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CITY: PG 3
CM Rekha unveils Delhi's air pollution mitigation plan for 2026

NATION: PG 5
PM courts voters in Puducherry roadshow

FILM: PG 12
'Conversation around alcohol addiction is absent'

Hormuz crisis deepens as Iran strikes Gulf infra, downs American fighter jet

Conflicting reports suggest one crew member may have been captured by Iranian forces

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI: Iran on Friday claimed it had shot down a United States fighter jet over its territory, setting off a complex search-and-rescue operation and a wave of conflicting reports about the fate of the aircraft's crew as the conflict in the region entered its fifth week.

Iranian state media said the aircraft was downed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in southern Iran, with television broadcasts showing what was described as mangled debris of the jet. Authorities in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, a mountainous region spanning more than 15,500 square kilometres and located about 500 kilometres south-west of Tehran, called on residents to help locate the crew. Officials said anyone who captured or killed the crew would be "specially commended", while local broadcasts later offered rewards for those who handed over any crew members alive.

Some Iranian channels initially urged citizens to shoot American personnel on sight before revising their message to encourage capture. Footage aired by state-affiliated media showed twisted metal loaded onto a pickup truck, though no independent verification was immediately available. Authorities also extended the search appeal to the neighbouring Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province.

US officials, speaking anonymously to international media organisations, confirmed that an American military aircraft had gone down in Iran, though they did not publicly confirm whether it had been shot down. Reports from multiple US outlets identified the aircraft as an F-15E Strike Eagle, a two-seat fighter jet carrying a pilot and a weapons systems officer.

According to American and Israeli sources cited by several media organisations, both crew members ejected from the aircraft. One of them has since been rescued alive during an ongoing search-and-rescue mission, while efforts continue to locate the second crew member. The United States launched a combat search-and-rescue operation soon after the incident, reportedly moving quickly to reach the survivors before Iranian forces.

The rescue effort is believed to involve US aircraft, including helicopters and drones, with Iranian media reporting sightings of American aerial activity over the crash site. One Iranian report claimed that a US helicopter involved in the mission was struck by a projectile, though this has not been independently confirmed.

There were also conflicting accounts regarding the crew's status. While some Iranian sources suggested that at least one crew member may have been captured, US and Israeli media indicated that one individual had already been evacuated from southern Iran. The second crew member, identified in reports as the navigator or weapons systems officer, remains unaccounted for.

The White House said President Donald Trump had been briefed on the incident. Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed the development but did not provide further details, and there has been no official statement from the US Department of Defence on the fate of the aircraft or its crew.

The incident marks the first confirmed loss of a US aircraft inside Iranian territory since the conflict began nearly five weeks ago, representing a significant escalation in hostilities. It remains unclear whether the jet was shot down or suffered another failure, despite Iran's claims.

The downing occurred amid intensified military exchanges across the region. Iran launched attacks on multiple targets across the Middle East on Friday, including strikes on critical infrastructure in Gulf countries. In Kuwait, the Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery was set on fire, with the state-run Continued on P4

A bridge struck by U.S. airstrikes on Thursday is seen in the town of Karaj, west of Tehran, Iran, Friday AP/PTI

HIGHLIGHTS

- Authorities urged residents to locate crew, offering rewards for capture or information
- US officials confirmed an aircraft went down but did not confirm it was shot down
- US media identified the aircraft as an F-15E Strike Eagle with two crew members
- Both crew reportedly ejected over Iranian territory after the incident
- One crew member has been rescued alive during a US-led search operation
- Search continues for the second crew member, believed to be the navigator

Russia offers to scale up crude oil, LNG supplies to India

NEW DELHI: Russia has offered to step up supplies of crude oil and liquefied natural gas to India as turmoil in West Asia continues to disrupt global energy markets, according to official statements and people familiar with the discussions held in the capital this week.

The proposal was conveyed during meetings between Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov and senior Indian leaders, including National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, on Thursday. Manturov also met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A Russian readout said energy cooperation featured prominently in the talks, noting that "Russian companies have the capacity to steadily increase supplies of oil and liquefied natural gas to the Indian market." The offer comes at a time when global oil and gas prices have risen sharply due to supply disruptions linked to tensions in West Asia.

The crisis has affected shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route handling nearly 20 per cent of global oil and LNG flows. Iran's actions in the region have constrained movement through the narrow corridor connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, adding pressure on energy-importing countries such as India, which relies significantly on West Asian suppliers.

Continued on P4

TAKEAWAYS

- Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov held talks with Ajit Doval, S Jaishankar, Nirmala Sitharaman, and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi
- Moscow said its companies have the capacity to steadily expand oil and LNG exports to the Indian market

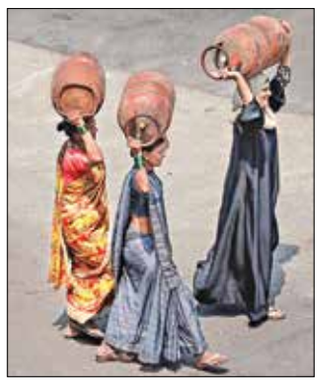
Mahaveer Singhvi assumes charge as India's Consul General in Toronto

OTTAWA: Senior diplomat Mahaveer Singhvi has assumed charge as India's new consul general in Toronto amid efforts by New Delhi and Ottawa to further expand the bilateral ties in a range of areas, including trade, investment and energy.

Singhvi, a 1999 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, was serving as an additional secretary in the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi before taking up the new responsibility.

"His appointment comes at an important moment to further strengthen and elevate the India-Canada Continued on P4

Govt asks states to crack down on hoarding, black marketing amid fuel supply concerns



OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Centre has asked states and Union Territories to step up enforcement against hoarding and black marketing of petroleum products and LPG, as concerns over supplies grow following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

In a directive issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, authorities were told to act under provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and the LPG Control Order. The ministry called for intensified inspections, including daily raids carried out in coordination with oil marketing companies, along with close monitoring to prevent diversion of supplies and the spread of misinformation.

According to an official statement, states have also been advised to establish control rooms and helplines while conducting daily press briefings to keep citizens informed. These measures are aimed at maintaining public confidence and ensuring transparency regarding fuel availability.

The government said it is taking steps to ensure uninterrupted supply of petrol, diesel and LPG despite the ongoing geopolitical tensions. Citizens have been urged to avoid panic buying of fuel and refrain from unnecessary LPG bookings. "Avoid panic purchase of petrol and diesel as well as unnecessary booking of LPG," the advisory said, adding that people should rely only on official information and Continued on P4

Ship carrying Iranian oil shifts course midway from India to China

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: A tanker carrying Iranian crude that had briefly raised the prospect of India resuming purchases after a gap of nearly seven years has altered course mid-journey and is now headed towards China, according to shipping data and market analysts.

The Aframax vessel Ping Shun, built in 2002 and placed under US sanctions in 2025, had earlier indicated Vadinar in Gujarat as its destination. Data from ship-tracking firm Kpler now shows the tanker signalling Dongying in China instead. The change comes just days before its previously estimated arrival date of April 4.

Market participants caution that destinations transmitted via a ship's Automatic Continued on P4

Afghanistan-centred 6.3 quake shakes north India

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Tremors from a strong earthquake centred in Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region were felt across parts of north India on Friday night, prompting brief alarm among residents, though no damage or casualties were immediately reported. Officials said the quake, recorded between 9:13 pm and 9:45 pm by different monitoring agencies, measured 6.3 in magnitude and struck at a depth ranging from 150 to 190 kilometres.

In India, the shaking was experienced in Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Haryana, lasting a few seconds before subsiding. "I felt a strong jolt which lasted for a few seconds," said Baldev Chand, a Chandigarh resident. Ajay Kumar, who lives on the 11th floor in Zirakpur, said residents briefly considered evacuating before the tremors stopped.

Across the border, the quake was felt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and parts of Punjab. Pakistan's National Seismic Monitoring Centre located the epicentre near latitude 36.48°N and longitude 70.84°E.

Authorities in both countries confirmed there were no immediate reports of loss to life or property. Pakistan, Continued on P4

AAP accuses Chadha of indulging in 'soft PR', dodging key issues in Parl

Chadha says 'silenced, not defeated'

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: A political storm broke out within the Aam Aadmi Party on Friday as senior leaders mounted a sharp and coordinated attack on Raghav Chadha, a day after he was removed as the party's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha. The party's reaction quickly became the focal point of the controversy, with top figures accusing Chadha of avoiding confrontation with the Centre and engaging in what they described as "soft PR" instead of raising pressing political issues.

The backlash followed Chadha's public response to his removal, where he declared that he had been "silenced, not defeated." In a video message and accompanying post on X, he recited an Urdu couplet to underline his position: "Meri Khamoshi Ko Meri Haar Mat Samajh Lena, Main wo Dariya Hun Jo Waqt Aane Par Sailab Banta hai." He said his silence should not be mistaken for weakness and suggested he would respond forcefully Continued on P4

India gets 3rd nuclear submarine INS Aridhaman

INS Aridhaman PTI

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: India on Friday inducted INS Aridhaman, an indigenously developed nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, into service, strengthening the sea-based leg of its nuclear triad, sources said. The commissioning follows months of sea trials, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh attending the ceremony at a naval base in Kerala, though there has been no official announcement so far.

India's SSBN programme remains highly classified. INS Aridhaman is the third vessel in this series, after INS Arihant and INS Arighaat. INS Arihant, the country's first indigenous nuclear submarine, was launched in July 2009 and commissioned in 2016. The second submarine, INS Arighaat, joined service in August 2024.

The SSBN designation refers to nuclear-powered submarines equipped with ballistic missiles, forming a key component of strategic deterrence. With this addition, India continues to expand its underwater nuclear capability, Continued on P4

Governor bound by Cabinet advice on remission: Madras HC

MPOST BUREAU

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court has ruled that a State Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers while deciding on remission and premature release of convicted prisoners under Article 161 of the Constitution of India, making it clear that the Governor cannot independently reject such recommendations.

The judgment was delivered on Thursday by a full bench comprising Justices A D Jagdish Chandra, G K Illanthiraiyan and Sunder Mohan in response to a reference made by a division bench that had encountered conflicting interpretations in earlier rulings. The court was Continued on P4

CBSE PLAN FOR 2026-27

Three-language formula from Class 6; two levels of maths, science for Class 9

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced a series of curriculum changes that will take effect in phases beginning with the 2026–27 academic session. The reforms include the introduction of a three-language framework from Class 6 and a new two-tier system in mathematics and science for Class 9 students, officials said on Friday.

Under the revised structure aligned with the National Education Policy, students will follow a structured language model identified as R1, R2 and R3. According to a senior board official, at least two of these languages must be native to India. "A third language will be made mandatory from Class 6 with effect from the academic session 2026–27, ensuring that every learner studies at least two Indian languages," the official said, noting that the move continues the board's phased push towards multilingual education.

The board has also provided flexibility for certain students. Those returning from schools abroad who may not have access to the same third language in India could be granted exemptions under approved norms. However, such students will still need to meet the total subject requirements laid out in the scheme of studies.

Alongside language reforms, CBSE will introduce a significant change in Continued on P4

KEY POINTS

- Three-language formula from Class 6
  - Based on National Education Policy and NCF
  - Students must study 3 languages (R1, R2, R3)
  - At least 2 must be Indian languages
  - Applies from academic session 2026–27
- Exception provision
  - Students returning from foreign schools may be exempt from the third language if unavailable
  - Must still meet total subject requirements
- Two-level system for Maths & Science (Class 9)
  - Starts 2026–27 academic session
  - Standard level (mandatory):
    - 80 marks exam
    - 3-hour duration
  - Advanced level (optional):
    - 25 marks exam
    - 1-hour duration
    - Focus on higher-order thinking

In today's paper ...

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'WOMAN DRAGGED TO STORE WAREHOUSE'

Woman assaulted & confined over cashew theft claim in Burari

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: A man has alleged that his wife was confined in a room and brutally assaulted by three women who accused her of stealing a packet of cashew nuts in the Burari area of north Delhi, an official said on Friday.

According to the FIR registered at Burari police station, the incident occurred on March 28 between 9.15 and 9.30 pm as the woman was returning home from work and stopped at a grocery store near a government school.

In her complaint, the woman claimed THAT after completing her purchase at the counter, the three women demanded to see the bill for her items. As she began to comply, the trio allegedly pushed her, hurled abuses, and accused her of theft.

When she resisted, the accused allegedly snatched her mobile phone and dragged her to the back warehouse of the store, where they physically assaulted her, read the FIR.

The victim further alleged that a man briefly intervened, but the assault continued. She sustained injuries during the attack, including swelling under her right eye and a fracture in her right hand. She stated that she requested her phone but lost consciousness during the assault.

> She sustained injuries during the attack, including swelling under her right eye and a fracture in her right hand

According to the FIR, she regained consciousness upon hearing her husband's voice, who had arrived at the scene after someone from the store asked him to come quickly.

The store staff eventually returned her mobile phone, after which a PCR call was made.

Subsequently, a PCR van arrived at the scene and took the woman to Burari Government Hospital, where she received initial treatment.

Doctors documented a medico-legal case (MLC), noting the history of physical assault. She was later referred to a higher centre for further treatment and underwent care at LNJP Hospital on March 29.

The police stated that the woman did not provide her statement immediately at the hospital, indicating that she would do so after her treatment.

On March 30, accompanied by her husband, she visited the Burari police station and based on her complaint, the police registered a case under Sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 127(2) (wrongful confinement) and 3(5) (common intention) of the BNS, launching further investigation into the matter.

Police are verifying facts, while the husband alleged his wife was assaulted inside the store and later found unconscious after he was called.

20-year-old man stabbed to death in Shalimar Bagh quarrel; three apprehended within hours

PRAJYOT DEOGHARE

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police have arrested two men and apprehended a juvenile for allegedly stabbing a 20-year-old man to death following a quarrel in north-west Delhi.

Police said a PCR call reporting a stabbing was received at Shalimar Bagh police station on April 2. The victim, identified as Nikki alias Nitesh (20), was found critically injured near Haiderpur Nahar and rushed to Dr BSA Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

A case was registered and multiple teams were formed to trace the assailants. During the investigation, officers relied on local intelligence and technical surveillance to identify the suspects.

Preliminary findings suggest the murder stemmed from a quarrel that escalated into a violent attack. The accused — Karan alias Tarun (18), Monty (22), and a juvenile — allegedly assaulted the victim, with Karan said to have stabbed him multiple times.

> The accused allegedly confessed to their involvement, officials said, adding that the sequence of events and circumstances leading to the quarrel are being verified

Acting on leads, police launched a search operation and apprehended all three within four hours of the incident.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly confessed to their involvement, officials said, adding that the sequence of events and circumstances leading to the quarrel are being verified.

Police credited swift response, coordinated efforts, and use of intelligence inputs for cracking the case quickly.

The accused are in custody, and further legal proceedings are under way, while investigators are also examining any prior dispute between the parties.

Ghaziabad woman held for husband's murder, alleges yrs of domestic abuse

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD: A 32-year-old woman was arrested on Thursday night for allegedly killing her husband at their residence, with the accused claiming she had endured nearly two years of physical abuse and humiliation.

According to police officials, the incident followed a heated argument between the couple at their home. During preliminary interrogation, the woman alleged that her husband frequently assaulted her and subjected her to degrading treatment, adding that the abuse had persisted for the past two years and intensified in recent months.

Police said the argument escalated, after which the woman allegedly attacked her husband, resulting in his death. She later alerted the police, following which a team reached the spot and took her into custody.

"The accused has confessed to her involvement during questioning. She has alleged prolonged domestic violence. We are verifying her claims and collecting evidence," a senior police officer said.

The body has been sent for post-mortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of death. Police teams are also recording statements of neighbours and relatives to understand the history of disputes between the couple.

Officials added that they are checking whether any prior complaints of domestic violence were filed. "Further legal action will be taken based on the findings of the investigation," the officer said.

Police said the investigation is ongoing and further details are expected to emerge.

Illegal LPG stockpile seized; one arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police have busted an illegal LPG cylinder hoarding and suspected black-marketing racket in the Bawana industrial area, arresting one person and seizing a vehicle used for transportation.

The accused has been identified as Anil (50), a resident of Auchandi village in Delhi. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, a team from Bawana police station in Outer North district launched an operation on April 2 following information about illegal storage and movement of LPG cylinders.

A police team laid a picket near District Park in Sector-2, DSIIDC Bawana, and intercepted a Tata Ace vehicle around 4 pm. During inspection, officers recovered 27 LPG cylinders from the vehicle, including 13 domestic and 14 commercial cylinders, several of them filled. The driver failed to produce any valid documents or authorisation.

During interrogation, the accused revealed that more cylinders were stored nearby. Police subsequently conducted a search at premises near a factory in G Block, Sector-2, and recovered 48 additional cylinders from two rooms and an iron shed. Cylinders stored illegally posed safety risks; case registered, police probing supply chain, buyers and possible involvement of others.

DU hostel protest over meals

NEW DELHI: Hostel students at Miranda House staged a protest and hunger strike, alleging food rationing and poor meal quality linked to an LPG shortage amid the ongoing Middle East conflict. Students said nutritious items had been reduced, with limited breakfast options and repetitive meals affecting those dependent on hostel food. The principal, Bijayalaxmi Nanda, said PNG is primarily used and any rationing follows discussions. She added that an agreement has been reached with the student union and hostel authorities; issue expected to be resolved soon. MPOST

News at a glance

MAN STABBED TO DEATH DURING ARGUMENT OVER 'GUTKA' PRICE

NEW DELHI: A 35-year-old man was stabbed to death by a tea seller after a dispute over gutka prices in northwest Delhi's Azadpur Mandi on Friday, police said. The victim, Nazim from Saharanpur, was attacked during an altercation. He was declared dead at hospital. The 19-year-old accused has been apprehended and the weapon recovered.

THREE NABBED FOR REPACKAGING, SELLING EXPIRED FOOD

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police have busted a racket repackaging expired food and beverages in Dwarka, arresting three men and seizing over 3,000 soft drink cans and biscuits. The accused allegedly erased expiry details using chemicals and printed new dates before reselling the items. A printing machine was recovered, and FSSAI officials collected samples. Further investigation is under way.

ROHINI: FAMILY ASSAULTED OVER OLD DISPUTE

NEW DELHI: Three members of a family were allegedly assaulted over an old dispute in Delhi's Rohini, police said. The incident occurred on April 1 in Sector 16, with a video of the attack surfacing online. The victims were hospitalised. Two accused have been arrested and two juveniles apprehended, while efforts continue to trace others.

Man crushed to death by reversing truck in South Delhi

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: A 48-year-old man was killed after being hit by a reversing truck at a ready-mix concrete plant in south-west Delhi's Rajokari village area on Friday, police said.

A PCR call regarding an accident was received at Vasant Kunj South police station from a worker at the plant, they said.

A police team rushed to the spot and found the victim, identified as Surender Shah, a resident of Rajokari, lying unconscious at the site.

During preliminary inquiry, it emerged that Shah, who worked at a cloth factory in Gurugram, had come to the plant to purchase concrete mix.

"While he was collecting the material and sitting on the ground near the vehicle, a truck driver, identified as Anil Vishwakarma, allegedly reversed his vehicle and hit Shah, who was positioned just behind the truck," a senior police officer said.

The impact left Shah critically injured. He was immediately shifted to Safdarjung Hospital by local workers and police, where doctors declared him brought dead. Police said forensic and crime teams were called to the spot to examine the scene and collect evidence.

Initial findings suggest that the incident occurred due to negligence while reversing the vehicle, though all angles are being probed as part of the investigation. The body has been preserved for a postmortem examination, and further investigation is in progress, police said.

DFS: Blaze erupts in residential building, 4 occupants rescued

NEW DELHI: Four people, including two children, were safely rescued after a fire broke out in a residential building in northeast Delhi's Yamuna Vihar area on Friday, an official of the Delhi Fire Services said.

According to the DFS, a call regarding a house fire was received around 3:50 pm from the Mohanpuri area.

Two fire tenders were rushed to the spot immediately.

The blaze, which had erupted on the first floor of a four-storey building (ground plus four floors), spread to domestic articles, causing panic among residents.

"The situation was brought under control by 4:15 pm, and the fire was stopped by 4:30 pm after ensuring that the flames had been completely doused," he said.

The officer further said that during the operation, four occupants of the house were rescued safely. They have been identified as Salman (24), his daughter Hibja (3), his son Hanimja (2), and Zazina (50).

No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident, he said.

The building is constructed on a plot measuring approximately 30 square yards, and the fire was confined to household items on the first floor, the officer said.

Firefighters carried out cooling operations to prevent any rekindling of the flames. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, and further investigation is underway, the officer added. PTI

Shot fired in Fbd road rage, biker suffers minor injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT

FARIDABAD: Shots were fired following an incident of road rage in Haryana's Faridabad on Friday, with a man sustaining minor injuries, police said.

The incident took place around 10:30 am on Balaji College Road in the Ballabhgarh area when the victim, Vivek, who was on his way to work on his motorcycle, saw a man driving a two-wheeler in a reckless manner with a woman riding pillion and asked him to drive carefully, police said. This led to a verbal exchange between the two and the accused allegedly pulled out a pistol and pointed it at Vivek, they added. As Vivek tried to snatch the weapon from the accused, the pistol went off and the bullet grazed past the victim's face, leaving him with minor injuries. However, the victim managed to snatch the pistol from the accused, who fled the spot, leaving behind the two-wheeler and a bag, police said.

The victim alerted police who arrived at the scene and took the firearm and the bag into custody.

TAKEAWAYS

- The incident took place around 10:30 am on Balaji College Road in the Ballabhgarh area when the victim, Vivek, who was on his way to work on his motorcycle, saw a man driving a two-wheeler in a reckless manner with a woman riding pillion and asked him to drive carefully
- A verbal altercation escalated when the accused allegedly pulled out a pistol; as the victim tried to snatch it, a shot was fired, grazing his face and causing minor injuries, police said

An FIR has been lodged at the Adarsh Nagar police station. Station House Officer (SHO) Manoj Kumar said, "We are searching for the man and the woman who fled the scene after firing the shot. CCTV footage of both has surfaced and they will soon be arrested."

Man dies in Seemapuri blast hours after stabbing teenager

NEW DELHI: A 24-year-old man died in a suspected cylinder blast at his house in Delhi's Seemapuri on Friday evening, hours after he allegedly stabbed a teenage girl, police said.

A PCR call was received at Seemapuri police station at 5.33 pm reporting that a girl had been stabbed and was lying unconscious with multiple injuries in Ravidas Mandir Wali Gali in Old Seemapuri. Police teams reached the spot, but the victim had already been shifted to Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital.

Doctors declared her unfit to give a statement. She sustained multiple stab wounds and remains under treatment, police said. A medico-legal case was registered and a case of attempt to murder initiated. In a related development, another PCR call reported a cylinder blast at a house in New Seemapuri. Police found that Jatin (24) had died in the fire triggered by the blast. He was taken to GTB Hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

> She sustained multiple stab wounds and remains under treatment: Police

During inquiry, police established that Jatin was the same person who had allegedly stabbed the girl earlier.

Forensic teams have examined both sites, and police are investigating the sequence of events, motive, and whether the blast was accidental or deliberate. MPOST

NEW TRAINS ADDED, SPL SERVICES FOR PEAK DEMAND

NR records highest-ever freight loading, boosts infra in 2025-26

PRAJYOT DEOGHARE

NEW DELHI: Northern Railway recorded its highest-ever freight loading, expanded key infrastructure, and strengthened passenger services and safety during the financial year 2025–26, General Manager Rajesh Kumar Pandey said at a press conference at Baroda House on Friday.

Highlighting the zone's performance, Pandey said Northern Railway achieved a record annual originating freight loading of 52.26 million tonnes, including a single-day peak of 119 rakes on March 31.

Logistics operations were enhanced with the introduction of scheduled "Cargo Service" routes such as Annapurna and Niryat, reducing transit time for foodgrains and export containers. In a first for the Kashmir Valley, 14,869 tonnes of apples were dispatched via rail.

> A major infrastructure milestone was the commissioning of the New Yamuna Bridge in late March 2026

On the passenger front, 35 pairs of new trains were introduced, including eight Vande Bharat and 14 Amrit Bharat Express services. To manage peak travel demand, over 5,000 special trains were operated during festivals and emergencies.

A major infrastructure milestone was the commissioning of the New Yamuna Bridge in late March 2026. The zone also operationalised the 29.55-km Deoband–Roorkee line and completed several bridges and station upgrades.

Safety and technology remained a key focus, with mechanical signalling eliminated across all passenger yards and 52 level crossing gates interlocked. Kavach was deployed over 38 route kilometres, while automatic signalling covered 63.9 km. CCTV cameras were installed at 321 stations to enhance security.

Financially, Northern Railway reported total earnings of Rs 12,006.73 crore, supported by a 32.65 per cent rise in non-fare revenue and increased digital ticketing through the RailOne app.

The Railway Protection Force intensified enforcement, arresting 528 criminals, rescuing over 2,000 children, and recovering lost property worth crores. Pandey credited the workforce for the achievements and reaffirmed Northern Railway's commitment to building a modern, efficient and self-reliant transport system.

Noida Int'l Airport set to boost connectivity, ease Delhi traffic

Focus on better road, metro links & supporting facilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NOIDA: The inauguration of Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport, along with the foundation laying of a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility, brought together industry representatives, officials and stakeholders, who outlined the project's expected economic and logistical impact.

Bob Chi, CEO of Gateway Services at Singapore-based SATS Ltd., said the airport would enhance connectivity between Uttar Pradesh and global markets and could attract international investment. Film producer Boney Kapoor, associated with the proposed film city in the region, said the airport and related projects may contribute to the growth of a combined economic and cultural hub.

Subhash Goyal, chairman of the Aviation and Tourism Committee, noted capacity constraints at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, adding that the Jewar facility could ease pressure and improve connectivity for nearby regions. He also underlined the need for better road and metro links, along with supporting infrastructure.

Lalit Thukral, president of the Noida Apparel Export Cluster, said the airport is expected to boost cargo operations and support export industries.

Officials said the project is likely to generate employment and drive ancillary development, with further phases planned.

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Only BS-VI, EVs in Delhi from Nov 1, de-congestion of 62 traffic hotspots

CM unveils Air Pollution Action Plan: 'No PUC, No Fuel' rule to be enforced strictly

AIMAN FATIMA

NEW DELHI: In a decisive push against rising air pollution, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday unveiled the 'Air Pollution Mitigation Action Plan 2026', signalling a strong shift from policy intent to strict, ground-level enforcement. With sweeping measures targeting vehicles, dust, waste, and industrial emissions, the plan aims to deliver measurable improvements in air quality across the Capital.

Chairing a high-level meeting at the Mukhyamantri Janseva Sadan, attended by senior ministers, officials, and agencies including DMRC and Traffic Police, the Chief Minister underlined that clean air is now central to governance.

"This is not just a policy announcement, it's an enforcement-driven campaign powered by resources, technology and strict oversight," she said.

The plan adopts a scientific and data-driven approach, identifying 11 priority sectors and focusing on major pollution sources such as vehicular emissions, road dust, construction activity, industrial discharge, and biomass burning.

Taking a tough stance on transport emissions, Gupta announced strict enforcement of the 'No PUC, No Fuel' rule using ANPR cameras and digital systems. From November 1, only BS-VI compliant, CNG, or electric goods vehicles will be allowed entry into Delhi, with further restrictions during severe pollution episodes.

To reduce dependence on private vehicles, the government plans to expand the bus fleet to 13,760 by 2028-29, with a strong push for electric buses, alongside installing 32,000 EV charging points. Integration of metro and RRTS networks with feeder services is also being prioritised.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This is not just a policy announcement, it's an enforcement-driven campaign powered by resources, technology and strict oversight: CM
- Taking a tough stance on transport emissions, Gupta announced strict enforcement of the 'No PUC, No Fuel' rule using ANPR cameras and digital systems
- Clean air is not a luxury, it is a fundamental right, and we are committed to delivering it, says CM

Addressing congestion, 62 traffic hotspots have been identified for time-bound interventions, supported by an Intelligent Traffic Management System and smart parking solutions.

