

Somnath Amrut Mahotsav: IAF's renowned Surya Kiran Aerobatic team to perform air show on May 11

GIR SOMNATH: The Indian Air Force's renowned Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) will present an air show over the Somnath Temple on May 11 as part of the 'Somnath Amrut Mahotsav-2026' celebrations marking 75 years of the temple's reconstruction, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official said on Sunday.

gathered in large numbers and cheered the pilots as they executed precision formations and close-range flying displays in the skies above the temple town, an official release said. A major attraction of this year's display would be indigenous smoke pods developed by the Air Force's Base Repair Depot in Nashik, which will release saffron, white and green smoke to create the image of the Indian tricolour in the sky, it said.

Moreover, an Indian Air Force Chetak helicopter will also shower flower petals over the Somnath temple as part of the celebrations. "The aerobatic display will feature synchronized formations and daring aerial manoeuvres by pilots flying red-and-white Hawk Mk-132 aircraft. The 15-minute show would demonstrate the pilots' expertise in flying fighter aircraft at extremely close distances from one another," the release quoted



Wing Commander Janmeet Sharma as saying. The aircraft will take off from the Jamnagar Air Force Station and reach Somnath within 18 minutes, covering an aerial distance of around 182 kilometres, officials said. The team, led by Group Captain Ajay Dasharathi, comprises 13 pilots, while 25 to 30 Air Force personnel from the Jamnagar station will manage operational responsibilities including flypast control, aviation safety, bird

hazard management, weather coordination and signal communication, the release said. The Surya Kiran team, which was established in 1996, has conducted over 800 air displays across India and has represented the Indian Air Force in countries such as China, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, the release noted. "The helicopter unit, which also undertakes search and

rescue, medical evacuation and disaster relief operations, had already carried out rehearsal flights over the temple during the past two days. The same unit had earlier conducted a flower shower over the Statue of Unity on National Unity Day," an official said. Somnath Amrut Mahotsav ceremony will mark 75 years since the inauguration of the restored temple by then President of India Rajendra Prasad.

AAP govt's duty to resolve objections raised by Akal Takht on anti-sacrilege law: Badal

LUDHIANA: Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Sunday said it was the duty of the AAP government to resolve the objections raised by the Akal Takht and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026.



Talking to reporters after addressing a public function held in memory of Sikh leader Jassa Singh Ramgarhia here, he said, "The SAD agrees with the views of the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib who asked the AAP government to amend objectionable provisions in the anti-sacrilege Act which go

against the 'Khalsa Panth' and the sentiments of the Sikh community." He said the SGPC, which was an elected body of the Sikh community, had also conveyed its views to the AAP government and the same should be respected. The Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar

(Amendment) Bill, 2026 was unanimously passed by Punjab Assembly on April 13. It includes a provision for stricter punishment, including life imprisonment for any act of sacrilege against the Guru Granth Sahib. The Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kuldip Singh Gargaji

on Friday asked Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan that within 15 days, the state government must remove provisions from the anti-sacrilege Act which are "against the Guru Granth Sahib, the Khalsa Panth and the sentiments of the 'Sangat' (Sikh community). The supreme temporal seat of Sikhs is particularly objecting to provisions related to requiring the SGPC to upload records of Guru Granth Sahib 'saroops' (copies) to a government monitored portal. However, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said there was no question of withdrawing or rolling back the anti-sacrilege law and claimed that it

has received overwhelming support from the 'Sangat' across the world. Targeting the AAP government over the corruption issue, Badal alleged, "The AAP rule in the State is akin to the rule of Ahmed Shah Abdali who plundered Punjab at will before meeting his match in Jassa Singh Ramgarhia". He said the manner in which Punjab's resources were being "looted" was coming out in the open with the arrest of Cabinet minister Sanjeev Arora. Earlier, while paying glowing tributes to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia on the occasion of his 303rd birth anniversary, the SAD president appealed to Punjabis.

CM chair 'stable', says Shivakumar amid PM Modi's criticism of Cong in Karnataka

RAICHUR: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday categorically refuted PM Narendra Modi's remark suggesting that the CM's chair in the state was "wobbling." Speaking to reporters at Lingasagur in Raichur district, Shivakumar, who is also the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president, said, "No chairs are wobbling in Karnataka. All chairs are stable. I don't know what the PM is referring to." He was responding to the PM's statement alleging a power struggle within the state government. At the heart of the "power tussle" within the Karnata-

ka Congress is a reported 2023 understanding between Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar. According to reports, when the Congress high command selected Siddaramaiah as CM, there was an informal understanding that Shivakumar would take over after the government reached its halfway point. However, the party leadership has not publicly confirmed any such arrangement. Addressing BJP workers in Bengaluru, Modi on Sunday attacked the Congress, accusing it of "failing to provide good governance due to internal power struggles in Karnataka and of betraying the people."

