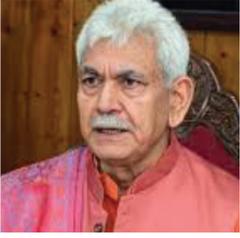


Central Chronicle

Wednesday, 4 March 2026, Bhopal | Year 69 | No. 40 | City Edition | Pages 12 | Rs. 5/- | www.centralchronicle.com



LG chairs security review in Srinagar, calls for high alert



No evidence that Iran was developing nuclear weapons: Sergey Lavrov

US-Israel-Iran War: 787 people killed

The tit-for-tat attacks marked a sharp escalation in hostilities

New Delhi: The US-Israeli war campaign against Iran has moved into day four, with no sign of a pause. Israel said its air force struck key government sites in Iran overnight, including the country's presidential complex and a building linked to its top security body. In a post on X, the Israel Defense Forces said it targeted the "Iranian Regime's Leadership Compound".

Iran has also launched missile and drone strikes targeting Israel and Gulf states that host US military bases, following US and Israeli-led strikes on Iran that began on Saturday.

According to the statement, the compound housed Iran's most senior decision-making forum and was among the most heavily secured locations in the country. The Israel



Air Force carried out the strike using what it called precise intelligence. Two Iranian drones struck the US

Embassy compound in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's defence ministry said,

causing a fire and material damage. No injuries were reported as the building was empty. A video showed a huge blaze and thick plumes of smoke coming out of the drone-hit US Embassy.

Meanwhile, Iran has broadened its retaliatory attacks on American and Israeli targets in the Gulf region on Tuesday, as Trump warned that the US-Israeli strikes on Iran could intensify.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian says country has not come to a halt despite the ongoing conflict.

The US State Department urged Americans to leave much of the Middle East, including Egypt and the Gulf states.



Global oil prices surge as Iran shuts strategic Strait of Hormuz

India holds 25 days of crude reserves

New Delhi: Global energy markets are in turmoil following the Revolutionary Guard's declaration that the Strait of Hormuz is "closed," threatening to set any passing vessels ablaze.

As a primary chokepoint for one-fifth of global oil consumption, the shutdown has paralyzed 80% of regional maritime traffic.

The escalation follows joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran, leaving 150 ships stranded and insurance premiums at a six-year high.

Brent crude reacted sharply, surging toward \$80 per barrel—a 10% jump since the crisis began—while shipping costs have skyrocketed as major operators withdraw from the corridor.

Despite this global volatility, the Indian government has moved to reassure domestic consumers. Official

sources confirmed on Tuesday that India maintains a robust 25-day reserve of crude and refined oil stocks. As the world's third-largest importer, India's energy supplies remain "secure and well-monitored," with no immediate plans to hike petrol or diesel prices.

While analysts warn that prolonged closure could devastate regional supply chains and benefit US producers, New Delhi remains in a "wait-and-watch" mode. For now, India's significant fuel buffers of petrol, diesel, and ATF provide a crucial cushion against the price shocks felt elsewhere.

However, the long-term stability of pump prices will depend entirely on whether the international community can reopen the waterway or if the conflict further tightens the noose on global transit.

'Can't Guarantee Your Safety': US Embassy to Americans

The US Embassy has said that it is not in a position at this time to evacuate or directly assist American citizens seeking to leave Israel, urging individuals to make their own security plans amid the evolving situation.

In an advisory, the embassy stated that "is not in a position at this time to evacuate or directly assist Americans in departing Israel," and provided information about alternative travel options being arranged by Israeli authorities.

PM Modi speaks to Arab leaders

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had phone calls with Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, and Crown Prince of Kuwait HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalef Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah amid the Mideast tension. During both the discussions, he expressed concern at the attacks in both the Gulf countries and discussed the welfare and security of the Indians residing there.

Trump says Iran wants to talk, but 'it's too late'

US President Donald Trump said that the Iranian air defence, air force, navy and leadership are. "They want to talk. I said 'too late,'" he wrote on Truth Social. His remark comes after his earlier statement on Sunday when he said he had agreed to talk to Iranian leaders at their request. Trump, however, continued to urge Iranians to seize the current scenario and topple the regime, following the killing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Three Indians killed, 20 injured

New Delhi: At least three Indians were killed in Iranian strikes on vessels in waters off Oman, and 20 others were injured as the war in West Asia widened in scale and scope.

