid-

ered a wonderful experience of faith, meditation and spiritual energy. The sacred Uttarvahini Panchkoshi Narmada Parikrama organized in Gujarat is a living symbol of this eternal tradition, where devotees experience spiritual peace and energy while

Preparations for Narmada Parikrama begin, Gujarat government to spend 10 crores on facilities

worshipping Mother Narmada. The Gujarat government has begun extensive preparations for the 30-day Narmada Parikrama, scheduled to run from March 19th to April 17th, 2026. Temporary and permanent arrangements are being made at a cost of approximately ₹10 crore (approximately \$100 million) to ensure the convenience and safety of pilgrims.

The State Information Department stated in a statement that the Gujarat Holy Pilgrimage Development Board, under the

leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, will provide special facilities for the thousands of pilgrims expected during the Parikrama. Approximately ₹54.1 crore (approximately \$54.1 million) is being spent on temporary arrangements, including additional dome shelters, mobile toilets, water facilities, medical units, 24x7 ambulances, lighting, and emergency help points. Large waterproof dome shelters will be equipped with cots, mattresses, chairs, and bedding for pilgrims. Bathrooms, chang-

ing rooms, and cloakrooms will also be provided. Service centers and shops will also be arranged along the Parikrama route to ensure that pilgrims face no inconvenience. To ensure hygiene and sanitation, separate temporary toilets for men and women, mobile toilet vans, bathing facilities, and regular water supply have been arranged. Housekeeping teams will work in multiple shifts to manage waste and clean up.

In view of the arrival of millions of pilgrims, elaborate security arrangements have

also been made. Police booths, security cabins, and watchtowers will be installed in the Parikrama area. Crowd control will be barricaded, and pilgrim movement will be monitored through infrared (IR) and RFID-based headcount systems. LED and floodlights will be installed along the entire 18-kilometer Parikrama route and ghats to ensure safe travel for pilgrims even at night. Public address systems, wireless communication, and CCTV surveillance will also be in place. The Yatratham Board is also

focusing on the development of permanent facilities. Several permanent development works have been completed so far at a cost of approximately ₹5.07 crore, ensuring improved facilities for future pilgrims. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra of 'Development as well as Heritage', the state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and the guidance of Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghvi, is promoting the religious and cultural traditions.

Two days after Wangchuk's release, protests in Leh

Leh (GNS): Ladakh observed a shutdown on Monday with thousands of people taking to the streets to protest, demanding full statehood and protection under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Markets remained closed in Leh and Kargil, with people carrying banners and marching through the markets, raising slogans in support of their demands.

The strike was called by the Apex Body Leh (ABL) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). These organizations are in talks with the central government, but no solution has been reached yet.

The protests in Leh-Ladakh came two days after the release of environmental activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was detained under the National Security Act (NSA) for nearly six months.

DK Shivakumar alleges Congress MLAs were offered 5 crore each 4 people came to buy them to cross-vote in the Rajya Sabha elections; 2 detained



Bengaluru, Agency: Ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections in Bengaluru, Karnataka, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar alleged that Odisha Congress MLAs were offered 5 crore each to cross-vote. Police have detained two people in connection with the incident. Shivakumar said on Sunday that four people from Odisha had reached a resort in Bidadi near Bengaluru, where Odisha Congress MLAs are staying, and offered them money in exchange for cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections.

Shivakumar said the Congress MLAs rejected the offer and immediately informed the party leadership. He said two of the four men fled the scene, while two were apprehended. He claimed that blank checks were also found with the accused, which the police have seized. Shivakumar described this as the BJP's Operation Lotus, alleging that an attempt was being made to poach MLAs from opposition parties.

Odisha: Fire at Cuttack government hospital kills 10 patients

11 staff members also injured; 25 lakh rupees compensation to families of deceased

Cuttack, Agency: A fire broke out at Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College Hospital in Cuttack, Odisha, around 3 a.m. on Sunday night. Ten patients died in the incident. Seven of them died on the spot, and three died during treatment. The fire broke out in the trauma care intensive care unit on the first floor. Around 23 patients were admitted there. At least 11 hospital staff members suffered burns while trying to rescue them. It is suspected that the fire was caused by a short circuit. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Manjhi visited the hospital this morning to see the injured. He announced a compensation of 25 lakh each to the families of the deceased and ordered a high-level investigation into the accident.



Uproar in Rajya Sabha over LPG crisis

Kharge says government knew in advance, why didn't they make arrangements; TMC MPs walk out

New Delhi, Agency: Question Hour in the Lok Sabha concluded without any disruption for the first time on Monday during the second phase of the Budget Session. Meanwhile, the opposition raised questions in the Rajya Sabha regarding the LPG cylinder crisis.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said in the Rajya Sabha that the Petroleum Minister claimed in the Lok Sabha that there was no shortage of LPG, but the ground reality belies the government's claims. Had the government made timely arrangements, the situation would not have been so dire. BJP MP JP Nadda



interrupted Kharge, saying that Congress is playing politics even during a disaster. Kharge continued speaking.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that Congress leaders don't listen to answers. The Trinamool Congress

Question Hour concludes in Lok Sabha without any uproar

As soon as the Lok Sabha proceedings began, some opposition MPs demanded to raise their issues immediately. Speaker Om Birla said they would be given a chance to speak after the Question Hour ends at 12 noon. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Ministers Mansukh Mandaviya and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat answered MPs' questions during Question Hour. Ranjan Gogoi was given a farewell speech upon completion of his term in the Rajya Sabha.

