



**Assam election 2026:**

# BJP releases list of candidates CM Himanta Sarma to contest from Jalukbari

**New Delhi (GNS):** The BJP has released its first list of candidates for the Assam Assembly elections. This list includes the names of 88 candidates. According to the BJP list, Pradyut Bordoloi has been given the ticket from the Dispur seat. Bordoloi was the Congress MP from the Nagaon Lok Sabha seat and on Tuesday he resigned from the primary membership of the Congress party. On Wednesday, Bordoloi joined the BJP and now his name is in the first list of the BJP. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will contest from the Jalukbari seat of the state. The names were finalised in the BJP's Central



Election Committee meeting. A statement issued by the BJP said that the Bharatiya Janata Party's Central Election Committee met on Wednesday, in which PM Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and other members of the Central Election Committee participated. This meeting was chaired by party

president Nitin Naveen. Voting will be held in a single phase on April 9 in Assam, a state with 126 assembly seats. The votes will be counted on May 4. Sarma will contest from his traditional Jalukbari seat. Himanta Biswa Sarma has won the Jalukbari seat five times in a row. There are names of six women candidates in this list of BJP. Former Assam Congress President Bhupen Kumar Bora has been given ticket from Bihpuria seat. The names of Ranjit Kumar Das, Ashok Singhal, Ajanta Neog, Chandra Mohi Patwari, Ranaj Pegu, Sanjay Kishan and Pijush Hazarika and Bimal Bora are also included in the first list of BJP.

# It has been testing time, not just for us, but for entire global community: MEA on West Asia war

**New Delhi (GNS):** As the conflict in West Asia widened with global ramifications, India on Thursday said the situation has been a "testing time", not just for the country, but for the entire global community. At an inter-ministerial briefing here on the West Asia situation, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We continue to remain in touch with the countries concerned to ensure our energy security needs are met."



The raging conflict in the region entered its 20th day on Thursday.

The West Asia conflict began on February 28 when the US-Israeli combine launched military strikes on Iran. In retaliation, Tehran has targeted Gulf countries hosting US military bases. "Yes, it has been testing time, not just for us, but for the entire global community. Our leaders have been in touch with their counterparts, as I just spoke about the conversation between our

prime minister and the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Similarly, we have been in touch with several other leaders," Jaiswal said. He was asked if the West Asia conflict situation has proved to be a test of New Delhi's diplomatic approach in challenging global scenarios. "A couple of days back, you saw that because of our engagement, we were able to...and with talks and diplomacy with several of the stakeholders, we were able to get two of our LPG ships through the Strait of Hormuz," he added.

The MEA spokesperson said India "continues to remain in touch with several stakeholders in this matter, so that we can ensure our energy security needs, as also at the same time, ensure well-being and safety of our Indian nationals, diaspora, present in large number in this region."

"So, our diplomatic efforts continue, and we are committed to taking care of our interests," he asserted.

# PM Modi greets nation on Navratri and Gudi Padwa

**New Delhi (GNS):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday wished the country on the occasions of Ugadi, Chaitra Navratri, and Gudi Padwa.



He said the festivals marked the arrival of a new year, bringing with it a sense of renewal, hope and fresh possibilities.

"Greetings to everyone on the very special occasion of Nav Samvatsar. May everyone be blessed with infinite happiness, success and good health," he said in a message.

"I pray that this coming new year further strengthens the spirit of courage, self-confidence and service in everyone's lives. May it also add renewed momentum to our collective efforts towards nation-building," Modi

said. Nav Samvatsar, the Hindu New Year (Vikram Samvat 2083), begins on Thursday, marking the start of the Chaitra Shukla Pratipada.

The prime minister also greeted people on the occasion of Navratri, a festival observed in honour of the goddess Durga. He reflected on the tradition of "restraint and discipline" for devotion during the nine days of Navratri.

Highlighting the value of worshipping Maa Shakti in nine forms, the

PM said that this vision made 'Unity in Diversity' India's natural ethos.

"Navratri is also a festival that reflects the Upanishadic philosophy of 'ekovh bhusyaam', which enables us to perceive the Divine in multiple forms. It is this vision that establishes India as the 'Mother of Democracy' and makes 'Unity in Diversity' our natural ethos. During these nine days of Navratri, I pray to Maa Adi Shakti for the welfare of all citizens," the PM wrote.

In separate letters addressed to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Maharashtra and Goa, the PM said the onset of spring indicated "new energy and possibilities".

# Ram temple milestones are golden moments in India's history: President Murmu

**Ayodhya (GNS):** President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday termed key milestones associated with the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple as "golden moments" in the country's history, while extending greetings to devotees during her visit.

The President said this while addressing a gathering after visiting the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Thursday, and installed a 150-kg gold-plated metal plate called the 'Shri Ram Yantra' as part of special religious ceremonies.

The bhoomi puja at this sacred Ram Janmabhoomi, the Pran Pratishtha here, for devotees, and the hoisting



of the Dharma Dhvaj on the top of the temple — all these are golden moments in our history," the President said.

She began her address with the chant of 'Jai Sri Ram' and described Ayodhya as "dearer than

heaven" to Lord Ram. "Lord Shri Ram was born in this Ayodhya city. It is a matter of great fortune for me to touch this holy land."

Recalling references from scriptures, she said, "Lord Shri Ram himself had described this place of his birth as superior to heaven. In Ramcharitmanas, Lord Shri Ram tells Sita ji that although everyone has described Vaikunth, I find Avadh puri dearer to me."

She emphasised the special place Ayodhya holds in the hearts of devotees: "This city of Ayodhya is most dear to all Ram devotees," she said.

Highlighting the cultural and constitutional signifi-

cance of Lord Ram's legacy, Murmu said, "The very artistic line drawing of Lord Shri Ram's arrival in Ayodhya with Mata Sita and Lakshman ji after winning the Ram-Ravan war is adorned in the fundamental image of our constitution. This line drawing appears at the beginning of the very important Part 3 of the Fundamental Rights."

