



Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar addresses a press conference, in Ranchi, Jharkhand



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwat Mann during a visit to Gurdwara Dukhniwaran Sahib on the occasion of 'Baisakhi' festival, in Patiala



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar releases book on Dr BR Ambedkar during 'Bhim Samvad' programme on the eve of his 134th birth anniversary, in Patna



AAP leader Atishi attends the 'Kirtan Samagam' on the occasion of Baisakhi at a gurudwara, in New Delhi

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External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Minister-President of Bavaria state of Germany Markus Soder during a meeting, in New Delhi, on Sunday

India, 9 African nations kick-start mega naval exercise off Dar-es-Salaam

**NEW DELHI:** India and nine African nations on Sunday kick-started a six-day mega naval exercise off Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, signalling their long-term vision to work unitedly to confront common challenges in the maritime domain. The India-initiated exercise is taking place under the broad framework of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new vision called MAHASAGAR or 'Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions' for engagement with the Global South. The co-hosts of the maiden 'AIKEYME' or Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement exercise are the Indian Navy and the Tanzania Peoples Defence Force, officials said. Navy Chief Dinesh K Tripathi, Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth and Tanzanian Defence Minister Stergomena Lawrence Tax were among those who attended the inauguration ceremony of the exercise.

**Man accused of killing 5-year-old girl in Karnataka's Hubballi dies in police firing**  
**HUBBALLI (KARNATAKA):** A man who allegedly murdered a five-year-old girl earlier on Sunday was killed in police firing in the evening while attempting to escape, police said. The accused has been identified as 35-year-old Ritesh Kumar, a native of Patna, Bihar. He was booked on charges of murder under the POCSO Act and also for attacking and attempting to murder police personnel. The girl was reportedly kidnapped and killed by the accused in the morning within the Ashok Nagar police station limits. Her body was later found in an abandoned building, police said. Outraged by the murder, a large number of residents gathered in front of the Ashok Nagar police station and staged a protest demanding justice.

**2 operatives of terror module held with IED containing RDX, says Punjab Police**  
**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab Police on Sunday claimed to have foiled plans of Pakistan-based ISI to disturb peace and harmony in the region following the arrest of two terror operatives with an improvised explosive device (IED) containing RDX. The two accused, Jagga Singh and Manjinder Singh, both residents of Fatehgarh Sahib district, have a criminal history and were previously involved in multiple narcotics-related cases, said Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav. He said a 2.8 kg IED containing 1.6 kg of RDX and a remote control have been seized from them during the joint operation involving teams of counter-intelligence Ferozepur and state special operating cell, SAS Nagar.

Not mother of democracy, 'father of dictatorship': Sibal

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday accused the government of using probe agencies to "paralyse" the Congress and described the development of the Enforcement Directorate issuing notices to take possession of immovable assets in the National Herald case as an "assault on democracy".

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

"In lip service, we are the mother of democracy but in reality you are the father of dictatorship. They (BJP) want to do their politics on Hindu-Muslim agenda and finish off the opposition," Sibal said in a press conference. His remarks come a day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) stated it had attached as part of a money laundering probe linked to Con-

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gress-controlled National Herald newspaper and the Associated Journals Limited (AJL). Simultaneously, the notices have been affixed at "conspicuous part of these properties" located at Herald House at ITO (5A, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg) in Delhi, in the Bandra(E) area (Plot No 2, Survey No 341) of Mumbai and the AJL building located at Bisheshwar Nath Road (Property No.1) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday. The notices primarily seek vacation of the premises to be taken over by the ED. Speaking on the issue,

Sibal said, "The possession notice is aimed at taking over these properties of the newspaper in which Congress offices are running to paralyse the party." "What is the offense? Why have you waited for 13 years? Why? Because you want to grab the property. You want to paralyse the Congress party, take possession of all the properties so that they cannot function. The properties are spread across the country and are worth 600 crore that is what they allege, so they take them over, paralyse the Congress so that it has no office to operate from," the senior advocate and Independent Rajya Sabha MP said. "From what I know is the Congress does not have much money so it will not be able to function as a political party. This is an assault on democracy. This is an assault on what we as a republic stand for. This is an unfortunate event that is reflective of the mindset of this government," he added.

Andhra: 8 killed in firecracker unit explosion

**PTI, VISAKHAPATNAM:** Eight people, including two women, were killed and at least seven others injured in a powerful explosion at a firecracker manufacturing unit in Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. The explosion occurred around 12.45 PM at Kotavuratla village and the injured were shifted to hospitals. In a post on 'X', he said: "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives in a factory mishap in Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon. The local administration is assisting those affected". He also said, "An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given Rs 50,000." "Eight people, including two women, died and seven others were injured in the fire accident," Andhra Pradesh Home Minister V Anitha told PTI.

MUMBAI WATER TANKER STRIKE On Day 4, BMC invokes Disaster Management Act

**PTI, MUMBAI:** As the tanker association refused to relent on the ongoing strike, the Mumbai civic body on Sunday invoked the Disaster Management Act to requisition private water tankers, wells and borewells to streamline water supply with the help of police and the transport commissionerate. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said it is exercising powers under sections 34 (a) and 65 (1) of the Disaster Management Act 2005 to requisition private water tankers, wells and borewells. "The Disaster Management Act 2005 was invoked in the view of the indefinite strike called by tanker operators in opposition to the revised guidelines of Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) and to avert any disruption in essential water supply during the summer season," it said. Tanker operations will be managed through coordinated efforts of teams from BMC wards, Mumbai police and

the transport commissionerate, the release stated. It said a standard operating procedure (SOP) has been formulated for streamlined water supply to private housing societies and other stakeholders. As part of the SOP, the BMC's legal department and the disaster management department will jointly issue a notification order for the requisition of water tankers along with drivers, cleaners and office staff from the tanker operator's office for coordination, the release said. "Thereafter, Maharashtra Transport Commissioner will do requisition of the vehicles and personnel and deploy them to ward-level teams on Sunday evening, while ward officers will form a team comprising officials from the water works, pest control, health, accounts, RTO and local police departments, to ensure ward wise smooth water supply," it said.

