



Nepal PM Oli challenges former King Gyanendra to contest election, alleges attempt to disrupt harmony

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IIFA Digital Awards: 'Amar Singh Chamkila' adjudged best film, 'Panchayat 3' best series

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MeT predicts wet spell

The meteorological department has predicted a week-long spell of wet weather from Monday over Jammu and Kashmir.

The MeT office said the weather would generally remain dry till Sunday evening.

It said there was a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow over higher reaches at many places during March 10 and 11, while an intermittent spell of light to moderate rain and snow was expected at many places over Jammu and Kashmir during March 12

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Hirdesh among 24 empanelled for central posting



Hirdesh Kumar of the AGMUT cadre (J&K segment) is among 24 IAS officers who have been empanelled for central posting.

The approval in this regard was given by the Appointments Committee of

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Police team formed to investigate Kathua killings

A team has been formed to probe the death of three persons whose bodies were found near a waterfall in a remote forested area in Jammu's Kathua district.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu-Kathua-Samba Range, Shiv Kumar said all aspects of the case would be looked into and the results of the investigation would be shared with the public soon.

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Govt levies 10 pc duty on masur dal

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: The government has imposed a 10 per cent import duty on lentils (masur dal) and extended the duty-free import of yellow peas by three months till May 31 this year to enhance domestic availability, according to a finance ministry notification.

Through the notification, the government has imposed 5 per cent basic customs duty and 5 per cent Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on lentils with effect from March 8.

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India condemns vandalism at temple in California

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: India on Sunday strongly condemned the incident of vandalism at a Hindu temple in California's Chino Hills and demanded "stringent action" against those involved.

New Delhi also called for adequate security to the places of worship in view of the incident.

"We have seen reports regarding the vandalism at a Hindu temple in Chino Hills, California. We condemn such despicable acts in the strongest terms," External Affairs Ministry

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Budget Session

Par set for 'EPIC' showdown; Waqf Bill govt's top priority

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: Parliament's Budget session resumes on Monday amid indications of an 'EPIC' showdown between the treasury benches and the opposition which has said that it is all set to corner the government over the issue of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers, the fresh bout of violence in Manipur and India's handling of the Trump administration.

On the other side, the focus of the government will remain on getting Parliament nod for the demands for grants, completion of the budgetary process, seeking approval for the Manipur budget and passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill.

Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to move a statutory resolution seeking Parliament approval for the proclamation of President's Rule in Manipur.

Finance Minister Nir-

mala Sitharaman is also scheduled to table the budget for Manipur on Monday. Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13 after the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

The opposition said it is set to corner the govern-

The poll body also made it clear that while the EPIC numbers of some voters "may be identical", other details such as demographic information, Assembly constituency and polling booth are different.

ment over the issue of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers.

The Trinamool Congress has taken the lead in flagging the issue, following which the Election Commission declared that it would take corrective measures within the next three months.

The Election Commission had rejected the Tri-

namool Congress claim that the voter lists were manipulated to allow voters from other states to exercise their franchise in West Bengal.

The poll body also made it clear that while the EPIC numbers of some voters "may be identical", other

details such as demographic information, Assembly constituency and polling booth are different.

Trinamool Congress leaders are meeting the Election Commission on Monday and have also rallied other opposition parties, including the Congress, DMK, Shiv Sena-UBT, to raise the issue in both Houses of Parliament during

the second part of the Budget session.

For the government, the early passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill is a priority.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said at the India Today Conclave last week that the government is keen on the early passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill as it will solve many issues of the Muslim community.

A Joint Committee of Parliament submitted its report on the bill in the Lok Sabha amid vociferous protests by the opposition.

Issues such as the fresh violence in Manipur, the threat of reciprocal tariffs by US President Donald Trump, the political furor over the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies are also expected to find an echo in Parliament.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the opposition INDIA bloc leaders will hold "extensive consultation" to jointly oppose the

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LG orders probe into Kathua killings

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAR 09

Expressing pain and anguish over the killing of three civilians - Varun Singh, Yogesh Singh and Darshan Singh - in Lohai Malhar area of Kathua district of Jammu - LG Manoj Sinha has ordered a probe into the incident.

"I am shocked and saddened beyond words at the brutal killing of Varun, Yogesh and Darshan of Kathua. In this hour of grief, I offer my deepest condolences to their families and friends," he said in a

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Investment proposals worth Rs 1.63 lakh cr received

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAR 09

Investment proposals worth Rs 1.63 lakh crore have been received till December last year, which will create direct employment opportunities for more than 5.90 lakh people, Jammu and Kashmir government's economic survey report 2024-25 said.

