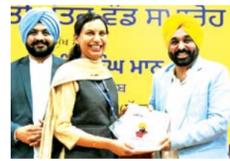




Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari arrives to present the State Budget in the Assembly, in Jaipur



Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan meets Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama at Vidhan Sabha Bhawan, in Dehradun



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during a government event for distribution of appointment letters, in Chandigarh



Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the 77th Session of Executive Committee of African Asian Rural Development, in New Delhi

Faecal bacteria high in Sangam waters at Kumbh, shows govt data

CPCB warns that the water does not conform to primary water quality standards even for bathing

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Ganga water at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, where lakhs of people are taking a holy dip every day during the ongoing Maha Kumbh, is currently unsafe for bathing as it exceeds the prescribed limit for biological oxygen demand (BOD), a key parameter to determine water quality, according to government data.

MAHA KUMBH FILTH ALERT

BOD refers to the amount of oxygen required by aerobic microorganisms to break down organic material in a water body. A higher BOD level indicates more organic content in the water.

River water is considered fit for bathing if the BOD level is less than 3 milligrams per litre.

The Central Pollution Control Board recently told the National Green Tribunal that several locations in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj do not conform to the primary water quality standards for bathing



Waste being collected at the Sangam for their disposal, during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Wednesday

with respect to faecal coliform levels.

However, it said that the river water quality met the bathing criteria in terms of BOD after January 13 "due to freshwater intrusion at upstream locations."

Government data shows that the river water at Sangam is currently exceeding the safe limit for BOD as well.

The BOD level at Sangam was 5.09 milligrams per litre at 5 am on February 16. It was recorded at 4.6 milligrams per litre at 5 pm on February 18 and 5.29 milligrams per litre at 8 am on February 19 (Wednesday).

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the BOD level at Sangam was 3.94 milligrams per litre on January

13 when the Maha Kumbh started. It improved to 2.28 milligrams per litre on Makar Sankranti (January 14) and further dropped to 1 milligram per litre on January 15.

However, it rose to 4.08 milligrams per litre on January 24 and was recorded at 3.26 milligrams per litre on Mauni Amavasya (January 29). According to

Sangam water fit for drinking, says UP CM Yogi Adityanath

PTI, LUCKNOW: The water at the Sangam is fit for both bathing and ritual drinking (aachman) as confirmed by some recent reports, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Wednesday, amid claims it may contain high levels of faecal bacteria.

He trained his guns at Opposition Samajwadi Party, saying the condition of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers was so poor while it was in power that the Prime Minister of Mauritius refused to take a dip during the 2013 Kumbh.

Uttar Pradesh government officials, 10,000 to 11,000 cusecs of water is being released into the Ganga to ensure it meets bathing standards.

Pilgrims generate at least 16 million litres of faecal waste and 240 million litres of greywater daily from activities like cooking, washing, and bathing.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh said "Before 2019, there would be no toilets at Kumbh. Officials would earmark an area with a red flag, provide tents, and open defecation used to take place."

"For the first time in 2019, we built 1.14 lakh in-

dividual toilets with Sintex (plastic) tanks underneath to collect wastewater and excreta. Desludging would be done every two-three days and the faecal sludge would be taken to open oxidation ponds far away. This time, we have constructed 1.5 lakh individual toilets and two faecal sludge treatment plants," he said.

A 200 km-long temporary drainage network has been set up to connect treatment facilities, Singh added.

"Sanitation is a big hallmark (of Kumbh arrangements), and those who have been to Kumbh previously can distinctly see the

difference," he said. Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers, and People (SANDRP), said the state government has been highly irresponsible in claiming that no harm has come to people who have bathed in the river, despite the water being unfit for bathing.

"It is the government's moral duty to provide clean water for bathing. When the water is not safe, there is always a high risk of infection," he said.

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A woman dressed up in Maharashtra traditional attire poses for pictures during celebrations on the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, celebrated as Shivaji Jayanti, in New Delhi, on Wednesday

Three of family found dead in Kolkata home, three others injured in car crash

KOLKATA: Two women and a teenage girl of a family were found dead inside their house in Kolkata, while three other members were injured after their car crashed into a Metro Rail pillar in the city on Wednesday, police said.