In the first week of the second phase of the Budget session, which began on March 9, the Question Hour, which was scheduled from 11 am to 12 noon, could not be completed due to opposition protests.

(TMC) staged a walkout Commission's decision to from the Rajya Sabha, remove top Bengal officials protesting the Election cials.

Dubai International Airport closed after drone attack, all flights from Kathmandu cancelled

Kathmandu, Agency: Following the closure of Dubai International Airport, all flights from Kathmandu to Dubai have been cancelled. All Nepali airlines have requested passengers not to come to the airport and to make their ticketing arrangements through the airlines' websites.

Dubai Airport was closed for six days from February 28th following the outbreak of war between the US, Israel, and Iran. During this period, flights from Kathmandu to Dubai and



all Gulf countries were suspended. Since the outbreak of the war, missile and drone attacks in the Gulf region have increased sharply. In particular, US diplomatic missions and mil-

itary bases in Gulf countries, as well as oil infrastructure, ports, airports, hotels, and residential and office buildings, are being targeted. A fuel tank caught fire due to a drone attack near Dubai International Airport on Monday. Following this, the airport has been temporarily closed keeping in mind the safety of passengers and staff. Fly Dubai, Nepal Airlines and Himalaya Airlines had scheduled flights from Dubai to Kathmandu on Monday. Along with this, Fly Dubai, Emirates, Himalaya Airlines and Nepal Airlines flying from Kathmandu to Dubai have postponed their flights.

Wholesale inflation reaches 12-month high

2.13% in February, with food and daily necessities becoming more expensive.

New Delhi (GNS): Wholesale inflation (WPI) rose to 2.13% in February. This is a 12-month high. In February 2025, it had reached 2.38%.

Previously, wholesale inflation stood at 1.81% in January 2026. In December, wholesale inflation was 0.83%. The Commerce Ministry released wholesale inflation figures today, March 16th.

Experts believe that if the US-Israel and Iran war continues for a long time, the price of crude oil can reach \$150 per barrel.

Due to this, petrol and diesel may become expensive, due to which the cost of transportation will increase and the prices of every essential commodity including fruits and vegetables will increase.

Daily essential goods and food items became expensive.

Inflation in primary articles increased from 2.21% to 3.27%.



Inflation in food items (food index) increased from minus 1.41% to 1.85%.

The wholesale inflation rate of fuel and power increased from minus 4.01% to minus 3.78%.

The wholesale inflation rate of manufacturing products increased from 2.86% to 2.92%.

High Court's petition for change of judge dismissed, Kejriwal now approaches Supreme Court

New Delhi, Agency: Former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and AAP leader Manish Sisodia have filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Delhi High Court Chief Justice's refusal to transfer the CBI's excise policy case petition from the bench of Justice Swaran Kant Sharma to another judge. The two expressed serious apprehensions about the impartiality of the bench after

an application was made to Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay on March 11, which the Chief Justice rejected, saying the matter was on the court's agenda and there was no administrative ground for reassignment. The CBI's petition, listed before Justice Sharma on Monday, challenges the lower court's acquittal on February 27 of Kejriwal, Sisodia and 21 others in the scam related to prefer-

ential treatment to liquor licensees. According to media reports, the 2021 Delhi Excise Policy, now rescinded, aimed to privatize liquor sales to increase revenue, but faced allegations of irregularities, bribery, and loss to the public exchequer, leading to investigations by the CBI and ED on the orders of the Lieutenant Governor. The lower court acquitted the accused, criticizing some of the



CBI's findings. However, on March 9, Justice Sharma issued notices to all 23 defendants,

stayed departmental action against the CBI investigator, highlighted prima facie errors in the lower court's observations, and stayed the related PMLA proceedings. These moves further bolstered the Aam Aadmi Party's claims of bias. The Aam Aadmi Party confirmed receipt of the High Court's letter, and Kejriwal also protested the March 9 order staying the lower court's com-

missions by S.K. Sharma without hearing him. The Supreme Court petition has sought an immediate listing of the case, potentially before a bench headed by the Chief Justice, for a fair hearing. This development has heightened tensions ahead of Justice Sharma's hearing, underscoring AAP's strategy of questioning judicial appointments amid this high-profile corruption case.

Assembly elections in five states vs. killing many birds with one stone?

Sanat Jain

The Central Election Commission announced elections for five states on Sunday, March 15th. For the first time in the country, the voting process will be completed in just 21 days. The manner in which the Election Commission has announced elections for five states, arbitrarily altering the existing election process, is being interpreted as having several other implications. Have the Election Commission and the government hit multiple targets with one arrow? This decision by the Election Commission could be interpreted as saying, have constitutional institutions forgotten their responsibilities and morality? They are acting solely at the behest of the government. The judiciary is

being the subject of much discussion. For the first time, the Central Election Commission has set a record by completing the process from nomination to voting in just 21 days, between April 9th and 29th. Parliament's budget session is underway, and a proposal to remove Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has been introduced. This was to be discussed in Parliament. Meanwhile, elections were announced by MPs and MLAs. The announcement of elections will have the effect of mobilizing all political parties for elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry. The attendance and activity of MPs in Parliament will be significantly reduced. In such a situation, the motion against Election

Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar may also be discussed. Perhaps with this strategy in mind, the Election Commission issued notifications for elections in five states on Sunday. The voter list for West Bengal has not yet been released. On the orders of the Supreme Court, judges are conducting an ongoing investigation into the controversy surrounding the inclusion of voter names in the SIR. There is no certainty as to when the investigation involving the names of millions of voters will be completed. Despite this, the Election Commission announced elections for West Bengal. The SIR case has been pending in the Supreme Court since before the Bihar Assembly elections. The Supreme Court has yet to issue a decision on its constitutionality. The hearing

has been ongoing for almost a year, with dates being postponed. Meanwhile, elections are also being held. Recently, judges from West Bengal and other states were assigned to investigate the West Bengal voter list. Elections were announced even though the voter list had not yet been finalized. This time, the opposition was pressuring the government in Parliament regarding the names of politicians implicated in the Epstein Files, India's foreign policy, and the petrol, diesel, and LPG crisis in the event of a US-Israel war with Iran. After the Election Commission announced elections for five states, all these issues were put on hold. India's stock market is continuously declining. The value of the rupee is continuously falling against the dollar. The budget session, which

was supposed to discuss the country's economic crisis and the global recession, will likely not take place. All political parties will become active in their respective state elections. This appears to be benefiting the ruling party. During the budget session, the government was relieved of the challenges it was facing. The opposition was able to unleash a conspiracy against the government. Now, trapped in the government's trap, the opposition has no choice but to flounder. The way the top leadership of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) strategizes, the opposition is unable to counter it even if it wants to. Taking advantage of this internal conflict, the BJP maintains a strong hold on power despite numerous challenges.

Editorial

On the functioning of Parliament

The Lok Sabha rejected by voice vote, on March 11, a resolution under Article 94(C) of the Constitution for the removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla from office, but only after a hostile debate on the functioning of the House deepened the wedge between the government and the Opposition. In principle, Parliament is the foundation of representative democracy, and its routine functions act as an instrument that holds the cabinet accountable. As a forum for government-Opposition interaction, it is meant to operate in a structured, methodical way. Single-party dominance has eroded all these formal and informal functions of legislatures at all levels, and the Lok Sabha, sadly, has become a platform for political partisanship. In recent years, the chairs of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have been dragged into political conflict. In 2024, there was an Opposition resolution to remove Jagdeep Dhankhar as Rajya Sabha Chairman. Though the resolution did not pass, he resigned as Vice-President for unexplained reasons. The Opposition has raised concerns over the Lok Sabha's functioning, but what precipitated their protest into a formal resolution for Mr. Birla's removal was, possibly, his statement that he had confidential knowledge that Congress women MPs might act against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the House floor.

Opposition MPs are routinely denied the opportunity to raise substantive issues, though the government cites statistics in its rebuttal. The Speaker had disallowed Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha) Rahul Gandhi from quoting former Army Chief M.M. Naravane's unpublished memoir, which discusses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role in the 2020 military standoff with China. The microphones of Opposition MPs are frequently switched off during debates. The Opposition has pointed out that in February, Mr. Gandhi was interrupted 20 times while speaking during the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address and also blocked from raising the Gautam Adani investigation issue in the U.S. and the EU-U.S. trade deal. The government argued that the Opposition was given 56% of Zero Hour time, and that NDA MPs, despite their majority, received 321 supplementary questions against the Opposition's 364 during his tenure.



The government needs to formulate a policy after extensive discussions that takes care of women's health and protects their employment opportunities. Employers may avoid hiring women if they are required to provide additional paid holidays each month - The Right View Gondia - Globally, in the 21st century, women's empowerment has become a central topic in world politics, social policy, and economic development. Today, it is recognized in most democratic countries that a nation's progress is possible only when women, who constitute half of its population, have equal opportunities, respect, and equal access to resources.



Petition seeking mandatory menstrual leave for working women and female students dismissed – a question of balance between equality, opportunity and practicality

Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavnani

India, in line with this global vision, is implementing numerous schemes for women's dignity, education, health, skill development, and economic empowerment. Several programs run by the Government of India, such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, aim to empower women socially, economically, and educationally. These schemes have not only improved the status of women but also strengthened the sense of respect for them in society. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavnani, Gondia, Maharashtra, believe that women are not only half the population of society, but also mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and the foundation of the family. Therefore, ensuring their safety, health, and respect becomes the primary responsibility of governments. While policy demands may sometimes be aimed at women's convenience and health, their social and economic consequences can be complex. One such issue recently surfaced when a petition was filed seeking to mandate menstrual leave for working women and female students. Hearing this petition, the Supreme Court of India dismissed it on March 13, 2026, with significant observations. The court stated that legally mandating such a provision could impact women's employment opportunities. This decision is not merely a legal order but also sparks an important debate about the balance between women's rights, equality, and employment opportunities.

Friends, if we consider the background and rationale behind the demand for menstrual leave, menstruation is a natural biological cycle in women's lives. This monthly physical change is normal for many women, but many women experience intense pain, weakness, hormonal imbalances, and mental stress during this time. This is why many social organizations and women's rights activists have long demanded that working women and female students be granted special leave during this time. The petition also stated that while India provides leave for pregnancy and maternity, such as the Maternity Benefit Act 1961, there is no specific legal provision for addressing the physical discomforts of menstruation. The petitioners argued that if women received one or two days of period leave each month, it would improve both their health and efficiency. They also argued that some state governments and private companies have voluntarily implemented such provisions, and therefore, it should be implemented nationwide. Friends, if we consider the Supreme Court's approach to this matter, pragmatism versus emotionalism. During the hearing of the petition, the bench headed by the Chief Justice emphasized the need to view the issue not just from an emotional perspective, but from a practical and economic perspective. The court clearly stated that if a company or institution voluntarily provides period leave to women, it is welcome. However, if it is made mandatory by law, it could have many unforeseen consequences. The court stated that if employers are required to provide addi-

tional paid leave every month, they may be reluctant to hire women. The court's observation was made keeping in mind the realities of the Indian labor market. A large number of private companies in India still hire employees based on cost and productivity. Therefore, if women employees are required to be given additional leave, many employers may prefer male employees. Friends, if we consider the dismissal of the petition, the potential impact on employment opportunities. In its comments, the Supreme Court also emphasized the need to avoid the mindset of stigmatizing women as weak. According to the court, if the law conveys the message that women are incapable of working every month, it could lead to bias against them in the workplace. For example, if a company is choosing between two candidates—one male and one female—the employer may believe that the female employee will have to take additional leave, which will impact productivity. In such a situation, employment opportunities for women could be reduced. The court said that it would be ironic if a policy designed to benefit women becomes a hindrance for them.

