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Kavinder sworn in as HP Guv, says post belongs to no political party

than 10,000 kilometres within seven months. I am familiar with the challenges of hilly regions," he said, adding that the hospitality of the people of Himachal Pradesh had deeply impressed him.

Highlighting his priorities, the governor said he would work towards promoting environmental protection, particularly enhancing the state's green cover, preserving cultural heritage and strengthening tourism with special emphasis on religious pilgrimages.

He said special attention would also be given to tribal development, promotion of natural farming, youth welfare and strengthening the ongoing campaign against drug abuse.

Gupta added that efforts would also be made to ensure that the central schemes effectively improve infrastructure and connectivity in remote areas of the state.

The governor further said that initiatives such as value-based learning, counselling and education would be strengthened to make the campaign for a drug-free Himachal more effective. Sports initiatives like Khelo India could also be linked with such efforts to engage the youth positively, he added.

Gupta also emphasised the importance of development in border areas adjoining China and said that schemes like the Vibrant Village Programme would be promoted. He further said special efforts would be made to achieve the goal of tuberculosis elimination in the state.

Exhibition at UNHRC focuses on Pak support for terrorism in J&K

GHRD is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands. The organisation is dedicated to advocating for and safeguarding human rights globally, with a particular focus on regions and communities where ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities face persistent and widespread human rights violations. GHRD works in areas where long-standing issues have been largely ignored by governments and international institutions, providing much-needed attention and support.

Pak drone detected; ops launched

more forces and a thorough search of the area to ensure that no weapons or narcotics were airdropped.

Officials said a joint search operation by Army, police and BSF was underway in Bhai nallah, Lala Chak Malani areas when reports last came in.

Other details were awaited.

Missing soldier's body recovered

local volunteers this morning.

Officials said he had gone missing all of a sudden during the river-crossing training exercise.

Tulip Garden to open on Mar 16

approximately 1.8 million tulip bulbs, comprising between 70 and 75 different varieties, had been planted this season.

"The density of flower-beds has been enhanced this year to present a more vibrant and striking floral spectacle for visitors," officials said.

Modi to release PM-Kisan instalment of Rs 19,000 cr

The transfer will take place from Guwahati, Assam.

Under the scheme, launched in February 2019, the government provides Rs 6,000 annually to each farmer in three instalments. The upcoming release, timed ahead of the kharif sowing season, is expected to help farmers procure essential agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilisers and pesticides.

"PM will release the 22nd instalment of PM-Kisan amount on March 13 from Guwahati," a senior agriculture ministry official said.

Typically, instalments are released in February or March, June or July, and October.

The 19th instalment of Rs 22,000 crore was released to 9.8 crore farmers in February 2025, followed by the 20th instalment of Rs 20,500 crore to 9.7 crore farmers in August 2025, and the 21st instalment of Rs 18,000 crore to 9 crore farmers in November 2025.

With cumulative disbursements of approximately Rs 4.09 lakh crore up to the 21st instalment, PM-Kisan remains one of the government's flagship direct benefit transfer programmes for the agriculture sector.

Cabinet approves JJM extension: Vaishnaw

2019 to provide safe and adequate drinking water through tap connections to all households in rural India.

"The Cabinet approved the Ministry of Jal Shakti's proposal to restructure and reorient the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) from infrastructure creation to service delivery, supported by drinking water governance and institutional ecosystem for sustainable rural piped potable water supply," the minister said at a press conference.

For restructuring JJM, focusing on structural reforms, the Cabinet has approved an enhancement of the total outlay to Rs. 8.69 lakh crore, with a total central assistance of Rs. 3.59 lakh crore as against from Rs. 2.08 lakh crore approved in 2019-20.

A uniform national digital framework called "Sujalam Bharat" shall be instituted, under which every village shall be assigned a unique Sujal Gaon or Service Area ID, digitally mapping the complete drinking water supply system from source to tap.

SC on plea seeking striking down of Shariat law provisions

power to bring the directive principles into effect," he said, adding that it is best to defer the issue to the legislative wisdom.

Justice Bagchi said, "This court has time and again recommended to the legislature to enact a Uniform Civil Code."

