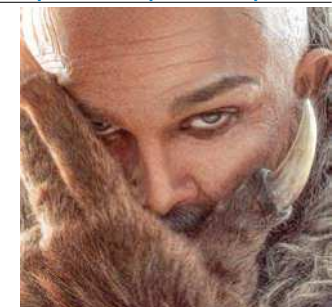




THE Hans India



We will move court again to resist voter deletions: Didi
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday hit out at the BJP and the Election Commission over voter deletions during the SIR exercise and said her party will move a court again to resist the removal of electors from the rolls. **P6**

Together, let us empower our Nari Shakti!
In the coming days, India will be immersed in a festive season, with celebrations taking place across the length and breadth of the nation. The people of Assam will mark Rongali Bihu while Odisha will celebrate Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti. **P4**

Centre lining up Rs 2.5-L-Cr guarantee scheme for MSMEs
The government is considering a Rs 2.5 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme to support businesses, particularly MSMEs, hit by the ongoing West Asia crisis, sources said. **P7**

Atlee unveils 'RAAKA', Allu Arjun roars
In a blockbuster announcement that has set the Indian film industry abuzz, Icon Star Allu Arjun, acclaimed director Atlee, and entertainment giant Sun Pictures, led by Kalanithi Maran, have unveiled the much-anticipated title of their mammoth project. **P8**

Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Vijayawada | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi: RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095

Follow @ thehansindia / thehansindiaweb / thehansindia / TheHansIndiaWeb / thehansindia

WINDOWS

Saradha scam accused Sen gets bail

KOLKATA: The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday granted bail to multi-crore Saradha ponzi scam accused Sudipto Sen in the last two of the 300-odd criminal cases against him, paving the way for his release from jail after 13 years. A division bench of the high court granted bail to Sen in two cases pertaining to the Barasat police station in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Sen has already been granted bail in all the other cases registered against him, including four criminal cases by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Monsoon plan: LG, CM visit Vasudev ghat

NEW DELHI: Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday visited Vasudev ghat along the Yamuna bank to take stock of summer and monsoon preparations of the government. During the visit, Sandhu said that he has discussed with the chief minister that the entire cabinet will be involved. He also said that with summer approaching, there are challenges related to water, followed by the monsoon, which has its own issues like cleanliness.

Dr Ambedkar's statue desecrated

MUZAFFARNAGAR: A statue of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar was desecrated by unidentified individuals on Wednesday to allegedly create tension at the Vehlana village here, police said on Wednesday. After receiving information about the vandalism, police rushed to the scene and started an investigation, Circle Officer Siddharth Mishra said, adding that the damaged statue has been repaired. Meanwhile, security has been tightened in the village, and extra police have been deployed as a precautionary measure. CCTV has also been installed, the officer said, adding that the police are trying to arrest those who were involved in the act of damaging the statue.

Minor held for raping 13-yr-old girl

LUCKNOW: Police said on Wednesday that a 17-year-old boy was taken into custody for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl in Lucknow's Ashiyana area. The incident occurred on Tuesday evening when the victim, who knew the accused, was led to a secluded spot, the police said.

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with Kapil Chits

KAPIL GROUP 46 Years

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS
SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Polls will be fear-free, violence-free, intimidation-free... shall I also add voter-free?

Ceasefire sealed, civilization 'saved'

DUBAI/TEHRAN

IRAN, the United States and Israel reached a tentative, two-week ceasefire Wednesday in the war that tore across the Middle East and disrupted the global energy market, with US President Donald Trump pulling back from his threats to destroy Iranian "civilization." But questions emerged over what appeared to be dueling proposals to halt the fighting, with Iran insisting it would control and charge ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz as well as enrich uranium. Trump initially said Iran proposed a "workable" 10-point plan that could help end the war he launched with Israel on Feb. 28. But he later called the plan fraudulent without elaborating. Trump has said ending Iran's nuclear program entirely was a key point of the war. Israel backed the US ceasefire with Iran but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday it doesn't cover fighting against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which continued through the morning. That