He charged that Congress has become a "parasite party." the Congress high command selected Siddaramaiah as CM, there was an informal understanding that Shivakumar would take over after the government reached its halfway point. However, the party leadership has not publicly confirmed any such arrangement. "For the past three years in Karnataka, instead of resolving people's problems, most of the government's time has been spent on addressing internal conflicts," the PM said, adding that the Congress government has remained gripped by uncertainty over leadership and power-sharing arrangements.

Yogi cabinet 2.0: Celebrations in Aligarh, Kannauj as new ministers inducted into UP government

LUCKNOW: Celebrations erupted in Aligarh and Kannauj as Surendra Diler, the BJP MLA from Khair in Aligarh district, and Kailash Rajput, the BJP MLA from Tirwa in Kannauj district, were inducted into the council of ministers headed by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.



In the second expansion of the Yogi Adityanath 2.0 ministry, two cabinet ministers and four state ministers were inducted into the Uttar Pradesh government, while two state ministers were promoted to independent charge on Sunday. This expansion comes ahead of the assembly elections, scheduled for early next year in the state. Reports of celebrations also came from Raebareilly as Dr Manoj Kumar Pandey took the oath of office. In Aligarh, friends, party associates, and neighbours flocked to Surendra Diler's home in Suraksha Vihar Colony as news

of his induction into the council of ministers spread. Mukesh Singh, the president of the Suraksha Vihar Residents Association, told reporters that Surendra Diler is very popular among his neighbours, and they were delighted by his inclusion in the ministry. Residents began distributing sweets to celebrate. Chaudhary Jitendra Singh, the district general secretary of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), not-

ed that Diler is well-liked in his constituency for his polite and helpful nature. Surendra Diler, 31, was first elected as MLA from the Khair (SC) assembly constituency in November 2024 during a by-election. He comes from a politically prominent family in the BJP that spans three generations. His grandfather Kishan Lal Diler, a notable Valmiki leader from Aligarh, was first

elected as the MLA of the Kol seat in 1985. In 1992, he was elected as an MP from Hathras and held that seat for four consecutive terms. After Kishan Lal retired from active politics, the responsibility fell to Surendra's father Rajveer, who was elected as MLA from the Iglas (SC) seat in Hathras district. He inherited the legacy of his father, known for his humble demeanour. Speaking to PTI Videos before the swearing-in ceremony, Surendra Diler said, "I would like to express my gratitude to the Bharatiya Janata Party government, the state government, as well as to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath." When asked about being one of the youngest ministers in the council and the challenges ahead, Diler replied, "It has only been about a year and a half since I became a member of the legislative assembly.

CM Adhikari visits hometown Kanthi, gets rousing reception

KOLKATA: West Bengal's newly sworn-in Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari received a rousing reception as he visited his hometown Kanthi in Purba Medinipur district in the early hours of Sunday, with thousands of supporters thronging outside his residence to greet him. After taking the oath at the Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata on Saturday and completing official engagements throughout the day, Adhikari left for Kanthi late at night following a puja at Kalighat Kali temple. His convoy reached his Kanthi residence 'Shantikunj' around 2 am, but despite the late hour, a sea of supporters had gathered around the neighbourhood since



evening. As his vehicle approached the locality, the crowd erupted in slogans, showering him with flowers and garlands. The convoy was forced to slow down due to the huge turnout, prompting Adhikari to come out of his vehicle and acknowledge the cheering supporters. Visibly moved by the reception, the chief minister folded his hands and appealed to the crowd to disperse, saying, "It is very late now, please return home." The atmosphere resembled a festival, with locals celebrating the rise of their "son of the soil" to the state's top post.

Adhikari also sought the blessings of his parents after reaching home. Father Sisir Adhikari and mother Gayatri Adhikari had reportedly stayed awake till late at night to welcome him home. Local residents and childhood acquaintances described Adhikari as determined and resolute, attributing his rise to political prominence to his strong will and persistence. Since the morning, a serpentine line of people coming from different parts of Purba and Paschim Medinipur, as well as from other districts, was seen outside his Kanthi residence as police and security forces were managing the crowd, most of them carrying flowers and bouquets in their hands.

Constable releases 3rd video alleging corruption in Lucknow Commissionerate; seeks justice from Yogi

LUCKNOW: A constable posted in the Lucknow Police Commissionerate on Sunday released a third video demanding an independent probe into alleged corruption within the commissionerate, appealing to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for justice. Police have trashed his claims, including harassment by department staff, as "false and baseless".