Friends, if we understand the real challenge of women's empowerment and equality, women's empowerment comes not just from providing privileges but from ensuring equal opportunities. If a policy provides special privileges to women but results in fewer employment opportunities, that policy may ultimately be against their interests. Therefore, the biggest challenge facing policymakers is to protect women's

health and dignity while also safeguarding their employment opportunities. Addressing problems related to menstruation involves not just legal provisions but also social sensitivity. Workplaces should create a more sensitive and supportive environment for women. Many companies already offer benefits like flexible working hours, work from home, and paid leave. If these provisions are strengthened, women can receive appropriate relief without any additional legal burden.

Friends, if we consider the court's social warning, during the hearing, the court also remarked that it is not right to portray menstruation as an unfortunate event. Women's biological processes should be viewed with respect and normality. According to the court, making period leave mandatory could create a perception in society that women are incapable of regular work. Thus, the court emphasized the principle of women's empowerment, which views women not as weak or dependent, but as capable and equal partners. Employers' Concerns and Economic Reality During the hearing, Justice Joymalya Bagchi also remarked that the idea of the petition is good, but it is also important to understand the employers' situation. If every female employee has to be given two additional days of paid leave per month, the financial burden will be on companies. This burden could be particularly heavy for small and medium-sized enterprises. In a developing country like India, where employment generation is a major challenge, it is essential to analyze the economic impact of any new policy when implementing it.

Gas queues raise questions: How secure is India's energy system?

Yogesh Kumar Goyal

Gas crisis becomes a test of energy security

The conflict in the Middle East between the US, Israel, and Iran has once again reminded the world how vulnerable the energy that flows through the veins of the modern global economy is. Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and the disruption of maritime traffic have caused profound disruptions in the global energy supply chain, with the sharpest impact on import-dependent countries like India. The LPG crisis in India has become a topic of discussion from Parliament to the streets. Long queues are forming outside gas agencies in many cities, hotels and restaurants are closing due to the shortage of commercial cylinders, and reports of black mar-

keting are constantly emerging. This situation is not merely a temporary supply disruption but a serious indicator of the structural weaknesses in India's energy security.

The Strait of Hormuz plays a crucial role in the global energy map. This approximately 21-mile-wide sea route, connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea, is considered the world's most important energy chokepoint. Approximately 20 percent of global oil and gas supplies pass through this narrow strait. Major energy exporting countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Iraq rely on this route to transport their vast oil and gas reserves to global markets. Therefore, when war or military tensions escalate in this region, the entire global energy system becomes unstable. The cur-

rent conflict has done just that. Iran's restrictions on maritime activities in the Strait of Hormuz and warnings of possible attacks on ships have halted numerous tankers, leaving LPG and LNG vessels stranded at sea, and dealing a major blow to import-dependent countries. This crisis is particularly serious for India because the role of LPG in the country's energy infrastructure has increased significantly over the past decade. India today consumes over 30 million tons of LPG annually, but domestic production fails to meet even half of this demand. The remaining requirement is met by imports from Gulf countries. It is estimated that 80 to 90 percent of the LPG coming into India passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, as soon as this route is disrupted, the first and

most immediate impact is felt in Indian kitchens. It is a harsh reality that the energy security of Indian households depends largely on this narrow sea route. During this crisis, the availability of petrol and diesel has remained relatively normal. There have been no long queues at petrol pumps, nor have prices suddenly spiked. This is because India has developed a more resilient crude oil supply structure over the years. Today, India imports crude oil from more than 40 countries, and oil from Russia, the United States, and several African countries reaches India via routes that do not depend on the Strait of Hormuz. Furthermore, India possesses strategic petroleum reserves, which store millions of barrels of crude oil for emergencies. These reserves and diverse supply sources have ensured

that petrol and diesel availability is not immediately affected. In contrast, the situation is quite different with LPG. Storing LPG in liquid form requires high pressure and specialized tanks, making large-scale storage expensive and technically complex. This is why India does not have a large strategic LPG reserve. According to available data, the limited LPG reserves in the country barely cover two to three days of consumption. Consequently, any slight disruption to imports immediately impacts the market and domestic consumers. This structural weakness is what has exacerbated the current crisis. There is another aspect to this crisis that cannot be ignored. Over the past decade, cooking gas has been provided to millions of poor families through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

"Dhanvantari Arogya Rath" will accelerate "Health For All" in Halar region with free services

The Dhanvantari Arogya Rath, launched to provide free healthcare services in the rural areas of Jamnagar district, was flagged off by District Collector Ketan Thakkar. During the event, he reviewed the stock of medicines, the vehicle's route plan, and other operational details with officials from the Shramyogi Welfare Board and the medical staff. He stated that the state government's main objective is to ensure that citizens living in rural and remote areas receive primary healthcare services close to their villages. According to this report prepared under the guidance of Jamnagar District Information Officer Sonalben Joshipura, Senior Sub-Editor Parul Kanagal, officials and staff were instructed to ensure that the Dhanvantari Health Rath provides free medical check-ups, medicines, and



necessary health guidance to residents in rural areas. The health vehicle is staffed by a five-member team consisting of a doctor and healthcare workers, and it is equipped with essential medicines, medical equipment,

and first-aid facilities. The vehicle will travel from village to village to conduct health check-ups for citizens and provide appropriate treatment and guidance to patients who require medical attention.