She expressed happiness over efforts to spread awareness about this depiction. "I am happy to know that this painting is spreading awareness and knowledge, and connecting the public with constitutional ideals and sacred cultural symbols," she said.

# CBI questions Anil Ambani in SBI's Rs 2,929 crore 'cheating' case

**New Delhi (GNS):** The CBI on Thursday questioned industrialist Anil Ambani in connection with the alleged Rs 2,929 crore cheating case registered against Reliance Communications Ltd and him on a complaint by the State Bank of India, officials said.



Ambani arrived at the agency headquarters this morning for questioning in the case. The agency has alleged fund diversion, misappropriation and other irregularities in the loan funds issued to the company by the bank, they said.

The spokesperson for Anil Ambani said in a statement on Thursday that he will be appearing before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in Delhi on March 19 and 20 "for examination in connection with the FIR registered on the basis of a complaint filed by the State Bank of India".

"The appearance is in furtherance to Mr Ambani's commitment to extend full cooperation in the matter with all agencies," the spokesperson said.

The CBI had booked Ambani in August last year for allegedly defrauding the SBI to the tune of Rs 2,929.05 crore, officials said.

According to the SBI complaint, now part of the FIR, the company had an outstanding of over Rs 40,000 crore to various lenders with the public sector bank alone facing a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore, according to 2018 figures.

The CBI booked Ambani and RCom for allegedly committing offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust.

"It is alleged that the accused persons, in criminal conspiracy, misrepresented and got sanctioned credit facilities from SBI in favour of Reliance Communication Ltd," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement in August last year.

# Government says online cylinder bookings rise to 94%; panic bookings down

**LPG supplies from the US, no price increases**

**New Delhi, Agency:** Various central government ministries on Thursday held a joint press conference to provide information on the oil and gas crisis caused by the ongoing tensions in West Asia. Aseem Mahajan, Joint Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said this is a testing time not just for India but for the entire global community. Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary (Marketing and Oil Refinery) in the Ministry of Petroleum, said



that the LPG situation remains a concern due to the war. However, no LPG distributor in the country is facing a shortage of cylinders. According to the Petroleum Ministry, online bookings in the country have increased to 94%. Approximately 83% of

refill deliveries are being made using "Delivery Authenticate" codes. Approximately 57,000 refill bookings were made on March 18, and LPG cylinder supplies are normal. According to the Petroleum Ministry, panic booking is declining. The government has urged commercial LPG consumers to shift from LPG to CNG. The government stated that many companies have also announced incentives for this purpose.

# Himachal Pradesh Congress leader Anil Dadwal sent to Tihar Jail for posting objectionable content about PM Modi

**New Delhi, Agency:** Senior Congress leader Anil Dadwal from the Gagret Assembly constituency in Himachal Pradesh's Una district has been sent to Tihar Jail for 14 days' judicial custody for sharing an objectionable post on social media against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Delhi Police Special Cell registered a case against Anil Dadwal on February 25 under sections 336(4), 353(2), and 386 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).



# Israel ranked 8th happiest country in the world in the World Happiness Report

**New Delhi, Agency:** The United Nations released the World Happiness Report 2026 on Wednesday. Finland has been ranked the world's eighth happiest country. At the bottom of the list are countries with conflict. Afghanistan again ranked as the least happy country,

followed by Sierra Leone and Malawi. Again, no English-speaking country is in the top 10. The United States is ranked 23rd, Canada 25th, and the United Kingdom 29th. The happiness of countries like Finland is attributed to good economic conditions, equi-

# Potatoes and onions were looted at Nitish Kumar's event: employees ran away with lemons

**vegetables were written "Samridhhi Yatra" in Munger; people attacked the CM as soon as he left**



**New Delhi, Agency:** Nitish Kumar reached Munger and Lakhisarai on Thursday, the fourth leg of his Samridhhi Yatra. As soon as his visit ended in Munger, looting of potatoes, onions, lemons, eggplants, and other vegetables began. Officials tried to reason with the crowd, but no one listened.

To welcome Nitish,

# Conservation of sparrow is necessary

Sanjay Goswami

Special on World Sparrow Day 20 March 26

World Sparrow Day is observed every year on 20 March to raise awareness about the importance of conservation of sparrows and other small birds that are facing extinction due to urbanisation and pollution. The day was first celebrated in 2010 in collaboration with Nature Forever Society (India) and Eco-System Action Foundation of France.

The sparrow is a small bird. It is light brown or white in color. It has small feathers on its body and

a yellow beak and legs. The male sparrow is identified by a black patch near its neck. This 14 to 16 cm long bird prefers to live near human-built dwellings. It tolerates almost all types of climates, but is rarely seen in hilly areas. It is found in abundance around cities, towns, villages, and farmlands. The male sparrow has a brown head, undertail, and cheeks. The throat, beak, and eyes are black, and its legs are brown. The female does not have a brown head and neck. The male sparrow is also called a chida, and the female is called a chidi or chidiya. Sparrows are considered

social animals. They live in colonies, which are often described as flocks. Sparrows generally move by hopping rather than walking upright on the ground. When sparrows are sad, they repeatedly shake their tails to relieve stress. Most sparrows are lethargic and rarely fly more than 2 kilometers from their birthplace. Very few sparrow eggs contain DNA from both parents; most contain only the mother's. Male and female sparrows can be distinguished by their color; males have a tobacco-colored back and a black stripe on their neck, while females have both a

brown back and stripes. Sparrows are very small birds, averaging 16 cm in length and weighing 24 to 40 grams. Male sparrows are responsible for building nests, and while building, they try to attract female sparrows. The retina of a sparrow's eye contains 400,000 photoreceptors per square millimeter. Sparrow Day is celebrated every year on March 20th to raise awareness about this tiny bird. Female sparrows give birth to 3 to 5 young at a time. A single sparrow hatches from the egg after 12 to 15 days. Sparrows are rare in mountainous areas. Within 15 days of birth,

the young are able to leave the nest. Sparrows make a melodious chirping sound. Due to the constant supply of food, sparrows easily adapt to life in human settlements. They learn to eat food provided by humans. They have a plump body with rounded wings. Their bodies are covered with brown, black, and white feathers. Sparrows live for approximately 4-5 years in the wild. These birds are found in Europe and Asia. According to scientists, there are approximately 43 species of sparrows. Their numbers have declined by 60 to 80 percent in recent years.