Large-scale dust control measures, including mechanised sweeping, water sprinkling, and anti-smog guns, will be monitored in real time. Construction activities will be tracked through AI-enabled systems to ensure compliance.

The government has also set deadlines to clear legacy landfill sites and imposed a strict ban on biomass burning.

Emphasising the broader vision, Gupta said, "The Action Plan 2026 is not just about intent, it is a robust execution model with financial backing, strict timelines and accountability at every level." She added, "Clean air is not a luxury, it is a fundamental right, and we are committed to delivering it."

Delhi govt STEPS UP measures to manage LPG supply pressure

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Facing rising demand and supply pressure in the LPG sector, the Delhi government on Friday announced a multi-level strategy, including coordination with the Centre, to stabilise supply and curb misuse. The move comes amid a surge in bookings and reports of localised shortages in parts of the Capital.

The announcement was made during a press conference by the Department of Food, Supplies and Consumer Affairs, where officials outlined a combination of policy intervention, enforcement action, and consumer awareness measures to address the situation.

Additional Commissioner Arun Kumar Jha said Delhi currently has nearly 56 lakh domestic LPG connections and urged residents to ensure their connections are registered in the correct name to prevent diversion and misuse. He also emphasised the need to reduce dependency on LPG by promoting piped natural gas. "Wherever PNG connections are available, residents should shift from LPG to PNG," he said, adding that the pipeline network has now expanded to cover every village.

To monitor the situation closely, the government has set up a dedicated control room to receive complaints and track supply issues. Citizens have been encouraged to report suspicious activities through helpline numbers, with assurances that verified complaints will be acted upon swiftly while maintaining confidentiality of informants.

On the enforcement front, authorities have intensified action against hoarding and illegal diversion. In a recent crackdown, around 100 LPG cylinders were seized from Alipur and Bawana. Officials said operations are being carried out at multiple levels, including intelligence gathering. "The intelligence department is also actively working on this," an official noted. So far, 27 cases have been registered in connection with illegal activities, though no distributor or gas agency has been formally charged yet, according to Joint CP (Transport) Milind Mahadeo Dumbere. Officials highlighted that LPG demand has spiked significantly, with daily bookings touching nearly 2 lakh, compared to the usual average of 1.60 lakh. The sudden rise has led to queues in some areas due to backlog. As a temporary relief, migrant workers can access 5 kg cylinders without a regular connection by providing valid identification.

The government is also accelerating PNG adoption, increasing installation targets from 1,000 to 3,000 connections, as part of efforts to ease pressure on LPG supply and ensure long-term stability.

KEY POINTS

- 'Wherever PNG connections are available, residents should shift from LPG to PNG'
- 'Pipeline network has now expanded to cover every village'
- To monitor the situation closely, the government has set up a dedicated control room to receive complaints and track supply issues

Flood Dept: EMD now 100% online

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: In a major administrative reform aimed at enhancing transparency and fairness in public works, the Flood Control and Irrigation Department has made the submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) fully online, eliminating the need for physical deposits during the tendering process.

The move is expected to significantly reduce human interface and curb potential malpractices associated with the earlier system, where bidders had to physically submit EMD at project offices. Officials noted that the previous process often led to unnecessary interactions, raising concerns over information leaks and possible bias in awarding contracts.

Under the revised system, bidders will now submit EMD through online mode and upload a scanned copy along with their tender documents on the e-procurement portal. The original EMD will only be required from the lowest bidder, also known as the L1 bidder, within a fixed timeframe after the bids are opened.

According to the department, this shift ensures that no individual or authority can track bidders during the process, thereby safeguarding the integrity of the system and preventing any undue influence or manipulation.

> Under the revised system, bidders will now submit EMD through online mode and upload a scanned copy along with their tender documents on the e-procurement portal

Highlighting the intent behind the reform, Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said, "This reform is about building trust in the system. By moving EMD completely online, we are eliminating unnecessary human interface and ensuring that the bidding process remains fair, transparent, and free from any undue influence. Our priority is clear, honest contractors should get a fair opportunity, and public money should be utilized with full accountability."

To enforce compliance, strict rules have been introduced. The L1 bidder must submit the original EMD within three days of bid opening, failing which they will be debarred from participating in tenders for two years.

The department also clarified that physical submission of EMD will no longer be accepted and corrigendums will be issued where necessary, marking a decisive shift towards digital governance.

MCD: 100 TPD biogas plant in Civil Lines to curb Yamuna pollution

NEW DELHI: A 100 TPD compressed biogas plant is set to come up between the Bhalaswa and Jharoda dairies in north Delhi's Civil Lines area, aimed at managing cattle waste and preventing it from entering the Yamuna, officials said.

The proposal for the project will soon be submitted to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). The plant is planned over an eight-acre site located between the two dairy clusters, they said.

"Around 6,000 cattle have been identified in the surrounding areas, generating substantial quantities of organic waste. The facility will have a capacity of 50 tonnes per day (TPD) each for Bhalaswa and Jharoda dairies," officials said, adding that a survey to assess cattle population and waste generation was conducted last month.

Meanwhile, experts said that nearly 80 per cent of pollution in the Yamuna in Delhi is caused by domestic sewage, while the remaining 20 per cent comes from sources such as dairy waste, solid waste dumping and small-scale industries.

"Dairy waste is not the dominant source of pollution, but it is a low-hanging fruit, it is localised, easier to manage and can be converted into a resource," environmentalist Bhavreen Kandhari said. MPOST

Indraprastha Fest kicks off

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The three-day Indraprastha Cultural Festival 2026 was inaugurated at India Habitat Centre on Friday, bringing together over 100 speakers, cultural performers, writers, and scholars to celebrate India's civilisational heritage and contemporary cultural discourse.

Organised by the Delhi government, the festival, scheduled from April 3 to 5, features more than 50 cultural performances, literary sessions, youth town halls, and exhibitions aimed at showcasing the country's diverse traditions while encouraging informed dialogue.

Addressing the inaugural session, Delhi's Minister for Art, Culture, Languages, Tourism and Labour, Kapil Mishra, described the event as a step towards cultural revival. He said, "The very selection of the name 'Indraprastha' is a cultural assertion in itself. It reflects an effort to re-establish Delhi's historical and civilizational identity, which has long been presented within a limited perspective."

Highlighting the importance of meaningful discussions, he added, "Platforms where dialogue is based on facts, logic, and evidence are the ones that truly guide society." Emphasising Delhi's diversity, Mishra said, "Delhi, as a 'Mini India', represents the cultural expressions of every region of the country."

Referring to recent initiatives, he noted that events like Deepotsav, Chhath Puja, and Navratri celebrations have strengthened cultural engagement in the capital.

He also stated, "A phased removal of a large number of previously installed CCTV cameras in Delhi has been initiated… purely on security grounds." The festival will continue with discussions, performances, and exhibitions aimed at positioning Delhi as a vibrant cultural hub.

From fines to warnings: MCD relaxes norms

NEW DELHI: In a sweeping overhaul of municipal laws, the Centre has introduced more than 20 changes to the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, replacing minor criminal provisions with monetary penalties and removing several outdated offences in the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, which was passed by Parliament on Thursday.

The amendments largely do away with low-value fines and imprisonment for minor violations, and introduce graded penalties and warnings aimed at improving compliance without criminalising everyday civic lapses.

Among the key changes, which signal a shift towards a more facilitative civic framework, more than 10 provisions that earlier attracted fines have now been converted into penalties, often with higher amounts.

For instance, people caught urinating in public or creating a nuisance by dumping stinking waste on the streets will attract a tenfold fine of Rs 500.

Failure to remove filth, which earlier invited a fine of just Rs 50, will now draw a warning for the first offence and a Rs 500 penalty for repeat violations.

Similarly, activities such as unauthorised hawking, running eateries without licences or obstructing municipal officials will now attract steeper penalties, going up to Rs 1,000 in some cases.

Further, civic behaviours that directly affect public hygiene, such as tethering cattle on streets, dumping waste or causing public nuisance, have also been brought under stricter penalty regimes.

In a notable move, imprisonment provisions have been removed in two instances. A controversial clause that allowed jail time for municipal sweepers quitting without notice or neglecting duties has been scrapped.

Additionally, violations of municipal bylaws will no longer lead to imprisonment, with penalties replacing both jail terms and fines.

The amendments also eliminate fines in 11 provisions, effectively decriminalising several minor or outdated offences. PTI

City Briefs

NDMC TO EASE COMPLIANCE

NEW DELHI: The New Delhi Municipal Council is set to align its enforcement approach with the Centre's Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, which decriminalises over 1,000 minor offences and signals a shift towards trust-based governance. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on March 30 said that implementing the Unit Area Method (UAM) introduced by the Bill could reduce property tax by 30 to 50 per cent, particularly benefiting old and self-occupied properties. The Bill was introduced by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada in the Lok Sabha, which proposed multiple changes to the the NDMC Act, 1994.

UNAUTHORISED SALE IN DELHI METRO TO ATTRACT PENALTY UP TO Rs 5,000

NEW DELHI: Selling or exposing for sale any article without authorisation in the Delhi Metro will soon attract a penalty of up to Rs 5,000 under the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002, following the passage of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026. The Bill was passed by the Parliament on Thursday. Introduced in the Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada, the legislation proposes to convert certain minor offences from criminal penalties into civil penalties. Among these is the unauthorised selling or offering for sale of any article in metro railway carriages or premises. At present, such an offence attracts a fine ranging between Rs 100 and Rs 400. Under the amended provisions, this will be replaced with a penalty of up to Rs 5,000 under Section 73 of the Act.

AQI REMAINS 'POOR'

Stormy start, rainy relief

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Delhi witnessed light rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms across parts of the city after a dust storm swept through the national capital in the morning, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday.

The weather office has forecast thunderstorms with lightening on Saturday, with maximum temperature expected to reach 33 degrees Celsius and the minimum around 20 degrees Celsius.

On Friday, the maximum temperature was recorded at 33.7 degrees Celsius, 0.3 notches below normal.

An orange alert (be prepared) has been issued for south, central and New Delhi, while a yellow alert (be aware) is in place for southwest, west and northeast Delhi.

Station-wise data showed that Palam recorded a maximum of 32.7 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees below normal. Lodhi Road and the Ridge station both logged 33 degrees Celsius, with the latter staying 1.7 degrees below normal. Ayanagar recorded 34 degrees Celsius, 0.1 degrees above normal.

Parts of the city witnessed light rain during the day, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting light showers, thunderstorms and gusty winds in several areas later in the day as well.

Weather experts attributed the morning dust storm to a disturbance over the western Himalayas, which has induced a cyclonic circulation over central Pakistan and adjoining Haryana and Rajasthan.

"A disturbance over the western Himalayas has been recurring frequently over the past month, creating a consistent pattern. This system is inducing a cyclonic circulation over central Pakistan and adjoining Haryana and Rajasthan, which is now influencing Delhi-NCR," said Mahesh Palawat, vice president, Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet.

He added that winds have shifted to easterly, bringing in moisture and leading to isolated rainfall, thunderstorms and gusty winds.

"A temporary rise in temperature is expected on April 5, followed by another spell of rain and thunderstorms on April 6 and 7 due to a fresh western disturbance. Thereafter, a sharp rise in temperatures is likely," he said. On the minimum temperature front, Delhi recorded 22.4 degrees Celsius, 3.6 notches above normal.

Among stations, Palam recorded a minimum of 20.6 degrees Celsius (2.1 notches above normal), Lodhi Road 21.1 degrees (3.1 notches above normal), Ridge 20.6 degrees (0.8 notches above normal), and Ayanagar 21.8 degrees (3.6 notches above normal).

Meanwhile, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 266, in the 'poor' category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

CAQM decides against imposing GRAP in Delhi

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Commission for Air Quality Management on Friday decided against invoking GRAP restrictions in Delhi-NCR at the moment despite the air quality slipping into the poor category, officials said.

According to the AQI bulletin by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi's daily average AQI breached the 200 mark on Thursday and was recorded at 266 (poor category). "The Commission for Air Quality Management sub-committee on GRAP called a meeting to review the current air quality scenario in the region, as well as the forecast for meteorological conditions and AQI made available by IMD and IITM," a senior official said.

"The panel, while reviewing the current air quality scenario of Delhi-NCR and forecast for weather and meteorological conditions, noted that Delhi's AQI, which was recorded 194 yesterday, has sharply deteriorated to 266 at 4 pm today, owing to the dust storm in the early morning," the official added.

Govt pushes 33 clean-air ideas to next phase

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Around 33 innovative prototypes selected under the Delhi government's 'innovation challenge' to combat air pollution are set to move into the second phase, where real-world trials will be conducted, officials said.

The shortlisted solutions aim to address multiple sources of pollution and include technologies such as solar-powered pole-mounted dust traps, filterless devices designed to capture smoke and particulate matter, electrostatic mist sprayers, and advanced systems for dust suppression and air quality monitoring. Some proposals also focus on retrofitting vehicles with air purification mechanisms to improve emission quality.

These innovations were chosen from a large pool of entries and were showcased earlier this year at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi during a dedicated exhibition. The initiative is part of the government's broader push to identify scalable and practical solutions to tackle the city's worsening air quality.

According to officials, the next stage will involve on-ground testing to assess the effectiveness, feasibility, and scalability of each solution. "The innovation challenge is now ready to enter the second phase, where trials will begin, and the government will be providing all necessary infrastructure required for the trials," an official said. The trials are expected to commence in the first week of May and will likely continue for around three months. During this period, each prototype will be evaluated under real environmental conditions to determine its performance and cost-effectiveness.

An eight-member expert committee, headed by IIT Delhi Professor Sagnik Dey, has been constituted to oversee the evaluation process. The panel will review the results of the trials and identify the most viable solutions that can be implemented on a larger scale across the capital. Officials indicated that once the assessment is complete, selected technologies will be adopted by the Delhi government for operational use as part of its long-term pollution control strategy. Another official said that a meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday to finalise the framework for the trials and necessary logistical arrangements. WITH PTI INPUTS

ERRATIC WEATHER TILL APRIL 10: MeT

Fresh snowfall in Kashmir higher reaches while rains lash plains

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR: Few areas in the higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall on Friday, while the plains were lashed by rains, officials said.

They said a few areas in the higher reaches of Kashmir, including Mughal Road in south Kashmir's Shopian, and Sadhna Top in north Kashmir's Kupwara, received fresh snowfall. Srinagar and other plains of the valley were lashed by rains, which continued at many places when the last reports came in, the officials said.

A strong western disturbance made an impact in Jammu and Kashmir, under the influence of which, widespread rainfall and snow in scattered higher reaches were witnessed, the officials said.

The Meteorological Department has said that while the effect of the western disturbance would remain till April 4 evening, the weather would remain erratic in Kashmir till April 10.

There is a possibility of intermittent light to moderate rain/snow at many places with thunder/hailstorm/gusty winds till Saturday evening, it said.

A locality is seen covered in hailstones after a hailstorm and rainfall, at Arjunsar village, in Bikaner district, Rajasthan, Friday PTI

Highlights

- Srinagar and other plains of the valley were lashed by rains, which continued at many places when the last reports came in, the officials said
- Moderate to heavy rain, or snow in the higher reaches, with brief intense heavy showers at a few places in Kashmir is possible, the MeT Office said
- The MeT Office has advised farmers to suspend all farm operations during this period

Moderate to heavy rain, or snow in the higher reaches, with brief intense heavy showers at a few places in Kashmir is possible, the MeT Office said.

From April 5-6, partly cloudy weather with light rain at isolated places is likely, while from April 7-9, fresh spells of light to moderate rain/snow (higher reaches)/thunder/gusty winds are possible at many places, it added.

From April 10-11, a brief spell of light rain/snow (higher reaches) at a few places is also possible, the MeT Office said.

There is a possibility of thunder/hail/gusty winds (40-50 kmph) at a few places during the next 24 hours and 7-8.

Intense heavy showers for a brief period may lead to flash floods/landslides at a few vulnerable places, and waterlogging in a few low-lying areas, it said.

The MeT Office has advised farmers to suspend all farm operations during this period, it added.

HOURS AFTER 3-YEAR JAIL TERM

MP Assembly terminates Congress MLA Bharti's membership

SATYAPRAKASH SHARMA

BHOPAL: The Madhya Pradesh Assembly Secretariat on Thursday night formally notified the disqualification of Congress MLA Rajendra Bharti from Datia constituency with effect from April 2, 2026.

According to the official notification published in the Madhya Pradesh Gazette (Extraordinary), Bharti has been disqualified under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, following his conviction and sentencing by a special court in Delhi.

Interacting with the media, Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar said that under Section 8(3) of the Act, read with Article 191(1)(e) of the Constitution, any legislator sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more stands automatically disqualified from the date of conviction.

He added that the Secretariat acted on the court's order in accordance with legal provisions and the 2013 Supreme Court directive, after receiving information regarding the conviction.

The notification stated that a Special Judge at Rouse Avenue Court, New Delhi, convicted Bharti on April 2, 2026, in a case involving criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery.

He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 1 lakh, resulting in a vacancy in the House.

Bharti, a three-term MLA, had defeated senior BJP leader and former Home Minister Narottam Mishra in the 2023 Assembly elections.

His disqualification comes as a significant setback to the Congress ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls, as the party already faces challenges with another MLA, Mukesh Malhotra, over his voting rights.

The case relates to an alleged decades-old fraud involving a fixed deposit in the Zila Sahkari Krishi Gramin Vikas Bank in Datia.

Bharti, who served as chairman of the bank from 1984 to 2000, is accused of forging documents linked to a Rs 10 lakh deposit in his mother's name to extend its tenure and draw higher interest.

The FIR was registered in 2015, while the Supreme Court transferred the trial to Delhi in 2025 citing concerns over witness intimidation.

Reacting sharply, Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar termed the move "undue haste" ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls, alleging that Bharti's membership was terminated late at night despite scope for appeal. He accused the BJP of targeting Opposition MLAs and said the Congress would challenge the action through legal and constitutional means.

From Page 1

Hormuz crisis

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation reporting efforts to control several blazes. A separate Iranian strike caused "material damage" to a desalination plant, which is vital for drinking water supply in Gulf states.

Elsewhere, sirens were reported in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia said it intercepted several Iranian drones, and Israel reported incoming missiles. In the United Arab Emirates, authorities shut down a gas field after debris from a missile interception sparked a fire.

The broader conflict, which began on February 28 with US and Israeli strikes on Iran, has expanded into a multi-front confrontation involving several regional actors. According to available figures, more than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran since the start of the war, while 19 deaths have been reported in Israel. More than two dozen people have died in Gulf states and the occupied West Bank, and 13 US service members have been killed.

In Lebanon, where Israel has launched a ground offensive against the Hezbollah militant group, more than 1,300 people have been killed and over one million displaced. Ten Israeli soldiers have also died in that theatre.

The conflict has also disrupted global energy markets, largely due to Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping route through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil and natural gas passes in peacetime. Iran's restrictions on traffic through the strait have pushed Brent crude prices to around 109 dollars per barrel, an increase of more than 50 per cent since the conflict began.

World leaders have struggled to address the situation, with the United Nations Security Council expected to take up the issue of securing the waterway. A proposal from Bahrain under consideration would authorise measures to ensure safe transit, though divisions remain among major powers over the use of force.

Amid the escalation, there have been indications of possible diplomatic movement. Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif suggested a framework for ending the conflict in an article published on Friday. He wrote that Iran could agree to limit its nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

"Prolonged hostility will cause a greater loss of precious lives and irreplaceable resources without actually altering the existing stalemate," Zarif wrote, signalling that some within Iran's leadership may be open to negotiations.

The United States has proposed a 15-point plan that includes dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities and restricting missile production in return for sanctions relief. Iran's initial counterproposal has included demands such as recognition of its sovereignty over the strait, removal of US bases from the region, compensation for war damage and guarantees against further aggression.

Despite these proposals, there has been no visible progress towards a ceasefire. Thousands of US Marines and paratroopers have been deployed to the region, raising speculation about a possible ground offensive.

WITH AGENCY INPUTS

Russia offers

The issue of energy security was also discussed at the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, co-chaired by Manturov and Jaishankar. Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral ties and explored ways to expand trade and investment.

According to the Russian side, "specific steps were discussed to create favourable conditions for increasing bilateral trade turnover in the present context." The two countries have set a target to raise annual trade to USD 100 billion by 2030 under a five-year economic roadmap agreed during the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit held in December last year, which was attended by President Vladimir Putin.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the discussions covered a wide range of sectors including energy, trade, fertilisers, connectivity and mobility, along with emerging areas such as technology, innovation and critical minerals.

Manturov also noted that Russia increased fertiliser supplies to India by 40 per cent by the end of 2025 and is prepared to continue meeting India's demand. In addition to hydrocarbons, the Russian statement highlighted cooperation in civil nuclear energy, with Manturov stating that Moscow sees "significant prospects" for deeper engagement with India in the sector.

MPOST

Ship carrying

Identification System are not always final and can shift during transit. Still, the move has drawn attention, given the timing and the potential implications for India's oil sourcing strategy.

"An Iranian crude vessel 'Ping Shun' that had been en route to Vadinar, India, over the past three days has dropped India as its declared destination near arrival and is now signalling China," said Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst for Refining and Modelling at Kpler.

The cargo on board, estimated at around 600,000 barrels, was loaded from Iran's Kharg Island around March 4. Had it reached India, it would have marked the first Iranian crude shipment to the country since imports halted in May 2019 following tighter US sanctions.

Ritolia linked the diversion to evolving payment conditions. He said sellers appear to be moving away from earlier credit arrangements of 30 to 60 days toward upfront or near-term settlement, making transactions more complex. The identities of the buyer and seller involved in the cargo remain unclear.

Vadinar houses a 20 million tonnes per year refinery operated by Nayara Energy, which is backed by Russian oil major Rosneft. The facility has historically processed Iranian grades such as Iran Light and Iran Heavy, which are considered well suited to Indian refineries.

India had once been a significant importer of Iranian crude. In 2018, purchases averaged about 518,000 barrels per day, accounting for roughly 11.5 per cent of the country's total imports. Volumes declined to about 268,000 barrels per day between January and May 2019 under temporary US waivers before falling to zero after those waivers expired.

A recent 30-day US waiver allowing limited transactions involving Iranian oil stored at sea had reopened a narrow window for potential deals. That window is set to close on April 19. Analysts estimate that about 95 million barrels of Iranian crude are currently held on vessels, with roughly 51 million barrels potentially suitable for Indian refiners, while the rest is more aligned with demand in China and Southeast Asia.

Despite the waiver, payment mechanisms remain a major obstacle. Iran is largely excluded from the SWIFT global banking network, complicating international transactions. Earlier arrangements involving euro payments routed through a Turkish intermediary are no longer available.

Ritolia noted that such mid-voyage destination changes are not unusual for Iranian shipments but reflect growing sensitivity to financial arrangements and counterparty risks. "If the payment issues are resolved, the cargo could still make its way to an Indian refinery," he said, adding that commercial terms are playing an increasingly decisive role alongside logistics in determining trade flows.

India's oil ministry has maintained that any decision on resuming Iranian imports will depend on techno-commercial considerations.

Govt asks

ignore rumours.

Consumers have also been encouraged to use digital platforms for LPG bookings and limit visits to distributors. The government has suggested the use of alternative cooking options such as piped natural gas, induction stoves and electric cooktops wherever possible, along with adopting energy-saving practices.

Despite what it described as a "war situation," the Centre said domestic LPG and piped natural gas supplies, along with services like hospitals and educational institutions, remain a top priority. Measures include increasing refinery output and extending LPG booking intervals to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural regions.

To ease demand, alternative fuels such as kerosene and coal are being supplied, with additional coal allocations made to states. Authorities have also been advised to expand PNG connections and ensure targeted LPG distribution.

Enforcement actions have already been scaled up, with more than 4,000 raids conducted nationwide. Over 1,300 LPG cylinders have been seized, and public sector oil marketing companies have issued more than 670 show cause notices to distributors.

So far, 21 states and Union Territories have begun regular press briefings to keep the public updated, the statement added.

Mahaveer Singhvi

relationship, with a focus on deepening cooperation across trade, technology, education and innovation," the Indian mission in Toronto said on social media.

Singhvi looks forward to working closely with Canadian stakeholders and the vibrant Indian diaspora to strengthen mutual trust, expand partnerships, and build a forward-looking partnership rooted in shared values and opportunities, it added.

In his nearly 25-year stint as a diplomat, Singhvi held many key positions, including helming the New, Emerging and Strategic Technologies as well as the Counter Terrorism divisions.

The senior diplomat has assumed charge a month after India and Canada finalised a new framework to shore up the overall trajectory of ties, including taking bilateral annual trade to USD 50 billion by 2030.

The framework was finalised during Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to India.

In the last few months, India and Canada have taken several steps to normalise their relations.

The ties had hit rock bottom following then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

India had dismissed Trudeau's accusation as "absurd".

In October 2024, India recalled its high commissioner and five other diplomats after Ottawa attempted to link them to the Nijjar case.

India also expelled an equal number of Canadian diplomats.

However, Liberal Party leader Carney's victory in the parliamentary election in April last year helped in beginning the process to reset relations.

Subsequently, both sides have already posted their high commissioners in each other's capitals.

In June last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Canada's Kananaskis to attend the G7 summit.

"After joining as the Consul General of India in Toronto, I visited the Jain Society of Toronto and offered prayers at the temple, reflecting on the timeless values of Ahimsa (non-violence), peace, unity and harmony," Singhvi said in a social media post.

AGENCIES

Madras HC

examining a batch of petitions, including the Eswaran case, where life convicts challenged the rejection or inaction on their premature release despite favourable recommendations from the State Cabinet.

Petitioners argued that once the Cabinet had taken a decision recommending remission, the Governor had no authority to override it. They contended that such rejections were legally unsustainable. The issue arose after divergent views were expressed in earlier cases, including Veera Bharathi and Murugan alias Thirumalai Murugan, prompting the need for an authoritative ruling.

Framing the central question, the full bench examined whether the Governor is bound by ministerial advice in such cases and, if so, whether any discretion exists to depart from it. Answering both aspects, the Court held that the constitutional position is clear and leaves no ambiguity.

"The Hon'ble Governor is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers regardless of whether the Hon'ble Governor likes that advice or not and under no circumstance can exercise discretion to take a different view," the bench stated, reinforcing that remission powers exercised under Article 161 are not discretionary in nature when Cabinet advice is available.

The court relied on key Supreme Court precedents, including Maru Ram v. Union of India and AG Perarivalan v. State of Tamil Nadu, which establish that the Governor acts as a constitutional head and must function in accordance with the elected government's advice. It noted that the Perarivalan ruling reaffirmed principles laid down in Maru Ram, which held that the Governor, though vested with executive power, cannot act independently of the Council of Ministers.

During the proceedings, State Public Prosecutor Hasan Mohamed Jinnah highlighted the legal background, pointing out that earlier judgments had taken differing approaches. While one line of cases followed the binding nature of Cabinet advice, another relied on the Constitution bench decision in MP Special Police Establishment v. State of MP to argue that the Governor could act independently in certain situations involving bias or irrationality.

However, the bench rejected this argument, clarifying that the MP Special Police Establishment case dealt with a distinct statutory function concerning sanction for prosecution under criminal law, and not the exercise of constitutional powers under Article 161. It held that the reasoning in that case could not be extended to remission decisions.

The bench further observed that if a Cabinet decision is alleged to be arbitrary or based on irrelevant considerations, the appropriate remedy lies in judicial review by constitutional courts, as recognised in Epuru Sudhakar v. Government of Andhra Pradesh. It stressed that such scrutiny cannot be undertaken by the Governor acting independently.

"This Court finds that the ruling in Perarivalan has merely reiterated the position of law laid down in Maru Ram, and therefore, it is well settled that the Governor is bound by the advice given by the Council of Ministers in matters relating to remission and premature release," the bench said.

The ruling settles the legal position on the extent of the Governor's powers in remission cases, affirming that no independent discretion exists once the Council of Ministers has made its recommendation. It also clarifies that any dispute over such decisions must be resolved through judicial processes rather than executive intervention.

Afghanistan-centred 6.3 quake

situated along the convergence of the Arabian, Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, frequently experiences seismic activity, including recent quakes of magnitude 5.9 and 5.6 earlier this year.

INS Aridhaman

complementing its existing air and land-based nuclear systems.