At the outset, Bhushan submitted that the court can make a declaration that Muslim women are entitled to equal inheritance rights as men, and the provisions of the Indian Succession Act will apply if the court strikes down the Muslim Personal Law Application Act of 1937.

Infiltration bid foiled; terrorist killed

the infiltration attempt by them, it said.

In the ensuing exchange of fire, one Pakistan-sponsored terrorist was eliminated, effectively preventing any breach of the LoC, it added.

Officials said a search operation had been launched to trace the second terrorist, who was believed to be hiding in the area.

"Security forces have strengthened their operational posture and heightened surveillance across the sector, with integrated ground and aerial monitoring to ensure complete domination of the area," Army said.

Lok Sabha takes up Oppn resolution to remove Speaker

resolution for Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's removal to "save the Constitution", as he accused Birla of partisan behaviour.

Initiating the debate on the resolution for the removal of Birla from the Speaker's post, Gogoi claimed that the environment of Parliament has become such that the LoP is not allowed to speak in the House during the debate on the motion of thanks to the President's address in February because the leadership of the country is "weak".

Giving reasons as to why the opposition was compelled to bring the resolution, the MP from Assam's Jorhat said, "We stated that in February, when the LoP wanted to speak on the motion of thanks to the President's address, he was interrupted 20 times by the Speaker, members of the chairpersons' panel, senior members of the treasury benches. He was interrupted in a premeditated manner."

"The Speaker did not allow the LoP to speak. The LoP was repeatedly interrupted while attempting to place a few critical issues mandatory to be known to the House and the people of the country," Gogoi said.

He pointed out that Gandhi wanted to speak about former army chief MM Naravane's remarks in his unreleased book, in which he reportedly talked about taking direction from the political leadership and the country's "mukhiya" told him "'Jo uchit samjho wahi karo" (Do what you feel is right).

At this point, Jagdambika Pal, who was in the chair, urged Gogoi to stick to the reasons for bringing the resolution against Birla.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju intervened, saying this was a discussion on the Speaker, and if the opposition is talking of other issues, they should not interrupt when "we reply".

Gogoi claimed that if a research of transcripts was done, Rijiju would be found to interrupt opposition members most often.

Home Minister Amit Shah then quipped that it is true that Rijiju has interrupted the most, but there has never been an opposition like the current one.

After several interruptions, Gogoi resumed his speech and said that Rahul Gandhi, in February, wanted to raise the issue of the ongoing investigation in the US against a businessman, which also mentions a minister, but was not allowed.

Gandhi also wanted to talk about the trade deals between the EU and the US with India. "He (Gandhi) asked what made India rush into a deal (with the US) and make concessions to the US that would be detrimental to our farmers," Gogoi said.

"When the leader of the opposition wanted to bring critical issues to light, the Speaker demanded authentication, and the LoP agreed to do so. However, treasury benches repeatedly opposed it and did not allow the LoP to speak," Gogoi said.

Earlier, the Congress MP cited the case of Nabam Rebia versus the deputy speaker, to state that the Supreme Court had said that the Speaker is expected to have a "sense of elevated independence, impeccable objectivity, irreproachable fairness and above all absolute impartiality".

"I want to ask, the Speaker set up the panel of chairpersons. But who decided who would preside over the proceedings on the resolution for the removal of the Speaker? Who appointed Jagdambika Pal ji to preside?" Gogoi asked.

He said all members have good relations with Birla on a personal level, and that is why the opposition members are saddened that they had to bring the resolution. "But it is our responsibility to protect the dignity of the House and save the Constitution. It is to protect the faith of the people in democracy," he said.

Over 50 members stood up in support, and the resolution was admitted.

The speaker can be removed from office if a resolution is passed by the House by a simple majority. Article 94C of the Constitution has provisions for such a move. Article 96 allows the speaker to defend himself or herself in the House.

The language of the proposed resolution is usually examined by the deputy speaker, but since the present Lok Sabha does not have a deputy speaker, it may be examined by the senior-most member of the panel of chairpersons.

The panel helps run the House in the speaker's absence.

The opposition resolution has alleged that Speaker Birla acted in a "blatantly partisan" manner in conducting the business of the House and "abused" the constitutional office he occupies.