Through the Dhanvantari Health Rath, services such as blood pressure testing, malaria testing, diabetes screening, general health check-ups, distribution of sanitary pads, maternal and child health guidance, and awareness about various diseases are also provided. At present, four Dhanvantari Health Rathes are operating in Jamnagar district. Through these vehicles, the government provides free healthcare services to people in labour settlements and various areas of Jamnagar city and district from Monday to Saturday. This information was also shared on the occasion by Rahul Shekhawa, the Jamnagar and Rajkot Coordinator of the EMRI Dhanvantari Health Rath Project. **Report By Bharat G. Bhogayata-Journalist-Jmr & A"bad**

From milestone to melancholy Delhi race club told to vacate



NEW DELHI, (GNS): The Delhi Race Club quietly turned 100 on March 8. Yet, instead of celebrating the milestone, the club now finds itself confronting an uncertain future after receiving a notice from the Land and Development Office (L&DO), under the Union ministry of urban affairs, to vacate the sprawling 53.2-acre property on Lok Kalyan Marg within 15 days. The notice has come as a shock to hundreds of families whose livelihoods depend on the club - including members, horse

owners, trainers, jockeys, suppliers and vendors. Uncertainty hangs heavy in the air, with the management unsure about where or how operations could be shifted. The club plans to approach the ministry again on Monday, hoping for a sympathetic "While the decision was verbally conveyed to us on March 6, despite our presenting the factual position, a formal vacation notice was served by the L&DO on March 13," said Col. S.K. Bakshi (Retd), secretary and CEO of the Delhi Race Club.

Light rain keeps heat under check, more showers likely



New Delhi, (GNS): The city saw widespread but light to very light rain on Sunday morning, while parts of NCR received intense showers, thus bringing the temperatures down. Weather analysts said that while the mercury was set to rise marginally over the next few days, another western disturbance would lead to widespread rain by halfway through next week, thus keeping the heat under control. On Sunday, however, despite recording a drop, the daytime temperature remained above normal, as the early morning's overcast sky was replaced by sun and a partly cloudy sky. On Sunday, the maximum temperature recorded at the base station was 30.1 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal, against 33.2 degrees Celsius a day earlier. The minimum temperature was 18.1 degrees Celsius, 4 notches below normal, compared to 18.1 degrees Celsius a day earlier.

"The western disturbance is exiting, though the remnant moisture may lead to drizzling on Monday at a few places in NCR. The temperatures will rise, however, not sharply. On March 19 and March 20, there is a possibility of widespread rain again," said Mahesh Palawat, Skymet.

On Sunday, as per IMD, between 5.30 am and 8.30 am, base station Safdarjung and Lodhi Road logged 0.8 mm rainfall, Palam 0.4 mm, Ayanagar 2.6 mm and Pitampura 3.5 mm, respectively. Later, between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm, Safdarjung recorded 0.4 mm rainfall, Palam saw a trace, Lodhi Road and Pusa recorded 0.5 mm and Ayanagar recorded 0.8 mm rainfall, respectively.

"The western disturbance as an upper air cyclonic circulation over north Punjab and neighbourhood between 1.5 and 3.1 km above mean sea level, with the trough aloft middle and upper-level westerlies at 5.8 km above mean sea level, persists. A fresh western disturbance is likely to affect northwest India from the night of March 17," stated IMD.

Tears And Relief For Many As 70 Indian Students Return From Iran

New Delhi, (GNS): Twenty-four-year-old Tahir says buying a return ticket has always been the norm before travelling home to Jammu & Kashmir's Kupwara, since he moved to Iran in 2022 to pursue an MBBS degree. This time, however, he has booked a one-way ticket to Delhi.

Tahir was among the first batch of nearly 70 Indian students, most of them from Kashmir, who landed at Delhi's IGI Airport on Sunday after travelling from Iran. At the start of the war, around 1,200 Kashmiri students, most of whom study medicine, were in the restive country.

Relief was writ large on many faces outside the international arrivals gate at Terminal 3 on Sunday. Naina, a 22-year-old final-year medical student from Anantnag, said the past month was full of

anxiety as the students waited for communication from their universities and Indian government. "I could feel the tremors after bombs hit police stations near my hostel," she said. "The entire room was shaking."

The students said they paid for their own flights while the Centre facilitated their documentation and travel clearances.

Iran has declared a 40-day period of mourning following the death of its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Universities have suspended classes for now. The Indian students have been told they are expected to return for examinations once academic activities resume.

"We were in the middle of our clinical trials," said Sohail Amin, 23, another medical student. "But the moment the



conflict began, everything stopped. In a situation like this, schools and hospitals are usually the first places to shut down because they often become targets."

The students said while they had received a general advisory regarding the exams, there was little clarity about what the immediate plan would be for them, particular-

ly how their degrees would be impacted.