The Indian Embassy in Oman Monday confirmed that a citizen was killed on board MKD Vyom, which was attacked by an unmanned boat off the coast of Muscat. Two Indians on another merchant vessel, MV Skylight, died in strikes, government sources said.

Sources said another Indian citizen was critical, and on ventilator support in Oman. The deaths and injuries were from Iranian strikes across the Gulf, they said.

India emerges as a global beacon of hope: PM Modi

New Delhi: Addressing a post-budget webinar on "Sustaining and Strengthening Economic Growth" on March 3, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India's robust economy has become a "beacon of hope" amidst shifting global dynamics. Speaking via video conferencing, the Prime Minister emphasized that as international supply chains undergo a historic reorganization, India's rapid progress serves as the bedrock for the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India).

A four-pronged strategy for growth

The Prime Minister outlined a clear mandate for the nation: Build more, produce more, connect more, and export more. He noted that the pillars of the economy—manufacturing, logistics, and MSMEs—are deeply interconnected.

A strong manufacturing base, he argued, does not just create products but generates vast opportunities

Says in the post-budget webinar



across the entire economic ecosystem.

Quality: The non-negotiable standard

In a firm message to the industry, PM Modi stressed that India's global competitiveness hinges on uncompromising quality. "If there is one area where we must concentrate all

our energy and intelligence, it is quality," he asserted. With several Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) now in place, he described the current era as a "highway of development." However, he warned that to truly dominate these markets, Indian products must not only meet global standards but surpass them.

Innovation and sustainability

The Prime Minister urged industry leaders to abandon "frugal" approaches to Research and Development (R&D). He called for a deep study of international consumer needs to create user-friendly, high-end products. Highlighting a major shift in the global market, he noted that "sustainability" is now as critical as "cost."

He pointed to the Biopharma SHAKTI Mission and the Carbon Capture Mission as key budgetary initiatives designed to position India as a trustworthy, green, and resilient manufacturing partner for the world.

Over 2,100 Indians evacuated amid Middle East airspace closure



New Delhi: More than 2,100 Indians stranded in the Middle East returned safely on Tuesday via seven special flights as regional conflict intensified. The crisis forced the cancellation of over 250 international flights across Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai due to sudden airspace closures.

In response, IndiGo has launched

10 emergency flights from Jeddah to major Indian metros, while Air India Express resumed limited operations to Muscat. Despite the logistical chaos, the government is prioritizing the swift repatriation of citizens, even as major hubs like Mumbai report over 100 grounded departures in a single day.

Four repatriation flights are currently en route to Jeddah, and one flight is expected to operate to and from Muscat later in the day. From March 4, the airline said it will offer more scheduled flights and increase seat capacity as part of a phased restoration of services, subject to prevailing airspace conditions and regulatory approvals.

IndiGo plans to resume operations to Muscat, Jeddah and Madinah in West Asia, and to Athens in Europe, totaling 13 return flights comprising 26 sectors.

Greetings

Central Chronicle extends greeting to readers, advertisers and patrons on the occasion of Holi.

Editor

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The office and press of Central Chronicle will remain closed on account of Holi on Wednesday, 4th March. Hence the next issue of the paper will come out on March 6.

Manager

MUSTREAD

4.3 Magnitude Iran quake sparks nuclear test speculation online

New Delhi: A sudden but small 4.3 magnitude earthquake had hit southern Iran. It happened at a shallow depth and was recorded by international monitoring agencies. Iran has always lied in the earthquake-prone zone. Therefore, such earthquakes are not unusual. This quickly turned into wider Middle East earthquake social media speculation. People debated whether the tremor was natural or man-made. A few discussions also mentioned Iranian quake theories, comparing the recent quake to previous seismic events in the country.

Pak President claims India preparing for another war

Islamabad: Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday accused India of preparing for another conflict and urged New Delhi to step back from what he called a theatre of war and return to negotiations. Addressing a joint sitting of Parliament amid opposition protests, Zardari said, "India's leaders say they are preparing for another war. As a lifelong advocate of regional peace, I would not recommend it." "My message to them (India) is to move away from the war theatre to meaningful negotiation tables, because that is the only path for regional security," he said.