Three Lok Sabha speakers - G V Mavlankar (1954), Hukam Singh (1966) and Balram Jakhar (1987) - faced no-confidence motions in the past, which were all negatived.

India slams Pakistan's airstrikes on Afghanistan

tice of trade and transit terrorism by denial of passage for trade and cynical closure of access" to Afghanistan, a land-locked country.

Describing it as a violation of WTO norms as well as international law, he said the trade and transit vulnerabilities of Land Locked Developing countries (LLDCs) should not be weaponised.

"While we condemn these acts, we reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan," the envoy said.

He said terrorism continues to remain a global scourge afflicting humanity and stressed the need for coordinated international efforts to ensure that groups such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda and their affiliates, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and their proxies, do not carry out cross-border terrorism.

The diplomat said the political situation in Afghanistan has changed over the last four years and urged the UN sanctions system to be reviewed.

The policies should be more flexible and practical, and the goal should be to help the Afghan people rather than isolate them, he said.

"We call on the United Nations and international community to shun this 'business as usual approach' and adopt nimble policy instruments that bring sustainable benefits for the Afghan people who have endured suffering for so long," Parvathaneni said.

Acute food insecurity and climate and natural hazards that have led to 45 per cent of the population in Afghanistan requiring humanitarian assistance this year is a dire situation that needs the world's attention.

"These significant vulnerabilities necessitate more efforts towards addressing food security, healthcare, water security and other shelter challenges," the envoy said.

Reaffirming India's commitment to the Afghan people, Parvathaneni said New Delhi will continue to engage with all stakeholders in bilateral, regional and multilateral formats to ensure Afghanistan's stability, development and humanitarian needs.

"India will always stand for the priorities and aspirations of Afghan society and will always support the people of Afghanistan," he said.

India has undertaken over 500 development partnership projects across Afghanistan and continues to provide humanitarian assistance in sectors such as healthcare, food security and education, Parvathaneni underlined.

Committed to peaceful Bengal polls: CEC

for the upcoming assembly elections, amid a charged political atmosphere.

Addressing a press conference here after a series of meetings with political parties and senior administrative officials, Kumar said the people of West Bengal have always believed in "peaceful and participatory democracy".

"Our aim is to ensure free, fair and peaceful polls in Bengal," he said, emphasising that every eligible voter will have the opportunity to cast their ballot.

"No eligible voter's name will be removed," the CEC said.

Speaking about the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, a politically sensitive exercise that has triggered sharp exchanges between the TMC and the BJP, Kumar said the process was being carried out across the country in accordance with constitutional norms.

"All over India, SIR is being carried out as per the constitutional norms," he said.

According to CEC, the objective of the roll revision is to ensure that the voters' list remains "pure".

"The aim is to ensure that those who are eligible to vote find their names in the rolls while names of ineligible people do not remain on the list," Kumar said.

Refuting claims that logical discrepancies have been brought in only for Bengal, the CEC said, "These were pointed out in all the 12 states, similar to the way it was done in West Bengal."

Explaining the data patterns that emerged during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, Kumar said that after enumeration forms were submitted, around 4-5 per cent electors could not map themselves with the 2002 electoral rolls.

They were categorised as 'unmapped electors', he said.

"Another 7-8 per cent of electors were found to have mapped themselves incorrectly, either due to deliberate attempts or unintentional errors," Kumar added.

He said that many cases in West Bengal are currently pending for scrutiny.

"In West Bengal, there were many undecided cases at the ERO and AERO levels," the CEC said.

He added that names placed in the "under adjudication" category are being processed strictly according to judicial directions.

"Regarding names under adjudication, the process is underway according to the Supreme Court's orders, and judicial officers are handling the exercise," Kumar said.

After the February 28 publication of the post-SIR electoral rolls, the Election Commission will also upload supplementary voter lists on its website in due course, he added.

The chief election commissioner's remarks came amid allegations by the ruling TMC that the poll panel had deleted nearly 64 lakh voters from the electoral rolls following the SIR and placed around 60 lakhs more under scrutiny.