## Editorial

### On the Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict

As the U.S.-Israel war against Iran rages, India's western frontiers have flared up, intensified by recent clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan forces on the Durand Line. On Tuesday, Pakistani airstrikes tragically killed at least 400 Afghans at a drug treatment and rehabilitation centre. Pakistan, which has accused the Taliban administration of harbouring the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and supporting its terror attacks on Pakistan, denied Afghanistan's accusations, claiming that its strikes had only targeted "military installations". Despite the denial, it is clear from visuals that the Omid Rehabilitation Facility in Kabul was destroyed. In an extremely strong statement, India condemned what it called Pakistan's "cowardly" targeting of a hospital, rejecting its denial as a cover-up for a "massacre", and called for an international inquiry. The Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict, which has been simmering for over a year, escalated in February when the Pakistan Air Force struck Taliban bases in Kabul, Kandahar, and Paktia in what it called Operation Ghazab Lil Haq (Righteous Fury). Tensions have also risen after TTP attacks killed 11 soldiers and a child in Bajaur and 32 people in an Islamabad mosque following a suicide bombing. Pakistan has also been angered by closer India-Afghanistan ties and New Delhi's hosting of Taliban ministers, accusing the Taliban of turning Afghanistan into an "Indian colony" — a turnaround from its support in 2021, for the Taliban's rise to power in Kabul. Apart from its continued tensions and hatred of India, and now Afghanistan, Pakistan possibly benefits from the global focus on the U.S.-Israel war with Iran. The U.S.'s actions here and its statement expressing support for Pakistan's "right to defend itself against Taliban attacks", has also imbued Pakistan's generals with a sense of impunity to strike targets in Afghanistan at will. New Delhi could be permitted some sense of 'payback' as Islamabad's fight against cross-border terrorism from Afghanistan mirrors India's problems with Pakistan. The constraints on Pakistan's military in a two-front situation with India and Afghanistan, compounded by a transnational war on the third front, may also be the source of some relief for India.



**Whenever atrocities have increased in the world, God has taken birth on earth for his devotees — the 1076th Jhulelal Jayanti is a symbol of this. The coincidence of the 1076th birth anniversary of Jhulelal and the holy Islamic festival of Eid-ul-Fitr not only reflects India's tradition of unity in diversity but also gives the message of cultural co-existence, tolerance and brotherhood at the global level - Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavani, Gondia, Maharashtra**



### Sai Jhulelal Sahib's 1076th birth anniversary, March 20, 2026, a wonderful coincidence of Chetrichand Festival and Eid-ul-Fitr - a confluence of worldwide faith, culture and harmony - a comprehensive analysis

Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavani

The month of March 2026 is presenting a unique example of religious, cultural, and social harmony globally, including in India. On one hand, the 1076th birth anniversary of Jhulelal, the revered deity of the Sindh community, is being celebrated in a grand manner, while on the other hand, the sacred Islamic festival of Eid-ul-Fitr is also likely to be celebrated around the same time. This coincidence not only reflects India's tradition of unity in diversity, but also sends a message of cultural co-existence, tolerance, and brotherhood on a global scale. For the Sindh community, Cheti Chand is not just a religious festival, but a symbol of their cultural identity, historical heritage, and social unity. This day marks the birth anniversary of Jhulelal Sahib, who is worshipped as the god of water and the protector of truth and justice. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavanani, Gondia, Maharashtra, would like to state that the Sindh community across the world, whether in India, the US, Dubai, the UK, Africa, or other Asian countries, celebrate this day with great devotion, joy, and grandeur. This celebration has become even more special in 2026 as it is being organized on a grand scale as a seven-day Cheti Chand Pakhwada Mahotsav from March 15th to 20th. With the support of various Jhulelal Jayanti celebration committees, panchayats, social organizations, Sindh schools, and business and religious institutions, this event has become a global cultural festival. The events held

during this period not only express religious sentiments but also encourage social service, health awareness, cultural preservation, and youth participation. During this week, the day begins with Prabhat Pheri, in which devotees sing hymns and praises of Jhulelal Sahib. Blood donation camps convey the message of social responsibility and service to humanity. Painting competitions provide a platform for the creativity of children and youth, while yoga camps promote health and a balanced lifestyle. Trade fairs and Anand Melas encourage local businesses and foster social interaction. Events like the Women's Scooter Rally and Rangoli Carnival symbolize women's active participation and empowerment. Religious offerings and food festivals like Chhappan Bhog make this celebration a unique confluence of taste and tradition. On March 19th, grand fireworks and cultural programs culminate the celebration, offering a wonderful blend of music, dance, and devotion.

Friends, if we consider the significance of March 20, 2026, it will be the main day of this festival, when massive processions will be held across the world. These processions will feature live tableaux of Jhulelal Sahib, devotees dressed in traditional attire, and displays of devotional music and dance. Events like marathon scooter rallies, public feasts, and community feasts make this day even more special. It is not merely a religious event, but a celebration of social unity and community cooperation. Meanwhile, Eid al-Fitr, celebrated at

the end of the holy month of Ramadan for followers of Islam, is also expected to fall on March 20 or 21, depending on the sighting of the moon. This festival symbolizes gratitude to Allah, self-restraint, charity, and compassion. After fasting for the entire month of Ramadan, Eid brings a message of joy, contentment, and spiritual balance. On Eid, special prayers are offered, Fitr (charity) is given, and people embrace each other and say Eid Mubarak. The distribution of vermicelli and other sweets is a hallmark of this festival, symbolizing the fact that happiness is enhanced when shared with others. This festival truly strengthens social harmony, mutual respect, and brotherhood.

