

Morning News Script

0730 hrs

18th March 2026

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Parliament has passed the Appropriation Bill 2026 with the Rajya Sabha returning it to the Lower House after discussion. Lok Sabha has already given its approval to the Appropriation Bill. The Bill seeks to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2025-26. Replying to the discussion in Rajya Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted that government's budgeting is transparent and realistic.

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The Government has enhanced the Budget allocation of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare from 21 thousand 933 crore during 2013-14 to 1 lakh 27 thousand 290 crore during 2025-26. This was stated by the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Bhagirath Choudhary in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha yesterday.

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The Supreme Court yesterday struck down a law which said a woman would be eligible for maternity leave if she legally adopts a child below the age of three months. A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan held that an adoptive mother should be entitled to maternity leave of 12 weeks, irrespective of the age of the adopted child. The Bench said, the protection of maternity benefit cannot be confined to keeping in mind the age of the child. The court added that an adoptive mother would have the same rights and obligations towards the child as the natural mother. The Supreme Court also asked the Centre to come out with a provision recognising paternity leave as a social security benefit. The Supreme Court's judgement came on a plea challenging Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code,

2020 that allows 12 weeks of maternity leave only if an adoptive mother adopts a child below three months of age.



In pursuance of the standing instructions issued by the Election Commission of India, the Chief Electoral Officer, Nagaland has designated all ranks of the Nagaland Police as election-related officials for the upcoming bye-election to the 28–Koridang Assembly Constituency. According to an official notification, the designation covers officers from the Director General of Police down to personnel at the field level, including Home Guards and Village Guards, who fall under the jurisdiction of the constituency. The order comes into effect from the date of election notification and will remain in force until the completion of the bye-election process. The notification further stated that, under Section 28A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, all such police personnel engaged in election-related duties will be deemed to be on deputation to the Election Commission and also be directly accountable to the Commission for any acts of commission or omission while discharging election duties.



The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) has issued weather warning of unsettled conditions across the state till 21st of March. According to the NSDMA, most districts in the state are likely to experience frequent thunderstorms, lightning, and light to moderate rainfall during this period. Weather activity is expected to be more intense today, accompanied by strong surface winds reaching speeds of 30 to 40 kmph. Districts likely to be affected include Peren, Dimapur, Kohima, Phek, Wokha, Mokokchung, Tuensang, and Kiphire. Gusty winds may cause damage to temporary structures, uproot trees or branches, and disrupt power supply and transportation. Widespread thunderstorm activity is also expected in districts such as Dimapur, Kohima, Wokha, Mokokchung, Mon, Tuensang, Zunheboto, and Peren throughout the forecast period. Meanwhile, some districts including Kiphire, Phek, and Zunheboto may witness gradual improvement in weather conditions from March 20 onwards, with reduced intensity of rainfall and storm activity. Intermittent cloudy to overcast skies are also

expected in Kohima, Wokha, Niuland, and Tseminyu. The NSDMA further advised residents to remain cautious, avoid open areas during lightning, and take necessary precautions to ensure safety. Overall, while weather conditions may ease slightly towards the end of the period, localized thunderstorms and rainfall are expected to continue across Nagaland till March 21.