The report, tabled by the Chief Minister in the Legislative Assembly last week, said 1,984 units in

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2 murders rock Jammu

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAR 09

In unconnected incidents, a youth and an elderly man were murdered here today.

In the first instance, a 23-year-old youth was allegedly stabbed to death by his younger brother over a domestic dispute at Smailpur in Domana area in the morning, officials said.

The accused was identified as Anil Kumar (20) and the victim as his elder brother Mukesh Kumar. Police had arrested Anil <

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Kathua killings

Home secy reviews situation; union minister points to terror angle

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAR 09

While union home secretary Govind Mohan today reviewed the security situation, following the death of three persons in the remote Lohai Malhar area of Kathua's Billawar, union minister Jitendra Singh pointed to the involvement of terrorists in the incident.

The killings sparked off strong protests in Kathua district, with Billawar observing a shutdown.

The bodies of Varun Singh (15), and his uncles - Yogesh Singh (32) and Darshan Singh (40) were found in Ishu nullah in the higher reaches of Lohai Malhar on Saturday.

The minister said the killings were a matter of great concern.

"The brutal killing of three persons by terrorists in Bani area of Kathua district is extremely sad as well as a matter of great concern. There appears to be a deep conspiracy behind spoiling the atmosphere in this peaceful area," the union minister, who represents Kathua-Udhampur parliamentary constituency, said in a post on X.

"We have discussed this matter with the officials concerned. The union home secretary is himself reaching Jammu so that the situation can be assessed on the spot. I am confident that it will be ensured that such incidents do not happen again and the confidence of the people remains strong," he said.

Officials said union home secretary Govind Mohan was reviewing the security situation in a meeting here.

The killings led to protests in the district, where people demanded a probe into the incident.

The Billawar town observed a complete bandh as mark of protest against the killings. The locals demanded a thorough and impartial probe into the incident.

"This is a clear case of target killings by terrorists, engulfing the peaceful area in fear and anger. We want the government to intensify anti-terrorist operations in the local forests to neutralise the terrorists hiding in there for the last one year," a local BJP leader, who led a group of protesters at Phinter Chowk, said.

He said people would not allow terrorists to succeed in their designs and harm the communal harmony by carrying out selective killings.

Senior BJP leader and Billawar MLA Satish Kumar Sharma, who visited the deceased family, said it was premature to say who killed the three civilians.

"It is a matter of investigation as nobody has seen how they were killed. Police are looking at all aspects, including the terror angle, in the case," he said, adding a clear picture would emerge after the post-mortem report comes.

Congress demanded a high-level investigation to clear the apprehensions of locals and overcome the current situation of 'great fear' and sense of insecurity in the entire belt.

Neonatal Mortality Rate drops in J&K

Sex ratio at birth improves from 923 to 976

Himalayan Mail News JAMMU, MAR 09

The Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) has reached single digit at 9.8 per 1,000 live births in Jammu and Kashmir, recording a 13.3-point decrease, while the sex ratio at birth has recorded significant improvement from 923 to 976.

The infant mortality rate (IMR) also dipped to 16.3, marking a drop of 16.1 points, according to the

Economic Survey Report for 2024-25 tabled by the Jammu and Kashmir government in the Assembly on March 6.

The report said the government is continuing its efforts to enhance basic health infrastructure at all levels, including technical manpower and medical equipment to provide improved healthcare delivery with special focus on maternal and child health, communicable and non-communicable diseases, and to face the upcoming

challenging ailments.

Jammu and Kashmir has moved forward from the category of 'performers' to 'front-runners', as per the SDG India Index 2023-24 released by the NITI Aayog, with the score of the health sector increasing from 70 to 78.

"The NMR has reached a single digit of 9.8 per 1,000 live births, a 13.3-point decrease, while the IMR has dipped to 16.3 with a decrease of 16.1 points. Sex ratio at birth also recorded a

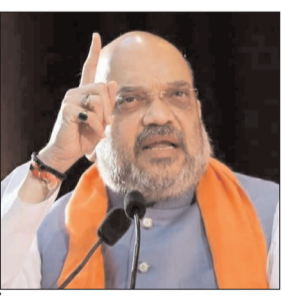
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Lawyers have contributed in nation building, protecting Constitution: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: Asserting that legal profession is a sacred duty, Union Home Minister Amit Shah today said that 'lawyers have contributed significantly in nation building, in getting us freedom and framing our Constitution'.