Friends, when two important festivals like Cheti Chand and Eid al-Fitr coincide, it becomes a living example of India's Ganga-Jamuni culture. People of different religions participate in each other's festivals, exchange greetings, and foster mutual love. This tradition is not limited to India; it is also adopted by Indian and Sindh communities around the world, promoting cultural harmony globally. Given the significance of this occasion, several Indian states, including Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, have declared public or regional holidays. In some places, March 19, 2026, has also been declared a holiday, grouping Chaitra Shukladi, Gudi Padwa, Ugadi, and Cheti Chand into one category. This demonstrates that the Indian administrative system also respects and encourages diverse religious and cultural traditions. This holi-

day is not just a holiday, but provides an opportunity for people to perform their religious and cultural duties, spend time with family and society, and carry forward traditions. This is a very important step towards social cohesion and cultural preservation.

Friends, if we talk about this Jhulelal Jayanti festival, Chetrichandra, it is an important festival celebrated by Sindhis. Every year, it is celebrated on the second day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra. This year, it will be celebrated on March 20, 2026. Usually, this festival falls on the second day of Gudi Padwa and Ugadi. Sindhis living in neighboring countries and around the world also celebrate it. On this day, the moon appears full after many days, and everyone worships the water god. Chetrichandra is celebrated by the Sindh community in memory of their patron deity, Jhulelal. On this day, the Sindh community worships the water god and Jhulelal, cultural programs are organized, and processions are taken out. Boiled black gram and sweet rice are given as prasad with reverence.

Friends, if we discuss the reasons for celebrating Jhulelal Jayanti Mahotsav (Chetrichandra), whenever atrocities have increased in the world, God has taken birth on earth for the benefit of his devotees. This has been a tradition for ages. Many gods and saints have been born in India and have taught the world the difference between right and wrong. Gods from all religions have come to this earth to eradicate sin—Rama, Krishna, Allah, Jesus, to name a few.

## Pakistan's cowardly attack on Kabul is a threat to humanity

Saurabh Varshney

It is said that the holy month of Ramadan preaches self-restraint, compassion, and service to humanity. At such a time, the alleged cowardly attack on Kabul is not only an affront to human values but also a matter of grave concern for the entire world. At a time when the world is talking about peace and coexistence, such violent incidents challenge the fundamental principles of civilization.

The essence of Ramadan is that people should introspect and shun evil and promote love, brotherhood, and cooperation in society. However, the attack in Kabul is completely contrary to this sacred spirit. Killing innocent people can-

not be justified under any circumstances. This is not only an attack on the sovereignty of a country, but a crime against humanity as a whole. If any country or entity is proven to be involved in this attack, the international community must take strict action without any discrimination. A selective approach to terror and violence fuels such incidents. There is a need to unite on global platforms and adopt a concrete and impartial policy against terrorism. South Asia is already going through a period of instability and mistrust. In such a context, such incidents further undermine regional peace. We must understand that war and violence are not the solution to any problem. Only dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual trust can form the basis

for lasting peace. The most pressing question today is: can we not respect humanity even on a sacred occasion like Ramadan? This incident in Kabul warns us that if this cycle of violence is not stopped in time, its consequences could be even more dire. It is time for the world to unite and send the message that humanity is paramount. Violence of any kind, no matter what its name, is unacceptable. True devotion lies in re-establishing the values of peace, tolerance, and humanity during this holy month of Ramadan. This attack occurred at a time when three countries were openly engaging in missile attacks. This war has devastated the entire world, including inflation, and other factors. Crude oil has completely

ruined the situation. We're talking about Pakistan, which, compared to other countries, is on the verge of starvation. Yet, it is untimely bombing Kabul, killing innocent people. The entire world is watching all this silently. It should be noted that even those countries that harbor Pakistan should know well that those who dig a hole for others are the first to fall in it. The same situation is facing those countries that, in their quest to build great nations, are becoming a threat to peace.

How long will such a country like Pakistan last? When bombing another country, the other country will inevitably retaliate. What I mean to say is that a country living in poverty, instead of developing itself, is throwing itself into the fur-

nace of fire. India has also strongly condemned Pakistan's attempt to portray this massacre as a military operation. This despicable attack by Pakistan is a clear assault on Afghanistan's sovereignty and a direct threat to regional peace and stability. It reflects Pakistan's continued reckless behavior and repeated attempts to conceal its internal failures through increasingly violent acts of cross-border violence. This attack occurred during the holy month of Ramadan, a time of peace, reflection, and compassion for Muslim communities worldwide, making it all the more reprehensible. There is no religion, no law, or no morality that can justify the deliberate targeting of a hospital and its patients.

# Delhi-NCR hit by sudden rain-storm, yellow alert issued

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** A day after intense rain, thunderstorms and dust storms battered Delhi-NCR on Wednesday evening, the region woke up to a lighter spell of rain on Thursday morning, with India Meteorological Department (IMD) continuing a yellow alert for the day.

While Thursday's showers remained mild compared to Wednesday's high-intensity storm, the wet spell is expected to persist, accompanied by cloudy skies and gusty winds reaching 30-40 kmph, with gusts up to 50 kmph. The sudden change in weather has brought relief from the early March heat, with IMD confirming that the recent heat-wave-like conditions have subsided. "There's an ongoing western disturbance impacting north-west India till around March 21. Two more active systems are like-



ly around March 23 and March 27. Temperatures are expected to remain normal to below normal," said IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

**Stormy Wednesday disrupts city life** :On Wednesday evening, strong winds, lightning and heavy rain swept across the

capital, leading to widespread disruption. Wind speeds touched 68 kmph at Pragati Maidan, 65 kmph at Pusa and 52 kmph at Palam, while several areas recorded moderate rainfall, including 11.5 mm at CRPF camp and over 10 mm in Janakpuri. The storm triggered traffic

chaos across key stretches such as Vikas Marg, ITO, NH-24 and the Delhi-Meerut Expressway, worsened by a tree fall and peak-hour congestion. Commuters reported long delays, with many journeys taking nearly twice the usual time. Flight operations were also hit, with at least 16-22 flights diverted and over 300 delayed at IGI Airport due to adverse weather conditions.