India is among a small group of nations possessing nuclear-powered submarines, alongside the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China.

In a brief message posted in Hindi, Singh wrote, "It's not words but power, Aridhaman," hinting at the submarine's induction.

Three-language

how mathematics and science are taught and assessed. Starting in 2026–27 for Class 9, students will be required to take a standard course in both subjects and sit for a common examination worth 80 marks, conducted over three hours.

Students seeking a deeper level of engagement can opt for an additional advanced course in either or both subjects. This advanced component will involve a separate one-hour examination carrying 25 marks. It is designed to assess higher-order thinking skills and a stronger grasp of concepts.

"Students must mandatorily take the standard exam, while the advanced paper remains optional," the official said. "Performance in the advanced paper will not be added to the overall aggregate; instead, students scoring 50 per cent or above will have the advanced-level qualification reflected separately in their mark sheet."

The first batch of students to experience this dual-level system will appear for their Class 10 board examinations in 2028, marking a shift in assessment patterns for the cohort entering Class 9 in 2026.

AAP accuses Chadha of indulging in 'soft...

Continued from Page 1

When the time was right.

However, AAP leaders wasted no time in countering his remarks. Bhagwant Mann led the charge, stating that Chadha appeared "compromised" and had deviated from the party's line, including going against the whip. The criticism was echoed by Saurabh Bharadwaj, who accused Chadha of failing to participate in opposition walkouts in Parliament and not adequately representing the concerns of Punjab, the state he represents in the Upper House.

Bharadwaj alleged that Chadha's recent parliamentary interventions focused on comparatively minor issues, such as food prices at airport canteens, rather than confronting the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP-led Centre. "The government does not care about 'soft PR' when larger issues are at stake," Bharadwaj said, adding that Chadha had remained absent during key political moments, including the arrest of party chief Arvind Kejriwal in March 2024.

The Delhi AAP president also questioned Chadha's absence from opposition initiatives, including a motion seeking action against the Chief Election Commissioner and several coordinated walkouts in Parliament. He said party members are "soldiers" of Kejriwal and are expected to stand united during political challenges.

The criticism extended beyond Bharadwaj. AAP's national media in-charge Anurag Dhanda asked whether someone who "fears" Modi could effectively fight for the country. He pointed to Chadha's refusal to sign a proposal related to the Election Commission and alleged that he had avoided taking strong positions on key democratic issues.

Senior party leader Atishi also questioned Chadha's silence on matters such as rising LPG prices and broader concerns about democracy and the Constitution. Referring to Kejriwal's arrest, she noted that while other leaders were protesting on the streets, Chadha's absence had raised questions. "We defended you then, citing your eye operation. But today, I want to ask if you were even then scared of the BJP," she said.

The party's remarks also included pointed jibes, with some leaders invoking the phrase "Jo Dar Gaya Samjho Mar Gaya" to suggest that political hesitation amounts to defeat.

Chadha, for his part, defended his parliamentary record, stating that he had consistently raised issues affecting ordinary citizens. He listed topics such as high food prices at airports, challenges faced by delivery workers, food adulteration, toll charges, mobile data expiry, and taxation on the middle class. He asked whether speaking about these concerns constituted an offence and thanked the public for their continued support.

His campaign against high airport food prices had led to the introduction of affordable options like Rs 20 samosas and Rs 10 tea at several airports under the 'Udaan Yatri Cafes' initiative. Still, party leaders argued that such issues did not substitute for confronting the Centre on broader political and governance matters.

The developments come against the backdrop of Chadha's recent distancing from party activities. He had remained largely silent during significant moments, including when Kejriwal, former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and others were discharged in the excise policy case last month. He also skipped Kejriwal's press conference and a rally at Jantar Mantar following the court's relief.

Chadha had been abroad for medical treatment during Kejriwal's arrest in March 2024 and was absent for much of the leader's nearly six-month incarceration, meeting him only after his release in September that year.

On Thursday, the AAP replaced Chadha with Ashok Mittal as its deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha. The move followed his prolonged absence from party events and growing unease within the leadership. He is now the second AAP Rajya Sabha member, after Swati Maliwal, to fall out with the party leadership.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party weighed in on the controversy, with Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva stating that Chadha's need to communicate through social media reflected a breakdown of internal dialogue within AAP.

With 10 members in the Rajya Sabha, including seven from Punjab and three from Delhi, the AAP now faces a visible internal rift playing out in public, as its leaders intensify scrutiny of one of their once-prominent young faces.

SEEKS SUPPORT FOR NDA

PM Modi courts voters in grand Puducherry roadshow

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PUDUCHERRY: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a grand roadshow in Puducherry on Friday, seeking support for the NDA and its allies in the April 9 election to the territorial Assembly.

The Prime Minister, flanked by N Rangasamy, founder of the All India N R Congress (AINRC), and BJP leader and Home Minister A Namassivayam, led the roadshow from Ajanta signal point to the Kamarajar statue near Raja Theatre. Covering a distance of less than 2 km, the roadshow took nearly an hour to conclude as large crowds lined the route to catch a glimpse of the Prime Minister.

On his arrival, Modi was accorded a rousing reception by BJP workers and supporters, who raised slogans such as "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Jai Shri Ram." Standing atop an open campaign vehicle, he greeted the crowd, waving as supporters showered flowers along the route.

The city wore a festive look, with BJP and AINRC flags fluttering prominently, especially along SV Patel Road—the starting point of the procession—and up to the Anna Salai–Kamarajar Salai junction, where the roadshow culminated. Cultural performances and traditional dance programmes added colour to the event, drawing enthusiastic participation from local residents.

A large number of supporters had gathered hours in advance, reflecting the high political stakes in the Union Territory. Party leaders expressed confidence that the Prime Minister's visit would energise cadres and improve the electoral prospects of the ruling alliance.

Security arrangements were heightened across the city in view of the Prime Minister's visit, with police deploying personnel at key intersections and along the entire route to ensure smooth conduct of the event.

During his previous visit to Puducherry last month, Modi had inaugurated development projects worth over Rs 2,700 crore, highlighting the Centre's focus on infrastructure and growth in the region.

For the upcoming Assembly elections, the ruling AINRC and the BJP are contesting 16 and 10 seats, respectively. Other NDA constituents, including the AIADMK and the Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi founded by Jose Charles Martin, have been allotted two seats each as part of the alliance arrangement.

With campaigning gaining momentum, the roadshow is being seen as a key effort by the NDA to consolidate support and strengthen its position ahead of the polls.

PM Narendra Modi greets supporters during the roadshow in Puducherry PTI

Highlights

- He was accorded a rousing welcome by the BJP workers amid chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Jai Shri Ram'
- As the prime minister's open campaign vehicle slowly moved on, he waved at the people, and they showered flowers on him and his campaign vehicle
- Cultural shows and traditional dance programmes added colour and spice to the PM's roadshow in Puducherry

Rahul hails UDF as beacon of hope ahead of Kerala polls

'Our team is strong, united, and ready to lead'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday shared a video on social media of him enjoying a hearty breakfast with party leaders in Kerala recently, while discussing the ground realities in connection with the Assembly polls in the state.

Kerala will go to the polls on April 9.

In the video, he sits down to breakfast with Congress general secretary KC Venugopal, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly VD Satheesan, and some party candidates, and holds discussions with them on issues such as brain drain, lack of jobs, and the proposed amendments to the FCRA.

"In between bites of appam, puttu, and omelette, the UDF leaders and I had a very interesting conversation on the ground realities of the Kerala election. It's evident that Kerala deserves change—an overhaul of the education system, real opportunities for youth, and a government that supports its people in sickness and old age," the former MP from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency, said in his post on 'X'.

"UDF is a renewed hope for the people of Kerala—our team is strong, united, and ready to lead," he added.

During the breakfast meeting, Satheesan informed Rahul about how the Congress-led UDF was "exposing and criticising" the government for a long time.

"For the first time, we are bringing alternatives wherever the government has failed," he said.

Rahul then asked what the government's failures in education were, to which Satheesan remarked that courses in the universities were outdated, resulting in brain drain from the state.

"If this continues, within five years, Kerala will become an old-age home," he contended.

Congress MLA from Angamaly, Roji M John, claimed that most arts and science colleges in Kerala have low enrollment and many vacant seats, "as nobody wants to study there."

He said this has resulted in the migration of young people.

Venugopal expressed the view that the education system needs to be revamped.

Rahul then referred to the lack of job creation in Kerala and across the country, saying that employment opportunities now exist in China, its neighbouring countries, and Vietnam, as they "are the ones producing everything".

"Our businesspeople, like the Adanis and Ambanis, don't want to produce anything. They just want to sell Chinese products. They avoid manufacturing because the moment they do, parties like Congress gain strength as labour comes into the factories," Rahul contended.

Rahul Gandhi with Congress MP KC Venugopal, and other party leaders, during a meeting ahead of the Kerala Assembly PTI

'Decisive, meaningful': BJP hails passage of Jan Vishwas Bill

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Friday hailed the passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, in Parliament, describing it as a "decisive", "meaningful" and a "giant step" towards enhancing ease of living and ease of doing business in India.

Parliament on Thursday passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, to amend 784 provisions in 79 central laws for decriminalising and rationalising minor offences to further improve the business environment and check harassment of people.

In a post on X late Thursday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "The passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 in Parliament is India's giant step towards accelerating ease of living and ease of business."

"Cutting down on several legal provisions makes Modi Ji's vision of New India a grand reality by making life easier and business simpler for all," he added.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin said the passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, marks an important step towards improving ease of living and ease of doing business in the country, with a clear focus on reform and simplification.

"By removing outdated legal provisions and reducing compliance burden, it reflects a governance model rooted in trust and efficiency. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, this initiative strengthens the vision of a New India where citizens are empowered, businesses are encouraged and systems are simpler, faster and more effective," Nabin said in a post on X. AGENCIES

'CONFUSION AMONG VOTERS'

Roll revision rush ahead of phase 1 polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: With the first phase of polling days away (April 23), a pressing concern has emerged—whether voters whose names were deleted during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) can realistically secure restoration within the two-day window ending April 6 (freezing of electoral rolls for Phase 1).

Official figures indicate that around 17 lakh names have been deleted in the ongoing revision. Of nearly 60 lakh cases flagged for adjudication, about 52 lakh have been disposed of (till the time this report was filed), leaving close to 8 lakh still pending at the time of reporting. The scale of unresolved claims has raised serious doubts over the feasibility of timely redress before polling begins.

The situation is compounded by delays in operationalising the appellate tribunal mechanism. Nineteen tribunals were proposed to hear appeals arising from the revision process. However, retired Jharkhand judge Justice Tapan Sen has declined the assignment in Kolkata, citing age-related and logistical constraints, effectively reducing capacity at a crucial juncture.

In the absence of fully functional tribunals to date apparently, voters seeking restoration must navigate a tight timeline with limited institutional support. Legal experts point out that the process—submission of documents, verification, and appeals where necessary—is difficult to complete within just two days.

Tensions are also surfacing on the ground. In Malda's Mothabari, protests have been reported over alleged voter list discrepancies, reflecting growing anxiety among residents over possible exclusion.

Confusion persists among voters who have found their names missing from the rolls.

With polling imminent, delays in adjudication could leave a significant number of eligible voters unable to exercise their franchise.

While election authorities maintain that mechanisms are in place to address genuine claims, the numbers suggest a system under strain. As the deadline approaches, the key question remains: can lakhs of affected voters reclaim their voting rights before polling, or does the timeline itself risk exclusion?

Official figures indicate that around 17 lakh names have been deleted in the ongoing revision

Congress calls govt's special session 'poll-driven', alleges MCC violation

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Thursday termed the government's decision to convene a special session of Parliament on April 16–18 a "clear violation" of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), alleging that its timing—when electioneering in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal will be at its peak—was aimed at conferring an electoral advantage on the ruling party.

Party general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said the opposition had unanimously urged the government on March 24 to hold consultations on the Women's Reservation Bill only after April 29, once the five State Assembly elections conclude. "The BJP now wants to take double advantage of women's reservation," he said, describing the hastily convened session as, in effect, an "electoral session."

Ramesh also said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had twice written to Congress president and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge seeking a separate meeting on proposed constitutional amendments linked to the Bill. Kharge, he said, responded by urging the government to convene an all-party meeting instead—a position endorsed by the entire opposition.

The Women's Reservation Bill, passed in September 2023, is tied to a fresh delimitation exercise for its implementation. Questioning the urgency, Ramesh noted that the census data required for delimitation may not be available until 2027 at the earliest.

He also flagged reports suggesting that the special session could take up amendments to Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution to increase parliamentary and assembly seats by 50 per cent. Such a move, he warned, if undertaken without adequate deliberation, could place southern and northwestern States at a structural disadvantage.

Congress also cautioned against any haste in amending the Constitution

TN polls: Annamalai out, Murugan and Tamilisai in BJP's list of 27 candidates

NEW DELHI/CHENNAI: The BJP on Friday announced names of 27 candidates for the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, including Union Minister L Murugan from the Avinashi seat and former Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan from Mylapore, but its former state president K Annamalai is not in the electoral fray.

The absence of Annamalai, a former IPS officer who was the face of the party during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, from the list of candidates comes amidst reports of differences over seat allocation.

"In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, they asked me to contest. Now, nobody has asked me to contest. I did not seek an opportunity, and I am carrying out the tasks assigned to me. If the party decides and asks me to contest, I will," Annamalai told reporters in Coimbatore last month.

Annamalai unsuccessfully contested from Aravakurichi in the 2021 Assembly election and also lost the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

When asked why Annamalai's name was not on the list of candidates, Union Minister and BJP State Election In-Charge Piyush Goyal said,"he is a dedicated soldier of the party, and he has desired to work across the state rather than being restricted to one constituency".

"The candidates are selected based on the inputs from the state and the desire of each candidate where he would like to serve, in what capacity he would like to serve. All things are taken into consideration," he said.

According to the BJP list, its Mahila Morcha national president Vanathi Srinivasan will contest from Coimbatore (North), Kirthika Shivkumar will be the candidate from Modakurichi, S Vijayadharani from Vilavancode, and Nagesh Kumar from the Thalli seat.

Polling for the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly is scheduled for April 23, and the counting of votes will take place on May 4.

The party has retained three sitting MLAs, renominating senior leader M R Gandhi from Nagercoil. Party president Nainar Nagenthran, who won from the Tirunelveli constituency in the 2021 election, has been fielded from Sattur.

Vanathi Srinivasan, who defeated actor-politician Kamal Haasan from Coimbatore South, has been nominated from Coimbatore North. AGENCIES

TMC alleges bias in Bhowanipore RO, submits memorandum

AGNIHOTRI GUPTA

KOLKATA: The Trinamool Congress on Friday submitted a memorandum to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer seeking the removal of the Returning Officer of Bhowanipore Assembly Constituency, alleging bias and conflict of interest. The party claimed that the officer's alleged proximity to Suvendu Adhikari, a contesting candidate, raises serious concerns over the neutrality of the electoral process and violates established guidelines of the Election Commission of India.

A four-member delegation visited the CEO office in the afternoon to submit the representation.

Following the submission, party leaders addressed a press meet, reiterating their demand for immediate intervention.

TMC leaders at CEO office on Friday PIC/GAUTAM BOSE

Shashi Panja said: "We have placed clear and documented evidence before the Commission. Free and fair elections cannot be conducted under an officer whose neutrality is in question. We expect urgent corrective action to uphold the integrity of the process."

Senior leader Aroop Biswas stated: "This time the election has been turned into a mockery. The election is being controlled by the BJP, not the Commission."

Regarding the Form 6 submissions, the CEO reportedly told the delegation that the Commission would display district-wise Form 6 applications of voters who had been deleted in February. The delegation also complained about some voters whose names appear in both the Bihar voter list and the list of West Bengal. Panja stated: "Is it our work to find out? What is the Commission doing?"

Another claim of the TMC is that three BDOs have been posted in their home districts for election duty, which violates election rules.

According to the TMC, the Commission has taken note of the names and started an investigation. The memorandum also called for the appointment of a neutral and senior officer as Returning Officer, stressing that any delay in action could erode public confidence in the electoral system.

BJP, Congress against strong Muslim leadership in Assam: Owaisi

GUWAHATI: AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday alleged that both the BJP and Congress are two sides of the same coin, as neither of the parties wants a strong Muslim leadership in Assam.

Addressing election rallies for the AIUDF candidates at Goalpara and Dhubri, the Hyderabad MP said that both parties are responsible for the sufferings of the Muslims, and it is important to have a strong leadership of the minority community in the state.

"I have come to Assam to strengthen Muslim leadership in the state and to ensure that the lives of Muslims improve so that they can lead a dignified life", he said. Owaisi accused BJP leader and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of practising the "politics of hate" and provoking violence in the state. "Sarma is the chief minister, but why does he hate a particular community so much? He should remember that he is the CM of all, whether they vote for him or not," the AIMIM chief said. MPOST

Jan Vishwas Bill brings compliance relief, decriminalisation in health sector

Reflects the government's commitment to fostering a trust-based governance framework

NEW DELHI: The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, passed by both Houses of Parliament, amends certain provisions in the health sector aligning with the broader objective of simplifying compliance while maintaining robust safeguards for public health.

The Bill reflects the government's commitment to fostering a trust-based governance framework and ensuring proportionate regulation by reducing the compliance burden on individuals and businesses, the Union health ministry said.

A central feature of these reforms is the replacement of criminal penalties, particularly imprisonment for minor procedural violations, with graded monetary penalties.

"This marks a shift towards a more facilitative regulatory framework while retaining strict action for serious violations affecting public health and safety," the ministry said in a statement.

Within the health sector, the amendments span key legislations including the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; the Pharmacy Act, 1948; the Food Safety and Standards Act; the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010; and the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021.

In the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, several provisions have been amended to substitute imprisonment with financial penalties and to introduce a structured adjudication mechanism, the statement said.

Notably, an adjudication mechanism has been introduced for violations under Section 27A(ii) and Section 28A.

This ensures that minor violations in the case of cosmetics (other than spurious or adulterated) will not require court intervention and can instead be addressed through a civil penalty framework, it said.

Further, violations such as non-maintenance of documents or non-submission of information, which were earlier punishable through court-imposed fines or imprisonment, can now be adjudicated through this civil penalty mechanism.

For the first time, the Act provides for the appointment of adjudicating authorities by the central government and state governments, along with a defined process involving issuance of show cause notices, provision for personal hearing and an appellate mechanism.

This reform will significantly reduce the burden on courts, minimise layers of litigation and enable faster resolution of minor compliance issues, the statement said.

It will particularly benefit the cosmetics industry by allowing structured and predictable handling of minor infringements, including procedural lapses such as non-maintenance of statutory records or documents, which are now free from prolonged litigation, it said.

Similarly, amendments to the Pharmacy Act, 1948 aim to modernise penalty provisions and enhance accountability through increased financial penalties for non-compliance. The reforms also ensure alignment with updated legal frameworks.

Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, provisions have been streamlined to strengthen enforcement while ensuring that penalties are proportionate to the nature of the offence. AGENCIES

Piyush Goyal speaks on the Bill during a meeting on Friday PTI

Key Points

- A central feature of these reforms is the replacement of criminal penalties, particularly imprisonment for minor procedural violations, with graded monetary penalties.
- "This marks a shift towards a more facilitative regulatory framework while retaining strict action for serious violations affecting public health and safety," the ministry said in a statement.

Nation Briefs

AMARAVATI AS CAPITAL OF ANDHRA HAS NATIONWIDE SUPPORT: CM NAIDU

AMARAVATI: Despite alleged conspiracies orchestrated by the opposition YSRCP, Amaravati's status as the capital of Andhra Pradesh has received unanimous support from the country, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said on Friday. Addressing a press conference, Naidu asserted that after receiving the central government's sovereign seal, no one can alter the status of the capital city in the future. "They (YSRCP) wanted to destroy Amaravati, but we brought a law. Today, the entire country stands behind Amaravati. Overcoming all conspiracies, Amaravati has emerged victorious."

NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN OVER PROPOSED FCRA AMENDMENTS: RIJIJU

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Reaching out to the Christian community on Good Friday, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju—who is in Kerala campaigning for the BJP—said there was no cause for concern regarding the proposed FCRA amendments. The Union Minority Affairs Minister assured that minority communities, especially Christian missionaries, need not worry, as the Narendra Modi-led government will protect their interests and offer support wherever possible. Rijiju claimed that the Communists and Congress in Kerala are spreading rumours and misleading NGOs, especially those working for the welfare of the people, regarding the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

'MAJORITY OF MILITARY CADETS WERE BELOW AGE OF 30 & WOULD NEED EMPLOYMENT'

SC weighs ex-servicemen status for injured cadets

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has asked the Centre if military cadets who become unfit due to disabilities sustained during training can be given ex-servicemen status, enabling them to avail reservation benefits in government and semi-government jobs.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said a majority of the military cadets were below the age of 30 and would need employment.

"During the course of submissions, one of the aspects that was discussed was as to whether the boarded-out cadets could also be considered as ex-servicemen or ex-military personnel for the purpose of having the benefit of reservation for such persons in various governmental and semi-government jobs and posts," the bench said.

REPRESENTATIOANL IMAGE

"Learned ASG to seek instructions on this aspect, so that the scope of the ex-military personnel could also include the boarded-out cadets, since a majority of them are in their 20s, 30s", it said.

Additional Solicitor General N Venkataraman, appearing for the Union of India, said it would give a comprehensive response to the issue.

Highlights

- Additional Solicitor General N Venkataraman, appearing for the Union of India, said it would give a comprehensive response to the issue
- SC was hearing a suo motu case related to the difficulties faced by cadets who were boarded out due to injury or disability during training
- The top court asked the Centre to explore a scheme for the rehabilitation of the disabled candidates into desk jobs or any other work related to defence services, after their treatment was over

The top court was hearing a suo motu case related to the difficulties faced by cadets who were boarded out due to injury or disability during training.

On August 18 last year, the apex court said it wants defence forces to have "braveheart cadets" who should not be deterred by injuries or disabilities suffered during training, and directed the Centre to explore the possibility of providing them with insurance covers for such exigencies.

It sought the response of the Centre and the defence forces in a suo motu case on difficulties faced by cadets, who were medically discharged from military institutes on account of disabilities suffered during training programmes.

The court said the Centre should explore the possibility of granting an insurance cover like group insurance to the cadets undergoing rigorous training in different military institutes to deal with any exigency of death or disabilities.

It also asked the Centre to seek instruction on enhancing the current lump sum amount -- Rs 40,000 for cadets disabled during the training programme -- to meet their medical needs.

The top court was informed that a file relating to granting them Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) cover had been cleared by the defence ministry, but not implemented.

The top court asked the Centre to explore a scheme for the rehabilitation of the disabled candidates into desk jobs or any other work related to defence services, after their treatment was over.

On August 12 last year, the top court had taken suo motu cognisance of a media report, which flagged the issue of these cadets.

They were stated to be once a part of training at the nation's top military institutes, such as the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Indian Military Academy (IMA).

According to a report, there were around 500 officer cadets who were medically discharged from these military institutes since 1985, due to varying degrees of disability incurred during training, and are now staring at mounting medical bills with an ex-gratia monthly payment that's far short of what they need.

'Ganga water meets bathing standards; pollution declining'

'CPCB monitors water quality of the River Ganga at 112 locations'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Ganga water meets bathing standards at all monitored locations and pollution levels in the river are declining, according to the government.

In a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary on Thursday said pH and dissolved oxygen levels of the river meet the required norms for bathing criteria across all locations, based on median water quality data for 2025 (January to August).

He said the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) monitors water quality of the River Ganga at 112 locations across five main-stem states of Uttarakhand (19), Uttar Pradesh (41), Bihar (33), Jharkhand (4) and West Bengal (15).

The minister said water quality with respect to biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) conforms to bathing criteria in the entire stretch of the river in Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal, except certain stretches in Uttar Pradesh, including Farrukhabad to Purana Rajapur in Kanpur, Dalmau in Raebareli, and downstream Mirzapur to Tarighat in Ghazipur.

He said bio-monitoring conducted during 2024-25 at 50 locations along River Ganga and its tributaries and 26 locations along River Yamuna indicates that biological water quality predominantly ranges from "good" to "moderate", reflecting the ecological potential of the rivers to sustain aquatic life.

The minister said a "diverse and holistic set of interventions" has been undertaken under the Namami Gange Programme for cleaning and rejuvenation of Ganga and its tributaries, including waste water treatment, riverfront management, ensuring e-flow, rural sanitation, afforestation, biodiversity conservation and public participation.

Devotees carry holy water of River Ganga as they wait in queues to offer prayers on 'Nikashi Puja' festival, in Mirzapur, Friday PTI

As of February 2026, a total of 524 projects have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs 43,030 crore, of which 355 have been completed, he said.

He said of these, 218 sewerage infrastructure projects costing Rs 35,794 crore have been taken up for remediation of polluted river areas with a treatment capacity of 6,610 MLD, of which 138 sewage treatment plant projects with a capacity of 4,050 MLD have been completed and made operational.

The minister said science-based species restoration, rescue and rehabilitation programmes for aquatic species such as dolphins, otters, hilsa, turtles and gharials, undertaken in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and state forest departments, have shown marked improvements in biodiversity, with increased sightings of riverine species.

CM Saini: Strengthening rural sanitation and drainage systems utmost priority

MPOST BUREAU

CHANDIGARH: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday stressed the need to strengthen sanitation and drainage systems in rural areas, directing officers concerned to ensure regular and time-bound cleaning of village ponds and wastewater channels across the state.

Chairing a review meeting of the Haryana Pond and Waste Water Management Authority here today, the Chief Minister said maintaining cleanliness in villages must be a priority to prevent inconvenience to residents.

He underlined that village ponds should remain free from foul smell, and waterlogging in residential areas must be avoided at all costs.

The CM further directed that cleaning, desilting and drainage works be carried out under a structured Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to ensure transparency, quality and accountability. He also called for improved planning and the use of modern technology and scientific design in the construction, reconstruction and modernisation of ponds.

He directed officers to undertake beautification works around ponds to create clean and accessible spaces for villagers, including for morning and evening walks.

To enhance efficiency, Nayab Singh Saini suggested the use of solar pumps for regular cleaning and maintaining water flow. He warned that negligence in sanitation at the village level would invite strict action, with accountability fixed on concerned officials, sarpanches and staff.

Further, he directed that Panchayat Secretaries be assigned responsibility for regular monitoring of ponds in every village and that the number of sanitation workers be increased to strengthen the system.

Meanwhile, giving a major push to infrastructure development in Faridabad through Faridabad Metropolitan Development Authority (FMDA), the authority approved an annual Budget of ₹988 crore for the financial year 2026–27.

Country passing through a 'time of crisis', alleges Akhilesh Yadav

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government, alleging that the country is passing through a "time of crisis" rather than an era of progress.

Addressing the media at the party office in Lucknow after a meeting with district-level office-bearers of Lohia Vahini, Chhatra Sabha and Mulayam Singh Youth Brigade, Yadav said the Samajwadi Party would celebrate the birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar across villages and hold discussions on the Constitution.

He accused the ruling government of attempting to weaken constitutional values and replace democracy with a more centralised system. "This is not a period of progress. It is a time of crisis. Even those from traditional and religious sections are facing difficulties. Saints are being attacked and insulted," he said.

Akhilesh Yadav

Targeting the Bharatiya Janata Party, Yadav said the government was functioning like a trader. "We follow the ideals of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the path shown by Ram Manohar Lohia and the principles of Netaji Mulayam Singh Yadav to establish a socialist system. On the other hand, the BJP government is working like a trader selling everything with the sole aim of profit," he said.

He alleged that corruption under the present dispensation has led to rising inflation and economic distress.

Raising the issue of unemployment, the Samajwadi Party chief said the youth were being shown dreams of large investments without tangible outcomes. "Educated young people do not have jobs. If you ask the government how many employment opportunities have been created through investments, they do not provide figures," he said.

Haryana mandis lack gunny bags, tarpaulins and labour: Hooda

MPOST BUREAU

CHANDIGARH: Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition, Bhupinder Singh Hooda stated on Friday that while procurement has indeed commenced in the Mandis, farmers are receiving nothing but trouble.