US, Israel and Iran agree to a 2-week ceasefire as Trump pulls back on his threats; Trump says moment could mark new 'Golden Age' for Mideast; Democrats call for removal of Trump; push back from some Republicans too; Trump warns of 50% tariffs on nation supplying arms to Iran; Iran confirms participation in Pak-hosted peace talks with US

contradicted comments from Pakistan, a key mediator that said talks over cementing a peace plan would begin as soon as Friday in Islamabad. Pakistan also said the ceasefire began immediately, while Iran launched attacks on Gulf Arab states and Israel soon after. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has confirmed Tehran's participation in Pakistan-facilitated peace talks with the US in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday. The talks will



be held on Friday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said passage through the strait would be allowed under Iranian military management. It wasn't clear whether that meant Iran would completely loosen its chokehold on the waterway

Trump in a social media post declared the ceasefire agreement a "big day for World Peace" and that the US "will be helping with the traffic buildup in the Strait of Hormuz." "There will be lots of positive action!" Trump predicted in his

post. "Big money will be made. Iran can start the reconstruction process. We'll be loading up with supplies of all kinds, and just hangin' around" in order to make sure that everything goes well. I feel confident that it will." Trump's message on his Truth Social website signals Washington's concern about Iran maintaining its chokehold over the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, through which 20% of all oil and natural gas passes in peacetime. Trump's threats of wiping out the "whole civilisation" in Iran drew strong condemnation from Democrat leaders, who called for his "immediate removal" and a push back from some Republicans who hoped and prayed that the remarks were "bluster". US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth on Wednesday claimed that Tehran begged for a truce. Trump warned that any nation providing military weapons to Iran will face an immediate 50 percent tariff on all goods exported to the United States.

Will 'dig up' uranium buried in Iran: Trump

DUBAI: President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the United States would cooperate with Iran to excavate and remove enriched uranium buried during joint US-Israeli strikes last summer.

In a social media post, he emphasized that there would be no further uranium enrichment and claimed the material has remained untouched since the June attacks.

Iran claimed a 'historic victory' after the US agreed to a two-week ceasefire.

Foreign Affairs Expert Robinder Sachdev said that Trump's warning on Iran that its entire civilisation "will die" if a deal was not made raised the stakes for



the US President to take severe steps against the Islamic Regime, which pressured him to take a step back and lead to the ceasefire deal. Maria Zakharova, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, says the United States and Israel

launched 'a one-track aggressive unprovoked attack' on Iran on February 28, which led to a "crushing defeat". "Our country, from the very beginning, in its first statements, said that it was necessary to immediately stop this aggression, that

Iran declared victory by waging asymmetric war; US-Israel suffered 'crushing defeat' in Iran, Russia's Foreign Ministry; 'Trump's statements on Iran pressured him to step back'

there was no military solution to this situation or any attempt to establish order in the region," she said on Sputnik radio.

'Caring for Indians my responsibility'

No gas, fuel paucity; saw 95% online LPG bookings: Govt

NEW DELHI

ABDUL Majid Hakeem Ilahi, Representative of Iran's Supreme Leader in India, on Wednesday said that when the conflict intensified, Iran also worked closely with the Indian embassy in Tehran to support students and visitors.

Ilahi, in a conversation with ANI, said that taking care of Indian brothers and sisters is his responsibility. "When this conflict intensified, I worked to ensure about 3,000 students from Tehran and other cities, mostly in medical sciences,



were moved to safe accommodations. We also worked closely with the Indian embassy in Tehran to support students and visitors. About 400 visitors were provided with accommodation and meals before I supported their travel to Armenia and then back to India. Taking care of our Indian brothers and sisters is my responsibility," he said. The Indian Ministry of

Petroleum said that there is sufficient availability of liquefied petroleum gas and other fuels such as petrol and diesel despite tensions in West Asia. About 95 percent bookings of LPG cylinders are being made online and 91 percent of the refill deliveries are ensured through the delivery authentication code, which reflects that there was no diversion in deliveries.

