BJP to go solo in 2027 Punjab assembly elections: Amit Shah

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France 'ready' to host Lebanon-Israel ceasefire talks

Fuel adequately available across country

Citizens advised not to store petrol, diesel in loose containers: Petroleum Ministry

Agencies, New Delhi

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Saturday issued an advisory to citizens stating that petrol and diesel are adequately available at retail outlets across the country.

The ministry urged consumers not to take or store fuel in loose or inappropriate containers, warning that such practices pose serious safety risks.

According to the advisory, retail outlets have been instructed to strictly adhere to safety guidelines while dispensing fuel.

The ministry further said that any violation of the prescribed safety norms by retail outlets will invite strict action.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said there is no crisis regarding petroleum products in India, even as the West Asia conflict poses challenges for global energy markets.

Speaking to the media, Shekhawat said the current war-like conditions in the Middle East have created concerns for several countries, stating that some neighbouring countries are facing serious disruptions.

"There is no crisis regarding petroleum products in India... the war-like situation in the Middle East has posed a challenge to all countries. Speaking of our neighbouring countries, an emergency-like situation prevails in Pakistan, while schools and colleges have been closed in Bangladesh," he said.

Highlighting the government's strategy to secure energy supplies, Shekhawat said India has significantly diversified its crude oil import sources."We used to import crude oil from a total of 27 countries earlier; now the government has signed agreements with 40 countries for crude oil imports. We have diversified our supply lines," he said, adding that while the gas supply has been disrupted, the government has taken necessary steps to keep the supply going. He also said protocols have been put in place to prevent black marketing and hoarding of petroleum products.

Responding to the criticism over the situation from the Congress, he accused them of attempting to create an unnecessary controversy over the issue. "The Congress has no issue, that's why they are trying to make it an issue," he said.

1,483 locations raided, 24 FIRs were lodged in Uttar Pradesh

In response to the LPG crisis, Uttar Pradesh's Food and Civil Supplies Department executed raids at 1,483 sites, arresting six individuals involved in black marketing.

The operation, conducted in collaboration with the district administration, led to 24 FIRs being registered, focusing on preventing shortfalls and supply issues throughout the state.

To guarantee efficient LPG distribution, a 24-hour control room has been set up, ensuring uninterrupted communication with districts to maintain adequate fuel availability under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's guidance.

Pakistan closes 84 Islamabad entry routes after Taliban Drone attack

Agencies, Islamabad

Pakistan is closing most entry points to its capital for security reasons. Pakistan's interior ministry said on Saturday that the number of access routes into Islamabad would be reduced from 109 to 25.

In a post on X, Afghanistan's Ministry of National Defense said the Afghan Air Force targeted a strategic military center known as "Hamza" in the Faizabad area of the Pakistani capital at around 5 p.m. local time.

Mohsin Naqvi, Pakistan's Interior Minister, has ordered the full activation of the capital's Red Zone security area and increased monitoring at checkpoints and entry points to ensure the city's security.

The decision to reduce the number of entry routes to Islamabad comes amid escalating tensions between the Taliban and Pakistan.

On Friday, the Taliban launched a drone attack near Islamabad. Pakistan said the drones were intercepted but confirmed that four civilians, including two children, were injured when debris fell to the ground.

Islamabad has also witnessed two major suicide bombings in recent months. Last month, an attack at a mosque killed 32 people and injured more than 100 others.

Regime change in Bengal is inevitable: PM Modi

Kolkata (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asserted that a political shift in West Bengal is only a matter of time, claiming that the desire for change is visible across the state.

Addressing a massive rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata to mark the culmination of the BJP's "Parivartan Yatra" ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, he said the mood among people reflects a growing demand for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to assume power.

"The message of change is already visible on the walls and in the minds of the people of West Bengal," Modi said. "There is a widespread call for the BJP to form the government and end what people describe as 'jungle raj' in the state."

The Prime Minister launched a sharp attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), alleging that soon after assuming power in 2011, the party absorbed many individuals with criminal backgrounds who had earlier been associated with the previous Left Front regime.

According to him, this had resulted in a deterioration of law and order in the state. He claimed that the presence of such elements in the political system had contributed to rising corruption, violence and crimes against women.

"People had voted the Left Front out with great hope and gave the Trinamool Congress an opportunity to govern. But that trust was betrayed," Modi said, adding that many incidents of crime in the state allegedly involve individuals linked to the ruling party.

India-Iran ties ensure passage for some ships through Hormuz: Tehran envoy

New Delhi (UNI)

Amid heightened tensions in West Asia, Iran has permitted a number of Indian vessels to transit the Strait of Hormuz, with Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Fathali on Saturday citing the "longstanding friendship" between the two countries, while stopping short of assuring safe passage for all oil tankers.

Speaking at a media conclave being organised in the national capital, the Iranian Ambassador said, "We have allowed some ships to pass through Hormuz, but we can't tell how many at this moment. I will follow up on this issue in the future. Iran and India have historical relations and common interests."