"Conditions such as large number plates on tractors, biometric verification, gate passes, and the requirement of three guarantors are being imposed—conditions so onerous that a frustrated farmer might simply choose to sell his produce outside the Mandi at a loss and leave," he pointed out.

He asserted that this is shaping up to be yet another scam. "Not every individual owns a tractor, after all. The government is imposing conditions that are effectively forcing farmers to sell their produce at distress prices. The Haryana govt is preparing to turn the farmer into a prisoner," he added. Hooda affirmed that "we stand firmly with the farmers and will resolutely oppose the government." Starting tomorrow, he himself, along with other party office-bearers and MLAs—will begin touring the Mandis in their respective constituencies to personally observe the ground reality.

The Leader of the Opposition further remarked that during the tenure of the Congress government, farmers consistently received the Minimum Support Price (MSP); however, under the BJP government, farmers rarely receive the full MSP.

"This season, too, the crop yield has been low. Farmers have suffered heavy losses due to hailstorms and rainfall. Yet, the government has neither conducted a special 'Girdawari' (crop damage assessment), nor provided any compensation, nor even mentioned the possibility of offering a bonus," said Hooda.

He demanded that the government immediately provide a bonus on wheat, offer compensation for crop damage, and ensure complete preparedness in the mandis. He further demanded that the restrictions currently imposed within the Mandis be lifted.

Assam polls: Eager to vote, UP's migrant workers head home

Raises fears of garbage pile-up in various cities

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

LUCKNOW: A steady stream of migrant sanitation workers from Uttar Pradesh is heading back to Assam ahead of the April 9 Assembly elections, driven by a strong urge to vote and secure their identity, even as their departure threatens to disrupt waste management in several cities.

For many of these workers, casting a vote is not just a civic duty but proof of belonging. The prospect of returning home, standing in line at polling booths and getting their fingers inked carries deep significance. It reassures them that their names remain on electoral rolls and their identity is intact.

> For many of these workers, casting a vote is not just a civic duty but proof of belonging

This silent migration, however, is beginning to affect daily life in urban areas. Resident Welfare Associations in Lucknow and other cities have started warning of irregular garbage collection and sanitation gaps as sweepers, rag pickers and domestic workers leave in large numbers.

In Bal Vihar Colony in Lucknow, residents say even a brief disruption could spiral into a crisis. "If garbage is not cleared for even two days, the stench becomes unbearable. Stray animals gather and it quickly turns into a health hazard," said Indu Prakash Sharma, an office-bearer of the local RWA. "We are trying to arrange alternatives, but the dependence on migrant workers is very high."

Municipal authorities acknowledge the strain. A senior official said a significant share of the sanitation workforce in cities like Lucknow comes from Assam and nearby regions. "When many of them leave at the same time, it creates an immediate vacuum. Backup arrangements are being made, but maintaining normal operations is a challenge," the official said.

'Punjab records 65,264 govt jobs in just 4 years'

MPOST BUREAU

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann presented a comprehensive report card highlighting that the government has delivered a record 65,264 government jobs in just four years. The government has extended a 5-year age relaxation to compensate for the lost opportunities caused by previous regimes.

Backed by transparent recruitment across key sectors including education, police, power, health and local bodies, the Bhagwant Mann government has positioned itself as a clean break from past practices of favouritism, asserting that jobs are now being given to common citizens without bribes or recommendations.

At the same time, the rapid expansion of Digital Punjab, with 30 lakh monthly footfall at 'Sewa Kendras' and over 8.20 crore services delivered, underscores a broader push towards transparent governance, skill development and systemic reform aimed at reshaping Punjab's future.

CM Bhagwant Mann addresses a press conference MPOST

Presenting the report card of various departments, CM Mann said, "Punjab is emerging as a new digital hub which has brought transparency in its functioning thereby opening new vistas of government jobs and opportunities for the youth."

The Chief Minister highlighted that for the first time in Punjab's history, 65,264 government jobs have been provided within four years, adding, "In Education departments 6,308 jobs have been given, in Punjab Police 12,966 jobs, in Power Department 8,765 jobs, in Health & Family Welfare and Medical Education 6,320 jobs, 5,771 in Local Government Department and others." He added, "This has checked the brain drain from the state and youth from every village, town, and city in Punjab have benefited by getting jobs."

Emphasising transparency in recruitment, Mann said, "All jobs were given purely on merit and eligibility, without any bribery or favouritism. No paper leaks occurred, and no recruitment was challenged in court." He further stated, "Several candidates secured jobs multiple times across departments and many of them even returned from abroad to take these jobs."

He noted that earlier recruitment processes were delayed in courts, often causing candidates to cross the age limit, adding, "Now, youth prefer preparing for government jobs instead of going to IELTS centres."

Contrasting the present governance model with earlier regimes, CM Mann said, "Previous governments favoured their own families instead of common people but the state government has worked for the well being for all due to which around seven lakh have got jobs even in private companies."

He added, "The Hunar Vikas Mission has been started under which five Multi-Skill Development Centres have been established in Amritsar, Bathinda, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, and Ludhiana." He further stated, "In these centres 1.25 lakh youth have been trained, out of which 73,250 have been placed," adding that MoUs have been signed with companies like Microsoft and IBM for training in AI, cybersecurity and cloud technologies.

Global push to Himachal tourism, HPTDC profits exceed Rs 100 cr mark

'We are targeting a global push to the tourism industry with new facilities'

ASHWANI SHARMA

SHIMLA: The Himachal Pradesh government proposes a major push to the tourism sector, undertaking massive investment plans and the expansion of Gaggal Airport for the landing of larger aircraft and renovation of the heritage hotels, including the profit-making Hotel Holiday Home in Shimla.

"We are targeting a global push to the tourism industry with new facilities and upgrading infrastructure, and also raising the profits of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) – a government-owned pioneering PSU hosting tourists in more than 60 hotels, some of which are landmark properties," said R S Bali, Chairman of the HPTDC, at a press conference here.

Bali said despite challenges like natural calamities and disruptions, HPTDC has seen the biggest jump in turnover from Rs 80 cr to Rs 110 crore.

Key Points

- Bali said despite challenges like natural calamities and disruptions, HPTDC has seen the biggest jump in turnover from Rs 80 cr to Rs 110 crore
- Among administrative reforms, Bali said HPTDC will soon set up a 24x7 call center and a flying squad to monitor operations

"HPTDC has witnessed record growth, and major infrastructure redevelopment is underway with a long-term vision to transform Himachal Pradesh, the northern hill state, into the most sought-after world tourism destination," he declared.

It reflects the commitment of our workforce and better management practices, he said

He rolled out a multi-crore plan of ADB funding to add new facilities for the tourists, whose footfall in the small hill state of 75 lakh population is nearly 5 crores in a year.

The HPTDC chairman, who is also an MLA from Nagrota Bhagwan, said a major Rs 180 crore tourism project at Nagrota Bagwan is proposed for making Kangra a tourism capital with facilities like a five-star hotel, a large convention and wedding facility, and an international-standard musical fountain with the Dhauladhar ranges as a backdrop.

"This initiative will position Himachal as a leading wedding destination, similar to Jaipur, Udaipur, and Goa," Bali said.

Among administrative reforms, Bali said HPTDC will soon set up a 24x7 call center and a flying squad to monitor operations, ensure transparency in billing, and improve service quality.

He added that tie-ups with private travel platforms have also been initiated to enhance bookings and generate advance revenue, an initiative he described as a first-of-its-kind move for a government tourism corporation.

He also highlighted major upcoming projects, including a Rs 45 crore renovation of the historic Hotel Holiday Home in Shimla, a Rs 20 crore investment in Hotel Hamir, and a Rs 35 crore development of a tourism complex at Jwala Ji.

Man kills twin daughters in Telangana

KARIMNAGAR: A man allegedly killed his four-year-old twin daughters by drowning them in a well in a village in Karimnagar district on Friday, police said.

The accused, a resident of Jubileenagar village, had been married for the past six years and the couple had twin daughters.

According to police, the couple had been facing frequent domestic disputes.

Preliminary inquiries suggest that the man took the children to an agricultural field and is suspected to have pushed them into a well resulting in them drowning.

Acting on information, police teams launched a search operation and later recovered the bodies of the two children from the well. Police have taken the accused into custody.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Vijaya Kumar visited the scene and supervised the investigation.

A heavy police presence has been deployed in the village to prevent any untoward incidents and maintain law and order. AGENCIES

Nation Briefs

NFR: RPF REINFORCE ITS COMMITMENT TO PASSENGER SAFETY IN FY 2025–26

MALIGAON: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to passenger safety, security and public service through the commendable performance of its Railway Protection Force (RPF) during the financial year 2025–26. Through intensified surveillance, prompt action and a proactive enforcement strategy, the RPF has significantly strengthened security across railway premises, ensuring a safer travel environment for passengers across its jurisdiction.

ASSAM: MAN KILLS 6-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER INSIDE TRAIN

Guwahati: A six-year-old girl was killed allegedly by her father inside a train at Silanibari station in Assam's Lakhimpur district on Friday, a Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) spokesperson said. Security personnel have arrested the accused, he said. The spokesperson said the incident took place inside a general coach of the 15813 Dekargaon- Murkongselek Express around 9.15 am. "Railway Police Force and Government Railway Police personnel immediately reached the spot. The accused has been arrested," he said. "After recording statements of eyewitnesses and taking custody of the body by police authorities, the train departed from Silonibari at 10.58 am," the spokesperson added.

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EDITORIAL

WAR SINGES BIG TECH

Iran's warning that it may target major American corporations introduces a new and unsettling dimension to geopolitical conflict. Traditionally, wars and tensions have centred on state actors, military installations, and strategic assets. What is now emerging is a blurring of lines between geopolitical confrontation and the global corporate ecosystem. When companies such as Microsoft, Apple, and Google are explicitly named in a threat matrix, the message is unmistakable: the infrastructure of global technology itself is no longer peripheral to conflict, but central to it. This marks a significant shift, because these firms are not merely commercial entities; they are the backbone of the digital economy, powering cloud computing, artificial intelligence systems, financial networks, and everyday communication across continents.

Iran's rationale, as articulated through its military establishment, reflects a growing perception that modern warfare is no longer confined to missiles and troops, but is increasingly mediated through data, algorithms, and digital intelligence. Technology companies, particularly those at the forefront of artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructure, are viewed as enablers of military capability—whether through data analytics, surveillance systems, or logistical support. This perception, whether fully accurate or not, alters the risk profile of global tech firms. Their offices, data centres, and personnel in regions such as the Gulf become potential pressure points in a broader geopolitical contest. Even if no direct attack materialises, the signalling itself is powerful enough to disrupt investor confidence, delay expansion plans, and trigger precautionary shutdowns. In a tightly integrated global economy, perception often travels faster than reality.

The consequences of any disruption to these companies would extend far beyond the immediate geography of West Asia. The modern digital economy is deeply interdependent, with cloud services acting as invisible infrastructure for banking, aviation, healthcare, logistics, and governance systems worldwide. A disturbance in operations—whether through physical threats, cyber retaliation, or even temporary closures—could cascade across sectors. Financial markets, already sensitive to geopolitical shocks, would likely react sharply. Supply chains dependent on digital coordination could face delays. Even routine services such as payments, e-commerce transactions, and data storage could experience instability if core systems are strained. The risk, therefore, is not limited to physical damage but includes systemic disruption, where uncertainty alone is enough to slow down global economic activity.

For India, the implications are indirect yet deeply consequential. The country's information technology sector is intricately linked to global technology giants, both as a service provider and as a user of their platforms. Firms such as TCS and Infosys operate within an ecosystem where partnerships with American technology companies are central to business models. Any disruption in client operations, especially in regions like the Gulf that host significant corporate activity, could lead to project delays, contract renegotiations, or a slowdown in outsourcing demand. Additionally, a substantial portion of India's digital infrastructure—ranging from startups to large enterprises—relies on cloud services provided by global players. If these services face interruptions or security concerns, the ripple effects could be felt across banking systems, digital payments, online retail, and even government platforms. While India itself may not be a direct target, its economic interdependence ensures that it cannot remain insulated.

The more immediate concern, however, lies in employment and sentiment within the IT sector. India's technology workforce, which has long benefited from global integration, is particularly sensitive to shifts in outsourcing demand and investment cycles. A prolonged period of uncertainty could lead companies to adopt a cautious approach to hiring, delay expansions, or rationalise costs. Even without large-scale job losses, the slowdown in new opportunities can have a tangible impact on fresh graduates and mid-career professionals. The sector has already been navigating challenges related to automation, artificial intelligence, and changing client expectations. An external geopolitical shock adds another layer of complexity. At the same time, it would be premature to assume a structural downturn. The global dependence on digital services remains robust, and in some cases, crises accelerate digital adoption. The real question is whether India can leverage this moment to strengthen its own technological capabilities and reduce excessive reliance on external platforms.

Ultimately, the situation underscores a larger reality: technology is no longer neutral terrain. As geopolitical tensions increasingly intersect with digital infrastructure, countries and companies alike must rethink resilience, diversification, and strategic autonomy. For India, this is both a warning and an opportunity. The warning lies in recognising the vulnerabilities of deep integration without adequate buffers. The opportunity lies in accelerating domestic capabilities in cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity, while continuing to engage with global ecosystems. The coming months will determine whether the current tensions remain a momentary disruption or evolve into a longer-term recalibration of how technology, business, and geopolitics intersect. Either way, the era in which global tech companies could operate largely insulated from geopolitical fault lines appears to be drawing to a close.

DELHI BUDGET

From Intent To Impact

More than a fiscal exercise, the Delhi Budget 2026–27 positions governance as a lived promise of welfare, mobility, care and opportunity

RAJ KUMAR BHATIA

THE WRITER IS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI

When a bird takes flight, it does not just look at the sky. It looks for a safe nest for its young. That is the difference between ordinary governance and a thinking government.

The Delhi Budget 2026–27 is not just Rs 1,03,700 crore. It is not just numbers. It is intent, empathy, and vision. It reflects what Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently emphasised: "Governance must transform lives, not just create schemes."

This philosophy is clearly reflected in the governance approach of the Rekha Gupta Government, which is focused on delivering outcomes on the ground with accountability, transparency, and speed. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, governance in Delhi is being redefined—from announcement-driven to delivery-driven, from intent to impact.

The Chief Minister has consistently emphasised that "Development is meaningful only when every citizen feels secure and empowered." This guiding principle is visible in every layer of this budget.

This is a budget that begins with life itself.

Fifty-six tests for newborns under the ANMOL scheme are not merely a policy decision; they are reassurance for every mother.

This is a budget that empowers a young girl. An allocation of Rs 90 crore to provide bicycles to more than one lakh girls is not about mobility alone; it is about freedom, confidence, and dignity. Women's safety has been strengthened through investments in surveillance systems, better lighting, and safer public transport. This is not infrastructure alone; this is trust built into the system.

> The Rekha Gupta Government's first budget frames development not as expenditure alone, but as a long-view investment in citizens' lives

Rekha Gupta's Delhi vision integrates growth, welfare and dignity across every stage of life

Beyond these immediate interventions, the budget adopts a broader, life-cycle approach to governance, addressing the needs of citizens at different stages of life. It seeks to connect policy not only with infrastructure, but with lived experience.

Healthcare continues to be a central pillar. With more than Rs 12,000 crore allocated to health and the development of 750 Ayushman Arogya Mandir, there is a clear effort to expand access to quality care. At the same time, the increase in undergraduate medical seats from around 600 to over 800 reflects a long-term investment in healthcare capacity.

Education is being aligned more closely with opportunity. The introduction of a Talent Hunt Scheme and the expansion of skill development initiatives signal a move towards identifying and nurturing potential, enabling young citizens to move towards self-reliance.

Infrastructure development remains a key focus, guided by the Four S framework articulated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi—scope, scale, speed, and skill. Allocations of Rs 5,900 crore for public works and Rs 7,900 crore for urban development reflect this direction.

Visible improvements are planned in everyday infrastructure, including end-to-end recarpeting of 750 kilometres of roads. Targeted investments in Trans-Yamuna development and Delhi Gram Vikas Board initiatives indicate an effort to ensure more balanced regional growth.

Basic services are also being strengthened. With Rs 9,000 crore allocated to the Delhi Jal Board, the expansion of water supply and sewerage infrastructure aims to address long-standing urban challenges.

Transport planning reflects a forward-looking approach, with metro expansion, increased deployment of electric buses, and a broader push towards sustainable mobility. Environmental priorities are further reinforced through the expansion of the green budget and the scaling up of waste processing to 15,000 metric tonnes per day.

An important dimension of the budget is its emphasis on dignity across generations. The introduction of initiatives such as Vayo Anand Yojana creates meaningful spaces for senior citizens to engage, participate, and live with joy. It recognises that development is not only about growth, but also about respect and care for those who have built the foundations of society.

Similarly, initiatives such as Mahila Haat (Rani Haat) provide platforms for women artisans to connect directly with markets. These are not merely economic measures; they are pathways to self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and dignity, where skill is transformed into sustainable livelihood and independence.

Another important dimension of the Rekha Gupta Government's approach is compassion as a governing principle. Investments in veterinary hospitals and gaushala facilities reflect a broader understanding of responsibility within an urban ecosystem.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has observed, "Good governance must become a people's movement." This budget reflects that vision by reaching multiple sections of society and integrating welfare with development.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has also emphasised that "We are not planning for the next year; we are planning for the next generation." This long-term orientation is visible in the budget's focus on sustainability, capacity building, and institutional strengthening.

What ultimately defines this budget—and the governance approach of the Rekha Gupta Government—is its attempt to balance scale with sensitivity. It recognises the concerns of households, the aspirations of young people, and the dignity of senior citizens, while building systems that are efficient, inclusive, and forward-looking.

It may therefore be seen not merely as a financial budget, but as a statement of direction—one that seeks to build a Delhi that is not only more developed, but also more inclusive, secure, and humane.

Views expressed are personal

AT VANTAGE

India's Scope For Biotech

India is pushing ahead with a robust plan for the biotech sector, charged by government support, dynamic founders, and finally, patient capital

SHUTAPA PAUL

THE WRITER IS AN AUTHOR AND MEDIA ENTREPRENEUR

A nation's ambitions, even if delayed, are laudable to a patriot. It becomes incumbent upon us to cheer the right decisions, historically impeded as they may be, simply because thankfully, it's finally happening! For generations, India's attitude towards research and development was almost akin to feeding foreign universities and companies. A reverse brain drain that happened in plain sight as bright and able Indian minds contributed towards global innovation. All at the same time, when we desperately needed it back home, too. It's not that nothing happened on Indian shores; of course, we made some strides, but did we ever optimally push sectors such as research and development? We didn't even scratch the surface.

Soon after acquiring our Independence, our forefathers had bigger fish to fry. Robbed of our riches and prospects by the colonial raj, it was a time of fighting poverty, establishing reliable healthcare, encouraging industry, and generating employment. Even after we stabilised our existence on the back of newfound freedom, we didn't enthusiastically take up the cudgels of innovation. For years, India continued to spend about 0.6-0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on R&D compared to the US, China, and Israel, which spend anywhere between 2.5 per cent and 5 per cent. Countries such as China have gradually surpassed us, and the reality of the advancement of their technologies is there now for all to behold. I mean, just ask Galgotias University.

But finally, change is afoot. Maybe it's the USD 300 billion dollar opportunity in the bioeconomy sector or the early successes of tenacious biotech startups such as String Bio, Eyestem, Bugworks Research, Pandorum Technologies, among others — but the tide is definitely turning. These brilliant teams are creating path-breaking treatments that will not only serve the world but, in many instances, dramatically democratise access by reducing cost. As per the recently released 'India's Biopharma Moment' by venture capital firm Endiya Partners, in 2026, the bioeconomy sector is pegged at USD 195 billion, and the projected USD 300 billion will come briskly by 2033 — a massive testament to the bullishness surrounding it.

> For decades, Indian talent powered global innovation while domestic research lagged, but now it is finally correcting course

India's bioeconomy rise signals promise, but execution speed will define its global position

Unlike in other countries, the majority of the support to R&D in India has come from the Indian government. As paltry as it may have been compared to other nations, it must be noted that for a very long time, the government, even in its limited capacity, has been the primary benefactor. Private capital has largely remained absent, chasing quicker and larger returns. A handful of investors have propounded patient capital in the recent past; a trend that the government hopes will pick up pace in contemporary times. So enthused is the government by the possibility of this sector that, along with industry-friendly policies and programmes, a Rs 1 lakh crore Research, Development Innovation Fund (RDIF) has been constituted to mobilise private capital.

As gung-ho as the horizon may seem, there are still sobering realities to grapple with, though. Even if capital is not an issue, the efficacy of the regulator will remain in question. Industry leaders say that approvals are slow and often not time-bound, unlike in other nations. It's also true that perhaps the regulatory teams don't have the experience of handling breakthrough R&D swiftly. Therefore, while the government encourages more investors to pump in capital into the sunrise sector, it must simultaneously strengthen domestic regulatory processes and compliance with a view to elevating us to world standards.

Here's taking an unbiased look at the brass tacks — the opportunity is well-established, the talent has long been ready, and the right kind of capital is finally on its way. Everything seems well-aligned, but what about the cost of lost time? Can we scale speedily enough to accomplish the potential already achieved by other nations and possibly even dream of leading in a few? Or are we destined to play catch-up? Industry leaders and practitioners opine that India's time to shine, at least in the field of bioeconomy, may well be nigh. A lot will transpire in this coming decade, and all eyes are on us.

Views expressed are personal

DEAR EDITOR

RETHINKING SCHOOL LEARNING

The CBSE's decision to introduce the three-language formula from Class 6 and a two-level system in mathematics and science from Class 9 marks a significant shift aligned with the National Education Policy. While the emphasis on multilingual learning is commendable, its implementation may pose challenges for students already coping with academic pressure and diverse linguistic backgrounds. Requiring two Indian languages could strengthen cultural roots, but it must be ensured that flexibility is maintained for students from transferable jobs or international schooling systems. The provision for exemptions is welcome, yet clarity and consistency in its application will be crucial. Similarly, the introduction of standard and advanced levels in mathematics and science has the potential to cater to varied learning abilities. However, separating advanced performance from the aggregate may dilute its perceived value, potentially discouraging students from opting for higher-level learning despite its intellectual benefits. For these reforms to succeed, schools must be adequately equipped with trained teachers, appropriate resources, and clear guidelines. Without this, even well-intentioned policies risk becoming burdensome. A balanced, student-centric approach will determine whether these reforms truly enhance learning outcomes or add to existing pressures.

NIKITA KHANNA, DEHRADUN

millenniumpost.in

Send your letters to **letter2editor.mp@gmail.com**.
You can also send your comments to The Editor, *Millennium Post*, Pratap Bhawan, 5 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi 110 002

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.: CEN00AGC0526 **Date:** 02.04.2026

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), North Central Railway, Agra Cantt for and on behalf of the President of India invites in **TWO PACKET SYSTEM** open tender on prescribed forms on line (E-Tendering). Tender offer can be submitted on line up to **15.00 hours** of **28.04.2026,** on website **http://ireps.gov.in.** The details of the tenders are as under:-

Description of Work: Idgah yard remodelling (Provision of two additional lines with platform and connection of AF-BKI doubling in in Idgah Yard); Conversion of D-Class station into B- Class station of Bateshwar and Construction of Station Building with platform at Karondhana station in connection with Bhandai Flyover work.

Approx. Cost: ₹ 57.27 Cr. (App.)	**Earnest Money in Rs.:** ₹ 1,14,54,300
Completion Period: 12 Months	**Date of Opening : 28.04.2026**

Validity: 90 Days. **Note:** For complete details and submission of tender please see Indian Railway's website **http://www.ireps.gov.in.** **735/26 (A)**

North central railways | @CPRONCR | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82(2) Cr. P.C./84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person Namley **Kishan S/o** Ashok **R/o** H.No. D-1562, Gali No. 3, D-Block, JJ Colony, Bawana, Delhi, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR No. 284/2019, U/s 420/34 IPC**., has been registered at **P.S. Burari, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, **Kishan** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Kishan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused, **Kishan** of under **FIR No. 284/2019, U/s 420/34 IPC**., has been, registered at **P.S. Burari, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **09.05.2026**.

By Order
Ms. Payal Singal
JMFC-09, Room No. 286
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/4323/N/2026
(Court notice)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

रजिस्ट्री सं.: डी.एल.-33004/99 **REGD. No.:** D.L.-33004/99

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

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MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
[North Central Railway (Bridge Line Unit)]
NOTIFICATION
Prayagraj, the 10th March, 2026

S.O. 1444(E).- In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of clause 20A of section 2 of the Railways Act 1989 (24 of 1989) and Railways Amendment act 2008 (11of 2008) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government after being satisfied that for the public purpose the land the brief description of which has been given in the schedule Annexed hereto is required for the purpose of execution of special Railway Project namely, "Construction of 02-lane road over bridge in lieu of level crossing No. 551 at km. 1447/0-2 in Mathura-Palwal section in Agra Division of North Central Railway" here by declares its intention to acquire such land;

Any person interested in the said land may within a period of thirty days from the date of publication of this notification in the official Gazette, raise objection to the acquisition and use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section (1) of section 20 D of the said Act;

Every such objection shall be made to the competent authority namely, Sub - Divisional Officer (Civil) Hodal, Palwal, Haryana in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the competent authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard either in person or by legal practitioner and may after hearing such objections and after making such further enquiry if any as the competent Authority thinks necessary by order either allow or disallow the objections;

Any order made by competent Authority under Clause 20D (3) sub-section (2) of section 20 D of the said Act shall be final;

The land plans and other details of the land covered under this notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.

SCHEDULE

Brief description of the land to be acquired, with or without structure, for the special Railway Project namely "Construction of 02-lane road over bridge in lieu of level crossing No. 551 at km. 1447/0-2 in Mathura-Palwal Section in Agra Division of North Central Railway".

Sr. No.	Name of Tehsil	Name of Pargana	Name of Village	Plot No.	Proposed Land for Acquisition	Nature of Land
1	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	42//17/1/1 (Min North) 0.1265 Hectare	0.0430 Hectare	Non Agriculture
2	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	42//17/1/2 (Min North) 0.0683 Hectare	0.0329 Hectare	Non Agriculture
3	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	41//9 (Min North) 0.4477 Hectare	0.0784 Hectare	Agriculture
				41//10/2 (Min North) 0.1189 Hectare	0.0658 Hectare	Agriculture
				41//11 (Min North) 0.3794 Hectare	0.0253 Hectare	Agriculture
4	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	42//15/2 (Min North) 0.1745 Hectare	0.0810 Hectare	Agriculture
5	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	42//16 (Min North) 0.4047 Hectare	0.0127 Hectare	Agriculture
6	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	41//2/2 (Min South) 0.1214 Hectare	0.0203 Hectare	Barren
7	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	231 (Min North) 0.0177 Hectare	0.0038 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pathway)
				234 (Mi North) 0.0101 Hectare	0.0026 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pathway)
				102/1 (Min) 0.3389 Hectare	0.3389 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pathway)
				103 (Min) 0.3035 Hectare	0.0987 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pathway)
8	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	32//16 (Min in between) 0.3035 Hectare	0.1645 Hectare	Barren
				32//17 (Min in between) 0.4047 Hectare	0.0759 Hectare	Barren
				32//23 (Min South) 0.2580 Hectare	0.0405 Hectare	Barren
				32//24/1 (Min South) 0.1088 Hectare	0.0886 Hectare	Barren
				32//24/2 (Min North) 0.2428 Hectare	0.0102 Hectare	Barren
				33//11 (Min South) 0.2302 Hectare	0.0785 Hectare	Barren
				41//3 (Min North) 0.2049 Hectare	0.0203 Hectare	Barren
9	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	32//15 (Min East South) 0.4047 Hectare	0.0279 Hectare	Agriculture
10	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//26 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
11	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//27 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
12	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//28 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
13	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//29 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
14	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//30 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
15	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//31 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
16	Hodal	Hodal	Karwan	33//32 (Min South) 0.0051 Hectare	0.0051 Hectare	Non Agriculture (Pit Compost)
Total (Hectare)					1.3455	

[e.F. No. NCR-HQ0ENGG(MISC)/11/2026-O/o Dy.CE/Br./L/AGC (Computer No: 168281]

727/26 (A) **J.C. CHAURASIA, Principal Chief Engineer**

North central railways | @CPRONCR | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

UNDERSCORES A SHARP FOCUS ON MILITARY SPENDING

Trump seeks record $1.5T defence push

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has proposed boosting defence spending to $1.5 trillion in his 2027 budget released Friday, the largest such request in decades, reflecting his emphasis on US military investments over domestic programmes.