**Temperatures dip sharply:**

The rainfall led to a sharp drop in temperatures within a short span. Between 6.45 pm and 7.15 pm on Wednesday, mercury levels fell by up to 10°C at Safdarjung and Palam. The maximum temperature, which had earlier touched 36.8°C on March 11, is now expected to drop further to around 27°C by Friday.

## Temples not an 'industry', run on donations: Tamil Nadu board in SC

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments Commissioner questioned the expansive definition of 'industry' settled by Supreme Court in 1978, saying how it can cover temples when most of them are maintained from the surplus money generated from donations received by a few of them.

Appearing for the body which oversees administration, management and maintenance of Hindu religious institutions, temples and charitable endowments in TN, senior advocate Jaideep Gupta told a nine-judge bench led by CJI Surya Kant that the nature of activities carried out in a temple has nothing to do with industrial activity or disputes covered under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

Gupta said industry must be a unit where the employer and employees collaborate to produce something for human need and it must have a commercial character or profit



motive. "Can a temple be classified as an industry when there is no strike, lockout or retrenchment, which are the main subjects dealt with by the Act," he asked. He said in Kerala, the Devaswom Board manages hundreds of temples from the surplus funds generated by three - Guruvayur temple, Sabarimala temple and the Padmanabhaswamy temple.

"How the surplus money is used is a critical factor in determining whether an entity is a temple or not," he said, adding that corporate entities spending 2% of average net profit of the last three years on CSR (corporate social responsibility) would not make them a charitable organisation.

## Over 2.7k fire calls already this year, electric faults lead cause



**NEW DELHI(GNS):** This year so far, the fire department has received 36 calls on a daily average reporting fire incidents in the city. Data indicates that between Jan 1 and March 15, Delhi Fire Service (DFS) responded to 2,716 fire-related incidents across the city. These emergencies saw 13 people losing their lives and 111 sustaining injuries of varying severity. A senior fire official said about 85% of fire incidents are believed to be caused by electrical faults. "People tend to install new electrical appliances and equipment every year but often fail to upgrade or properly maintain their wiring systems, which can lead to short circuits," he said. He added that many homes contain highly combustible materials, such as curtains, wooden furniture and other household items, but residents frequently neglect to follow proper fire safety norms while constructing or furnishing their houses. This combination of outdated electrical systems and flammable materials significantly increases the risk of fires spreading rapidly, he said.

Another senior fire official said the department is receiving a wide range of fire-related calls every year. "We constantly strive to raise public awareness about the measures they should take to make their homes and workplaces safer from fire hazards," he said.

## Jamia joins youth exchange programme

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has, for the first time, participated in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)'s Ashtalakshmi Youth Exchange Programme, sending a 20-member student delegation on a tour to Northeast India from March 15 to 28.

The fully-funded programme covers air travel, accommodation and other logistics, with the JMI delegation currently hosted at the IIT-Guwahati. Students are taking part in academic interactions, institutional visits and cultural activities as part of the exchange. The initiative aims to promote national integration and cultural understanding by connecting youth from different regions of the country. Through field visits and discussions, participants are being exposed to the socioeconomic and cultural landscape of the northeastern states, along with ongoing developmental initiatives in the region. The programme is being coordinated by Sudhanshu Trivedi, Assistant Professor at the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, who has been appointed as the nodal officer by the Ministry of DoNER and the JMI Vice-Chancellor. JMI officials said such initiatives help broaden students' intellectual and cultural exposure, while strengthening inter-regional ties and encouraging youth participation in nation building. The university said its involvement in the programme reflects its continued focus on promoting academic exchange, cultural dialogue and youth engagement at the national level.

## For seven who were away, the home they knew no longer exists

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** In a close shave that seems both miraculous and cruel, seven members of the Kashyap family who were away on Tuesday night are now returning to a home in Palam village that no longer exists as they knew it - their shop and home scorched and nine of their loved ones gone.

For nearly five decades, the family lived together above their garment, jewellery, skin-care and cosmetics shop, Pravesh Moderate Fashion - named after one of the sons, Pravesh. This space sustained generations and held together a joint family under one roof, where life moved in shared routines and constant presence.

Sunil Kashyap had left for Solan Valley in Himachal Pradesh just a day earlier for work, a routine trip that would become the reason he survived. A senior customer relations assistant at Delhi



Metro Rail Corporation, he was rushing back to Delhi within hours on learning that he had lost his mother, two brothers, sister, two sisters-in-law and three young nieces in the tragedy.

Sunil's father, 70-year-old Rajender Kashyap, a well-known local figure and two-time president of Sadh Nagar

Market Association, also had a narrow escape. He had travelled to Panaji two days earlier for work. Now, he has returned to confront the loss of the home and family he spent a lifetime building.

Sunil's wife Gauri, lovingly called 'Dolly' by her family, had also been away at her native place in Bharatpur,

Rajasthan, for nearly a week with their sons, five-year-old Harshit and one-year-old Kairav.

Kavita, the wife of Pravesh, had gone to Najafgarh with her son, Vyom, for a wedding back home. At Manipal Hospital, she sat surrounded by relatives, too shocked to speak or comprehend anything. "We have not told her how many people have died yet. We are terrified of how she will take it," said Yash, a cousin of the Kashyaps.

What awaits them all is not just the sight of blackened walls, but the collapse of a life built patiently and lovingly over 50 years. The house that was never empty, the shop that carried their name and memories, and the joint family that moved as one now lie in pieces.

## Emergency operations centre to be set up in national capital

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** The Delhi State Disaster Management Authority (DSDMA) will set up a state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and an Integrated Command and Control Centre in a bid to enhance the disaster response system in the national capital. The decision was taken during the meeting of DSDMA chaired by L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu alongside Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. Moreover, the authority also gave in principle approval to the Delhi Urban Flood Mitigation Plan with a proposed budget outlay of Rs 21,000 crore. This comprehensive plan focuses on strengthening drainage infrastructure, desilting of major drains, construction of additional stormwater channels and real-time flood monitoring systems to significantly reduce urban flooding risks during monsoons.