Sensex
BSE..... 80,238.85 (-1048.34)
NSE..... 24,865.70 (-312.95)

Bullion
Gold..... 1,70,020 (24 carat 10gm)
Silver..... 2,95,000 (1kg)
USD(\$)/INR(Rs)..... 92.09

Weather
Sunrise | Sunset | Day | Night
6.41 | 6.24 | 34.2 | 15.9

BJP nominates Nitin Nabin as candidate for RS elections

Patna: The BJP on Tuesday announced the name of its national president Nitin Nabin as candidate for the 2026 biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar.

The party has also announced the name of Shivesh Kumar as another candidate for the election.

BJP national general secretary and headquarters incharge Arun Singh said in a release that the party has approved the name of Nitin Nabin along with 9 other candidates for the election to be held in various states.

He said the approval has been given to the proposed name by the party's Central Election Committee.

Nitin Nabin is from Bihar's Bankipur assembly constituency. While representing the seat for four terms and serving as a prominent minister in the Nitish Kumar government, Nabin was appointed as the



party's national working president by the BJP's parliamentary board on December 14 last year. In January this year, he was elected unopposed as the national president of the BJP.

The other candidate of the BJP, Shivesh Kumar, former MLA is a dalit leader who had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha elections in 2024 from Sasaram seat. On being nominated as a Rajya Sabha candidate from Bihar, Kumar extended his gratitude towards the party's top leadership.

Sonia Gandhi says India's 'silence' on Khamenei death is abdication

New Delhi: Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson and Rajya Sabha member Sonia Gandhi questioned the timing of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in the wake of the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran and slammed the Centre's 'silence' on the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

She said that silence in this matter is "not neutral", citing that Khamenei's killing violated the rules of the UN charter. In an article published in an English Daily, Sonia Gandhi stated that silence is "abdication" when India has long aspired to be more than a regional power. She said that there is urgency for the country to rediscover its moral strength and articulate it with clarity and commitment.

"In 1994, when sections within the Organisation of Islamic Coopera-



tion sought to advance a resolution against India at the UN Commission on Human Rights over Kashmir, Tehran played a consequential role in blocking that effort.

That intervention helped prevent the internationalisation of the Kashmir issue at a delicate moment in In-

dia's economic trajectory," she added.

BJP hits back

Countering the Congress leader BJP stated, "Sonia Gandhi's recent article attempts to portray India's calibrated response to the ongoing West Asian crisis as silence. That characterisation is not only misleading, it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of how responsible diplomacy works," BJP sources told media.

"India has not been silent. India has consistently called for restraint, respect for sovereignty and de-escalation. A country with millions of its citizens living and working across the Gulf region, with critical energy dependencies and deep economic linkages, cannot afford reckless commentary," the sources said.

SC fastens liability to pay penalty on employer for delay in compensation

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has fastened the liability to pay penalty on an employer for a delay in depositing the compensation amount under the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, saying the law is a "social welfare statute" for redressing employees' grievances. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P B Varale said in a catena of judgments, the apex court has stressed the "liberal and purposive interpretation" of the Act in favour of the employees being



a social-welfare legislation. The bench delivered its verdict on an appeal filed by an insurance firm, challenging a May 2025 order of the Delhi High Court.

The high court had fastened the liability of paying the penalty imposed under section 4A(3)(b) of the

Act on the insurance firm.

"The perusal of the statement of objects of the said legislation makes it crystal clear that the said legislation is a social welfare statute brought in by Parliament to redress the grievances of the employees in case of accidents that may occur in or during the course of employment by payment of adequate compensation expeditiously..." the top court said in its February 23 verdict.

6 killed, many injured in Yamuna Expressway accident in Hathras

Lucknow: Six persons, including three women, were killed and as many injured after a double-decker sleeper bus hit a van on the Yamuna Expressway here on Tuesday, police said. The accident occurred around 4.20 am in the Sadabad police station area, they said.

The van carrying 13 passengers was on its way from Prem Nagar in Delhi to Dholpur in Rajasthan when it was hit from behind by a sleeper bus travelling from Noida to Gorakhpur, Additional Superintendent of Police Ram Anand Kushwaha said.

Superintendent of Police Chiranjiv Nath Sinha said the accident occurred when the bus was attempting to overtake the van.

The bus driver, operator and conductor have been arrested, he said. A case is being registered under the relevant sections of BNS. Strict action will also be taken against the bus owner and others associated with the vehicle, Sinha said.

The accident left six people, including three women, dead. The driver of the van escaped unhurt, police said.