The sizable increase for the Pentagon had been telegraphed by the Republican president even before the US-led war against Iran.

The president's plan would also reduce spending on non-defence programmes by 10 per cent by shifting some responsibilities to state and local governments.

US President Donald Trump arrives from the Blue Room to speak about the Iran war from the Cross Hall of the White House AP/PTI

Highlights

- The sizable increase for the Pentagon had been telegraphed by the Republican president even before the US-led war against Iran
- The president's annual budget being considered a reflection of the administration's values and does not carry the force of law

"President Trump is committed to rebuilding our military to secure peace through strength," the budget said.

The president's annual budget is considered a reflection of the administration's values and does not carry the force of law.

The massive document typically highlights an administration's priorities, but Congress, which handles federal spending issues, is free to reject it and often does.

This year's White House document, prepared by Budget Director Russ Vought, is intended to provide a road map from the president to Congress as lawmakers build their own budgets and annual appropriations bills to keep the government funded.

Vought spoke to House GOP lawmakers on a private call Thursday.

Trump, speaking ahead of an address to the nation this week about the Iran war, signalled the military is his priority, setting up a clash ahead in Congress.

"We're fighting wars. We can't take care of day care," Trump said at a private White House event Wednesday.

"It's not possible for us to take care of day care, Medicaid, Medicare — all these individual things," he said.

"They can do it on a state basis. You can't do it on a federal." AGENCIES

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person Namely **Vineet Kumar S/o** Raju **R/o** H. No. 569, Badi Gali, Shiv Mandir, Kabir Nagar, Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case **FIR No. 312/2024 U/s 304(2)/3(5)/317(2) BNS PS: Roop Nagar, Delhi,** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Vineet Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Vineet Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Vineet Kumar** accused of **FIR No. 312/2024 U/s 304(2)/3(5)/317(2) BNS PS: Roop Nagar, Delhi,** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **15.05.2026.**

By Order
Ms. Rashi Raheja
Ld. JMFC-13, Central, Room No. 33
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/4332/N/2026
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Hussain Shabir @ Bahuaa S/o:** Shamsher Ali, **R/o:** Jhuggi No. 70, CD Park, Jahangir Puri, **Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No. 135/2021, Dt. 22.02.2021, U/S: 25/54/59 Arms Act, PS: Jahangir Puri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Hussain Shabir @ Bahuaa** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Hussain Shabir @ Bahuaa** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Hussain Shabir @ Bahuaa, FIR No. 135/2021, Dt. 22.02.2021, U/S: 25/54/59 Arms Act, PS: Jahangir Puri, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **04.05.2026**.

By Order
Jyoti Nain
Judicial Magistrate First Class-07 North District
Rohini Court, Delhi

DP/4286/NW/2026
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Manoj Kumar, S/o:** Om Prakash, **R/o:** Kh. No. 19/10/1, Kadyan Foundation, Nangloi, Nihal Vihar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 111/2024 U/s 33/38 D.E. Act, P.S.: Nihal Vihar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Manoj Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Manoj Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Manoj Kumar** accused of offence in case **FIR No. 111/2024 U/s 33/38 D.E. Act, P.S.: Nihal Vihar, Delhi** and is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **12.05.2026**.

By Order
Ms. Komal Garg
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03 (West)
Room No. 292, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/4319/OD/2026
(Court Matter)

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Advt. No. R&P/315/2026 **Dated: 12.03.2026**

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Associate Professor in the Academic Pay Level-13A of the 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the **Centre for Hindu Studies**, University of Delhi. The last date for receipt of applications is two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For more details, please visit the University website **www.du.ac.in** and click "Jobs and Opportunities" under the Head "Work with DU".

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.

cbc 21231/12/0007/2526 REGISTRAR

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender No. : PRYJ-Sig-401-2026-27 **Dated : 01.04.2026**

E-Tender Notice

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Co-ordination/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works **up to 15:00 hrs. on 28.04.2026.** The details of the Tender is as under;-

Tender No. : PRYJ-Sig-401-2026-27

Name of work : S&T work for provision of shifting of Electronic Interlocking equipment from Khurja ASM old building to Khurja ASM new building.

Approx. Cost of work (in Rs.) : Rs. 4888828.61/- (Rs. Fourty-Eight Lakhs Eighty-Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Eight & Sixty-One Paisa Only)

Bid Security/Earnest Money (in Rs.) : 97800/- | **Completion Period : 12 Months**

Date of Closing of tender : 28.04.2026

Availability of tender form : Tender forms shall be available on www.ireps.gov.in 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender.

Earnest Money to be deposited : The prescribed amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above must be deposited along with the tender form. The tenderer(s) should note that, Tenders without earnest money shall be summarily rejected.

Time, date & place of opening of tender : Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj on or after pre-determined date at 15:30 hours. In case tender opening date happens to be holiday. Tenders will be opened on the next working day.

Validity of offer : 60 days from the date of opening.

Right of Railway to deal with tender : Railway administration reserves the rights to postpone/modify or to cancel the tender without assigning any reasons. **729/26 (C)**

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @ CPRONCR

'US Army chief of staff fired by Hegseth'

WASHINGTON: U.S. Army Chief of Staff Randy George was fired on Thursday by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, three U.S. defense officials told Reuters, a major staffing change that comes as the U.S. military fights a major war in the Middle East, Rueters reported.

Even as Hegseth has moved quickly to reshape the department, firing the head of a military branch during wartime is extremely rare.

The Pentagon confirmed that George, who had more than a year left in his term, "will be retiring from his position as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army effective immediately."

Two of the officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Hegseth has also fired General David Hodne, who leads the Army's Transformation and Training Command, and Major General William Green, head of the Army's Chaplain Corps.

George's removal adds to recent upheaval at all levels of leadership at the Pentagon, including the firing last year of the previous chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General C.Q. Brown, as well as the chief of naval operations and Air Force vice chief of staff.

US Army Chief of Staff Randy George

> THE ARMY IS THE LARGEST BRANCH OF THE U.S. MILITARY, WITH ABOUT 450,000 ACTIVE-DUTY SOLDIERS

The department did not give a reason for George's departure, which comes as the U.S. military builds up its forces in the Middle East while carrying out operations against Iran.

The U.S. strikes in the region are largely being carried out by the Navy and Air Force, although U.S. Army soldiers have been dispatched to the Middle East for air defense systems.

The Army is the largest branch of the U.S. military, with about 450,000 active-duty soldiers.

Thousands of soldiers from the U.S. Army's elite 82nd Airborne Division have also started arriving in the Middle East, potentially for ground operations in Iran.

In a statement, the Pentagon's Joint Staff thanked George for his service. AGENCIES

Pak, Afghan talks to end conflict progressing steadily: China

BEIJING: China on Friday said that the talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan under its mediation to end their conflict "advanced steadily", two days after officials from the three sides met in the Chinese city of Urumqi.

A day after parrying questions over the Pakistan-Afghanistan talks, the Chinese foreign ministry on Friday said that both sides are willing to meet and discuss a way out to end their armed conflict.

"The consultation process is being implemented and advanced steadily," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here. This is the second time China has sought to mediate between two of its neighbours. AGENCIES

Russia kills 5 in daytime strikes on Ukraine as Kyiv holds door open for Easter truce

KYIV: Russian strikes killed at least five people across Ukraine on Friday, including in a "massive" missile and drone attack near the capital, local authorities reported.

Ukrainian officials claim the Kremlin is changing its tactics to increase civilian suffering, shifting to daytime barrages and preparing to target more key infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signalled Kyiv's openness to a potential Easter truce. The holiday is celebrated on April 12 in both Ukraine and Russia.

Key Points

- Ukrainian officials claim the Kremlin is changing its tactics to increase civilian suffering
- In Russia, 192 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea
- Almost 500 drones and missiles launched at Ukraine

Zelenskyy also said that Ukraine is preparing for a shift in Russian aerial tactics, with intelligence indicating that future attacks will move beyond energy infrastructure.

In Russia, 192 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on Friday morning.

"The Kyiv region is once again under a massive Russian missile and drone attack," said Mykola Kalashnyk, head of the regional military administration, in a Telegram post on Friday morning.

According to Kalashnyk, one person died and at least eight more were wounded in strikes on three of Kyiv's satellite towns — Bucha, Fastiv and Obukhiv. AGENCIES

KEEPS ARMY IN CHARGE

Myanmar's Parl elects ruling general as Prez

Myanmar lawmakers arrive to attend a session at Union parliament in Naypyitaw on Friday AP/PTI

BANGKOK: Myanmar's parliament on Friday elected Min Aung Hlaing, a general who ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in 2021 and kept an iron grip on power for the past five years, as the country's new president.

The move marks a nominal return to an elected government but is widely considered as an effort to keep the army in power after an election organised by the military that opponents and independent observers deemed neither free nor fair, and as civil war rages.

Transitioning to an elected government is also seen as a way to improve frosty relations with some Southeast Asian neighbours following the military takeover.

China and Russia have supported the military administration, while Western powers imposed sanctions. Min Aung Hlaing was one of three nominees for the president's post, but was virtually guaranteed the job as lawmakers from military-backed parties and appointed members from the army hold a commanding majority in parliament. AGENCIES

North Eastern Railway

Open Tender Notice No.SRDEE-TRD-IZN-2026-27-T01 Date:02.04.2026

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD/ North Eastern Railway, Izzatnagar for and on behalf of President of India, invites sealed "OPEN" E-Tender for the following work. **S.No.1 Name of work:** OHE related work for Development/ upgradation of good shed with world class facility at Chhatarpur. **Tender reference no:** SRDEE-TRD-IZN-2026-27-T01 **Approx. Cost (in Rs.):** 1,23,28,464.08/- **Earnest money/Bid Security (in Rs.):** 2,46,600.00 **Cost of tender documents (in Rs.):** 00 **E-Tender closing date and Time:** 24.04.2026 11:00 **Completion period:** 12 Months ● E-Tender Online will be submitted upto 11:00 Hrs on date: 24.04.2026 ● For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the Official website if Indian Railways i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in.**

Sr.DEE/TRD
Izzatnagar

CPRO/Elect-02

DO NOT SMOKE BIDI/CIGARETTE IN TRAINS

Karachi receives heaviest 24-hour rains

KARACHI: Pakistan's financial capital Karachi recorded its heaviest 24-hour rainfall starting from Thursday morning, breaking a 41-year-old record, the Pakistan Meteorological Department said Friday.

The biggest city in the country and the capital of the Sindh province, Karachi received 38.6 mm rainfall during the 24 hours from Thursday 10 am, surpassing the previous record of 37.0 millimetres from 1985, the (PMD confirmed. AGENCIES

World Briefs

SUICIDE CAR BOMB BLAST KILLS FIVE IN NORTHWEST PAKISTAN

PESHAWAR: A suicide car bomb blast targeting a police station in northwest Pakistan killed five persons, including four from the same family, and wounded 13 others late Thursday, police said on Friday. Police said the suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into the rear side of the police station in Domel tehsil of Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, triggering a powerful explosion. The intensity of the blast, which was heard miles away, triggered panic among residents. Gunfire erupted immediately after the explosion, further heightening tension in the area. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

RUSSIAN SU-30 CRASHES IN CRIMEA, PILOTS SAFE

MOSCOW: A Su-30 fighter jet of the Russian Aerospace Force crashed in Crimea on Friday during a routine training flight, according to media reports. Both pilots ejected safely from the jet, which was unarmed. "The crew safely bailed out and were evacuated by the ground search and rescue team. There is no threat to the pilots' lives," the RBC business portal reported, quoting a press release issued by the defence ministry. The Su-30, a highly potent multi-role fighter, was unarmed during the training flight and was flying without ammunition. The defence ministry, however, did not provide a possible cause or other circumstances of the crash.

APSEZ CROSSES 500 MILLION TONNES MILESTONE

Adani Group sets cargo volume target of 1 billion tonnes by 2030

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Billionaire Gautam Adani on Friday said his conglomerate's port arm is targeting cargo volumes of 1 billion tonnes by 2030, after the company surpassed 500 million tonnes milestone, underscoring the rapid scale-up of India's largest port operator.

Speaking on the occasion of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) crossing the milestone, Chairman Adani said the group's ports network has expanded into an integrated system of 20 ports across India and international locations, positioning it as a key enabler of trade and logistics flows.

He said APSEZ's logistics and marine services businesses are expected to grow fivefold over the next five years, as India enters a phase where logistics capacity will become a strategic driver of economic growth.

The milestone marks a significant step in the ports-to-energy conglomerate's ambition to scale up infrastructure capacity in line with India's rising trade and industrial demand.

Highlighting the pace of expansion, Adani said it took the company 16 years to reach its first 100 million tonnes of cargo, but subsequent growth accelerated sharply, with the last 200 million tonnes added in just four years.

Adani Group chief Gautam Adani

'The group's ports network has expanded into an integrated system of 20 ports across India & int'l locations'

Adani also outlined organisational changes aimed at improving execution, including a shift to a flatter, three-layer structure to push decision-making closer to operations and enhance responsiveness.

He added that the company is increasing its focus on frontline empowerment and partner ecosystems to support long-term growth, while crediting employees and on-ground workers for building the business.

"It is often said that an explorer is shaped by the path he undertakes, just as the path awaits an explorer worthy of it. I have long believed that there are no final destinations in the life of an explorer.

Highlights

- He said APSEZ's logistics and marine services businesses are expected to grow fivefold over the next five years
- Highlighting the pace of expansion, Adani said it took company 16 years to reach its first 100 million tonnes of cargo
- 'However, subsequent growth accelerated sharply, with the last 200 million tonnes added in just four years'

"There are only moments of pause, when you look back with wonder at the distance you have travelled, and then find within yourself the strength to begin again," he said.

Calling the crossing of 500 million tonnes of cargo an "extraordinary achievement of APSEZ", he said the achievements of this scale are never just about numbers but about legacy.

"Numbers measure performance. Legacy measures something deeper. It measures the audacity of vision, the endurance of belief, and the courage to target what most would not even dare imagine," he said.

Dwelling into the group's business philosophy, Adani said great organizations are built twice - first, in the mind through hope, self-belief, conviction, and second, in the real world, where dreams are constructed, moment by moment, brick by brick, hand by hand.

Milestones such as those achieved by APSEZ can never be measured in business terms alone. "They are about our people - about those who chose to believe in me, to walk with me and to build with me," he said. "They are about our memories - of struggles, of victories, of setbacks - all of which came to define the Adani spirit."

Mundra in Gujarat, APSEZ's first port, gave vision to the group's philosophy, its first physical form. "It is here that our belief became reality, courage became commitment, and conviction became concrete."

"I still clearly remember many trips, driving overnight in an old Contessa car, from Ahmedabad to Mundra... There were really no roads to Mundra in the 1990s, and even I am amazed that we did it.

"Because no one in their right mind would have driven through the night to a place that, at the time, looked less like the future of ports and Indian logistics and more like a giant endless marshland at the very edge of western India," he said.

In moments of despair, his long-time confidant, Malay Mahadevia, broke into the iconic song "Rote hue aate hain sab. Hansta hua jo jaayega. Woh muqaddar ka Sikandar Woh muqaddar ka Sikandar Jaan-e-man kehlayega," he recalled.

"Somehow, in the middle of that vast emptiness, the philosophy of a song celebrating Alexander the Great became our own private anthem. And perhaps, without even fully realizing it, this gave voice to something deep within us - the stubborn belief that if destiny does not come to you on its own, then you must go out and build it yourself," he said.

Adani said the truth about all great institutions ever built is this: they do not begin because the future is fully visible; they begin because their conviction is stronger than their doubts.

"That, my friends, is the story of Mundra," he said. "Mundra was the spark. This spark became the nucleus of APSEZ. APSEZ became the nucleus of the Adani Group. And the Adani Group became the nucleus for Indian infrastructure."

IndianOil says LPG supply stable, warns against panic booking

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, on Friday said liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply in India remains stable and adequate despite geopolitical disruptions to global energy markets, adding that domestic availability continues to be its top priority.

The company said it is delivering around 28 lakh LPG cylinders daily, in line with normal levels prior to the current tensions, with uninterrupted supply to households.

IOC added that nearly 87 per cent of refill bookings are being made through digital platforms, while deliveries are being authenticated through OTP-based systems to ensure correct distribution.

"India's LPG supply remains stable, adequate, and under close monitoring, despite ongoing geopolitical developments impacting global energy markets. Domestic LPG (supply) continues to be accorded the highest priority," the company said in a statement.

The current deliveries of around 28 lakh LPG cylinders daily are "consistent with normal delivery levels prior to the onset of current geopolitical tensions," it said.

Customers are encouraged to use digital modes such as SMS and IVRS for booking LPG refills.

At present, nearly 87% of bookings are received through digital platforms. Deliveries are being carried out with Delivery Authentication Codes (DAC OTP) to ensure cylinders are received by the intended customers.

The company said it is delivering around 28 lakh LPG cylinders daily, in line with normal levels prior to the current tensions, with uninterrupted supply to households

IOC said it is actively listening to concerns shared on its social media platforms and remains committed to addressing them promptly.

"Reports of malpractices by certain LPG distributors have been noted through social media and customer complaints. To curb black marketing and hoarding, multiple cross-functional teams have been deployed to conduct surprise inspections of LPG distributorships," it said.

The firm said it has stepped up enforcement against malpractices, conducting more than 7,500 inspections and taking action against 141 distributors, including suspending five.

In coordination with state authorities and other oil marketing companies, around 68,000 raids have been carried out, leading to 855 FIRs and the seizure of over 48,000 cylinders.

"Action has been taken against 141 LPG distributors, including suspension of 5 distributors," it said. "IndianOil, as well as other oil marketing companies, is working closely with State Governments across the country to prevent malpractices and curb hoarding."

So far, around 68,000 raids have been conducted, 855 FIRs registered, and more than 48,000 cylinders seized.

IOC urged customers not to resort to panic booking or hoarding, stating there is no shortage of LPG, and advised consumers to rely only on official communication channels for information.

"IndianOil reassures all Indane customers that supplies remain adequate and stable, and there is no shortage of LPG in the country. Customers are advised not to queue at LPG distributorships and to avoid panic booking or stocking of LPG cylinders. They are also urged not to believe in rumours and to rely only on official sources of information," the statement added.

The company said it remains fully committed to ensuring seamless LPG availability, transparency in distribution, and strict enforcement against malpractice.

WCL Nagpur achieves 63.03 million tonnes of coal production in FY26

NAGPUR: Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL), Nagpur, has produced 63.03 million tonnes of coal during the financial year 2025-26, the company said. WCL, Nagpur, produced 63.03 million tonnes of coal, achieved 60 million tonnes of coal despatch & carried out 354.33 million cubic metres of Over Burden Removal, it added.

Further, during FY 2025-26, WCL obtained incremental environmental clearance for 5.375 million tonnes and has secured stage-II forest clearance for 207.76 hectares of forest land across seven projects.

Among the company's operational areas, Wani Area recorded the highest contribution to coal production with 13.31 million tonnes, followed by Nagpur area with 11.65 million tonnes and Umrer area with 10.57 million tonnes. During the year, the company also made progress in key initiatives such as Coal Gasification projects, First Mile Connectivity projects. PTI

Duty relief to SEZs allows limited domestic sales without diluting export focus: Experts

NEW DELHI: The one-time duty concession to manufacturing units in SEZs will provide them with limited domestic market access while preserving their export-oriented character, experts said on Friday.

However, the relatively modest duty relief somewhat diminishes the extent of the potential benefits to these special economic zones (SEZs), as it is not structured around the principle of duty forgone, they added.

"Consequently, the measure falls short of fully addressing the import substitution objective or significantly incentivising domestic procurement by SEZ units for manufacturing for DTA (domestic tariff area) requirements," Gulzar Didwania, Partner, Deloitte India, said.

He added that the measure reflects a nuanced shift in India's export strategy that is allowing limited domestic market access to SEZ units while preserving their export-oriented character.

"The relief provides much-needed cushion for SEZ units facing under-utilised capacity and demand volatility in export markets. By enabling calibrated access to the domestic market at concessional duty rates, it supports better capacity utilisation and revenue realisation," he said.

Didwania said that sectors with high export dependence, such as electronics, engineering goods, and textiles, are likely to benefit the most from this measure if implemented in a simpler manner.

"These industries can leverage the flexibility to offset global demand fluctuations through domestic sales. Conversely, excluded sectors, such as food, animal husbandry, precious metal and jewellery industry, nickel articles may see limited benefit, indicating a conscious effort to protect sensitive domestic industries," he said.

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Chairman A Sakthivel stated that the measure comes at a crucial time for the industry and will help ease cost pressures, improve liquidity, and support production continuity for textile and apparel exporters.

"The measure is especially important for textile and apparel exporters who are currently facing rising input costs, pricing pressures, and uncertain global demand," he said.

By enabling concessional duty on goods cleared into the domestic market, the relief will help manufacturers better manage inventories and utilise capacities more efficiently, Sakthivel added.

The government has announced limited duty concessions to special economic zones (SEZs) for one year to help manufacturing units of these enclaves, hit by weak global demand, sell their goods in the domestic market. The measure takes effect from April 1 and will remain valid until March 31, 2027. PTI

HPCL ensures robust LPG, automotive fuels supply

MUMBAI: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) continues to ensure uninterrupted supply of LPG and automotive fuels across the country.

In the LPG segment, Hindustan Petroleum recorded deliveries of 14,10,000 cylinders from its 55 bottling plants, reaffirming its commitment to prompt and reliable service.

Additionally, the Company supplied free trade LPG cylinders of 27,800 (5 kg) and 1,500 (2 kg).

In the retail segment, HPCL achieved nozzle sales of 37,269 kilolitres of Petrol and 75,356 kilolitres of Diesel, reflecting stable supply trends.

The Company served a widespread customer base of over 1.9 crore consumers during the day.

To support seamless distribution, 7,102 tankers carrying Petrol and Diesel were dispatched to retail outlets from 80 supply locations.

Hindustan Petroleum remains committed to maintaining uninterrupted and reliable supplies to its customers. MPOST

Cement, consumer goods players expect relief from customs duty cut on petchem products

NEW DELHI: Industries spanning consumer goods to cement, which are facing challenges from rising production and packaging costs amid geopolitical tensions in West Asia, expect the government's move to reduce customs duty on a range of petrochemical products to provide much-needed relief to manufacturers and downstream sectors.

Petrochemicals are critical raw materials for plastics, and a lower cost could translate into cheaper packaging materials for sectors such as FMCG, retail, and consumer goods companies.

Besides, this is also going to help sectors, such as cement, among others, as reduced costs in plastics, resins, and synthetic materials ripple across supply chains.

Govt on Thursday exempted the import of critical petrochemical products from customs duty to ensure supply

JK Lakshmi Cement President & Director Arun Shukla said the government's move to exempt Basic Customs Duty on a wide range of petrochemical products till June 30, 2026, comes as a relief for the industry.

"At a time when global prices and supply chains remain unpredictable, this step should improve stability in input costs," he said.

For the cement sector, while these materials are not part of the core manufacturing process, polymers such as polypropylene and polyethylene are used in packaging and certain value-added applications, he said.

"Any easing in their prices can help improve efficiencies in cement dispatch. The move reflects a proactive policy approach to cushion the industry from external cost pressures while sustaining momentum in construction and infrastructure activity," said Shukla.

The government on Thursday exempted the import of critical petrochemical products from customs duty to ensure supply stability and provide relief to consumers of final products amid the crisis in West Asia.

The duty exemption, which is valid till June 30, will benefit sectors dependent on petrochemical feedstock and intermediates such as plastics, packaging, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, automotive components and other manufacturing segments.

Parle Products Vice President Mayank Shah said the industry is still waiting for the impact of the exemption of import of petrochemical products from customs duty. PTI

Crude sustaining above $100 will push inflation beyond 6%, trigger rate hikes: HSBC economists

MUMBAI: Crude oil sustaining above $100 per barrel will push the headline inflation above 6 per cent, the upper level of RBI's tolerance band, and trigger rate hikes, a foreign brokerage has said.

Economists at HSBC said that consumer price inflation (CPI) will remain below 6 per cent if oil prices average below $100 per barrel, as per its modelling.

"... Sustained oil above USD100/bbl would push inflation beyond 6 per cent, likely triggering rate hikes," the economists said, adding that we are at "crossroads" as Brent has averaged $100 in March.

'CPI will remain below 6 per cent if oil prices average below $100 per barrel'

Amid speculation ahead of next Wednesday's monetary policy announcement on whether the RBI uses interest rates to defend the rupee, the report suggested risks of such a move.

"An interest-rate defence for the INR can be expensive when the growth drag becomes non-linear and intensifies quickly with higher oil prices," it said.

The economists recommended adopting a "neutral" stance on both the monetary and fiscal fronts for now, as the supplies are yet to be cleared and stimulating demand can stoke inflation.

Pointing out that doing so would be akin to the experience during the COVID pandemic, the report said stimulating demand before supply was repaired led to high and sticky inflation back then.

"The lesson now is clear: avoid boosting demand too early. But this is a delicate balance. Policymakers don't want to overstimulate, but they also can't tighten so much that the growth slowdown deepens," it added.

Elaborating on the "neutral" prescription, it said this would mean keeping the fiscal deficit close to FY26 levels and raising petrol and diesel prices to help contain the fiscal deficit.

On the monetary side, the "flexible" inflation targeting framework allows inflation to stay within the 2-6 per cent range, it added.

If the ongoing energy shock persists for a few more weeks, the growth drag could begin to outweigh the inflation shock, it said. PTI

'US drug tariffs unlikely to hit India's generics exports'

The April 2, 2026 order builds on a Section 232 investigation launched on May 1, 2025

NEW DELHI: India is unlikely to be significantly impacted by US President Donald Trump's announcement of 100 per cent tariffs on certain patented drugs, as the country primarily exports low-cost generic medicines to America, think tank GTRI said on Friday.

Trump signed an executive order on April 2, announcing the imposition of a 100 per cent ad valorem duty rate on the import of certain patented pharmaceuticals and associated pharmaceutical ingredients.

The order, issued on April 2, 2026, builds on a Section 232 investigation launched on May 1, 2025, which cited national security risks from dependence on foreign drug supplies.

CLOSER LOOK

- 'The move has left India largely protected, given its dominance in low-cost generic drug exports to the US'
- Generic medicines make up over 90 per cent of US drug use and are exempt for now, likely for about a year
- In 2025, India exported $9.7 billion worth of pharmaceuticals to the US, accounting for 38% of its global pharma exports of $25.8 billion

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said the move has left "India largely protected, given its dominance in low-cost generic drug exports to the US".

Generic medicines make up over 90 per cent of US drug use and are exempt for now, likely for about a year, to avoid shortages and price increases, it added.

In 2025, India exported $9.7 billion worth of pharmaceuticals to the US, accounting for 38 per cent of its global pharma exports of $25.8 billion.

"However, Indian firms producing branded or speciality drugs, or supplying inputs for patented medicines, could face tariff pressure. The larger concern is future uncertainty if tariffs are extended to generics," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

The order timing, issued on the first anniversary of the earlier "Liberation Day" tariff push, signals a continuation of Washington's aggressive trade strategy, he added.

On April 2 last year, the US announced sweeping tariffs on about 60 countries, including India.

The 100 per cent tariffs will mainly affect Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Japan, which are major exporters of patented and high-value drugs, including biologics, to the US, he said, adding that the order does not exempt countries with trade arrangements with the US, including the European Union and Japan. PTI

Coal India arm NCL supplies 137.08 million tonnes dry fuel during FY26

NEW DELHI: Coal India arm NCL on Friday said that it supplied a record 137.08 million tonnes (MT) of coal to its customers in power and other sectors during 2025-26, significantly reinforcing India's energy security amid surging domestic demand and shifting global dynamics.