The police came to know about the deaths in the house from one of the three injured occupants of the car, all of whom were male. The police are yet to find out whether it is a case of suicide pact or murder. The family, which used to run a tannery business, was in financial difficulties, an officer said. The three female bodies were found in separate rooms on the third floor of the four-storey house in Tangra area. Wrist of two of the bodies were slit, a senior police officer said. Joint Commissioner of Kolkata Police, Rupesh Kumar, said the husband of one of the two deceased women disclosed about the deaths in the house. The husband is one of the persons injured in the car crash that took place in Abhisikta Crossing on EM Bypass, nearly six km away from their residence, at around 4 am, Kumar said. Police are scanning CCTV footage and speaking to locals to ascertain how the accident took place. The eyewitnesses claimed that the car did not collide with any other vehicle and directly rammed into the pillar, Kumar said. Commissioner of Police (CP) Manoj Verma who also visited the house, said a deceased girl was aged 14-15 years while the other two women were aged around 39 and 40 years.

Lokayukta police says no proof against Siddaramaiah, wife

PTI, BENGALURU: The Lokayukta police probing the MUDA site allotment case on Wednesday said the charges against Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathi could not be proved for want of evidence.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, R Ashoka, addressing the media said the Lokayukta report giving clean chit to Siddaramaiah was on the expected lines, while the petitioner in the case, activist Snehamayi Krishna, told PTI: "Only those officials who have sold their conscience can give such a report".

The probing officers said they have submitted the final report to the High Court.

"Since the above allegations against accused-1 to accused-4 in the case have not been proven due to lack of evidence, the final report will be submitted to the High Court," the Lokayukta police said in a letter to Krishna.

Besides Siddaramaiah and his wife, his brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and the land owner Devaraju are the accused.

The Lokayukta police said that further investigation will be conducted into the allegations of

Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) providing compensatory plots in the ratio of 50:50 from 2016 to 2024 and an additional final report will be submitted to the High Court under Section 173 (8) CrPC.

According to Krishna, the Lokayukta police is likely to submit the report on Thursday.

In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an up-market area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

Fire breaks out in building near a project site in Gurugram

PTI, GURUGRAM: A short circuit in fan caused fire in a two-storey building for labourers near a project site in sector 54 here on Wednesday, a fire official said, adding that more than 10 fire engines were pressed into service.

The official said the building houses labourers most of whom were on work outside so no casualties were reported, but around 40 rooms along with household items were gutted.

Fire officer Rameshwar Dyal said the blaze broke out around 5:50 pm in the temporary building for labourers near a Tulip builder's project site.

Four Naxalites gunned down by police in MP

PTI, BALAGHAT: Four Naxalites, including three women cadres, were killed on Wednesday in an encounter with the police in Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat district, an official said.

The anti-Naxal Hawk Force of the state police and local police teams took part in the operation that took place in a forested area, said additional superintendent of police Vijay Dabar.

Weapons were also recovered from the encounter site, police said.

Balaghat shares borders with Gondia district of Maharashtra and Raajnandgaon, Khairagarh and Kawardha districts of Chhattisgarh with both adjoining states facing Left-wing extremism in certain pockets.

The gunbattle broke out in the morning, at a location some 90 km away from the district headquarters, Dabar told PTI.

The spot is near Ronda Forest Camp in Supkhar Forest Range under Garhi police station area, as per an official statement.

Identity of the slain Naxalites was yet to be ascertained, officials said.

Rekha Gupta to be Delhi CM

PTI, NEW DELHI: First-time MLA Rekha Gupta will be the new chief minister of Delhi, the BJP announced on Wednesday.

She was chosen as the Leader of the House in the Delhi Assembly at the BJP legislature party meeting. The party has returned to power in Delhi after over 26 years, ending the 10-year rule of the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP.

Accompanied by BJP leaders Ravi Shankar Prasad, O P Dhankar, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva and others, Gupta (50) later met Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena and staked claim to form a government.

She and her Cabinet ministers will take the oath of office at the Ramlika Ground on Thursday. She will be the fourth woman chief minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dikshit and Atishi.

Upon taking the oath, she will be the second incumbent woman chief minister of the country along with Mamata Banerjee. Also, she will be the only woman chief minister among the states being



29,000 votes in the February 5 Assembly polls.

All 48 newly elected BJP MLAs attended the legislature party meeting held in the presence of Central

observers Ravi Shankar Prasad and O P Dhankar. Gupta's name was proposed by senior party leaders Parvesh Verma, Vijender Gupta and Satish Upadhyay. The announcement came 11 days after the results of the Delhi Assembly polls were declared on February 8.

Soon after the announcement, Gupta thanked Prime Minister Modi and said she would work with full honesty, integrity and dedication for the welfare, empowerment and overall development of every resident of Delhi.