"They are going to be professionally involved in the process of protecting the Constitution and providing justice to citizens," he said while addressing a gathering of 11,000 young lawyers at the Bar Association of Gujarat's oath taking ceremony.

"The profession you are joining today is not just a profession but a sacred duty - to strengthen the Constitution and democracy and implement the constitution rights to protect the property, body and



honour of 140 crore citizens," he said. "There are some judgments in which learned jurists have helped the Supreme Court shape the law of the country," he said, adding this judicial process has done the work of protecting the original spirit of the Constitution.

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Govt yet to receive proposals from HCs to appoint ad-hoc judges

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: Over a month after the Supreme Court cleared the decks to appoint ad-hoc judges in high courts to deal with rising pendency of cases, the government is yet to receive proposals from respective HCs naming candidates.

Considering a backlog of over 18 lakh criminal cases, the Supreme Court on January 30 allowed the high courts to appoint ad-hoc judges, not exceeding 10 per cent of the court's total sanctioned strength.

Article 224A of the Constitution allows the appoint-

ment of retired judges as ad-hoc judges in high courts to help deal with pendency.

Sources said the Union law ministry is yet to receive any recommendation from respective high court collegiums for appointing ad-hoc judges.

As per the laid down procedure, the respective high court collegiums send recommendations or names of candidates to be appointed as HC judges to the Department of Justice in the law ministry.

The department then adds inputs and details on the candidates before for-

warding the same to the Supreme Court Collegium.

The SC Collegium then takes a final call and recommends to the government to appoint the selected persons as judges.

The president signs the 'warrant of appointment' of the newly-appointed judge.

The procedure to appoint ad-hoc judges will be the same except that the president will not sign the warrant of appointment. But the assent of the president will be sought for appointing ad-hoc judges.

Except in one case, there is no precedence of appoint

Tough challenges in safeguarding territorial integrity: China

Justifies its \$245 billion defence budget

NEW DELHI, MAR 09: China on Sunday justified its increasing defence expenditure, citing the tough challenges on the borders in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Defence spokesperson Sr Co Wu Qian claimed that the increased amount would be used to develop new-domain forces with the latest combat capabilities and joint strikes by its armed forces amid the ongoing standoffs with India

and in South China sea. "The Chinese military faces tough challenges in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Wu said during the ongoing annual parliament session.

Wu added that the increased expenditure would be used to develop new-domain forces with new combat capabilities and to enhance systems and capacity for reconnaissance and early warning, joint strikes, battlefield support and in-

tegrated logistics support. The spending will also be put into improving military training under combat conditions and deepening national defence and military reform.

Earlier on Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced that China's planned defence expenditure for this year is 1.784665 trillion yuan (approximately USD 249 billion).

China has the world's

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India win Champions Trophy, beat New Zealand by 4 wickets

DUBAI, MAR 09: Skipper Rohit Sharma led from the front with an excellent half-century as a resolute India held their nerve to win an unprecedented third Champions Trophy title with a four-wicket victory over New Zealand in the final here on Sunday.

Bowling first after Rohit lost his 12th straight toss, India's spinners restricted New Zealand to 251 for seven in the allotted 50 overs, with Kuldeep Yadav (2/40) and Varun Chakaravarty (2/45) making significant contributions with the ball.



India completed the chase of 252 with six balls to spare after Rohit (76 off 83 balls) and Shreyas Iyer (48 off 62 balls) shone with the bat.

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PM transformed anti-incumbency into pro-incumbency in electoral landscape: Nadda

AGARTALA, MAR 09: BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the country's political culture by transforming anti-incumbency into pro-incumbency in the electoral landscape.

Addressing a rally here, he also pointed to the increasing vote share in favour of the BJP during the past three Lok Sabha elections.

"Now, Modi has changed the country's political culture by transforming anti-incumbency into pro-in-



cumbency. Pro-incumbency means that people are happy and want Modi to win again and again," he said.

"The BJP polled 17 crore votes (31.30 per cent) in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, while it shot up to 22 crore votes (36.7 per cent)

in the 2019 polls. The figure was around 24 crore votes (37 per cent) in the last Lok Sabha polls (2024). People are blessing Modi ji with more votes every time," Nadda said.

The BJP chief was addressing a rally at the Swami Vivekananda Ground here to mark the saffron party-led government's second-year anniversary in the northeastern state during its second term.

Noting that the PM has left no stone unturned for the development of

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