Of the total dispatch, approximately 86 per cent, equivalent to 117.85 MT, was supplied to coal-based power plants. "Amid evolving global energy dynamics and rising power demand in the country, NCL's consistent performance has played a significant role in supporting the country's energy security. Reinforcing its contribution to national energy security, NCL dispatched 137.08 million tonnes of coal to the power sector and other consumers during FY 2025–26," Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) said in a statement.

In line with its commitment to sustainable operations, 85.51 per cent of the total coal dispatch was carried out through environment-friendly modes.

Northern Coalfields Ltd produced 140.5 million tonnes of coal in 2025–26, registering a growth of 1.08 per cent from the year-ago period.

"The company has successfully met its annual production target during the year, with all its projects achieving their respective coal production goals, reflecting strong operational coordination across its 10 highly mechanised mega opencast mines," it said.

Among individual projects, Jayant recorded the highest production at 30 MT, followed by Dudhichua and Nigahi projects at 25 MT each. Other projects also contributed significantly to the overall performance while achieving their individual targets. Overburden removal, which is a key parameter in the opencast mine operation, stood at 461.7 million cubic metres during the year. PTI

Jan Vishwas Bill: Govt pushes for withdrawing minor offence cases

'As part of general drive to reduce load on courts the govt has advised all departments to withdraw the prosecution wherever possible'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Commerce and Industry Ministry wants all the departments to consider withdrawing pending court cases involving minor offences in light of Jan Vishwas amendment bill, as it would significantly reduce load on the judiciary and promote ease of living, a top official said on Friday.

Parliament on Thursday passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, to amend 784 provisions in 79 central laws for decriminalising and rationalising about 1,000 minor offences to further improve the business environment and check harassment of people.

"Because of the changes which are coming up in the law, there is a greater case that in all these provisions, a review can be taken up. We will also be taking up with the law ministry and work out how it can be conveyed to the concerned departments," Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters here.

As part of the general drive to reduce load on the courts, he said, the government has advised all departments to review pending cases and withdraw the prosecution wherever possible.

"There is a general advisory which is already there to review all pending cases and wherever the departments feel that they need to be withdrawn as they are not very critical offences, they can file with the court to withdraw that," he added.

Addressing the media on the passage of the bill, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said as per estimates, there are five crore pending court cases relating to minor offences, majority of which should have never gone to the courts.

"We hope that these all can be resolved by the prosecutors by asking the courts to just close them on the basis of the new provisions so that a big relief can be given to past cases...It will be our request to the courts to take decision on those minor offences and end that," Goyal said. He said "these 1,000 sections in some way or the other, some place or the other , nationally, regionally, were a source of uncertainty, source of potential rent seeking and harassment. We have removed all of that".

The minister also said that the government is open to more suggestions to even further relooking at all the laws at the central government level.

"12 states have come out with their own versions of Jan Vishwas bills, decriminalising state laws and I would encourage the rest of the states to follow the suit and consider decriminalising petty offences," he added.

The Bill proposes to remove imprisonment in 57 provisions and fines in 158 provisions. Also, imprisonment is proposed to be reduced in 17 provisions, and imprisonment and fine are proposed to be converted to a penalty in 113 provisions.

It also proposes 67 amendments under the New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994, and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to facilitate ease of living.

Goyal expressed hope that municipal bodies in other states would take cues from these proposed changes and amend their laws to promote ease of living.

Further Bhatia said that penalties have been prescribed only for the first offence of violating standards of air pollution, but driving license will be suspended for three months. But stricter provisions will apply for subsequent violations, he added. Similarly for noise pollution also, it has been decriminalised for the first offence, with only a warning issued, while the usual provisions will apply for subsequent violations.

Parliament on Thursday passed the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, to amend 784 provisions in 79 central laws for decriminalising and rationalising about 1,000 minor offences to further improve the business environment

Highlights

- Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said as per estimates, there are five crore pending court cases relating to minor offences
- 'We hope that these all can be resolved by the prosecutors by asking the courts to just close them on basis of new provisions,' Goyal said
- The Bill proposes to remove imprisonment in 57 provisions and fines in 158 provisions

Emirates NBD Bank gets RBI nod to buy up to 74% stake in RBL Bank

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accorded approval to Dubai-based Emirates NBD Bank to acquire up to a 74 per cent stake in RBL Bank, paving the way for the bank to become a foreign lender.

The approval from RBI came on April 1 with one year validity, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. The approval follows Emirates NBD Bank, the second largest in UAE, expressing its interest in October 2025 to acquire a majority 60 per cent stake in RBL Bank for Rs 26,853 crore.

As per the approval letter, the Emirates NBD (ENBD) would acquire and maintain a shareholding of at least 51 per cent of the paid-up share capital of the RBL Bank and the bank would be classified as a foreign bank in subsidiary mode, with the Investor as its parent foreign bank.

"The provisions applicable to foreign banks operating in wholly owned subsidiary mode, as set out in Chapter IV of the Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks - Governance) Directions, 2025 dated November 28, 2025, shall be applicable to the bank, except the requirement to have at least half of the directors attending board meetings to be independent directors shall not apply," it said.

The bank has been advised to suitably amend its Articles of Association and obtain approval of the RBI in this regard, and the bank will take the necessary steps accordingly, it said.

The Reserve Bank has no objection to ENBD being classified as the promoter of RBL Bank, subject to applicable Securities and Exchange Board of India regulations, it said.

The voting rights of ENBD shall be capped at 26 per cent of the total voting rights of RBL Bank, in accordance with section 12(2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, it said.

The ENBD is exempted from the requirement of single mode of presence until the Indian branches of the investor are amalgamated with the Bank, or within one year, whichever is earlier, it said.

It further said that the RBI approval is subject to receipt of necessary approval from Government of India for investment beyond 49 per cent in the bank under the approval route and compliance with the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, RBI (Commercial Banks- Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights) Directions, 2025, dated November 28, 2025, provisions of the FEMA 1999, regulations issued by Securities and Exchange Board of India, and any other statutes, regulations and guidelines, as applicable.

The proposed transaction remains subject to receipt of certain other regulatory approvals and customary conditions precedent as mentioned in the Investment Agreement dated October 18, 2025 entered into between the Investor and the bank, it added.

Earlier in January, fair trade regulator CCI had approved Emirates NBD Bank's proposal to acquire a majority stake in private sector lender RBL Bank.

The approval from RBI came on April 1 with one year validity, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday

Key Points

- Approval follows Emirates NBD Bank expressing its interest in Oct 2025 to acquire 60% stake in RBL Bank for Rs 26,853 crore
- Emirates NBD would acquire & maintain a shareholding of at least 51% of paid-up share capital of the RBL Bank
- The voting rights of ENBD shall be capped at 26% of the total voting rights of RBL Bank

Forex stocks drop by $10.29 bn to $688.06 bn

MUMBAI: India's forex reserves dropped by $10.288 billion to $688.058 billion during the week ended March 27, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined by $11.413 billion to $698.346 billion.

The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of $728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year, before the onset of the West Asia conflict.

The rupee has come under pressure since the start of the West Asia conflict, and the RBI has been intervening in the forex market through dollar sales and has also taken some surprising policy measures to harness the fall.

For the week ended March 27, foreign currency assets decreased by $6.622 billion to $551.072 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the forex reserves.

Value of gold reserves decreased by $3.666 billion to $113.521 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights were up $17 million to $18.649 billion, the RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF was down by $17 million to $4.816 billion in the reporting week. PTI

Exports during FY26 to record positive growth despite global challenges

NEW DELHI: India's exports have sustained healthy momentum despite global headwinds and are expected to post positive growth in 2025-26, a senior official of the Commerce Ministry said on Friday.

The exports and imports data for the month of March and the full FY26 will be released by the commerce ministry on April 15.

"At the end of March 31, despite the war, we will be closing the year with positive growth. US tariffs, so many disturbances all through the year, Ukraine war is continuing, Iran war started, despite all, merchandise, exports have maintained their momentum," the official said.

The country's merchandise exports dropped marginally by 0.81 per cent year-on-year to $36.61 billion in February, and the trade deficit narrowed to $27.1 billion compared to the previous month.

Cumulatively, exports during April-February 2025-26 rose 1.84 per cent to $402.93 billion.

Imports grew by 8.53 per cent to $713.53 billion during the period, leaving a trade deficit of $310.60 billion as compared to $261.80 billion in the same month last year. The goods and services exports during 2024-25 was $825 billion (goods $437 billion and $388 billion services). PTI

RBI's Benchmark Issuance Strategy likely to boost transparency, liquidity in SDL market

MUMBAI: The RBI's Benchmark Issuance Strategy (BIS) for select states is expected to improve transparency and liquidity in the State Development Loan (SDL) market, say experts.

According to market experts, the impact on borrowing costs and yield spreads is likely to be gradual amid the continued heavy supply of state bonds.

The central bank has decided to roll out the strategy on a pilot basis from FY27, under which states will issue securities in specific benchmark tenor buckets based on a pre-announced borrowing calendar.

The framework is aimed at creating larger, more liquid benchmark bonds, improving price discovery and providing investors with better visibility into supply in the state bond market.

Market participants said the strategy would benefit both issuers and investors by bringing greater discipline and predictability to state borrowing programmes.

Mataprasad Pandey, vice-president at Arete Capital, said the benchmark issuance strategy enhances transparency and liquidity in the market while enabling states to manage their debt more efficiently, which could also support demand for their securities over time.

Experts also highlighted that the move represents a structural step towards aligning state borrowings with the broader government securities framework.

Venkatakrishnan Srinivasan, founder and managing partner at Rockfort Fincap LLP, said standardising issuances across key tenor buckets such as 5-year, 10-year and 15-year maturities would help build reliable benchmark securities, improve secondary market liquidity and strengthen the development of a proper yield curve for state bonds.

However, experts cautioned that the immediate movement in yields will continue to be driven by supply conditions, with states increasingly front-loading borrowings and tapping longer tenors.

They noted that the current widening of SDL spreads, now in the range of 0.65-0.75 per cent over comparable government securities, reflects elevated issuance volumes and rising duration risk rather than structural inefficiencies in the market.

While the Benchmark Issuance Strategy is expected to improve market efficiency and transparency over the medium term, analysts said sustained compression in spreads would depend on stronger demand conditions, broader investor participation and deeper market-making in the secondary market, suggesting that SDL yields may remain elevated in the near term despite the reform. PTI

IIFCL hosts Business Stakeholder Meet 2026

NEW DELHI: India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited hosted the Business Stakeholder Meet 2026 at India Habitat Centre, with over 100 participants from across the infrastructure and financial ecosystem.

Managing Director Rohit Rishi highlighted India's resilience amid global uncertainties and stressed infrastructure's central role in long-term growth, pointing to opportunities in transport, urban infrastructure and clean energy backed by strong policy support.

Deputy Managing Director Palash Srivastava outlined IIFCL's evolution and called for innovative financing, deeper capital markets and stronger stakeholder collaboration, with a focus on ESG-aligned funding and global partnerships.

The event featured two focused panel discussions centered on climate resilience and capital mobilization, enabling in-depth deliberations among policymakers, financiers, and industry leaders. IIFCL reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable infrastructure and the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. MPOST

'PV sales likely to moderate to 4-6% in FY27'

NEW DELHI: India's passenger vehicle industry growth is expected to moderate to 4-6 per cent in FY27, largely due to the high base and evolving macroeconomic conditions, ratings agency ICRA said on Friday.

For FY26, the industry is estimated to report wholesale volume growth of around 7-9 per cent, supported by strong festive demand, GST rate cuts and multiple new model launches, ICRA said in a statement.

"The industry continues to witness structural shifts, with utility vehicles accounting for nearly 67 per cent of overall sales, reflecting sustained premiumisation trends," it said.

Further, rising penetration of alternative powertrains such as CNG and electric vehicles is aiding demand diversification, ICRA said.

Despite the anticipated moderation in growth, passenger vehicle original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are expected to continue with significant capital expenditure towards new product development and electric vehicle platforms, while tractor manufacturers are likely to benefit from stable input costs and operating leverage, it added.

Going forward, key monitorables for the PV industry include inflationary pressures arising from geopolitical developments and interest rate movements, ICRA said.

Similarly for the tractor industry, ICRA said growth is likely to moderate to 1-4 per cent in FY27, given the high base and expected normalisation in demand.

The tractor industry has witnessed a sharp uptick, with wholesale volumes growing by 22.8 per cent in the 11 months of FY2026, supported by favourable monsoons, improved agricultural output and GST reduction on tractors. "(Tractor) industry volumes are expected to reach an all-time high in FY26," it said.

Going forward, tractor demand will remain closely linked to monsoon performance and rural income levels, with potential El Nino conditions posing a downside risk.

Despite the anticipated moderation in growth, the credit profiles of OEMs in both sectors are expected to remain strong, supported by low leverage, healthy liquidity and improving operating performance, ICRA noted. PTI

For FY26, the industry is estimated to report wholesale volume growth of around 7-9 per cent

Crypto steadies on easing geopolitical tensions

NEW DELHI: Bitcoin and Ethereum stabilised this week after recent losses, aided by improving sentiment around a potential de-escalation in the Iran conflict, though trading activity remained subdued.

Bitcoin moved in a narrow $66,000–$67,000 range with lower volumes, reflecting investor caution, while altcoins lagged amid its continued dominance, according to WazirX.

Precious metals corrected sharply due to profit-booking despite ongoing geopolitical risks, signalling cautious market recalibration.

In the US, the proposed crypto regulatory framework, the Clarity Act, is expected to reduce uncertainty.

Macro signals remained mixed, with India's strong GDP outlook contrasting with deflationary wholesale prices, while global investors awaited key inflation data.

Sentiment was further supported by expectations of foreign inflows and progress on US-India trade ties, though volatility continued to be driven more by uncertainty than clear directional trends. AGENCIES

HZL's mined & refined metal output rises in Q4

NEW DELHI: Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) has reported an increase in the production of mined metal and refined metal, but a slight decrease in silver production in the fourth quarter of FY26.

The company's mined metal production increased by two per cent to 3,15,000 tonnes and its refined metal output rose by five per cent to 2,82,000 tonnes in the Q4 FY26. Mined metal production refers to extracting raw ore and producing a concentrate that contains impurities. Refined metal production is the subsequent purification process, enhancing the grade to over 99 per cent purity.

In a statement, HZL has said that its silver production dropped marginally by 0.2 per cent to 176 tonnes in Q4 FY26 against 177 tonnes produced in the year-ago period.

The company's wind power generation also dropped by 11 per cent to 56 million units in fourth quarter from 63 million units in the year-ago period.

HZL is the world's largest integrated zinc producer and is amongst the top five silver producers globally. The company supplies to more than 40 nations and holds a market share of about 75 per cent of the primary zinc market in India. MPOST

India's seafood exports: From growth to global competitiveness

The sector supports nearly 30 mn fishers & fish farmers at primary level & almost twice as many across value chain

NEW DELHI: India's fisheries sector has emerged as a key driver of food security, employment, exports and sustainable livelihoods, supported by a record Rs 39,272 crore investment by the Centre since 2015.

The sector provides primary livelihoods to nearly 30 million fishers and fish farmers, with almost twice as many engaged across the value chain. Now the world's second-largest aquaculture producer, India contributes about 8 per cent to global fish output. Over the past decade, the sector has transitioned from traditional practices to a commercially significant activity, while retaining an inclusive focus on small-scale fishers. This shift is reflected in rising output, with fish production increasing from 141.64 lakh tonnes in FY20 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in FY25, clocking an average annual growth of around 7 per cent.

Seafood exports have also posted sustained growth, expanding at about 7 per cent annually over the past 11 years. Marine product exports more than doubled from Rs 30,213 crore in FY14 to Rs 62,408 crore in FY25, led by shrimp exports worth Rs 43,334 crore.

India exports over 350 seafood varieties to nearly 130 markets. The US remains the largest destination, accounting for 36.42 per cent of export value in FY25, followed by China, the EU, Southeast Asia, Japan and the Middle East. Frozen shrimp continues to dominate the export basket, alongside frozen fish, squid and value-added products, whose share has risen from 2.5 per cent to 11 per cent.

To diversify exports & cut dependence on a few commodities, the government is promoting high-value species such as tuna, seabass & tilapia under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana. Investments are being made in cold-chain infrastructure, fishing harbours and post-harvest facilities. India is also aligning with global sustainability standards to retain access to key markets. It secured a US comparability finding in 2025 under marine mammal protection norms, ensuring continued exports. Measures such as Turtle Excluder Devices, enhanced traceability and a national digital tracking framework are being rolled out.

Regulatory processes have been simplified, with import approvals now processed within 72 hours via a digital system. Going forward, India aims to boost value-added exports, expand into new markets and strengthen quality standards, positioning itself as a reliable global seafood supplier. MPOST

CLOSER LOOK

- Now the world's second-largest aquaculture producer, India contributes about 8 per cent to global fish output
- Seafood exports have posted sustained growth, expanding at about 7% annually over past 11 years
- Marine product exports more than doubled from Rs 30,213 crore in FY14 to Rs 62,408 crore in FY25

Lord of the kings

Iyer's fifty is centrepiece in PBKS' win over CSK

CHENNAI: Skipper Shreyas Iyer's half-century was elegance and aggression in equal measure in Punjab Kings' five-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match here on Friday.

Shreyas (50 off 29 balls) and his 59-run alliance with Nehal Wadhera for the fourth wicket helped Punjab end up at 210/5 while chasing a competitive 209 on a dew-less Chepauk night, also consigning the hosts to their second successive defeat.

It was Punjab's second win on the trot, but there were other heroes too on the night for the PBKS.

Chasing a target at a run-rate closer to 11 required consistent and calm run-making and that was what PBKS precisely did through their top-order, with just about everyone chipping in.

Priyansh Arya (39, 11 balls), Prabhsimran Singh (43, 34b), Cooper Connolly (36, 22b) all came up with mentionable contributions.

Arya was quite brutal while vandalising CSK attack — Khaleel Ahmed was put away for a 4 and six while Matt Henry was dispatched for 4, 6, 4 in his first over that leaked 20 runs.

Arya and Prabhsimran cracked 61 runs in just 4.2 overs that gave a strong portend to the route the match was taking.

The Delhi batter was cleaned up by Henry to give a token relief to CSK, but none was more significant in PBKS's march than their skipper Shreyas, who unfurled his full range of shots.

Punjab Kings' captain Shreyas Iyer and Cooper Connolly during the match PTI

Shreyas started a bit slow reaching 8 off 9 balls, as Connolly was doing the bulk of the work. But once the Australian fell to Anshul Kamboj, Shreyas took over the chase.

As expected, he hammered the spinners, and the shot of the innings was an inside-out six off leg-spinner Rahul Chahar.

Shreyas brought up his fifty in 26 balls with a boundary off Kamboj, but soon fell to the bowler, chasing a wide delivery.

Wadhera fell in the first ball of the next over to Henry as PBKS slipped to 186 for five from 186 for three.

However, that proved a minor aberration.

Earlier, Ayush Mhatre showcased his abundant talent with a 43-ball 73, powering the Super Kings to a competitive 209 for five.

Mhatre and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (28) added 96 runs for the second wicket after Sanju Samson returned to the hut early. AGENCIES

SA's Klaasen rules out international comeback

NEW DELHI: South Africa's swashbuckling batter Heinrich Klaasen has officially ruled out an international comeback, confirming his retirement to prioritise family time after toying with the idea for a brief period. Klaasen, 34, had retired from all forms of international cricket last June, following his omission from South Africa's central contracts, stepping aside to focus on playing in T20 leagues.

Now, despite experiencing "FOMO" (fear of missing out) during the 2026 T20 World Cup, the Protea, known for his belligerence with the bat, said he is not returning.

"It was a thought for about two weeks. And then we decided against it," Klaasen said. AGENCIES

KKR's freefall puts heat on captain Rahane

KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane has hit back at criticism around his strike rate, suggesting that there is a "certain agenda" and an element of "jealousy" behind the chatter.

Questions on his strike rate came up after KKR slumped to a 65-run loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Thursday. Chasing a steep 227, the home side never had any impactful partnership despite a promising start and folded for 161 in 16 overs to remain winless so far this season. The loss placed the focus on Rahane's own performance and strike rate. The KKR skipper, who managed 8 off 10 balls on Thursday, was uncharacteristically sharp as he reacted to the criticism.

"My strike rate, I think I have one of the best strike rates so far from 2020. People who are talking about me, probably not watching the game or they have certain agenda against me. They don't like me playing," he said without mentioning anyone in specific in the post-match media interaction.

"They don't like to watch me play. The amount of success which I got, I guess they are jealous of me. I am not too worried."

Approaching 38, the out-of-favour India player has been a transformed batter and was Mumbai's top run-getter in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, scoring 391 runs from 10 innings at a strike rate of 161.57, finishing among the top five batters in the competition.

Rahane was also KKR's leading run-scorer last season despite a poor eighth place finish in their title defence. As a result, the franchise kept faith in him as its skipper. But his middle-over slowdown has been a concern. Against Mumbai Indians in their opening game, Rahane cruised to 36 off 18 balls but only managed 31 off next 22 balls without a boundary. AGENCIES

TEENAGER HAS ENJOYED ROLLICKING START

Sooryavanshi in focus as GT pacers face test on batting deck

AHMEDABAD: A pace attack comprising Kagiso Rabada, Prasidh Krishna and Mohammed Siraj does bear an intimidating look but the troika will have its task cut out when 'Boy Wonder' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi faces them on a batting featherbed with Rajasthan Royals starting as favourites against Gujarat Titans in an IPL match here on Saturday.

The season two of "Vaibhav Kand" has started with the 15-year-old demolishing the Chennai Super Kings attack for a 15-ball-50 but that was in a chase of 127 and against a poor quality domestic attack.

On Saturday at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Sooryavanshi will once again try to meet fire with fire but there will be three international bowlers of repute in Rabada, Siraj and Prasidh, who would like to test the batting flagbearer for the 'Gen Alpha'.

For Titans skipper Shubman Gill, one would expect that he would take a few more prudent decisions unlike the opener in Mullanpur where Siraj was given only two overs and Prasidh was introduced as late as in the 13th over.

On the batting front, the track at the Narendra Modi Stadium is expected to be a paradise where one can hit through the line. The trend in the tournament so far has been to chase and Rajasthan Royals with Nandre Burger and Jofra Archer, two tearaway quicks at its disposal would like to ask probing questions to Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler first up.

Gujarat Titans' Mohammed Siraj during a training session PTI

> Sooryavanshi will once again try to meet fire with fire but there will be three international bowlers of repute in Rabada, Siraj and Prasidh

The problem with GT line-up is their top three batters, who aren't exactly scoring at 200 plus strike-rate. Both skipper Gill (39 off 27 balls) and Buttler (38 off 33 balls) didn't look in their element against Punjab Kings at Mullanpur. Sudharsan (13 off 11 balls) is also trying to get into the groove post injury break.

It doesn't help either that the top three on whom the Titans batting hinges, haven't exactly been in great touch and are fighting their own little demons. Worse, their Indian middle order comprising Shahrukh Khan, Washington Sundar and Rahul Tewatia doesn't inspire confidence of the highest order. AGENCIES

Top-order woes for DC? Kuldeep says not yet

NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Friday downplayed concerns over the team's top-order struggles, asserting that there was no need to "press the panic button" after just one game.

The Capitals endured a shaky start in their tournament opener, suffering a top-order collapse before Sameer Rizvi and Tristan Stubbs stitched together a match-winning stand to secure a six-wicket victory. KL Rahul fell for a first-ball duck, while Pathum Nissanka struggled to get going and Nitish Rana perished attempting an attacking stroke.

"Look Nitish has also been playing for many years, he is an experienced player in the IPL, he has given many performances. After that, Nissanka, obviously you know what kind of batsman he is, what his calibre is. So I feel there is no need to panic in this," Kuldeep said on the eve of the match against Mumbai Indians.

"There was no such talk either. It was the first game, obviously you want a good start but sometimes it doesn't happen. I'm sure they will perform well in the upcoming matches. So the panic button has not been pressed yet. When we lose five out of five, maybe the panic button will be pressed." AGENCIES

Steps down as Italy's coach after team failed to qualify for WC

Gutted Gattuso

MILAN: Italy coach Gennaro Gattuso left his role by mutual consent on Friday, three days after the national team failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup.

The Italian soccer federation announced the news in a statement thanking Gattuso "for the dedication and passion" during his nine months in charge.

Italy's chances of reaching this year's tournament in North America ended on Tuesday after a penalty shootout loss to Bosnia and Herzegovina in a qualifying playoff. "With pain in my heart, not having achieved the goal we had set ourselves, I consider my experience on the national team bench to be over," Gattuso said.

Gattuso's departure comes a day after Italy's soccer federation president Gabriele Gravina resigned along with Gianluigi Buffon, who was the national team's delegation chief.

The defeat to Bosnia added more misery for four-time champion Italy after being eliminated by Sweden and North Macedonia, respectively, in the qualifying playoffs for the last two World Cups.

Italy coach Gennaro Gattuso bid adieu after another heartbreak AP

> Gattuso's departure comes a day after Italy's soccer federation president Gabriele Gravina resigned along with Buffon

Gattuso took over from the fired Luciano Spalletti in June with the squad already in crisis mode following a defeat at Norway in its opening qualifier.

Spalletti had also overseen a disappointing European Championship campaign in 2024, when titleholder Italy was knocked out in the Round of 16 by Switzerland.

"I would like to thank Gattuso once again," Gravina said. "Because, in addition to being a special person, as a coach he has offered a valuable contribution, managing to bring enthusiasm back to the national team in just a few months. "He has conveyed great pride in the national team jersey to the players and to the whole country." Under Gattuso, Italy went on a six-match winning streak before another loss to Norway in November to finish second in their group and end up in the playoffs again. Gattuso had been given a contract until the end of the upcoming World Cup. AGENCIES

Format C-7
(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party)

Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates
(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL, 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **221 -Gopiballavpur Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Ajit Mahata**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. Section 121 of Municipal Act, 1993 2. Section 121 of Municipal Act, 1993 3. Section 121 of Municipal Act, 1993 4. Section 23A of Panchayat Act, 1993 5. Section 121 of Municipal Act, 1993
	b.	Case no.	1. NGR 1057/2019 2. NGR 1099/2019 3. NGR 1061/2019 4. NGR 1052/2019 5. NGR 1059/2019
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned C.J.M,Jhargram 2. Learned C.J.M, Jhargram 3. Learned C.J.M, Jhargram 4. Learned C.J.M, Jhargram 5. Learned C.J.M, Jhargram
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. Yes on 14/11/2025 2. Yes on7/2/2026 3. Yes on14/11/2025 4. Yes on11/9/2025 5. Yes on14/11/2025
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is a political figure and hasbeen consistently involved in social welfare activities, serving the marginalized sections of the society and has demonstrated a continuous commitment towards the development of society. He has actively worked at the grassroots level, addressing public concerns and contributing to local initiatives aimed at improving social conditions. His transparent public record, accountability and dedication to serving people reflect his suitability to represent public interests. The selection is thus based on merit, integrity, and service to society rather than mere electoral considerations.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **221 -GOPIBALLAVPUR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: - **Ajit Mahata**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
Member, National Working Committee
All India Trinamool Congress

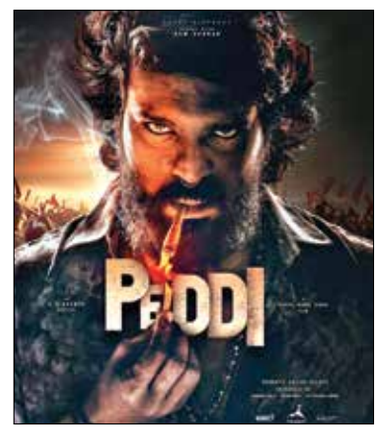
'CONVERSATION AROUND ALCOHOL ADDICTION IS ABSENT'

Janhvi Kapoor addressed the serious issue of alcohol addiction

Janhvi Kapoor recently addressed the serious issue of alcohol addiction while supporting an initiative aimed at changing how society perceives and discusses it. Speaking at the launch of a recent initiative for alcohol addiction awareness, Janhvi spoke about the stigma and silence toward a more informed, compassionate understanding. She also spoke about mental health being attached to it and how one needs care to get rid of this addiction.