Nationwide protests erupt over Waqf Act

Violence continues in WB; tensions spread to Assam, Telangana

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Protests against the recently enacted Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 have sparked widespread unrest across multiple States, with violent clashes in West Bengal's Murshidabad district leaving three dead and dozens injured. **WEST BENGAL:** The Muslim-majority district of Murshidabad witnessed severe violence in the towns of Suti, Dhulian, Samserganj, and Jangipur beginning Friday. Three individuals, including a man and his son who were found with stab wounds, and a 21-year-old shot during clashes, have died since Friday. At least 18 policemen were injured. In response, paramilitary forces including BSF, RAF, and state armed police have been deployed. Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) remain in place, with internet services suspended and continuous vehicle checks being conducted. Over 150 individuals have been arrested so far as overnight raids continue. Several vehicles, including police vans, were torched, and shops vandalized during the unrest.



People hold portraits of Dr B R Ambedkar during a protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, on the eve of 'Ambedkar Jayanti', in Hyderabad, Telangana, on Sunday

Fearing further violence, more than 400 residents, mostly Hindus, reportedly fled across the Bhagirathi River to Malda district. Governor C V Ananda Bose stated he is in constant communication with CM Mamata Banerjee, while the Centre is monitoring the situation closely. The violence has triggered sharp political reactions. BJP leaders Suvenudu Adhikari, Sukanta Majumdar, and Abhijit Gangopadhyay accused the TMC government of "appeasement politics" and demanded a CBI probe and imposition of AFSPA in Murshidabad, Malda, Nadia, and South 24 Parganas.

Adhikari alleged that Hindus were being "hunted" and "forced to flee". In contrast, TMC leaders accused the BJP of orchestrating a campaign of misinformation by sharing fake photos and videos on social media. TMC MP Sagarka Ghose and general secretary Kunal Ghosh alleged that some of the images circulated were from other states, and raised suspicions over the BSF's role in allowing alleged rioters to infiltrate through the Indo-Bangla border. Amid the tension, Islamic clerics, including Imam Moulana Shafique of Nakhoda Masjid, condemned the violence, stating that it

contradicts the principles of Islam and democratic protest. **ASSAM:** In Cachar district, a protest rally in Silchar turned violent as demonstrators blocked roads and threw stones at police, prompting a mild lathi-charge. Authorities swiftly imposed Section 163 of BNSS district-wide, banning unauthorised gatherings, rallies, loudspeakers, and road blockades. No arrests have been made yet, but cases have been registered. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma revealed that police acted on 'strong intelligence' to prevent larger-scale violence, hinting at possible pre-planned disruptions. **HYDERABAD:** In Hyderabad, protests were peaceful, with demonstrators marching under banners such as 'Our Waqf, Our Right' and 'Save Our Constitution'. The rally culminated at Ambedkar Statue on Tank Bund. Among those addressing the crowd were TPCC President B Mahesh Kumar Goud, Congress MP Imran Masood and Telangana government advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir. Masood vowed to repeal the Act if the Opposition returned to power.

Peaceful protest constitutional right: Jamiat

Says using force condemnable

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Prominent Muslim organisation Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind on Sunday asserted that peaceful protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act is a constitutional right and that using force to prevent it is condemnable. However, the organisation also regretted any violent acts during protests, stating that such elements only weaken the 'Waqf protection movement'. The organisation also said that "the most dangerous" aspect of the Bill is the abolition of 'Waqf by User', which it claimed "endangers" thousands of historic religious sites. The Working Committee of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (Mahmood Madani faction) held a meeting on Sunday at the Madani Hall in ITO here under the chairmanship of Jamiat chief Maulana Mahmood Madani. Speaking with reporters after the meeting, Madani said, "This is not an issue of Waqf but politics. Waqf (Amendment) Act has been brought with malicious political intent. This law and such amendments are neither for the benefit of the country nor for the common society and Muslims."



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have made sacrifices before (India's) independence as well. If we have to fight, we will fight. If we have to show patience, we will show patience. We are showing patience for justice," he said. The meeting focused on several pressing issues including the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, government action against madrassas in Uttarakhand, the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), and the situation in Gaza, a statement issued by the Jamiat said.

Tamil Nadu Guv Ravi in fresh trouble His 'Jai Shri Ram' chant in college stokes controversy

**PTI, CHENNAI:** Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi's reported remarks asking students of a college to chant "Jai Shri Ram" have triggered a controversy with SPCSS-TN, a body of educationists, alleging he violated his oath of office and secular principles and urged President Droupadi Murmu to remove him from his post. The State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN), said Ravi failed to abide by the Constitution, respect its ideals and institutions.

"Ravi should be removed from the office of Governor of Tamil Nadu forthwith for deliberately violating Article 159 (oath by governor) of the Constitution of India," SPCSS-TN General Secretary, PB Prince Gajendra Babu, said in a statement. Ravi was invited by a government-aided college in Madurai as chief guest to distribute prizes to the winners in a literary contest. Delivering his address on April 12, he had asked the students to chant the name of a God of particular religion (Jai Shri Ram) thrice. According to the Constitution, India is a secular country, education is a secular activity and it shall be the fundamental duty of every

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