## Blaze at ITO Trade & Taxes building in Delhi; no injuries reported

**NEW DELHI (GNS):** A blaze broke out at the Trade and Taxes building at ITO in the national capital on Thursday morning, a day after a deadly fire in a residential-commercial building in Palam.

According to officials, information about the fire on the 12th floor of the ITO building was received by the fire department at 8.26am, following which six fire tenders were rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control.

The Delhi Fire Services said the blaze was brought under control within a short time.

No casualties have been reported so far, and the cause of the fire remains under investigation. Further details are awaited.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government on Wednesday announced compensation of ₹10 lakh for families of those who lost their lives in the



Palam building fire, while ₹5 lakh will be given in case of deceased children. Additionally, ₹2 lakh compensation will be provided to those who sustained serious injuries in the fire.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Wednesday announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased in the Palam residential building fire. Expressing his deepest condolences on the incident, the PM also announced ₹50,000 ex-gratia for the injured from the

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The fire had broken out in a residential building in the Sadh Nagar area of Palam, allegedly due to a short circuit in the early hours of Wednesday. Delhi Fire Services, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), police and other agencies are engaged in relief work. The death toll in the fire has risen to nine, while three people have been reported injured so far, according to fire officials.

## Women MPs 'uncomfortable' as Rahul Gandhi moves around like a 'tapori', says Kangana anaut

**NEW DELHI(GNS):** Women parliamentarians feel "very uncomfortable" with Rahul Gandhi as he moves around like a "tapori" and butts into interviews of others, BJP MP Kangana Ranaut said Wednesday in a swipe at the leader of opposition and asked him to learn from his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who has "good etiquettes". "Rahul Gandhi is a shame I must say," she told reporters on Parliament's premises. Using Hindi slangs to target him, the actor-politician said, "We women feel very uncomfortable seeing him. He moves around like a tapori and speaks in tu-tadak".

Rahul's preferred casual attire, often a white T-shirt paired with cargo pants, have at times faced criticism from BJP members for allegedly not in line with decorum of Parliament but Kangana's



reference to discomfort of women Parliamentarians with him drew criticism. "That is such an unthoughtful statement to make," Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, praising women leaders who have come out of the Nehru-Gandhi family and he has grown up watching.

## Man gets interim relief in rape case; court notes five-year gap before FIR

**New Delhi(GNS):** A Delhi court has granted interim protection from arrest to a man accused of rape, directing him to join the investigation while noting delays and gaps in the prosecution's case.

Additional sessions judge Kapil Kumar was hearing an anticipatory bail plea filed by Sanjay Jain in connection with an FIR registered at Keshav Puram police station. In the order dated March 17, the court said the applicant "deserves the opportunity to join the investigation", noting that the



FIR was lodged nearly five years after the first alleged incident in April 2021.

The court directed that no coercive action be taken against Jain till March 28, the next date of hearing, and asked him to cooperate with the investigating officer.

The court also noted submissions by the investigating officer that the complainant's husband, who allegedly received obscene photos or videos, had "not provided any such material to the police so far".

It was further informed that the prosecutrix had "declined to undergo an internal medical examination" during the investigation. The prosecution opposed the bail plea, arguing that the allegations were serious and required strict scrutiny.

argued that the case arose out of a commercial dispute that had been given a criminal colour. He submitted that the complainant owed "around Rs 40 lakh" for supplied goods and repeated reminders and a legal notice. He also contended that the complainant and Jain had been in a consensual relationship since 2017, and that "the present case was filed only after relations turned sour over the financial dispute". The allegations, he argued, were false and motivated to evade liability.

WESTERN RAILWAY				
MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT				
VARIOUS MATERIALS SUPPLY				
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/13/2026, Date 11.03.2026				
S.N.	Tender No.	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.
82	26267022	Running Contract for One Year for supply of Metal Liner as per RDSO Drg. No. T-3741-42	700000 Set	15-Apr-26
83	22255042A	Supply, Installation, commissioning and retrofitment of Waterless Urinals	487 Nos	13-Apr-26
84	29265008	High End Surgical Operating Microscope	2 Nos	13-Apr-26
85	26261004	Running Contract of One year for Supply of Metal Liner 60 kg to RDSO Drg. No. T-3740 Alt-7	1000000 Nos	13-Apr-26
86	26267073	Running contract for One Year for supply of 10125 mm Curved Switch 60 Kg. Turnout on PSC Sleeper to RDSO Drawing No. T-8780	600 Set	10-Apr-26
87	26267074	Running contract for one year for Supply of 6400 mm Curved Switch with 60 E1 A1 Thick Web Tongue Rail and 60 Kg. 60E1 R260 Grade Stock Rail for 1 in 8.5. BG 60 Kg. Turnout on PSC sleeper to RDSO Drawing No. T-9775	160 Set	10-Apr-26
88	26261017	Running contract of one year for Supply of 6 mm thick Nylon Cord Reinforced GRSP Set to be used in 1 in 12 E.G. 60 Kg Turnout to RDSO Drawing No. T-4218 Alt. 11 or latest	1605 Set	09-Apr-26
89	15265002	16.25 T ICF Bogie Frame arrangement for self-generation AC coaches	50 Nos	08-Apr-26
90	22261408A	MVSL (CLASS 'H')	238 Nos	08-Apr-26
91	10251045A	Earthing Cable Complete conforming to RCF Drg. No. LW71248 Alt. C	38608 Nos	06-Apr-26

### CORRIGENDUM

Please read the due date as "24.03.2026" for the tender notice no S-08-2026 dated: 11.02.2026 at Sr. No. 66  
Please read the due date as "24.03.2026" for the tender notice no S-07-2026 dated: 02.02.2026 at Sr. No. 58  
Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) and [www.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.indianrailways.gov.in)  
Like us on: [Facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) Follow us on: [X.com/WesternRly](https://www.x.com/WesternRly)

# Drainage & LPG get focus in meeting chaired by LG and CM

**New Delhi(GNS):** Lieutenant governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Wednesday chaired a meeting of Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), which was attended by chief minister Rekha Gupta, during which an in-principle approval was given to Delhi Urban Flood Mitigation Plan with a proposed outlay of Rs 21,000 crore.