Janhvi said that as alcohol consumption becomes increasingly normalised in social settings, there remains a lack of clarity about when casual drinking crosses into a clinical problem.

She said at the launch of this initiative called 'Off The Rocks', "The conversation around alcohol is either completely absent or deeply judgmental and neither serves the people who actually need support. Alcohol addiction is real, it's clinical and it affects people across every walk of life. The initiative is about making it easier to acknowledge that and to know that help exists."



She also stressed that addiction is often wrongly viewed as a moral weakness rather than a mental health condition

She also stressed that addiction is often wrongly viewed as a moral weakness rather than a mental health condition that requires proper treatment and intervention.

On the work front, Janhvi will next be seen in the Telugu film 'Peddi', starring opposite Ram Charan, which is slated to hit theatres on April 30, 2026. AGENCIES

'Weapons' prequel in the works

The movie, tentatively titled 'Gladys', focuses on the villainous character

A prequel to 2025's surprise hit 'Weapons' is moving ahead at 'Warner Bros' with filmmaker Zach Cregger penning the script with 'Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire' writer Zach Shields.

The movie is tentatively titled 'Gladys', focusing on the villainous character played by actress Amy Madigan, who went on to win an Academy Award for 'Best Supporting Actress' for her performance in the first part.

Shields has regularly written for 'Warner Bros' and Legendary's 'Monsterverse' franchise, especially films like 'Godzilla: King of the Monsters', 'Godzilla vs. Kong' and 'Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire'.

Cregger, who wrote and directed 'Weapons', will also produce the prequel along with Vertigo Entertainment's Roy Lee and Miri Yoon, according to 'Deadline'. Portrayed as the modern, dark retelling of the Pied Piper folktale, 'Weapons' centres around a group of missing children who disappear in the middle of the night.

'Weapons' centres around a group of missing children who disappear in the middle of the night

The movie collected 270 million dollars at the global box office after hitting theatres in August last year. It also starred Josh Brolin, Julia Garner, Alden Ehrenreich and Benedict Wong.

Madigan's Gladys is the peculiar aunt of Alex Lilly, the only child from the group who doesn't disappear.

Madigan, 75, had spoken about the possibility of a prequel in an interview with 'The Hollywood Reporter' before her Oscar win last month.

"Zach has a map of what he would like to do. It would be such a blast and it would be really great if we could revisit her in some way. I'm excited about that possibility," she said. PTI

GLOBAL BOX OFFICE COLLECTION WITHIN 2 WEEKS

'Dhurandhar 2' grosses Rs 1,500 crore

Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge' has taken the global box office by storm, earning Rs 1,500 crore worldwide within just two weeks of its release, the makers said on Thursday.

Directed by Aditya Dhar and produced by 'Jio Studios' and 'B62 Studios', the film has made Rs 1,501 (gross) crore worldwide, emerging as the biggest Indian grosser of all time within just 15 days of its release.

The film has broken several box office records, including the biggest Hindi opener of all time, the highest first and second week collections, the biggest opening weekend worldwide and the fastest film to reach Rs 1,000 crore globally.

Overseas, the film has collected Rs 367 crore in the first two weeks, making it the highest-grossing Indian film in North America and the biggest Indian film ever in overseas markets within its first week. It also surpassed the overseas lifetime collection of 'Dhurandhar' - the first instalment of the franchise - in just 10 days.

At the domestic box office, the film has grossed Rs 1,134 crore. At the same time, its net collection (after tax figure) currently stands at Rs 961 crore, putting it within touching distance of the Rs 1,000 crore net milestone - a feat achieved by only a handful of Hindi films such as 'Dangal'.

At the domestic box office, the film has grossed Rs 1,134 crore

A sequel to Dhar's 2025 blockbuster 'Dhurandhar', the film released on March 19 in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. It stars Singh alongside R Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, Sara Arjun and Rakesh Bedi.

Set in the Lyari town of Karachi, an area known for its history of gang wars and violent turf battles, 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge' charts the rise of Singh's character Hamza Ali Mazari in the Karachi underworld while delving into his origins as Jaskirat Singh Rangi, a young man who transforms into a covert operative. PTI

Damson Idris to star in 'The Lord's Day'

Rising British star Damson Idris will headline 'The Lord's Day', the upcoming series based on a novel by 'House of Cards' author Michael Dobbs.

The action thriller show, which hails from streaming giant 'Netflix', will be produced by 'Bad Wolf', a prominent UK-based independent production company known for backing popular series 'Industry' and 'Doctor Who'.

Idris became a global star after he featured in "F1", the blockbuster racing movie from filmmaker Joseph Kosinski and co-starring Brad Pitt. He is also known for featuring in shows such as 'Snowfall', 'Black Mirror' and the film 'Outside the Wire'.

In 'The Lord's Day', the actor will essay the role of Harry Jones, an ex-spy of Britain and convicted traitor, who has to use his skills and training to save the government of the United Kingdom from a hostage siege as the Palace of Westminster goes into lockdown and Parliament becomes enemy territory with the threat inside the building itself, as per the official logline.

The upcoming series is based on a novel by 'House of Cards' author Michael Dobbs

As a member of the House of Lords himself, Dobbs is renowned for his political thriller novels, particularly 'House of Cards', which was earlier adapted as a series by 'Netflix'. The show, which ran for six seasons. PTI

DON'S WHEELCHAIR SCENE

Zeenat Aman goes down a memory lane

Zeenat Aman went down memory lane and recalled shooting a wheelchair scene alongside Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan from the cult film 'Don' and called it an 'awfully difficult' experience. The film was released in 1978 and featured Aman in the role of Roma and Bachchan as the ruthless underworld boss Don and his innocent lookalike, Vijay.

Aman shared a video scene of the film on her 'Instagram' handle on Thursday, in which she pretended to be a nurse and had to take Bachchan out in a wheelchair. The actress said she had to keep the expressions, but it was a struggle for her.

"I presume there's such a thing as vintage video Wednesday. Yes, this is THAT scene from (the original 1978) 'Don' - Roma, ever enterprising and daring, dupes the police and escapes with an unconscious Don from a hospital room," she wrote.

She added, "Now I had already worked with many of the cast and crew in previous productions, so I was at complete ease throughout the making of the film. I also relished Roma's character. She was smart, daring and smooth. Who wouldn't want to embody such a woman! Unfortunately, being smooth on set that day wasn't easy! Why, you ask. Because that relic of a wheelchair, with Mr Bachchan's dead weight to boot, was awfully difficult to manoeuvre. I had to keep my poker face for the part, while actually pushing with all my might."

The veteran actress called it an 'awfully difficult' experience

The film was directed by Chandra Barot and turned out to be the third highest-grossing Indian film during its release. It also inspired actor and filmmaker Farhan Akhtar to make the 'Don' films, which were released in 2006 and 2011, respectively. The starred Shah Rukh Khan in the role of Don with Priyanka Chopra Jonas essaying Aman's character, Roma. PTI

ABHISHEK SHARES HOW PARENTING HAS BROUGHT NEW DIMENSIONS TO HIS LIFE

Bachchan said there are no fixed roles for him and Aishwarya while parenting Aaradhya

Abhishek Bachchan has, on several occasions, spoken at length about how his life, belief systems and perspectives have evolved after the birth of his daughter, Aaradhya Bachchan. Once again, he opened up about how watching her grow up and parenting her has brought new dimensions to his life. The actor shared that her constant questioning has led to realisations he didn't even know he was seeking.

In a recent conversation with Lilly Singh, Abhishek recalled an anecdote from Aaradhya Bachchan's early years, one that has stayed with him ever since. "We were watching TV when she was a kid and I was being tortured by Peppa Pig. I said, 'Hey, Aaradhya…' You know how kids are; they're like zombies. I said, 'Aaradhya, can you just get Papa a glass of water?' She looked at me like, 'What?' I said, 'Can you give me a glass of water?' She said, 'Why?' I said, 'Because I asked you to'. It's normal, right? I'm the dad, get me a glass of water. She got up, went and got me a glass of water very sweetly. I said, 'Thank you' gave her a kiss and she sat down."

Aaradhya's constant questioning has led to realisations he didn't even know he was seeking

Abhishek went on to explain how the situation took a turn shortly after. "Half an hour later, she says 'Papa?' I said 'Yes?' She asked, 'Can you give me a glass of water?' And I'm like, 'Go get it yourself'. She said, 'Why? If you can ask me, why can't I ask you?' I had no answer to that. And I was like, 'She's right'. I mean, I can't pull rank on her. She's right. If she can get me a glass of water, why can't I get it for her? And I never butted heads with her after that. It's very logical."

Speaking further about parenting, Abhishek Bachchan shared that neither he nor his wife, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, believed in rigid parental roles. "In my home, as parents, both of us try to be the best example for Aaradhya instead of telling her what is right and what is wrong. We believe in showing what to do by being that ourselves. It's never been like, 'Okay, I'll teach her self-defence'. If you've seen my wife, she can take care of herself. It's never been divided." AGENCIES

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates
(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **37-Kushmandi (SC) Assembly Constituency**
Name of the candidate – **Rekha Roy**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 188 of Indian Penal Code, 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 354 of 2016 arising out of Kushmandi PS Case No. 66 of 2016 dated 12.04.2016
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned A.C.J.M Court Gangarampur at Buniadpur Sub-Divisional Court, Dakshin Dinajpur.
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	Yes
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an experienced grassroots political worker with strong public engagement. She serves as a voice for underprivileged and marginalized communities. Her accessibility, close connection with the community, and consistent commitment to public service make her a suitable candidate for legislative responsibilities.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **37-KUSHMANDI (SC) ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**
Name of the candidate: **Rekha Roy**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **30 – GoalpokharAssembly Constituency**
Name of the candidate – **Md. Ghulam Rabbani**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 325/147/148/427/506 of Indian Penal Code, 1860;
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 36 of 2002arising out of Islampur Police StationCase No. 13 of 2002
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Islampur, District Uttar Dinajpur (West Bengal)
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	Yes
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has earned widespread recognition for his consistent efforts in advancing social causes and promoting the welfare of the public. His work reflects a deep-rooted sense of responsibility toward the community, with sustained initiatives that have brought tangible improvements in people's lives. His sincerity, dedication, and service-oriented approach have garnered him considerable respect.His selection is grounded in his strong academic and professional credentials, along with a distinguished record of achievements and public service. He has demonstrated sound judgment, leadership, and a commitment to ethical standards.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **30 – GOALPOKHAR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**
Name of the candidate: **Md. Ghulam Rabbani**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name and Designation

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National Working Committee Member, All India Trinamool Congress

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **72- Baharampur Assembly Constituency**
Name of the candidate – **Naru Gopal Mukherjee**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 171C/171F/188of IPC, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 469/2023 arising out of Sagardighi PS Case No. 63 of 2023 dated 26.02.2023
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned A.C.J.M Court at Jangipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **72- BAHARAMPURASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**
Name of the candidate: **Naru Gopal Mukherjee**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **36 –Itahar Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Mosaraf Hussen**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: Sections 34/323/341 of IPC, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	G.R Case No. 419/2018 arising out of Itahar PS Case No. 87 of 2018 dated 03.04.2018
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Judicial Magistrate 1st Court at Raiganj, Uttar Dinajpur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **36- ITAHAR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Mosaraf Hussen**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **7- Dinhata Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Udayan Guha**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: 1 Sections 325/326/302/120B/34 of IPC, 1860 2. Sections 147/148/149/447/151/152/153/332/333/353/325/326/307/436/302of IPC, 1860 r/w Section 3/ 4 of PDPP Act r/w 9/10 MPO Act
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R No. 668/2013 (in connection to FIR No- 683/20213, date 13.06.2013) 2.G.R No. 58/2008 (arising out of FIR No- 49/2008, date 05.02.2008)
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate II, Dinhata 2. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Dinhata
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **7- DINHATA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Udayan Guha**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

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All India Trinamool Congress

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates

(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **1 Mekliganj (SC)**

Name of the candidate – **Paresh Chandra Adhikary**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Sections 420,467,468,471 & 477A read with Sections 120B,201 and 109 Indian Penal Code, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	Special Case No. 04 of 2025 arising out of RC Case No. 04 of 2022.
	c.	Name of the Court	1st Special Judge(CBI) at Alipore
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	Yes, charges framed on 11-09-2025
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		He is known for his deep connection with the people of Mekhliganj in Cooch Behar district. Renowned for his accessibility and grassroots engagement, he has cultivated a reputation as a leader who prioritizes local concerns and community welfare. His approachability and consistent presence among constituents reflect a commitment to responsive governance and active public service.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The decision to select his candidature reflects a strategic balance between electability, effective representation, and the capacity to respond to constituents' needs, ensuring that he can meaningfully serve and connect with the community.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **1 Mekliganj (SC)**

Name of the candidate: **Paresh Chandra Adhikary**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **25 Matigara-Naxalbari (SC)**

Name of the candidate – **Shankar Malakar**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: (i) Section34/420/506of IPC, 1860. (ii) Section 34/339/341of IPC, 1860. (iii) Section 143/186/323/ 506 of IPC, 1860. (iv) Sections 120B/468/471of IPC, 1860. (v) Sections 34/323 of IPC of 1860.
	b.	Case no.	(i) GR. No. 215/15, (in connection toP.S. Case No. 27/15, Bagdogra Police Station Darjeeling) (ii) P.S. Case No. 158/15, Matigara Police (iii) GR. No. 2824/15, (in connection to P.S. Case No. 476/15, Police Station Darjeeling) (iv) GR. No. 2725/15, (in connection to P.S. Case No. 705/15, Siliguri Police Station Darjeeling) (v) P.S .Case No. 1119/14, Siliguri Police Station
	c.	Name of the Court	(i) A.C.J.M., Siliguri, Darjeeling (ii) A.C.J.M., Siliguri, Darjeeling (iii) A.C.J.M., Siliguri, Darjeeling (iv) A.C.J.M., Siliguri, Darjeeling (v) A.C.J.M., Siliguri, Darjeeling
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	(i) No (ii) No (iii) No(iv)No(v) No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate's selection is based on his proven legislative experienceand sustained public engagement. The candidate maintains strong contact with the people, remains accessible, and has actively contributed to addressing public issues and local concerns. The selection is further based on transparency in disclosures, adherence to legal requirements, and a record that reflects accountability. The candidate's overall suitability to represent the interests of the constituency, along with a clear commitment to public service, forms the basis of selection.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **25 MATIGARA-NAXALBARI (SC)**

Name of the candidate: **Shankar Malakar**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERALELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **4 Cooch Behar Dakshin Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Avijit De Bhowmik**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. Under Section 341/323/354/506/34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 r/w Section 3 (r) (s) of The Scheduled Castes and The Scheduled Tribes (Prevention Of Atrocities) Act, 1989. 2. Under Section 341/323/ 427/ 506/ 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 3. Under Section 143/341/323/324/ 325/354/427 /506 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 4. Under Section 143/ 447/341/427 / 506 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 r/w Section 3/4of P.P. Act r/w Section 90 MPO Act. 5. Under Section 447/325/326/379 /506 /34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 6. Under Section 341/323 /324/506 /34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 7. Under Section 447/ 341/ 323/ 506/ 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 8. Under Section 341/325/379/506/ 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 9. Under Section 341/307/506/34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 r/w Section 25(1) (a) of Arms Act, 1959. 10. Under Section 341/323/379/506 /34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860. 11. Under Section 448/342/323/327/ 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R. Case No. 1415/2023 2. G.R. Case No. 310/2018 3. G.R. Case No. 789/2017 4. G.R. Case No. 788/2017 5. G.R. Case No. 1139/2016 6. G.R. Case No. 1150/2016 7. G.R. Case No. 987/2016 8. G.R. Case No. 932/2016 9. G.R. Case No. 967/2016 10. G.R. Case No. 28/1999 11. G.R. Case No. 222/1997
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 2. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 3. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 4. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 5. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 6. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 7. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 8. Learned C.J.M, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 9. Learned J.M ,3rd Court, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 10. Learned J.M ,2nd Court, Sadar, Cooch Behar. 11. Learned C.J.M Sadar, Cooch Behar.
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No 3. No 4. No 5. No 6. No 7. No 8. No 9. No 10. No 11. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N.A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N.A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N.A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an Advocate having graduated from University of North Bengal in 2000. He was the AITC candidate for the Coochbehar Dakshin constituency in the 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections. The candidate is renowned for his exemplary oratory skills, hard-working nature and connect with every strata of people at the constituency
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **4 Cooch Behar Dakshin**

Name of the candidate: **Avijit De Bhowmik**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **64-Murshidabad Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Shaoni Singha Roy**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 34/109/286/323/337/341/379/406/427/447 of Indian Penal Code, 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 723/2007
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned 2ndJudicial Magistrate at Berhampore, Murshidabad
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Shaoni Singha Roy brings a distinguished public-service record shaped by two successful terms as MLA from the Murshidabad Assembly constituency. Her deep familiarity with local issues, strong educational grounding as a science graduate, and long-standing engagement with community welfare underscores her capability to deliver effective representation. She has been an active legislator in her previous tenure in the Legislative Assembly and has actively contributed in the Assembly and in the various Assembly Committee meetings.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **64-MURSHIDABAD ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Shaoni Singha Roy**

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(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **278 – Raniganj Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Kalobaran Mondal**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 147/148/149/323/506 of I.P.C, 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R. 2126 of 2016 arising out of Andal Police Station Case No. 330 of 2016 dated 28.11.2016
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Judicial Magistrate, 3rd Court, Durgapur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is a political figure with a lifelong commitment to social work and deep-rooted connection with the grassroots community in Raniganj. His professional integrity, combined with an understanding of the constituency's socio-economic challenges, makes him a qualified representative capable of advancing public welfare through dedicated leadership.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **278 – RANIGANJ ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Kalobaran Mondal**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **71– Beldanga Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Rabiul Alam Chowdhury**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: Sections 323/324/34 of IPC, 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R CaseNo. 2253/2009
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Judicial Magistrate 2nd Court Berhampore, Murshidabad
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	Yes
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be withreference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidatehasdemonstrated public service, experience, and commitment to social welfare. As reflected in the affidavit, he is actively engaged in social work and public life, with prior legislative experience as an MLA. His educational background, grassroots engagement, and understanding of constituency issues make him capable of effective representation. The selection is therefore based on merit, public service record, and suitability for legislative responsibilities, and not on mere winnability.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **71– BELDANGA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Rabiul Alam Chowdhury**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **286 – Bolpur Assembly Constituency**
Name of the candidate – **Chandra Nath Sinha**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: Sections 3/4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.
	b.	Case no.	ML Case no. 05 of 2024 (old case no. ML/13/2022)
	c.	Name of the Court	Special CBI Court No. 3 designated as Special Court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2022.
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **286 - BOLPUR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**
Name of the candidate: **Chandra Nath Sinha**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **236 Medinipur**
Name of the candidate – **Sujoy Hazra**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 147/148/149/186/353/34/323/332/379/511/427/506 IPC, 1860 and Sections 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.
	b.	Case no.	G.R. No. 261/2011 arising out of Kotwali PS Case No. 45 of 2011 dated 31.01.2011
	c.	Name of the Court	Ld. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Paschim Medinipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		He has served in key organizational roles within the party, including as district president, and is known for his active engagement in district-level political work. Before entering full-time politics, he was involved in business and social work, and his educational background includes postgraduate studies.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has demonstrated sustained leadership, strong voter engagement, and proven ability to address local issues effectively. His familiarity with regional challenges, ability to mobilize support, and active participation in party programmes made him better positioned to deliver electoral success and long-term development outcomes, ensuring continuity in governance and strengthening the party's presence at both the local and district levels. The proceeding initiated against him is more than a decade old, lacks merit and was initiated with an oblique political motive.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **236 MEDINIPUR**
Name of the candidate: **Sujoy Hazra**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **: GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **28- Chopra Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Hamidul Rahaman**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Sections 147/148/149/448/323/342 of IPC, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	GR Case No. 1566/1979 (in connection to FIR No. 04/1979 dated 15.10.1979)
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate at Islampur Sub-Divisional Court
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N. A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N. A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N. A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an active public figure with consistent engagement in social and community-related issues. He has maintained a strong connection with the people and has been responsive to local concerns. His public conduct reflects accountability, transparency, and adherence to legal requirements. The candidate's involvement in public life and his ability to represent the interests of the constituency form the basis of his consideration.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The allegations are wholly baseless, exaggerated, and devoid of any substantive foundation and appear to have been made with an oblique motive to tarnish the image of the candidate. The claims are frivolous, unsustainable, and bereft of merit. The reputation of the candidate outweighs such stray allegations and any other possible candidate.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **28- Chopra Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate: **Hamidul Rahaman**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **53- Sujapur Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Sabina Yeasmin**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 34/323/341of the Indian Penal Code, 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 3700/2013
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned C.J.M Court at Malda.
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Sabina Yeasmin is a respected Indian politician and seasoned public representative who has served as the Member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly from the Mothabari Assembly constituency. Her electoralvictory reflects a deep and sustained connection with her constituents, built on her ability to empathise with diverse community needs and articulate local concerns at the state level. Yeasmin's lived experience, shaped by years of engagement with grassroots issues such as education, rural development, and women empowermenthas helped foster a sense of trust and relatability among the voters she represents. Her grounded persona and responsiveness to the community's social and economic challenges underscore her merit as someone well-positioned to serve as a public representative.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **53- Sujapur Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate: **Sabina Yeasmin**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates
(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **12-Alipurduars Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Suman Kanjilal**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1) Section188of IPC, 1860 r/w Section. 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section.3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 2) Sections 186/143/188 IPC,1860 r/w Section.51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 3) Sections 186/143/188/283 IPC, 1860r/w Section. 51 ofDisaster Management Act, 2005 and Section. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 4) Sections 147/148/149/186/ 283/ IPC, 1860r/w Section 51 ofDisaster Management Act, 2005 and Section. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 5) Sections 143/186/188/283 IPC, 1860r/w Section 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 6) Sections 143/188/283 IPC, 1860 r/w Section. 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 7) Section 188 IPC r/w Section. 51 ofDisaster Management Act, 2005 and Sec. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 8) Section 143/186/188/283 IPC, 1860 r/w Section. 51 Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Sec. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 9) Sections 143/186/188of IPC, 1860. 10) Section 188 IPC, 1860r/w Section. 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005and Sec. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 11) Sections 188 of IPC, 1860. r/w Section. 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Sec. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020. 12) Sections 188/143/283 IPC, 1860 r/w Sec. 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005and Sec. 3 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020.
	b.	Case no.	1) G.R. Case No. 30/21 2) G.R. case No. 2328/20 3) G.R. case No. 2356/20 4) G.R. case No. 2242/20 5) G.R. case No. 2241/20 6) G.R. case No. 2248/20 7) G.R. case No. 1338/20 8) G.R. case No. 1682/20 9) G.R. case No. 1365/20 10) G.R. case No. 1338/20 11) G.R. case No. 1328/20 12) G.R. case No. 1220/20
	c.	Name of the Court	1) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 2) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 3) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 4) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 5) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 6) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 7) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 8) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 9) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 10) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 11) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar 12) Learned Addl. C.G.M 1, Alipursuar
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No 3. No 4. No 5. No 6. No 7. No 8. No 9. No 10. No 11. No 12. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N.A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N.A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N.A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **12 ALIPURDUARSASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Suman Kanjilal**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **95 Bangaon Uttar (SC)**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Biswajit Das**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. U/S – 188 & 51(b) Disaster Management Act andSection 8(b), National Highway Act 1956. 2. U/S- 143/188/186 I.P.C.and 51(b) Disaster Management Act 2005 3. U/S- 143/188/186 IPC, 1860and 51(b) Disaster Management Act 2005 and 8(b) National Highways Act, 1956 4. U/S- 420/ 406/323 IPC, 1860 5. U/S-294/323/34 IPC, 1860 6. U/S -147/148/427/447/323/506 IPC, 1860 7. U/S-147/ 148/ 149/ 332 /353 /427/160/506 IPC, 1860
	b.	Case no.	1. Bangaon P.S. Case No. 318/20 dated 12.06.2020 2. Gaighata P.S Case No. 326/20 dated 07.06.2020 3. Gaighata P.S. Case No. 320/20 dated 05.06.2020 4. Gopalnagar P.S. Case No. 466/19dated 30.08.2019 5. Gopalnagar P.S.Case No. 198/2007 dated 03.09.2007 6. Gopalnagar P.S. Case No. 27/2005 dated 27.02.2005 7. Gopalnagar P.S. Case No. 28/2005
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Ld. A.C.J.M. Court,Bangaon 2. Ld. A.C.J.M. Court,Bangaon 3. Ld. A.C.J.M. Court,Bangaon 4. Ld. A.C.J.M. Court,Bangaon 5. Ld. J.M. Court,Bangaon 6. Ld. J.M. Court,Bangaon 7. Ld. J.M. Court,Bangaon
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No 3. No 4. No 5. No 6. No 7. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Biswajit Das is an experienced political representative with a long-standing footprint in North 24 Parganas. With multiple terms as MLA, including earlier victories from Bangaon Uttar in 2011 and 2016 and from Bagdah in 2021, he has established a consistent record of public engagement and constituency-focused work. His career reflects a blend of administrative familiarity, organisational depth, and a strong grassroots presence across border-area communities.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His candidature is grounded in demonstrable experience, a proven record of legislative contribution, and sustained responsiveness to local needs. Over the years, he has cultivated significant trust amongst the electorate through continued accessibility, welfare-driven initiatives, and active involvement in resolving constituency-level issues. The proceedings initiated against him are baseless, devoid of merit and a by-product of political vendetta and despite such proceedings, he has been elected several times in the past Assembly elections, due to his trust and goodwill amongst the electorate at large.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **95 BANGAON UTTAR (SC)**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Biswajit Das**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **70- Rejinagar Assembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Ataur Rahaman**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: 1. Section 188of IPC, 1860 and Section 51(b)of D.M. Act, 2005 2. Sections 34/147/149/332/353/379/427/448/506/511of IPC, 1860 and Section 3 of P.D.P.P Act, 1984
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R. Case No. 88/2021 2. G.R Case No. 272/2011
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned Judicial Magistrate 2nd Court Berhampore, Murshidabad 2. Learned Judicial Magistrate 1stCourt Berhampore, Murshidabad
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts to which he is highly respected and loved by the people.The candidate has demonstrated consistent involvement in addressing community issues and maintaining a strong connect with the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **70- REJINAGAR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(3) Name of the candidate: **Ataur Rahaman**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**
Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **208 Mahishadal**
(2) Name of the candidate – **Tilak Kumar Chakraborty**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. 147/148/323/427/506/447/448/34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 2. 143/448/186/189/506 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 3. 427/454/457/380 of Indian Penal Code, 1860
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R.No.-375/2010 arising out Mahishadal PS Case No. 72 of 2010 dated 22.04.2010 2. G.R. No-415/2006 arising out of Mahishadal PS Case No. 64 of 2006 dated 07.10.2006 3. C.R. No-222/2001
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Ld. Addtl. Chief Judicial Magistrate – II, Haldia 2. Ld. Judicial Magistrate, Haldia 3. Ld. Addtl. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Haldia
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No 3. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate possesses strong grassroots connect, deep familiarity with the Mahishadal region, and broad acceptance among local stakeholders. A resident of Mahishadal with a B.Com (Hons.) degree from Mahishadal Raj College and long-standing involvement in local affairs, he brings both educational grounding and practical experience through his business background. His decisive victory in the 2021 Assembly election reflects his credibility and sustained engagement with community needs.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Being born and raised in Mahishadal, with strong family ties and an established presence as a local businessman, he has long been integrated into the constituency's social fabric. His significant victory in the 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election further reflects public trust in his leadership. The proceedings against him are false, frivolous and baseless, which has been highlighted by the fact that he had contested and won the Assembly elections, after initiation of such proceedings.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **208 MAHISHADAL**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Tilak Kumar Chakraborty**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**
Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **209 Haldia (SC)**
(2) Name of the candidate – **Tapasi Mondal**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Sections 143/147/149/186/283/323/353/427/120B IPC 1860 and Section 3 of Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 and Section 9 of the West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972 and Section 8B of the National Highways Act,1956
	b.	Case no.	G.R Case No. 2744 of 2022 arising out of Tamluk PS Case No. 828 of 2022.
	c.	Name of the Court	Ld. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Tamluk, Purba Medinipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	A criminal revisional application is preferred against the aforementioned case, being G.R Case No. 2744 of 2022, before the Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta and the same is currently pending.
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is a dedicated social worker having tremendous goodwill amongst the electorate at large. Her continued relevance stems from her strong community presence, adaptability across party platforms, and demonstrated capacity to retain voter trust and support amidst political shifts, making her a more strategically viable choice.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The chosen candidate's established engagement with the community and demonstrated capacity to respond to local needs makesher a strategically preferable option for ensuring effective representation and electoral success. The proceedings against the candidate are baseless, devoid of merit, borne out of political vendetta and deserves to be disregarded for the present purpose.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **209 HALDIA (SC)**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Tapasi Mondal**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **232 Chandrakona (SC)**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Surjya Kanta Doloi**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 341/323/325/447/427/509/34 of IPC 1860
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 601 of 2021 arising out of Chandrakona PS Case No. 192/2021 dated 18.05.2021
	c.	Name of the Court	Addl. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ghatal
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	Yes
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Surya Kanta Doloi has been selected as the candidate owing to his strong grassroots presence, deep engagement with the people of the Chandrakona Assembly constituency, and his proven ability to mobilise public support around developmental priorities. His consistent organisational work, commitment to the welfare of local communities, and alignment with the ideals of inclusive development make him a credible, merit-based, and representative choice.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His ability to counter divisive narratives, maintain public confidence, and translate support into a decisive mandate placed him ahead of other potential candidates. The collective sentiment of the constituency, reflected through sustained mobilisation, public enthusiasm, and a clear preference for his leadership, made it evident that he was uniquely positioned to carry forward the party's development vision. Accordingly, his selection reflects a positive endorsement of his competence and acceptance, rather than any inadequacy on the part of other aspirants.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **232 CHANDRAKONA (SC)**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Surjya Kanta Doloi**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **285 Suri**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Ujjal Chatterjee**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. 329(3)/115(2)/117(2)/351(2)/3(5) of BNS 2023 2. 3(i)(r)(s)(u) of SC & ST(POA) Act 1989
	b.	Case no.	1. Suri P.S. Case No. 448/25 dated 04.08.2025 2. Suri P.S. Case No. 447/25 dated 04.08.2025
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Ld ADJ, 1st Court, Birbhum 2. Ld ADJ, 1st Court,Birbhum
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	1. No 2. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		His repeated electoral success reflects a solid and enduring connection with the people he represents. Known for his grounded social approach and consistent engagement with constituents' everyday concerns, he has cultivated a reputation as an accessible and relatable representative. His understanding of local priorities, such as infrastructure, education, and community welfare, and his ability to communicate effectively across diverse groups have contributed to the trust placed in him by the electorate. These qualities underscore his merit as a candidate whose personal rapport and authentic connect with voters make him well-suited to serve in the state legislature.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His connection to the people across every strata of the society, throughout his constituency makes him a compelling candidate. His track record in coordinating party activities, understanding voter priorities, and responding to pressing regional challenges made them better suited to represent the constituency effectively and deliver on long-term development goals. The candidate serves a chance to prove his credentials by contesting the upcoming election and seeking the mandate of the people.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **285 SURI**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Ujjal Chatterjee**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **280 – Asansol Dakshin Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Tapas Banerjee**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: 1. Section 32 of Police Act, 1861 2. Sections 147/353/186/427 of I.P.C, 1860 3. Sections 143/447/427/186/34 of I.P.C, 1860 4. Sections 143/448/427/506 of I.P.C, 1860 5. Sections 148/149/323/506 of I.P.C, 1860 6. Sections 147/148/149/353/323/427/435 of I.P.C, 1860 7. Sections 147/332/427/342 of I.P.C, 1860, Section 9 of West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972, Section 108 of Indian Railway Act
	b.	Case no.	1. NGR 816/2014 2. GR Case No. 1711/2009 3. GR 840/2006 4. GR 1599/1996 5. GR 1523/1995 6. GR 43/1993 7. GRPS 65/1990
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned C.J.M in-charge, Paschim Bardhaman 2. Learned Judicial Magistrate, 5th Court, Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman 3. Learned Judicial Magistrate, 3rd Court, Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman 4. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Bardhaman 5. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Bardhaman 6. Learned Judicial Magistrate, 2nd Court, Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman 7. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Bardhaman
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. Yes, date 18.12.2021 3. Yes, date 30.04.2016 4. No 5. No 6. No 7. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has proven qualifications, consistent academic and professional achievements, and demonstrated merit in public service. The selection process duly considered the candidate's integrity, competence, and commitment to constitutional values. Emphasis was placed on the ability to effectively represent public interests and discharge responsibilities with diligence and accountability. The selection is not predicated on mere electoral "winnability," but on a holistic assessment of merit, capability, and suitability for the role, ensuring that the chosen candidate upholds the principles of good governance and public trust.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **280 – ASANSOL DAKSHIN ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Tapas Banerjee**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **234 – Salboni Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Srikanta Mahata**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: 1. Sections 302/34, IPC, 1860. Sections 25/27 of Arms Act adding Sections 120B/121/121A/122/123/124A of I.P.C, 1860. 2. Sections 144/448/506/379/186/120B/121/121A/123/124A of I.P.C, 1860. 3. Sections 143/144/186/188/447/504/506 of I.P.C, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	1. GR Case No. 1411/2010 arising out of Salboni Police Station Case No. 69/2010 2. GR Case No. 1166/2009 arising out of Salboni Police Station Case No. 55/2009 3. GR Case No. 1029/2009 arising out of Salboni Police Station Case No. 42/2009
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Medinipur 2. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Medinipur 3. Learned C.J.M, Paschim Medinipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is a veteran political figure with a deep focus on public engagement.His merit is defined by his deep-rooted connection to the local community, where he has consistently served as an accessible and trusted representative. He is a qualified representative who prioritizes community welfare and maintains a strong focus on grassroots development and social cohesion.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **234 – SALBONI CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Srikanta Mahata**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party
Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **283 Barabani**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Bidhan Upadhyay**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Sections 148/149/323/325/332/353/427/506 IPC 1860
	b.	Case no.	GR Case No. 251/96 arising out of Asansol North PS Case No. 31 of 1996 dated 25.02.1996
	c.	Name of the Court	Judicial Magistrate, 2nd Court, Asansol, Paschim Bardhaman
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Having been elected thrice from the Barabani constituency, he has consistently demonstrated leadership, administrative understanding, and an unwavering commitment to community welfare. His sustained engagement with constituency issues and proven ability to deliver meaningful development equip him to effectively represent local interests. His merit, credibility, and responsiveness make him an ideal and well-qualified candidate.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His three consecutive electoral victories from Barabani Assembly Constituency reflect longstanding community confidence and his demonstrated ability to address local concerns. His level of organisational involvement, leadership readiness, and familiarity with constituency needs. The proceeding against him is a very old proceeding, which is devoid of merit and has not shown any significant progress in the past 3 decades and the candidate has continued to win elections several times, despite presence of such proceeding.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **283 BARABANI**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Bidhan Upadhyay**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **230- Daspur Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Ashis Hudait**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Sections329(3)/126(2)/115(2)/117(2)/109(1)/76 / 351(2) / 3(5) BNS, 2023 r/w Section 8/12 of POSCO Act, 2012 Sections329(3)/126(2)/115(2)/117(2)/109(1)/76 / 351(2) / 3(5) BNS, 2023 r/w Section 8/12 of POSCO Act, 2012
	b.	Case no.	Case No. 443/2025 (in connection to FIR No. 527/25dated 29/08/2025, Police Station Daspur)
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Additional Session Judge, Ghatal
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N. A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N. A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N. A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate's selection is rooted in his demonstrated qualifications, public service experience, and merit. The candidate is renowned for his exemplary oratory skills, hard-working nature and connect with every strata of people at the constituency.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The allegations are wholly baseless and devoid of any substantive foundation and appear to have been made with an oblique motive to tarnish the image of the candidate. The reputation of the candidate outweighs such stray allegations and any other possible candidate. Such purported criminal antecedents warrant no consideration and may be entirely overlooked and disregarded.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **230- DASPURASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Ashis Hudait**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **62 - Bhagabangola Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Reyat Hossain Sarkar**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: 1. Sections 341/323/325/506/34 of IPC, 1860. 2. Sections 420/406 of IPC, 1860. 3. Sections 420/406 of IPC, 1860. 4. Sections 420/406 of IPC, 1860. 5. Sections 420/406 of IPC, 1860. 6. Sections 21/18/16(1)/17(1) of Indian Explosive Substance Act, 1908
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R. Case No. 2100/2023 2. ACJR No. 1332/2026 3. ACGR No. 5623/2020 4. ACGR No. 5622/2020 5. ACGR No. 1333/2026 6. CR. Case No. 163/2017
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned A.C.J.M 2nd , Lalbagh 2. Learned A.C.J.M, Alipore 3. Learned A.C.J.M, Alipore 4. Learned A.C.J.M, Alipore 5. Learned A.C.J.M, Alipore 6. Learned J.M (Additional), Lalbagh
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an individual associated with public life and community engagement. He has maintained interaction with the people and has been involved in addressing local concerns. His conduct reflects responsibility and adherence to legal requirements, including transparency in disclosures.The candidate demonstrates the ability to represent the interests of the constituency and contribute towards its development and public welfare.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **62 - BHAGABANGOLA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Reyat Hossain Sarkar**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **30 – GoalpokharAssembly Constituency**