Constable Sunil Kumar Shukla had earlier released videos accusing senior officers of running a "corrupt feudal system" within the commissionerate. In the latest video, Shukla alleged that policemen were sent to his house late at night after he made the allegations to harass him and his family. Accusing department staff of behaving arbitrarily, Shukla questioned the police action against him and said, "Am I a criminal or a Naxalite that I am being treated in this manner?" In the video, Shukla claimed that he drew inspiration from Bhagat Singh and asserted that he cannot be bogged down mentally. "You can either get me killed to silence my voice or form a special committee on the lines of the Home Guard department to eliminate corruption, exploitation and irregularities within the police force," Shukla said. The controversy was triggered after Shukla's earlier videos went viral on social media, in which he

alleged that constables and head constables in the commissionerate were forced to pay around Rs 2,000 every month to secure assignments, which was passed up the chain of command to senior IPS officers. Shukla, a science graduate from the University of Allahabad who joined the force in 2015, is currently on earned leave. Reacting to the latest video, the Lucknow Police Commissionerate issued a statement rejecting claims of any raid or mistreatment of Shukla's family. The allegations circulating on social media were "untrue and baseless", it said. According to the statement, notices were sent to Shukla via email and WhatsApp, asking him to appear before an inquiry committee formed to probe his charges. Police said a team visited his residence only to serve the notice as per the established procedure, and that he was being given full opportunity to present his side before the committee. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, meanwhile, has extended support to the constable through a post on X, where he shared Shukla's video and described him as a "freedom fighter". Yadav said the constable represented the struggle of the PDA community against corruption, oppression and exploitation by those in power.

PIL in SC for reviewing wages of priests, sevadars and temple staff in state-controlled temples

NEW DELHI: A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre and state governments to constitute a judicial commission or an expert committee to review the wages and other benefits given to priests, sevadars and temple staff in state-controlled temples. The PIL filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay said that the writ petition seeks directions to the Centre and states to constitute a judicial commission or an expert committee to review the remuneration and other benefits given to the priests and temple staff in state-controlled temples. "Petitioner also seeks a declaration that priests and temple staff are 'employee' under Section



2(k) of the Code on Wages, 2019. Petitioner submits that once

the State assumes the administrative, economic and financial control over temples, an employer-employee relationship arises and denial of dignified wages to priests and temple staff violates the right to livelihood guaranteed under Article 21," it said. Upadhyay said that the cause of action accrued on April 4, when he went to Varanasi to attend a public programme and after performing 'Rudrabhishek' in the Kashi Vishwanath temple, which is controlled by the state, he came to know that even the minimum wages to live with dignity are not given to the priests and temple staff. "Recently, in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, priests and tem-

ple staff organised a large-scale protest demanding the minimum wages. Priests and temple staff are not getting even the minimum wage prescribed by the State for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. This is a systematic exploitation. State is acting as a model employer through the endowments department, but violating the minimum wages Act and the directive principles of state policy (Article 43)," it said. The plea further said that the continued refusal to minimum wages with the 2026 inflation-adjusted cost of living index has forced the petitioner to seek judicial intervention to prevent the further marginalisation of priests and temple staff.

Punjab minister Sanjeev sent to 7-day ED custody

GURUGRAM: A special PMLA court in Gurugram on Sunday remanded Punjab Industries Minister Sanjeev Arora in Enforcement Directorate's custody for a week in an alleged Rs 100-crore GST fraud-linked money laundering case, observing that the allegations against him are "very serious" and the agency needs to question him to unravel the money trail. The lawyer for Arora, a senior leader of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, alleged that a "false and frivolous" case was "cooked up" against the minister and that "no prima facie evidence" was collected by the investigating officer before his arrest. Arora, 62, was taken into custody by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on

Saturday evening at his official residence in Chandigarh by the following raids by the agency against him. The central agency also searched the premises of a Gurugram-based company named Hampton Sky Realty Ltd (HSRL), in which Arora was a director and shareholder. In a statement on Saturday, the company denied any wrongdoing. It said it has faith in the legal process and is fully cooperating with all statutory authorities and will continue to do so. Arora was brought by agency officials to Gurugram from Chandigarh by road overnight and was produced in the Sessions-cum-special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court of Judge Narendra Sura.

The ED has alleged that its case was against HSRL, linked entities and Arora, who was the "beneficial owner and controller" of the company along with his family members. The company, during the 2023-24 financial year, sold mobile phones worth Rs 157.12 crore to several local and overseas entities, and, as the CMD of the company, Arora was responsible for the conduct of the business of the company, which undertook alleged illicit transactions, the ED told the court. It alleged that the company, in connivance with its directors, employees and linked persons, used "a network of shell entities" to generate "fake" purchase invoices and used them to show "bogus" sales and exports.

Bus carrying Badrinath pilgrims overturns near Rishikesh, 7 hurt

NEW TEHR: Seven pilgrims sustained minor injuries after a bus they were travelling overturned on the Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway near Shivpuri in Uttarakhand's Tehri district while returning from Badrinath on Sunday, police said. According to the police, 25 passengers along with a driver, Rajesh, and conductor, Sonu, both from Dehradun, were on board the bus when the accident occurred near the Kalthri dumping point. The bus was heading towards Rishikesh from the Badrinath shrine. The police said the driver's window suddenly opened and the vehicle veered off the road as he tried to close it. The injured people -- all residents of Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh -- have been identified as Sonam Gupta (28), Munni Devi (56), Chandra Prakash Gupta (62), Sanjay Chaurasia (59), Sita Devi (38), Kumari Shabnam (32), and Manish Giri (44).