Kumar said the number of phases for the West Bengal assembly elections would depend on the assessment of the law-and-order preparedness of the state machinery.

"The phases of polls will depend on the law and order preparedness of the state machinery. We will take a decision after reaching Delhi and discussing the outcome of meetings held in the last two days," he said.

He also warned that the Election Commission will have zero tolerance towards violence or intimidation of voters or election officials.

The SIR exercise has become a contentious political issue in the state, with opposition parties and the ruling Trinamool Congress trading allegations over alleged voter deletions and "manipulation" of electoral rolls ahead of the assembly polls.

According to official data released on February 28, around 63.66 lakh names, about 8.3 per cent of the electorate, have been deleted since the revision began in November last year, bringing down the voter base from about 7.66 crore to a little over 7.04 crore.

Additionally, more than 60 lakh electors have been placed under the "under adjudication" category, meaning their eligibility will be determined through legal scrutiny in the coming weeks, a development that could potentially reshape electoral equations in several constituencies.

"It will not be appropriate for the EC to comment on what political parties are saying. We do not respond to political statements. The EC works according to the Constitution," Kumar said.

Iran war sparks LPG shortage, triggering panic over cooking gas supplies

to tackle the situation," he said.

Industry bodies have also warned that the crisis may hit manufacturing units. The Chamber of Industrial & Commercial Undertakings said disruptions in the Middle East could raise raw material costs for MSMEs, especially in industrial hubs like Ludhiana. Rising petrochemical prices and possible shortages of industrial gases could further strain small manufacturers. Sonu, a woman from Chandigarh, said: "Thank God, I got my LPG yesterday."

The ongoing war involving the United States and Israel against Iran has significantly disrupted energy shipments in the Gulf region. Shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz - one of the world's most important oil and gas routes - has slowed or halted due to security risks, reports said.

The disruption has had a ripple effect on global energy markets. India, which is the world's second-largest importer of LPG, depends heavily on overseas supplies to meet its domestic and commercial demand. Nearly two-thirds of the country's LPG consumption is fulfilled through imports, much of it sourced from Gulf producers such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

India typically receives about 85-90 per cent of its LPG imports through the Strait of Hormuz. With shipments affected by the conflict, supplies have tightened, causing a sharp rise in prices and delays in deliveries to commercial users.

The shortage has hit the restaurant industry particularly hard because most commercial kitchens rely heavily on LPG cylinders for daily cooking operations. According to the National Restaurant Association of India, any prolonged disruption in LPG supply could force widespread closures.

In a letter to the government, the association warned that the restaurant sector, which represents more than half a million establishments across the country, is almost entirely dependent on commercial LPG for cooking.

"Any disruption therein will lead to a catastrophic closure," the association said.

Restaurant operators in several cities have already started implementing emergency measures to conserve fuel. Some eateries have reduced menu items that require more gas to cook, while others are exploring alternative cooking methods.

Bert Mueller, founder of the Mexican food chain California Burrito, said the company has enough LPG stock for only two days in many of its outlets.

"We are working on contingencies," Mueller said. "We are conserving gas and installing induction stoves at certain stores." The chain operates more than 100 outlets in cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, and Noida.

The impact is already visible in Bengaluru, often referred to as India's Silicon Valley. Several restaurant owners there reported delays or complete stoppage of commercial LPG cylinder deliveries.

Manish V Shetty, who runs the Udupi Food Hub restaurant chain in the city, said one of his outlets did not receive gas cylinders as scheduled, reports said.

"Thankfully, one of our older vendors helped us," he said, adding that his chain pays suppliers immediately instead of operating on credit.

The crisis has also pushed up the cost of other cooking essentials. Restaurant operators said prices of sunflower oil have increased sharply, adding to the financial strain.

Industry representatives say most restaurants do not maintain large LPG reserves because of safety regulations. Instead, they depend on regular cylinder deliveries.

Veerendra Kamat, secretary of the Bengaluru Hotels Association, described the situation as serious.

"Most gas companies have stopped supplying commercial cylinders," he said.

Some establishments are already cutting down on menu items that require heavy use of gas and oil in order to stretch existing stocks for as long as possible.

