

Morning News Script

0730 hrs

17th March 2026

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The Election Commission of India yesterday issued the Gazette notification for the upcoming bye-election to the 28-Koridang (ST) Assembly Constituency in Mokokchung. According to the notification, the last date for filing nominations is March 23, while scrutiny of nominations will take place on March 24. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations until March 26. Polling for the bye-election will be held on April 9, and the counting of votes is scheduled for May 4. The entire election process is expected to be completed by May 6. Meanwhile, the Model Code of Conduct has come into immediate effect in Mokokchung district, covering all areas falling under the Assembly constituency going to the polls, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India.

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The government will launch a revamped version of the Stand-up India scheme to provide more benefit to SC, ST and Women entrepreneurs across the country. Replying to supplementaries during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha yesterday, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, the Stand-up India scheme, which was launched in April 2016, came to an end in March last year. She said the scheme was studied by NITI Aayog and other department and it is being redrafted to provide more benefits to beneficiaries.

The objective of the Stand-up India scheme was to facilitate bank loans between ten lakh to one crore rupees to SC or ST borrowers and at least one-woman borrower per bank branch of all scheduled commercial banks.

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Embassy in Iran has strictly advised Indian nationals currently in Iran not to approach or attempt to cross any land border of Iran for onwards travel without prior and explicit coordination with the Indian Embassy in Tehran. In the

advisory, the embassy said that the Indian nationals who attempt to leave Iran via land borders without the knowledge and guidance of the Embassy are highly likely to encounter serious logistical and immigration difficulties. It strongly discouraged uncoordinated movement toward land borders. The embassy noted that it will not be in a position to provide assistance once individuals move outside Iranian territory without prior coordination. It further said that they are in regular contact with members of the Indian community, and coordinated arrangements are being undertaken wherever necessary. The Embassy also urged all Indian nationals in Iran to strictly follow Embassy advisories and remain in touch with official channels before undertaking any travel.

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Sahitya Akademi has announced the winners of the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 in 24 Indian languages yesterday. The Awardees include noted Hindi Writer Mamta Kalia for her memoir 'Jeete Jee Allahabad', and diplomat Navtej Sarna for his English novel 'Crimson Spring'. The Ministry of Culture informed that this year eight poetry books, four novels, six short stories, and two essays have received the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025. Meanwhile, one literary criticism, one autobiography, and two memoirs have also been selected for the award. The awards will be presented on the 31st of this month in New Delhi.

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Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhavan will exclusively open for senior citizens today. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with the States and Union Territories, Senior Citizen cell of the Delhi Police, National Institute for Social Defence, Anugraha-Regional Resource Training Centre and Brahma Kumaris will facilitate the visit. The Ministry said that the visit is being organized with the objective of providing senior citizens an opportunity to experience the beauty of the Amrit Udyan and to encourage their participation in social and recreational activities.

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And, India Meteorological Department has forecast fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall across Northeast India for the next seven days, accompanied

by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds. According to the forecast, Nagaland is likely to experience strong winds of 30–40 kmph along with rain, thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places till Friday. Meanwhile, Kohima has been experiencing continuous rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and strong winds since last night.

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