Name of the candidate – **Md. Ghulam Rabbani**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections 325/147/148/427/506 of Indian Penal Code, 1860;
	b.	Case no.	G.R. Case No. 36 of 2002arising out of Islampur Police StationCase No. 13 of 2002
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Islampur, District Uttar Dinajpur (West Bengal)
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	Yes
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has earned widespread recognition for his consistent efforts in advancing social causes and promoting the welfare of the public. His work reflects a deep-rooted sense of responsibility toward the community, with sustained initiatives that have brought tangible improvements in people's lives. His sincerity, dedication, and service-oriented approach have garnered him considerable respect.His selection is grounded in his strong academic and professional credentials, along with a distinguished record of achievements and public service. He has demonstrated sound judgment, leadership, and a commitment to ethical standards.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(2) Name of the Constituency – **30 – GOALPOKHAR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Md. Ghulam Rabbani**

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates

(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **63- Raninagar Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Abdul Soumik Hossain**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences Alleged Under: 1. Sections 34/143/323/427 of IPC, 1860 2. Sections 143/149/283 of IPC, 1860 3. Sections 147/174 of The Railway Act, 1989
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R. Case No. 5040 of 2015 2. G.R (II)Case No. 260 of 2013 3. C.R. Case No. 1406 of 2014
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned Judicial Magistrate 2nd Court at Berhampore (Murshidabad). 2. Learned 20th Metropolitan Magistrate Court, Kolkata. 3. Learned Chief Judicial Magistrate, Murshidabad
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. No 3. Not Applicable
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	11.02.2020
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	In C.R. Case No. 1406 of 2014-The Learned Court sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 500 each, in default to undergo simple imprisonment for 1 month, for the offence punishable under Section 147 of the Railways Act and further required to pay a fine of Rs. 1,000 each, in default to undergo simple imprisonment for 6 months, for the offence punishable under Section 174(A) of the Railways Act. Both sentences shall run concurrently.
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has been selected on the basis of his consistent dedication to public service and his active role as a social worker committed to the development and welfare of society. His ability to connect with people, address local issues, and contribute meaningfully to community development reflects his merit and suitability. The selection is based on his commitment to social welfare, integrity, and proven contribution to society, rather than mere electoral considerations.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **63- RANINAG ARASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Abdul Soumik Hossain**

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(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **46 - Harishchandrapur Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Matibur Rahaman**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: 1. Sections 420/424/506/34 of IPC, 1860. 2. Sections 448/323/354/427/34 of IPC, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	1. G.R. Case No. 1141/2021 2. G.R. Case No. 988/2021
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Learned A.C.J.M Court at Chanchal, Malda 2. Learned J.M., 2nd Court at Chanchal, Malda
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate demonstrates consistent public engagement, credibility, and active involvement in community-oriented initiatives, reflecting suitability to represent public concerns and responsibilities.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **46 - HARISHCHANDRAPURASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Matibur Rahaman**

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **2 - Mathabhanga (SC)Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Dr. Sablu Barman**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: (i) Sections 448/323/427/506/34 of IPC, 1860. (ii) Section 32 of Police Act, 1861.
	b.	Case no.	(i) GR Case No. 831/2019 (in connection to Mathabhanga Police Station Case No. 409/2019 dated 30.09.2019) (ii) NGR Case No. 2483/2019(in connection to Nishiganj OP GDE No. 709/2019 dated 30.09.2019)
	c.	Name of the Court	(i) Learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate atMathabhanga Court (ii) Learned Judicial Magistrate at Mathabhanga Court
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	(i) No (ii) Not Applicable
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N.A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N.A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N.A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same As Above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **2 - MATHABHANGA (SC) ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

Name of the candidate: **Dr. Sablu Barman**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **32- Karandighi Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Goutam Paul**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections:143/323/325 /427/447/506of IPC, 1860.
	b.	Case no.	GR. No. 474/09 arising out of ItaharP.S. Case No. 142/2009
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Chief Judicial Magistrate at Raiganj
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is very well known for his active social work. He has worked relentlessly for the development of people and has devoted all his efforts for which he is highly respected and loved by the people.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **32- KARANDIGHI ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Goutam Paul**

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(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **292 Hansan**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Fayezul Haque**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. 341/326/307/120B/34IPC, 1860 2. 147/148/149/326/307/302IPC, 1860 and 9B(2) Indian ExplosivesAct 3. 147/148/149/324/326/307/379/ IPC, 1860and 9B(2) Indian Explosives Act. 4. 326/307/506/34 IPC, 1860 and Arms Act. 5. 147/148/149/448/379/436/427IPC, 1860and9B(2) Indian Explosives Act. 6. 147/148/149/323/324/325/307/286 IPC, 1860 and 9B(2) Indian ExplosivesActand3/4 Essential Commodities Act.
	b.	Case no.	1. SC 117/2024 arising out of Nanoor PS Case No. 106 of 2016. 2. SC 25/2022 arising out of Nanoor PS Case No. 127 of 2012. 3. SC 43/2023 arising out of Nanoor PS Case No. 150 of 2008. 4. GR 83/2016 arising out of Bolpur P.S. Case No. 28/2016 dated 05.02.2016 5. GR 158/2010 arising out of Nanoor P.S. Case No. 34/2010 6. GR 123/2008 arising out of Nanoor P.S. Case No. 23/2008 dated 23.03.2008.
	c.	Name of the Court	1. Ld. Additional Sessions Judge at Bolpur,Birbhum. 2. Ld. Additional SessionsJudge at Bolpur,Birbhum. 3. Ld.Asst.Sessions Judge at Bolpur,Birbhum 4. Ld. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate at Bolpur,Birbhum 5. Ld. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate at Bolpur,Birbhum. 6. Ld.ADJ, Bolpur, Birbhum
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. No 4. No 5. No 6. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	An application for revision has been filed against the proceedings nos. 1 and 2.
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is from the minority section of the population and is working for the upliftment of society. He is a social worker and is presently the Sabhadhipatiof the Birbhum Zilla Parishad and has deep empathy and understanding of community needs of his constituency. He has strong foundation in listening to and understanding the diverse challenges faced by village people, which enables him to advocate for policies that address the needs of his constituency.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The candidate has become falsely impleaded in criminal proceedings, which are the result of political disturbances in the area in question. If elected, the candidate with his connection with the local people is confident of beingsuccessful in tiding over the political and social disturbances in the constituency and be an effective catalyst in bringing in social harmony.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **292HANSAN**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Fayezul Haque**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **228 Kharagpur**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Dinen Roy**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: (i) u/s. 121 of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (ii) u/s 23(A) of WB Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 2006 (iii) u/s 23(1) WB Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 2010 (iv) u/s 121 of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (v) u/s 23(A) of WB Panchayat (3rd Amendment) Act, 2006) (vi) u/s 121 of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (vii) u/s 23 (1) WB Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 2010 (viii) u/s 23(1) WB Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 2010 (ix) u/s 121of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (x) u/s 121 of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (xi) u/s 121(1) of WB Municipal Act, 2006 (xii) u/s 32 Police Act 1861 (xiii) u/s 124(4) of WB Municipal Act 2006 (xiv) u/s 32 Panchayat Act (xv) u/s 23N Panchayat Act (xvi) u/s 23N Panchayat Act (xvii) u/s 121 WB Panchayat Act
	b.	Case no.	(i). N.C.R.-384/16, Dt. 30/03/16 (ii) N.C.R.-387/16, Dt. 28/03/16 (iii) N.C.R.-375/16 Dt. 29/03/16 (iv) N.C.R.-373/16 Dt. 29/03/16 (v) N.C.R.-367/16 Dt. 27/03/16 (vi) N.C.R.-357/16 Dt. 27/03/16 (vii) N.C.R.-355/16 Dt.27/03/16 (viii) N.C.R.-356/16 Dt.27/03/16 (ix) N.C.R.-385/16 Dt.30/03/16 (x) N.C.R.-398/16 Dt. 05/04/2016 (xi) N.C.R.-404/16, Dt.07/04/2016 (xii) N.C.R.-387/16 Dt. 31/03/16 (xiii) N.C.R.-386/16 Dt. 28/03/16 (xiv) NGR -2618N/16 Dt 23/06/16 (xv) NGR -2611N/16 Dt. 20/03/16 (xvi) NGR-2608N/16 Dt. 20/03/16 (xvii) NGR- 2615N/16 Dt. 21/03/16
	c.	Name of the Court	Case Nos. (i) to (xvii) are the pending before Court of Judicial Magistrate, 6thCourt, Midnapore.
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		He is known for his continued engagement with local issues.He has been actively involved in constituency development and party organisation at the grassroots level.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The selected candidate has a proven record of public service, policy implementation, and grassroots outreach, making him better equipped to represent the constituency and deliver sustained development. His merit, experience, and demonstrated capability were key factors in the selection. The proceedings against him are all frivolous, baseless, a by-product of political vendetta and serves to be disregarded completely.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **228 KHARAGPUR**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Dinen Roy**

* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name and Designation

Derek O'Brien
National Working Committee Member
All India Trinamool Congress

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Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates

(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1)Name of the Constituency - **75 Domkal**

(2)Name of the candidate – **Humayun Kabir**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. 448/323/379/427/504/506/341 IPC & 25/27 Arms Act 2. 448/323/325/307/506/34 IPC
	b.	Case no.	1. Burdwan PS Case No.131/23 dated 01.02.2023, Purba Bardhaman 2. Ausgram PS Case No. 31/23 dated 31.01.2023, Purba Bardhaman
	c.	Name of the Court	Not applicable
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	Not applicable
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N.A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N.A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N.A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an Indian politician, former police officer, and member of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). He was elected as the MLA from Debra constituency in 2021.A Ph.D. holder in Botany from University of Kalyani, he previously served in the police force, holding key positions such as Superintendent of Police and Commissioner. He also served briefly as a Minister of State (independent charge).
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The selected candidate brings extensive public service experience, strong decision-making skills, and a deep understanding of local challenges, making him better equipped to address public concerns and deliver results. His proven track record and commitment to service were key factors in the selection. No criminal proceedings have been initiated against the police cases filed against him, which shows that such offences as alleged were minor in nature.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **75 DOMKAL**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Humayun Kabir**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1)Name of the Constituency - **284 Dubrajpur (SC)**

(2)Name of the candidate – **Naresh Chandra Bauri**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1. 467/468/471/420/506/34 IPC, 1860 2. 448/ 333/ 379/ 506/ 354/34/IPC, 1860 and Section 25/27 Arms Act, 1959 3. 448/ 323/ 379/ 506/ 354/ 34 IPC, 1860 4. 338/ 336(3)/ 340(2)/ 318((2)/ 3(5) Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita, 2023
	b.	Case no.	1. Illambazar PS Case No. 17 of 2022 dated 18.01.2022 2. PurbaBardhaman PS Case no. 796 of 2022 dated 18.07.2022. 3. Santiniketan PS Case No.123/2020 dated 17.08.2020 4. Santiniketan PS Case No.265/2025 dated 27.09.2025
	c.	Name of the Court	1. ACJM Court, Bolpur 2. CJM Court, Purba Bardhaman 3. ACJM Court, Bolpur 4. ACJM Court, Bolpur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1. No 2. Yes 3. No 4. No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		The candidate is an Indian politician associated with the All India Trinamool Congress in West Bengal. He has been active in regional political affairs and is known for his engagement with grassroots issues, welfare initiatives, and organisational activities within the party. He has contributed to strengthening local party structures and addressing constituency-level concerns through community outreach and public interface programmes. As a committed party functionary, he continues to work toward advancing the developmental priorities and governance objectives of the Trinamool Congress in the State.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		The candidate demonstrates remarkable grassroots engagement, a steady record of public service, and broad acceptance among community members. His active organisational role, leadership ability, and continued involvement in constituency affairs uniquely position her to advance local interests. Although other individuals without criminal antecedents were considered, none possessed the same depth of experience, proven capability, or community confidence. His credibility, dedication to public welfare, and capacity to deliver effective and responsive governance make him the most suitable and deserving choice to represent the constituency.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **284 DUBRAJPUR (SC)**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Naresh Chandra Bauri**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) No. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **73- HariharparaAssembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Niamot Sheikh**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under: Sections146/174(A)of the Railway Act, 1989.
	b.	Case no.	SpecialCase No. 08/2025
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned Judicial MagistrateBidhannagar Court, North 24 Parganas
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N/A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N/A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N/A
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Niamot Sheikh was selected as a candidate owing to his long-standing presence in the Hariharpara region and the deep personal rapport he had cultivated with people across different sections of the constituency. First elected in 2016 and re-elected in 2021, his repeated electoral endorsement reflects a strong personal rapport with a diverse cross-section of voters. As someone rooted in the constituency's social fabric, Sheikh has displayed an ability to resonate with residents' everyday concerns, ranging from rural development and livelihood stability to community welfare. His lived understanding of local realities, approachable demeanour, and sustained engagement with citizens' needs have established him as a trusted, merit-based choice capable of representing his community's aspirations in the state legislature.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		Same as above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **73- HARIHARPARAASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**

(4) Name of the candidate: **NiamotSheikh**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **210 Nandigram**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Pabitra Kar**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 1) Sections 341/323/325/326/506/34 IPC, 1860 2) Sections 341/323/325/307/427/506/34 IPC, 1860 3) Sections 341/323/325/307/427/379/506/34 IPC, 1860 4) Section 379 IPC, 1860 5) Sections 448/323/427/506/34 IPC, 1860 6) Sections 447/323/506/34 IPC, 1860
	b.	Case no.	1) GR. Case No. 1912/23 arising out of Nandigram Police Station Case No. 924 of 2023 dated 22.06.2023 2) GR. Case No. 402/21 arising out of Nandigram Police Station Case No. 108 of 2021 dated 17.03.2021 3) SC Case No. 141/21 arising out of Nandigram Police Station Case No. 122 of 2021 dated 27.03.2021 4) G.R Case No. 88/20 arising out of Nandigram Police Station Case No. 19 of 2020 dated 23.01.2020 5) C.R Case No. 272/20 6) C.R Case No. 192/20
	c.	Name of the Court	7) ACJM, Haldi, Purba Medinipur 8) ACJM, Haldi, Purba Medinipur 9) ADJ, Haldia, Purba Medinipur 10) ACJM, Haldia, Purba Medinipur 11) Judicial Magistrate, Haldia, Purba Medinipur 12) ACJM, Haldia, Purba Medinipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	1) No 2) No 3) No 4) No 5) No 6) No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		A tireless worker, devoted to the cause of the society, especially the poor and the downtrodden. Known for being approachable and closely involved at the grassroots level, he has built a reputation as a leader who places local issues and community well-being at the forefront. His accessibility and regular interaction with constituents demonstrate his dedication to responsive governance and proactive public service.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His understanding of voter sentiment on issues that resonate locally positioned him uniquely to challenge strong opponents in a deeply symbolic constituency. The party's strategic choice reflects a positive preference for his ability to bridge community concerns with effective electoral mobilisation, qualities that, in this specific context, were judged to be strong. The proceedings against the candidate are false, frivolous, with oblique political motive and deserves to be disregarded.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **210 NANDIGRAM**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Pabitra Kar**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **67 Burwan (SC)**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Protima Rajak**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 147/148/149/325/307 IPC, 1860& 3/4 Essential Commodities Act and Sections 25/27 Arms Act
	b.	Case no.	GR No. 1787/16 arising out of Burwan P.S. Case No. 343 of 2016 dated 15.09.2016
	c.	Name of the Court	Ld. ACJM at Kandi, Murshidabad
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/ No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		She has established herself as a credible and impactful political representative from theconstituency, which is reserved for the Scheduled Caste community and she has beenelected twice to the Legislative Assembly. Her educational grounding as a BA graduate from the University of Kolkata have contributed to her understanding of social welfare and grassroots issues. Over consecutive terms, Rajak demonstrated dedication to public service and constituency development, making her a merit-based and well-qualified candidate with proven acceptance among voters.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		She has been an active legislator in her previous tenure in the Legislative Assembly and has significantly contributed in the Assembly and the various Assembly committee meetings. Her repeated electoral victories and the fact that she is a female apart from being a Scheduled Caste memberhas resulted in people from the marginalized communities looking up to her as a symbol of hope and progress.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **67 BURWAN (SC)**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Protima Rajak**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **293 Nalhati**

(2) Name of the candidate – **Rajendra Prasad Singh**

Sl.no.			
1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: 145,146,147,154,174 (a) of Railways Act
	b.	Case no.	SCR No. 1345/2024 arising out of RPF/POST/NALHATI Case No. 596 of 2024 dated 01.12.2024
	c.	Name of the Court	Addtl. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Rampurhat
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	Not Applicable
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)		Elected multiple times to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, he has cultivated a strong personal connection with constituents across diverse social and economic backgrounds. His sustained presence in public life, grounded understanding of rural and agrarian challenges, and willingness to engage directly with community needs have made him a trusted voice among voters. These qualities underscore his merit as a representative who resonates with the people he serves and whose lived experience enhances his capacity to meaningfully reflect constituency priorities in legislative deliberations.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)		His repeated electoral endorsements illustrate a level of trust and familiarity that set him apart from alternative aspirants. The electorate's continued affirmation of his leadership speaks to his grounded connect with people, his capacity to appreciate local aspirations, and his authentic representation of community interests. He has been found to be an active legislator involved in key deliberations regarding framing of the laws and policies of the state.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **293 NALHATI**

(4) Name of the candidate: **Rajendra Prasad Singh**

(5) * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

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Name of Political Party: **ALL INDIA TRINAMOOL CONGRESS**

*Name of the Election: **GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF WEST BENGAL 2026**

Name of State/UT: **WEST BENGAL**

(1) Name of the Constituency - **233- Garbeta Assembly Constituency**

(2) Name of the candidate – – **Uttara Singha (Hazra)**

1.	Criminal antecedents		
i)	a.	Nature of the offences	Offences alleged under Sections: Section 302/34 of IPC, 1860 and Section 25/27 of Arms Act ,1959
	b.	Case no.	Case No. 3/2011, date 23.01.2011 at Salboni Police Station)
	c.	Name of the Court	Learned CJM Paschim Medinipur
	d.	Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	N.A
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	N.A
	g.	Any other information required to be given	N.A

2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)	She is known for her strong personal rapport with the residents of the Garbeta Assembly constituency in Paschim Medinipur district. Her educational background, including a BA from Midnapore College, combined with her grounded upbringing, has helped her develop a relatable and approachable persona among constituents. Elected in 2021 with a significant vote share, she has demonstrated the ability to understand and address local concerns effectively, ranging from social welfare to rural development. Her credibility, consistent engagement with the electorate, and trusted presence in the community highlight her merit as a representative capable of articulating and advancing the aspirations of her constituency.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)	Same As Above.

(3) Name of the Constituency – **233- GARBETA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY**
Name of the candidate: **Uttam Singha (Hazra)**

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