The central government has responded by invoking emergency powers to direct refiners to increase LPG production for domestic use. However, this has meant that commercial sectors such as restaurants and hotels are receiving reduced supplies.

The oil ministry has formed a panel of executives from oil marketing companies to review requests for LPG supply from industries and commercial establishments.

Officials say the priority is to ensure that households continue receiving cooking gas without disruption.

According to government data, India consumes around 31.3 million tonnes of LPG annually. Nearly 87 per cent of this is used in household kitchens, while the rest is consumed by commercial establishments such as hotels, restaurants and catering services.

Meanwhile, the Gujarat government has announced a 50 per cent reduction in gas supply for certain industrial uses to safeguard domestic LPG availability.

State Energy Minister Rushikesh Patel said the measure aims to prevent panic and ensure households do not face shortages. "We have imposed a 50 per cent cut in gas supply to industries. For fertiliser and milk processing, there is about a 40 per cent reduction," Patel told reporters in Gandhinagar.

He added that there is currently no restriction on commercial gas cylinders for restaurants, although the hospitality industry continues to report supply shortages.

Hospitality associations have urged authorities to intervene quickly to stabilise LPG supplies. Many restaurants say they can operate for only a few more days if fresh cylinders do not arrive soon.

Hotel owners warn that closures could disrupt catering services and affect thousands of workers employed in the sector, especially during the busy wedding season.

Industry leaders say a prolonged disruption in energy imports could have broader economic consequences, affecting food services, tourism and small businesses across the country.

For now, restaurant operators are hoping that the government's emergency measures and diplomatic efforts will help restore LPG supply chains before the situation forces widespread shutdowns.

Rajnath unveils roadmap to transform AFs for future wars

defence forces to effectively address evolving geostrategic, technological and security challenges. It aims to build a force capable of responding across the full conflict spectrum while protecting India's expanding strategic interests amid rapidly changing global and regional dynamics.

A central pillar of the vision is the emphasis on jointness and synergy among the services, promoting greater coordination in planning, operations and capability development, according to the defence ministry.

The plan also highlights the importance of innovation, advanced technologies and a modern training framework to build a force adaptable to future warfare challenges.

A key focus of the vision is Aatmanirbharta in defence, promoting the development and adoption of indigenous technologies and solutions tailored to India's unique security requirements. Strengthening domestic defence manufacturing and technological capabilities is expected to enhance operational readiness while contributing to national economic growth.

The roadmap outlines prioritised capability goals across short-, medium- and long-term timelines, guiding the development of critical military capabilities, institutional reforms and strategic partnerships needed to build a world-class defence force.

Recognising the growing complexity of future security challenges, the document also calls for a whole-of-nation approach that integrates military strength with diplomatic, technological and economic power to safeguard national interests.

The vision aims to build a globally respected, technologically advanced and combat-ready military by India's independence centenary, contributing to the goal of a strong and resilient Viksit Bharat.

Rs 131 cr cash reward for Indian cricket team

staff and selectors once again on this historic achievement and wishes them continued success in the future," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement.

India lifted the prestigious trophy after defeating New Zealand by 96 runs in the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday, successfully defending the title and becoming the first team in the history of the tournament to retain the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

With this victory, India also became the first team to win the ICC Men's T20 World Cup three times, further cementing its place among the most successful teams in the history of the format.

FDI norms eased for China, other countries sharing border with India

all times, the government said.

The policy changes seek to address concerns raised by global investors and venture capital funds that the restrictions introduced during the pandemic were hampering capital flows. In April 2020, the government tightened FDI rules through Press Note 3 (2020) to prevent opportunistic takeovers of Indian firms during the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then, all investments from entities in countries sharing land borders with India-or where the beneficial owner is based in such countries-have required government approval.

Officials said the revised framework would improve clarity for investors and support India's manufacturing push, particularly in sectors linked to electronics and renewable energy supply chains. The Committee of Secretaries under the Cabinet Secretary will have the authority to revise the list of sectors eligible for the 60-day clearance. The government expects the changes to boost FDI inflows, facilitate technology partnerships and strengthen India's integration with global supply chains, while supporting domestic manufacturing and the broader "ease of doing business" agenda.