Some of their classmates who could not afford flights home have been moved to the city of Qom, where the situation is relatively calmer than in Tehran. Tahir said that while he usually spends around Rs 25,000 on a round-trip ticket, this emergency journey cost him nearly Rs 55,000 for a

one-way flight. For Mohammad Asim, Tahir's cousin in Delhi who came to receive him at the airport, the past few weeks had been deeply unsettling. "Everything was so uncertain. Our loved ones were stuck there and all we could do was wait for updates," he said.

With internet services frequently disrupted in Iran, many students said staying in touch with their families had been difficult. One final-year student described the emotional dilemma they faced. "We didn't know how much to tell our families. We wanted to be honest, but we didn't want to them to be worried." Adviyah, a 25-year-old student from Budgam, said they had spent nearly three weeks dealing with uncertainty while trying to reassure their families.

Over 40 Shops Gutted As Massive Fire Rips Through Nature Bazaar

New Delhi, (GNS): A major fire broke out at Nature Bazaar, a handicrafts market at Andheria Mor in south Delhi's Chhatarpur, early on Sunday morning, gutting around 40 to 50 shops. No one was injured.

A large number of exhibits like carpets and home decorative items were destroyed. An initial estimate by Dastkar, an NGO that runs the bazaar, pegged losses between Rs 10 crore and Rs 20 crore. The exact amount is being assessed, said DCP (south) Anant Mittal.

The blaze was massive, leading to the deployment of 10 fire tenders and around 60 firefighters. Locals also pitched in. "No one was trapped, but the fire spread rapidly," police said, adding that they had been alerted about it at 7.33 am. It took nearly one and a half hours to bring the fire under control. Its probable cause, according to three night



guards who were at the market at the time, was short circuit. An office-bearer of the NGO, said that out of 130 stalls, 42 were gutted. "Most of them were full of textile products, such as garments and carpets, while others had furniture and a variety of handicraft items," he said. The stalls included one showcasing Afghan products, run by Afghan

nationals, and others representing multiple states across India, such as Bihar and Jammu & Kashmir. Several owners had substantial stocks, including pashmina shawls, carpets and ethnic Afghan garments, all of which are expensive, he said, adding that the market, which has been operational since 2012, suffered damage as well.

Holi murder: Victim's family and Uttam Nagar residents protest, demand strict punishment

New Delhi, (GNS): Family members of Tarun Butolia, the youth who was lynched during Holi, staged a protest at Ayyappa Park in south-west Delhi's Uttam Nagar along with several other people, demanding strict punishment for the accused.

A large number of residents, representatives of social organisations and youth attended the gathering, where they prayed for the peace of Tarun's soul and expressed their condolences.

Tarun's uncle, Tek Chand Butolia, said people from all walks shared their views on the incident. However, everyone was united on one point: the accused must receive the strictest possible punishment.

Surender Gupta, Delhi prant mantri of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), said that whenever injustice is done to any member of society, it



becomes important for the community to stand united. He said the organisation would continue its effort to ensure justice is done and would persist until the accused are punished.

Representatives of various social organisations and community members present at the meeting also stressed that unity is society's greatest strength, adding that when people stand together against injustice, the path to justice becomes clearer.

Delhi University counters Rahul Gandhi's caste bias allegations

New Delhi, (GNS): Delhi University (DU) on Sunday released detailed admission and recruitment figures to counter allegations made by Rahul Gandhi regarding caste-based discrimination in the university's admission process.

Responding to the remarks made by the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the university said its admission and recruitment procedures strictly follow constitutional provisions and statutory reservation policies. In a post on X, the university stated that its processes are transparent and urged Rahul Gandhi to refrain from making "unsub-

stantiated" statements that could negatively impact the academic environment.

According to the data shared by the university, a total of 10,422 postgraduate students were admitted during the 2025-26 academic session through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET). Of these, 4,022 students (38.59%) belonged to the unreserved (UR) category. Students from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category accounted for 3,115 admissions (29.88%), while 1,488 students (14.27%) were from the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. The university also admitted 614 stu-



dents (5.89%) from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category and 1,203 students

(11.54%) under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category.

For undergraduate programmes, the university reported a total enrollment

of 70,395 students in the 2025-26 academic session. Among them, 32,777 students (46.56%) were admitted under the UR category, while 17,971 students (25.52%) belonged to the OBC category. Admissions under the SC category stood at 10,517 students (14.93%), while 3,251 students (4.62%) were from the ST category. Additionally, 5,879 students (8.35%) were admitted under the EWS category. The university reiterated that admissions are primarily based on CUET scores and that interviews are not a mandatory component for most undergraduate and postgraduate

programmes. Rahul Gandhi had made the controversial remarks on Friday while addressing an event in Lucknow to mark the birth anniversary of Kanshi Ram, founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

During the event, he alleged that interviews in universities can sometimes be used to filter out students based on caste. Following the remarks, the university had issued a clarification on Saturday stating that the CUET-based admission system forms the primary basis for student selection and that interviews are not part of the process for most courses. Along with admis-

sion data, the university also shared figures related to faculty recruitment between 2021 and March 15, 2025, including appointments of teachers, librarians and physical education staff.