The meeting, attended by senior govt officials, including chief secretary Rajeev Verma, focused on strengthening drainage infrastructure, desilt-

ing major drains, constructing stormwater channels, and deploying real-time flood monitoring systems. The chief minister stressed on timely implementation before the monsoon.

Govt took the key decisions of establishing an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and an Integrated Command and Control Centre that will serve as the nerve centre for disaster management. These facilities will enable real-time coordination, AI- and satellite-based predictive analytics, and faster response during floods, earthquakes, fires and chemical



emergencies.

The LG directed departments to expedite implementation. The chief minister reiterated that disaster resilience remains a top priority and said the Prime Minister's 10-point agenda on disaster risk reduction would guide the approach.

Urban flooding was a major focus. After a presentation by PWD, approval was given to implement a Drainage Master Plan - a long-term strategy to modernise stormwater systems, reduce waterlogging and improve flood management through upgraded drains, inte-

gration of waterbodies and use of technology.

Fuel and gas supply preparedness were also reviewed. The food and civil supplies department presented measures to ensure uninterrupted availability of LPG, PNG, petrol and diesel in view of the evolving global geopolitical situation. Chaired DDMA meeting with CM Rekha Gupta. Reviewed measures for urban flooding mitigation & Delhi's Drainage Master Plan... Discussed today's unfortunate residential fire incident; directed a comprehensive fire audit

across localities & institutions to strengthen prevention," the LG wrote on X.

In a separate meeting, Sandhu met NDMC chairperson Keshav Chandra at Lok Niwas, during which "the roadmap to unlock the full potential of the NDMC area" was discussed.

Sandhu also met Dr VK Paul, member of NITI Aayog; Dr M Srinivas, director of AIIMS; Rajib Kumar Sen, programme director at NITI Aayog; and Rupesh Thakur, secretary (health) at Delhi govt.

## Emergency operations centre to be set up in national capital



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Moreover, the authority also gave in-principle approval to the Delhi Urban Flood Mitigation Plan with a proposed budget outlay of Rs 21,000 crore.

This comprehensive plan focuses on strengthening drainage infrastructure, desilting of major drains, construction of additional stormwater channels and real-time flood monitoring systems to significantly reduce urban flooding risks during monsoons.

The DSDMA also reviewed the energy demand and supply scenario in the context of the emerging current geopolitical situation due to conflict in the Gulf. The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and an Integrated Command and Control Centre will serve as the nerve centre for disaster management, enabling real-time coordination, predictive analytics using AI and satellite data, and swift response mechanisms across all disaster scenarios, including floods, earthquakes, fires, and chemical emergencies.

The L-G directed all departments concerned to expedite implementation and timely completion of the project.

## Jamia joins youth exchange programme



**New Delhi(GNS):** Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has, for the first time, participated in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)'s Ashtalakshmi Youth Exchange Programme, sending a 20-member student delegation on a tour. The fully-funded programme covers air travel, accommodation and other logistics, with the JMI delegation currently hosted at the IIT-Guwahati. Students are taking part in academic interactions, institutional visits and cultural activities as part of the exchange. The initiative aims to promote national integration and cultural understanding by connecting youth from different regions of the country. Through field visits and discussions, participants are being exposed to the socioeconomic and cultural landscape of the northeastern states, along with ongoing developmental initiatives in the region. The programme is being coordinated by Sudhanshu Trivedi, Assistant Professor at the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, who has been appointed as the nodal officer by the Ministry of DoNER and the JMI Vice-Chancellor. JMI officials said such initiatives help broaden students' intellectual and cultural exposure, while strengthening inter-regional ties and encouraging youth participation in nation building. The university said its involvement in the programme reflects its continued focus on promoting academic exchange, cultural dialogue and youth engagement at the national level.

# Traffic snarls in city, Vikas Marg worst hit

**New Delhi(GNS):** A brief spell of rain on Wednesday evening triggered widespread traffic snarls across the city, with Vikas Marg among the worst-affected stretches after a reported tree fall. Peak-hour rush combined with rain slowed movement on key corridors, leaving commuters stuck far longer than usual.

For many, routine commutes became unpredictable. Ishmeet, 25, who left her office near ITO at 7pm for Noida, expected a one-hour ride but reached home only at 8.45pm after repeated diversions. "It just kept stretching. Every diversion seemed like a



shortcut, but it wasn't," she said. On Vikas Marg, the congestion was far worse. Megha,

from Mayur Vihar Phase I, said the traffic moved at a snail's pace. "I left the office at 8.40 pm, and by 9.12 pm, I had barely moved 300 metres. The app showed a minor delay, but on the ground, it was complete chaos," she said.

Citywide, the traffic control room received alerts of congestion on 20 stretches till 9pm.

Traffic police attributed the gridlock to the combination of rain and peak-hour volume, with Vikas Marg and Dhaula Kuan emerging as major choke points. A tree fall on Vikas Marg and congestion near the Gandhi Nagar-Pusta corridor worsened the situa-

tion, sources said.

Commuters took to social media to report long delays at ITO, Mother Dairy-Akshardham stretch, Anand Vihar ISBT, NH-24 and the Delhi-Meerut Expressway.

Several arterial roads, including Ring Road, Outer Ring Road, Mathura Road, Kalindi Kunj and NH-8 towards Gurgaon, slowed to a crawl.

Delhi Traffic Police said teams were deployed at major intersections. Many two-wheeler riders halted under flyovers to take shelter from the rain, reducing road space and adding to congestion, they said.

# Old Birth, Death Certs Issued By East, North Corpns Invalid

**New Delhi(GNS):** If you face a problem during the verification of a birth or death certificate issued by the erstwhile east or north Delhi corporation between 2012 and 2023, you need to download the document again. This is because the old certificates are now invalid. Downloading the new ones won't cost you any money.