Earlier, during an inter-ministerial briefing on Saturday, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), said that Indian vessels operating in the Persian Gulf remain safe and shipping activity continues to be closely monitored.

Sinha said that the two Indian-flag LPG carriers Shivalik and Nanda Devi safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz early Saturday, carrying around 92,700 metric tonnes of LPG.

"Both vessels crossed the Strait of Hormuz safely and are now proceeding towards India. They are expected to arrive at Mundra and Kandla ports on March 16 and 17," he said.

Underscoring the need to boost and enhance the relations between Iran and India, Fathali said, "If there is any rift, the enemies will use it to their effect. Both sides have the maturity to handle these political and social issues."

Defending Tehran's decision to target US bases in Gulf nations, the envoy said Iran respects its neighbours but was forced to respond as attacks were being carried out from American bases stationed in those countries.

"The Tomahawk missile that struck a girls' school and killed around 170 students was launched from a US base in one of the West Asian countries," he said.

Sonam Wangchuk's NSA detention revoked

Centre pushes for peace, talks in Ladakh

New Delhi (UNI)

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday revoked the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who had been held under the National Security Act in connection with the violence that took place in Leh last September, stating that the decision was taken to promote peace, stability and constructive dialogue in Ladakh.

The ministry said the government remains committed to fostering an environment of mutual trust in Ladakh and, after due consideration, has decided to revoke Wangchuk's detention with immediate effect while reiterating its commitment to providing all necessary safeguards for the region. The move comes months after Wangchuk was detained and later sent to Rajasthan's Jodhpur jail under the NSA.

In a statement issued here, the ministry stated that following the "serious law and order situation" that arose in Leh on 24 September, last year, Wangchuk was detained two days later, on 26 September.

Two Maoists including zonal commander held in Latehar

Latehar (Jharkhand): Police arrested two Maoists, including a zonal commander carrying a reward of Rs 10 lakh, during an anti-Maoist operation in Jharkhand's Latehar district, officials said on Saturday.

The arrested Maoists were identified as CPI (Maoist) zonal commander Mrityunjay Bhuiyan and sub-zonal commander Bablu Ram, who carried a reward of Rs two lakh.

Latehar Superintendent of Police Kumar Gaurav said Mrityunjay had been active in the Maoist organisation for nearly two decades and was wanted in 104 cases related to Maoist violence in different police station areas. Police said he was allegedly involved in several major attacks, including incidents in which a total of 44 police personnel were killed.

Always avoid extravagance in weddings: CM

Dr Yadav addresses mass marriage ceremony in Shujalpur via VC

Administrative Correspondent

Bhopal: Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that social harmony and mutual goodwill form the core of Indian culture, and mass marriage ceremonies are a powerful means to strengthen these values.

Addressing an "All-Faith Mass Marriage Ceremony" in Shujalpur via video conferencing on Saturday, he stressed that performing the sacred marriage rites of daughters is among the greatest acts of spiritual merit.

The CM said families earlier faced great anxiety regarding their daughters' marriages, but the state government now stands firmly with them at every stage—from birth and education to employment, motherhood, and marriage.

Emphasizing simplicity in weddings, he urged people to avoid unnecessary expenditure and instead opt for simple ceremonies or participate in mass marriage events. The money saved, he said, can help secure a better future for children. Dr. Yadav also noted that he had arranged his own son's marriage through a mass marriage ceremony.

Marriages of 200 daughters solemnized

During the event, marriages of 200 daughters were solemnized, including 162 Hindu weddings and 38 Nikah ceremonies. Under the Chief Minister Kanya Vivah/Nikah Yojana, the government is providing financial assistance of Rs 49,000 to each newlywed couple to help them establish their households.

Higher Education, AYUSH and Technical Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar said the scheme has become a symbol of social security and harmony, urging society to move away from extravagant weddings and support mass marriage initiatives.

Rahul Gandhi questions delay in legal MSP implementation

New Delhi (UNI)

Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said he raised a direct question in Parliament about the government's unfulfilled promise to provide farmers a legally guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) based on the C2 50% formula, alleging that the government avoided giving a clear answer.

In a post on X, Gandhi said he asked the government why the commitment made to farmers in 2021 to implement a legal MSP at "C2 50%" had still not been fulfilled. "In the Lok Sabha, I asked the government a direct question: why has the promise made to farmers in 2021 to implement a legal MSP at C2 50% still not been implemented?" he wrote.

According to Gandhi, the government did not address the question directly and instead reiterated its existing MSP policy.

He also claimed that the government acknowledged putting pressure on states to withdraw additional MSP bonuses.

"The government admitted that it pressured states to end the MSP bonus, which was justified without any reasoning in the name of 'national priorities'," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader also raised concerns about India's ongoing trade discussions with the United States, particularly references to reducing "non-trade barriers."