LDF eyes hat-trick

Assam to vote in high-stakes polls on Thursday; BJP aims hat-trick, Congress eyes wrestling power; 9.50 lakh voters to decide fate of 294 candidates in Pandy; all arrangements in place

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is all set for a crucial Assembly election on Thursday, with 2.71 crore voters poised to cast their franchise in a decisive contest that will test the ruling LDF's bid for a third consecutive term, the opposition UDF's comeback prospects, and the NDA's push to open its account in the state. After nearly a month of intense campaigning, the southern state will go to the polls in a single phase, with voting to be held from 7 am to 6 pm across all 140 constituencies where 883 candidates are in the fray. The electorate comprises 1.32 crore men, 1.39 crore women and 273 transgender persons, along with over 2.42 lakh overseas voters, underlining the scale of the electoral exercise, according to Election Commission figures. The contest, though triangular, is rooted in Kerala's traditionally bipolar political landscape, where power has largely alternated between the LDF and the UDF. The high-stakes elections to the 126-member Assam assembly will

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



be held on Thursday, with most seats slated to witness a direct contest between the BJP-led NDA and the opposition coalition helmed by the Congress. The BJP is eyeing a third straight term in power in these elections, while the Congress is looking to wrest the state, from

where it was ousted in 2016. Around 9.50 lakh voters will decide the electoral fate of 294 candidates in the Assembly elections in Puducherry on April 9 and all arrangements have been made for smooth conduct of polls, CEO P Jawahar said here on Wednesday.

Seven gang-rape schoolgirl in Bareilly

BAREILLY: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by seven people in a cafe here in the Bhojipura area, police said on Wednesday. On April 2, the girl was on her way to school when she was forced by one of the accused to ride on his bike to the cafe, where other people were already present. Deputy Superintendent of Police (North) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said the student was allegedly threatened with the circulation of a video of an earlier sexual assault. According to an FIR lodged at Bhojipura Police Station, the accused were identified as Asad Haider alias Karan, Chand, restaurant owner Saifi, Samir Ahmad, Banti, and two unnamed persons. Mishra said that on March 19, Asad had taken the girl to a room above the 'Saifi Cafe' and sexually assaulted her, filming the act in the process. He allegedly threatened to circulate the clip on social media if she told anyone.



The DSP said that on April 2, the girl was on her way to school to collect her mark sheet when Chand stopped her and warned that if she did not meet Asad, he would post the video online. He took the girl to the cafe where she was raped by the accused. The girl came home with the help of a passerby in a state of distress. Mishra said she hid the incident from her family for two days out of fear, and spoke up only after relatives noticed her deteriorating condition.

Court grants divorce to rape convict Narayan Sai's wife

INDORE: An Indore family court has granted a divorce decree to the wife of Narayan Sai, rape convict and jailed son of self-proclaimed godman Asaram, and ordered him to pay her a permanent maintenance of Rs 2 crore within three months, the woman's lawyer has said. Narayan Sai is lodged in a jail in Surat district of Gujarat after being sentenced to life imprisonment in a rape case.

The court's order of April 2 dissolves his 18-year-old marriage, Anuragchandra Goyal, the lawyer representing Narayan Sai's Indore-based wife, Janaki Harpalani, told reporters on Tuesday. Goyal said his client had filed a divorce petition in the local family court in 2018, alleging mental cruelty and other charges against her husband, and seeking a lump sum maintenance of Rs 5 crore.

High lead levels found in soil near battery recycling units: Study

NEW DELHI

A new study has found high levels of lead contamination in soil near battery recycling units across Delhi-NCR, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, raising concerns about public health and environmental safety.

The analysis, 'Soiled with Lead: from Battery Recycling,' was carried out by Toxics Link, an environmental research and advocacy organisation, and published on Wednesday. The authors

- The authors examined 23 soil samples collected near lead-acid battery recycling units in selected cities, including locations close to residential areas, local communities, and primary schools
- Unexpectedly, higher average lead levels were detected in samples collected from authorised recycling units (formal units) compared to those collected from the unauthorised units

examined 23 soil samples collected near lead-acid battery recycling units in selected cities, including locations close to residential areas, local communities,

and primary schools. "All samples showed evidence of widespread lead contamination ranging from 100 parts per million (ppm) to 43,800 ppm," said the analysis. With reference to the Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025, the findings indicated that 52 per cent (12 out of 23 samples) of the collected soil samples contained lead concentrations exceeding the 5,000 ppm benchmark for a Hazardous Contami-

nated Site. Also, 31 per cent of the samples surpassed the permissible limits for industrial areas as prescribed in the rule. "Unexpectedly, higher average lead levels were detected in samples collected from authorised recycling units (formal units) compared to those collected from the unauthorised units," said the study. Lead-acid batteries have been around for more than 150 years and are used in automobiles, backup power



systems such as inverters, uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), telecommunications, and railway networks.