WESTERN RAILWAY
CREATION OF SIDING FACILITIES FOR TRACK MACHINE
 Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400008, invites E-Tender Notice No: BCT/25-26/342, dt. 12.03.2026. Work and location: Creation of siding facilities for track machine siding at 04 stations between Ukaisongadh - Jalgaon of Mumbai Division of Western Railway. Approx. cost of work: ₹ 14,04,56,879.61. EMD: ₹ 8,52,300/- . Date & Time of Submission: Till 10.04.2026, 15:00 Hrs. Date & Time of Opening: On 10.04.2026 at 15:30 Hrs. For further details please visit our website www.ireps.gov.in Manual offer will not be considered. 1227
 Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly

Ahead of monsoons, Delhi PWD minister inspects storm water project

New Delhi (GNS): PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma on Sunday inspected the ongoing storm water drain improvement project along Rohtak Road (NH-10) and reviewed the progress of additional irrigation and flood-control works aimed at addressing water-logging issues in several parts of West Delhi as part of the preparations for the monsoons.

During the inspection, the minister expressed satisfaction over the pace of the work and said the project was in its final stage and would soon bring long-awaited relief to thousands of residents who have struggled with water



accumulation during heavy rainfall for many years.

The primary project under execution involves the construction

and improvement of a large storm water drainage system along the busy Rohtak Road corridor, designed to efficiently channel rainwater and prevent flooding on one of West Delhi's key arterial roads.

The project includes the development of storm water drains from the Kirari Suleman Drain near Nangloi Metro Station to the Hiran Kudna Drain, covering key stretches between Metro Pillar No. 428 to 626, and further from Tikri Border to Hiran Kudna Drain on both sides of the road.

Officials accompanying the minister informed him that the

RCC drain being constructed had a width varying between 1.2 m and 2.25 m, designed to handle heavy storm water flow during peak monsoon conditions.

So far, around 16,000 m of the drain had already been completed, while approximately 2,200 metres of construction work remains, which is currently underway.

The project work began in February 2025 and has progressed steadily since then. Once completed, the upgraded drainage infrastructure will significantly improve storm water management along Rohtak Road and nearby residential areas.

No shortage of LPG, says Delhi minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa

New Delhi (GNS): Amid concerns over the cooking gas availability in the national capital, Delhi Food Supplies Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Sunday reassured residents that there was no shortage of the LPG and warned strict action against hoarders and those spreading misinformation. The minister said the government had activated multiple monitoring mechanisms to ensure smooth supply of the cooking gas across the city during the monsoon season due to water accumulation on roads and in residential colonies. A total of 70 joint enforcement teams, comprising officials from the police, Weights & Measures



Department and the Food & Supplies Department, had been deployed to keep a close watch on markets and distribution channels.

The development comes at a time when global supply disruptions, particularly from the Gulf region, have caused some tightening in the LPG availability worldwide.

Delhi L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu offers prayers at Golden Temple



New Delhi (GNS): Former diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu was accorded a warm welcome by BJP leaders and party workers during his visit to Amritsar city for the first time after he was sworn as the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. He was appointed 23rd Lieutenant Governor of Delhi on March 5, replacing VK Saxena.

After paying obeisance at the Golden Temple, Sandhu visited Teja Singh Samundri Hall, which was named after his grandfather Teja Singh Samundri, who had played a major role in the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Teja Singh was the founder member of the SGPC and in recognition of his services to the Sikh Panth, the SGPC named its headquarters in Amritsar as Teja Singh Samundri Hall. He refused to answer anything political on the occasion citing his purpose of his visit was purely religious.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) presented him with a special felicitation ceremony at the Teja Singh Samundri Hall on the occasion.

Speaking to the media, Sandhu mentioned his family's deep devotion to the Golden Temple. He said the Darbar Sahib had always provided his family with blessings and strength.

Sandhu also mentioned the role his grandfather Teja Singh Samundri in historic the struggle. He assured that just as Teja Singh Samundri and Bishan Singh Samundri had brought glory to Amritsar, he too would work with utmost hard work and honesty.

Sandhu said he was going to Delhi to take up his new responsibility with the blessings of the Guru Sahibans.

He acknowledged that Delhi faces many challenges and difficulties. He, however, vowed to transform these challenges into opportunities and achieve success. He expressed his commitment to working together for the all-round development of Delhi. The 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer started his political debut from Amritsar as his family hails from Rai Buri Ka village of Tarn Taran, which was earlier part of Amritsar district.

Black market thrives as LPG shortage triggers panic buying in Delhi

New Delhi (GNS): What began as concerns over delayed LPG deliveries has now snowballed into a worrying black market crisis in parts of the Capital. While many households complain that cylinders booked days ago are still not delivered, others say their orders are marked "delivered" on the system even when they have not received these. The situation has pushed some desperate residents towards the illegal market, where cooking gas is being sold at shockingly inflated prices.

During visits to several residential pockets, residents said they had been running from one gas agency to another trying to secure a refill. Long queues outside agencies and repeated calls to distributors have become a daily routine for many households.

In the black market, a domestic LPG cylinder is reportedly being sold for up to Rs 6,500, while refills are being offered for Rs 3,500 to Rs 4,000, several times higher than the regular price. Sellers operate quietly through contacts and references, often conducting illegal refilling in small repair shops or hidden setups. For many families, especially those who depend entirely on LPG for cooking, the shortage has created serious day-to-day difficulties.

Interstate psychotropic drug syndicate busted

New Delhi (GNS): The Delhi Police have busted an interstate network involved in the illegal supply of psychotropic medicines and arrested four people, an official said on Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Salman Khan from Patiala in Punjab, Vipin Kumar Pal from Delhi, and Abdul Rehman and Ravi Garg, both residents of Uttar Pradesh. The police said on March 7 they received a tip-off that Vipin was involved in the illegal supply of psychotropic medicines, including alprazolam and tramadol. The police were informed that Pal would deliver a consignment to Salman Khan near Yudhishtar Setu towards Kashmere Gate between 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Acting on the tip-off, the team laid a trap near the Yamuna bridge.