In a public notice, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has said, "Earlier, birth certificates were issued under the same registration number across the former corporations - north, south and east. To ensure each certificate now carries a unique registration number, necessary corrective measures have been implemented, and revised ones have been issued. In case of any difficulty during verification, people are advised to download the latest certificates from the official or <https://rbd.mcdonline.nic.in> and use them for verification purposes, as only updated certificate will be treated as valid."

From 2012 to 2022, there were three municipal corporations in Delhi before the



Centre re-merged all three into MCD. Till 2020, a private IT company used to operate the MCD portal. In 2020, the corporation handed over this task to National Informatics Centre (NIC), which launched a new platform for all the three civic bodies.

"After this, all the three started using the NIC portal to generate their registration numbers, some of which were later found to bear the same numbers. The issue was pointed out recently when admissions began in Delhi govt schools under the EWS category. Instances were brought to our notice by the education department where a child born in east Delhi was found to have

background details of, say, south Delhi as registration numbers were the same. Accordingly, we have issued the public notice," said an MCD official, adding that the issue was prominently reported in case of certificates issued between 2020 and 2023.

"We have updated the registration numbers by adding the suffix 'N' to those issued by the north corporation and 'E' to the ones issued by the erstwhile east corporation. The south corporation's certificates will continue to bear the same numbers," the official said.

The new records will appear on the website in place of the old ones. One needs to download and submit the new certificates while applying for insurance, school admissions or other purposes.

From 2020 to 2022, 9 lakh registrations were recorded. Of these, 95% were from the MCD area. The rest were from NDMC and Delhi Cantonment areas. According to the annual birth and death certificate report issued by the statistics department, 3,00,350 birth certificates were issued in Delhi in 2022; 2,71,786 in 2021 and 3,01,645 in 2020.

# PWD sanctions Rs 25 cr for drain remodelling project

**New Delhi(GNS):** The Public Works Department (PWD) has sanctioned Rs 25.23 crore for the remodelling of an existing RCC drain from the Narela railway crossing to a major outfall near the Delhi Jal Board office along the Narela-Bawana road, according to an official order issued by the Delhi Government.

The project, approved under the North Roads Division, aims to strengthen the drainage network and improve stormwater discharge in the area, which is prone to waterlogging, especially during the monsoon season. The work falls under Sub Division NR-13 and is based on the master drainage plan.

Officials said the project will include upgrading and reconstructing sections of the drain to enhance capacity and ensure efficient flow of stormwater. The sanction has been granted with detailed conditions to ensure adherence to financial, technical and quality standards.

As per the order, the executing agency must follow all prescribed guidelines, including strict compliance with procurement norms, quality



checks and timelines. The project is to be completed within the sanctioned cost, with no provision for cost escalation. A defect liability period of five years has also been mandated.

The order further states that payments to contractors will be made through electronic transfer only, and the project will be subject to regular monitoring, including submission of quarterly progress reports and maintenance of updated records for transparency. The authorities have also been directed to ensure there is no duplication of work or funds, and that all construction follows environmental and regulatory norms, including guidelines issued by courts and relevant agencies.

# Rain Takes City By Storm, Yellow Alert In Place

**New Delhi(GNS):** The city saw strong winds, thunderstorm and intense rain towards late Wednesday evening due to a western disturbance and formation of convective clouds, with the Met department expecting more rain over the next few days.

The sudden change in the weather impacted traffic, knocked down trees and led to flight diversions. At least 22 flights that were to land at IGI Airport were diverted and over 300 flights were delayed, according to FlightRadar24, a live tracking website.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert, expecting rain and strong winds on Thursday and Friday.

On Wednesday, under the influence of the western disturbance and high moisture levels along with high temperatures, convective clouds formed, which impacted a

large part of the city and beyond. By the evening, the wind speed reached 68kmph in the Pragati Maidan area, 65kmph at Pusa and 52kmph at Palam. According to IMD, between 5.30pm and 8pm, Janakpuri received 12mm rain, CRPF camps 11.5mm, Janakpuri 10.5mm, Narayana and Pusa 8mm, Safdarjung 5.6mm, Pragati Maidan 5.5mm, Palam 5.2mm, Lodhi Road 4.5mm, Ayanagar 4mm and Pitampura 2.5mm rain. New Delhi Municipal Council claimed that no complaint of tree falling was received in its areas.

Gurgaon also saw gusty winds picking up around 6.30pm, followed by a thunderstorm and lightning, and a steady rain. According to IMD's Chandigarh centre, it is likely to witness thunderstorm activity with wind speeds of 40-50kmph for the next two days.

The city's base station, Safdarjung, recorded a max-



imum temperature of 33.8 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal, while the minimum was 18 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal. However, by late evening, the temperature dipped considerably. According to IMD, between 6.45pm and 7.15pm, the temperatures dropped at Palam and Safdarjung by 10 degrees, at Lodhi Road by 9.5 degrees, at Pusa by 7.6 degrees and at Pragati Maidan by 5.7 degrees.

The weather department

expects a fall in the maximum temperature. A slight rise of one-two degrees in the maximum temperature has been predicted during the next 24 hours, followed by a gradual fall of four-six degrees during the subsequent three days. Maximum temperatures are likely to be below normal to normal during the next seven days.

One or two spells of very light/light rain is predicted accompanied by thunderstorm/lightning and strong surface winds 30-40kmph

gusting to 50kmph in the afternoon to night on Thursday. Another spell of very light/light rain is likely accompanied by thunderstorm lightning and gusty winds of 30-40kmph gusting to 50kmph in the afternoon/evening on Friday, stated IMD.

According to the Met department, the maximum temperature is likely to be 28-30 degrees Celsius on Thursday and 26-28 degrees on Friday.

Meanwhile, the air quality in the city deteriorated to poor levels again on Wednesday. The air quality index was 232 or poor against 189 or moderate on Tuesday. Commission for Air Quality Management, which recently revoked GRAP stage-1 in the wake of improvement in the air quality, stated that it was not going to impose GRAP yet since AQI was showing improving trend.