Delhi Metro recorded 235.8 crore passenger journeys in 2025

New Delhi (GNS): The development comes shortly after the inauguration of two new metro sections on the Pink Line and Magenta Line last week, further expanding the network. With these additions, India now has the third-largest metro rail network in the world, with more than 1,143 km of operational metro lines across 26 cities. Together, these systems carry nearly 1.15 crore passenger journeys every day, with Delhi Metro alone accounting for over 55 per cent of the daily ridership.

Out of the country's total metro network, the Delhi NCR region accounts for about 416 km with 303 sta-

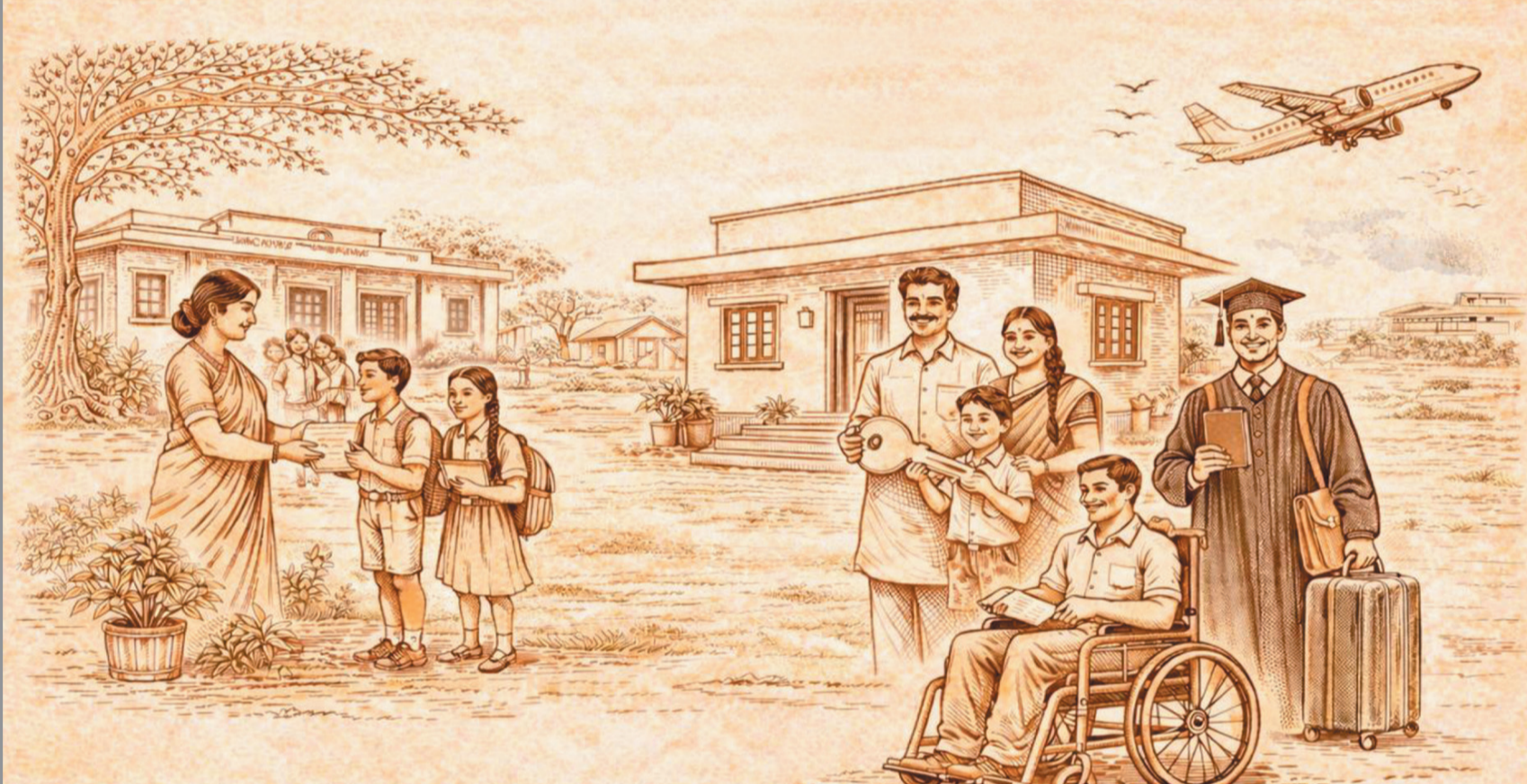
tions. This includes nearly 29 km of the Noida, Greater Noida Metro with 21 stations and 13 km of the Rapid Metro Gurugram with 12 stations, strengthening connectivity between Delhi and key NCR cities such as Noida, Greater Noida and Gurugram.

Currently, Delhi Metro operates 343 trains comprising 2,368 coaches, running around 4,508 train trips every day. Long queues outside agencies and repeated calls to distributors have become a daily routine for many households. These trains collectively cover approximately 1,40,112 train km daily, ensuring high-frequency

services across the network. The system also maintains a punctuality rate of about 99.9 per cent, making it one of the most reliable metro systems globally.

Ridership data from recent years reflects a steady recovery and growth after the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. In 2024, the network recorded 2,283.5 million passenger journeys (around 223.5 crore), translating to an average of 62.39 lakh daily passenger journeys. The number rose further in 2025 to 2,358.03 million journeys (around 235.8 crore), with an average of 64.60 lakh daily passengers.

Towards a Viksit Gujarat Built on Equal Opportunities and Social Harmony



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

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



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

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